An Observation of Displaced Manufacturing Workers in their Transition for Successful Reemployment Through Community College Education/Retraining Programs

Christina Granderson

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An observation of displaced manufacturing workers in their transition for successful reemployment through community college education/retraining programs

By

Christina Granderson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
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Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2014
An observation of displaced manufacturing workers in their transition for successful reemployment through community college education/retraining programs

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The economic changes that have occurred in this country over the course of this past decade have had a grave impact on manufacturing workers, which has forced many of these workers to transition into new career fields. As workers are faced with having to start new career paths, the community college has served as a hub of information and a source of inspiration to begin new careers. Through programs such as the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, these dislocated workers are able to acquire a new skill or trade. A qualitative study will investigate how dislocated workers make a successful transition from community college to a new career field. An examination will also be conducted, observing the positive transition that these workers have experienced since becoming unemployed.

Due to the closures of manufacturing facilities, there are thousands of people who are now considered to be dislocated. Advances in technology and global trading have been the culprits in this shifting of the workforce; due to this, there has been an economic downturn in the areas affected by these plant closures. The federal and state governments
have allocated resources to ensure that the dislocated workforce is retrained and educated through local community colleges in order to diversify and upgrade the workforce.

The Trade Readjustment Act (TRA), which is a federal law that allows for displaced workers to be retrained are processed through job centers, which assists those workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. The basic qualifications for unemployment benefits are to be unemployed through no fault of one’s own and to be able and available for work. The aforementioned qualifications are suited to those individuals who have had the unfortunate experience of being laid off from a manufacturing plant. The local job center offices work closely with other state agencies and local community colleges. Community colleges act as a vehicle for the training, and the job center’s objective is to then assist the worker, not only with its benefits and other programs, but also to assist the worker in becoming reemployed once they have been successfully retrained.
DEDICATION

Psalms 20:4 states, “May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.” I would first like to thank God, for without him, this goal would not have been possible, for I know it was the grace of God that has allowed me to reach this point in my educational career.

Abraham Lincoln once stated, “All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel Mother.” I am so grateful to my mother, Mrs. Wilma Granderson, who was so supportive in my quest to pursue this degree. Mom, you saw me start this goal and the primary person who inspired me to dream the impossible dream. You always encouraged me to take the road less traveled and that, indeed, has made all the difference. Even when I did not believe in myself, you believed in me. I am filled with emotions as I write this because I wish you were here, physically, but you’ll live in my heart forever. Losing my mother during this process was extremely difficult, and I found myself at a crossroad as to rather or not I should continue on, but I knew my mother would have encouraged me to carry on and in that spirit, I persevered in her honor.

I would be remised if I did not thank my Dad and siblings for their undying encouragement. To my Dad, thank you for your support and love. To my sister, Gwen, thank you for your continuous reassurance; I recall you freely and willingly giving up your laptop to me, without hesitation, when mine had a virus, so I could study for my comprehensive exams. You have a heart of gold, and I know that I can always depend on
you to have my back. Without question or hesitation, you have jumped in to help whenever I needed you. You have given me so much love and encouragement and when I wanted to throw in the towel, you wouldn’t let me and I thank you so much for that! I can never repay you, but please know I will never forget everything you have done and you have my sincerest thanks. To my sister Angela, as a child, you set the stage for me to attain academic excellence and I thank you for that example.

To my brother Eric, you are the greatest and sweetest big brother a girl could ask for; thanks for always being there when I need you. To my nieces and nephews (Tiffany, Eric II, Courtney, Chelsea, Forrest, Alexandra, and Ava) you are my inspiration. I hope you know that you served as my motivation. I love you guys so much. Just thinking of the seven of you brings a warm smile to my face. I hope you all know that you can accomplish anything you put your mind to, just pray and believe. I hope my perseverance through this degree will in some way serve as a lesson to you that you should never give up on your dreams. Please remember that quitting is the easy way out, even when times get tough; please hang in there and pray. God will always see you through; I am a living testament to that.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this time to thank those relatives, friends, and colleagues who have offered support or encouragement to me during this process. To those who have offered a kind word, words of wisdom, inspiration, or said a prayer for me; I thank you. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated and I will never forget the kind gestures of all who supported me on this journey. Lastly, to all of my professors, you have inspired me more than you will ever know. A special thanks to my dissertation committee for your advisement, expertise, and most of all your patience during this process. To my committee chairman, Dr. Davis, you are the best!
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The current study deals with the observation of displaced manufacturing workers in their transition for successful reemployment through community college education/retraining programs; it elaborates upon the provision of the educational programs for mobilizing the immobile workers in a successful manner. This chapter gives a description of the background, aims, objectives, and chapter layout on which the entire dissertation will be based.

The social context of this study is to take an introspective look at individuals who have suffered job loss through no fault of their own. Obviously the loss of one’s job can be a catastrophic event. In fact, when plants have made a decision to shut down, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) agency conducts what is called Rapid Response, where the agency explains the funding and personal options that are available.

The rationale for this study is to examine how a worker can successfully transition into a new career through retraining after suffering a job loss. This study addresses the fact that little research has been done to highlight the experiences of displaced workers who receive community training and become reemployed.

The reason I chose this particular topic on displaced manufacturing workers is due to my experience with the MDES. My experience in working with displaced workers,
coupled with this doctoral program, heightens my curiosity of the transition of displaced workers and how community college education can be a predictor in those individuals being successful in becoming reemployed. The MDES is a state entity that facilitates funds to displaced workers through federal funds primarily through Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) or National Emergency Grants (NEGs); but the reason I chose to focus on displaced manufacturing workers is due to the volume of claims the agency has had to process due to the number of manufacturing plant closings in the Golden Triangle area.

**Background**

Few American workers will remain unaffected by profound economic and technological forces rapidly reshaping the American work structure. For many workers, job security is threatened by plant closures or relocation. Technological displacement is occurring in many industries, particularly heavy industrial areas, as the nation’s economy becomes increasingly based on service- and information-related work. According to Choate (1982), this structural shift began in New England in the 1920s, gathered momentum in that subregion through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and began to alter the Midwestern economy in the late 1970s. Many United States industries are faced with the decision of whether to automate, migrate, or close down.

Bluestone (1983) emphasized that the United States economy continues to experience a thorough and rapid industrial transformation. This transformation seriously affects the American worker and efforts to provide training and retraining to supply industry with needed skilled workers. Sum, Trubskyy, and Palma (2011) explains:

U.S. labor markets over the past decade performed quite poorly on nearly every core measure of job creation or real wage improvement. The so-called Great
Recession of 2007-2009 and its largely jobless recovery through early 2010 have generated a substantial array of labor market problems for many U.S. workers. These problems included high aggregate levels of job loss, especially in key goods producing industries (construction and manufacturing) and among many blue-collar occupations, rising levels and rates of unemployment, a sharp rise in the mean and median durations of unemployment to historically high levels, a sharp increase in underemployment (persons working part-time but desiring full-time jobs), and declining rates of labor force participation accompanied by increases in the labor force reserve or the pool of hidden unemployed (p.1).

Further complicating the unemployment problem is that often times, many adults are unable to read a job notice, fill out a job application, or perform simple mathematical computations. These individuals are even less prepared for a technological future. Newly emerging jobs are requiring additional training and education. According to Bluestone (1983):

Despite an initial surge or economic recovery and the appearance of unemployment rates below the double-digit level, the U.S. economy continues to experience a thorough and rapid industrial transformation. It is one in which sectorial and regional dislocation pose significant challenges for government policy. Deindustrialization of the older mill-based and smoke-stack industries--even when set against real growth in high-tech, service and retail trade employment--is creating substantial labor displacement that can only be cured by an overhaul of our economic, educational and training institutions. (p. 10)
A study conducted by the National Alliance of Business (NAB; 1983) pointed out that skills demanded in jobs that will become vacant and will be created would differ from those of the workers who lose their jobs. This study stated the following:

The dislocation problem exists when the laid-off worker has difficulties being reabsorbed elsewhere in the economy, either because the worker is unable or unwilling to look for or take a suitable new job or because job vacancies do not exist which are suitable for the worker on the basis of his or her skills. In other words, the dislocation problem results from a mismatch between the demands of employers with jobs to offer and the capabilities and needs of displaced workers.

(p. 2–3)

**Problem Statement**

Companies nationally have been affected by the receding economy and have closed their doors. This has forced loyal workers to search for other employment, but they lacked the skills needed to compete in today’s job market. There is an abundance of research on the experiences of older students entering or returning to community colleges, and many dissertations have been written on this topic (Hogan, 2003). Little research, however, has been done to highlight the experiences of displaced workers returning to community colleges in rural, urban, and metro campus settings. The perception that community colleges will assist displaced workers in occupational retraining and new employment placement is explored in the present study. In this current state of affairs that seems to be in a continued recession, community college enrollment is increasing, and the constant threats of budget or sequestration cuts make it all the more
important to understand the plight of the dislocated worker as he or she navigates through the intricacies of federal programs and higher education.

Recessions and budget cuts coupled with an increase in community college enrollment has become the norm, and because of these issues, it has become increasingly important to understand the plight of the dislocated workers and to have a better understanding of higher education and of the federal programs that are available to offer assistance to these individuals. President Obama recently made a declaration that community colleges are one of the most important agents to invoke positive changes in the economy; as a result, he devised a plan for community colleges to implement and development new plans and programs to assist dislocated workers (Parry & Fischer, 2009). The federal government has also provided stimulus money to states and local community colleges with the stipulation that the spending be completely transparent to the public.

There is plenty of research on the experiences of older students entering or returning to community colleges, and many dissertations have been written on this topic. Little research, however, has been done to highlight the experiences of displaced workers returning to community college in rural, urban, and metro campus settings. The perception that community colleges will assist displaced workers in occupational retraining and new employment placement is explored in the present study. The problem to be discussed in the current dissertation relates to examining the displaced manufacturing workers. It elaborates upon hiring the immobile workers again through successful retraining and education programs conducted at community college.
The primary impetus of this study is rather or not educational training will increase the dislocated workers’ chances of becoming reemployed. The problem to be discussed in the current dissertation relates to examining the displaced manufacturing workers. It elaborates upon hiring the immobile workers again through successful retraining and education programs conducted at community colleges.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the life experiences of displaced workers enrolled in community colleges for retraining and their views on obtaining employment upon completion of the programs of study. This study is also designed to inform community college advisors, faculty, and leaders about the effects plant closures have on displaced workers. It addresses how those effects carry over into the decision-making process to attend community college. The intent of this study is also to provide needed information and recommendations for administrators to assist displaced workers transitioning through community college. The purpose is also to understand the plight of the dislocated workers who have become disenfranchised from their employer due to the dislocation and who have had a positive and successful transition through postsecondary education and are now able to use that training to obtain gainful employment. This study also seeks an understanding of how participants of this study approached their community college experience and made a contribution to adult education and accessibility to attend a training program.
Aims and Objectives

Every research study is conducted with certain aims and objectives. Similarly, this study is guided through the aim that stresses upon observing the successful educational transition of the dislocated workers through community colleges.

The current study is conducted with the following objectives:

- Examining the problems and experiences of displaced manufacturing workers
- Studying the education and retraining programs for displaced manufacturing workers
- Elaborating upon the successful education transition of displaced workers through community colleges

Research Questions

The current study will examine the following research questions:

1. What are the life experiences and problems of the displaced manufacturing workers?
2. How successful were displaced workers in their transition to reemployment?
3. How does the community college assist displaced workers after job loss?
4. What occupational changes took place as a result of training?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it provides qualitative data that inform community college academic leadership, faculty, student services, staff, and others about
displaced workers enrolled in their system. These data can be used to create a culture of evidence and inform diverse audiences about the experiences of displaced workers in the community college. This study seeks to observe and comprehend the causal effects educational training has on the transition of dislocated workers experiencing job loss in their attempt to become successfully reemployed. Ultimately, data should be used to inform leaders, faculty, and staff about the issues displaced workers face in the community colleges and how to assist the workers. Research has proven that the United States is trailing behind other countries in the area of postsecondary educational attainment, and the advancement of having a high-skilled workforce and the finding has become alarming as global competition amplifies (Douglass, 2008; Reindl, 2007).

Research has typically been empirical in nature regarding the evolving economy and the effect of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) but employees of the manufacturing sector have been seemingly overlooked. The experiences of the dislocated manufacturing workers will lend credibility to their plight and the need for consideration of how they are affected by the policies and practices that are currently in place for them. This study searches for understanding of just how job loss can be turned into a positive situation using the community college. Comprehension of how all the aforementioned elements of job loss and the community college education unite together can be helpful tools to government offices and community college administrators who are the delegated individuals responsible for managing the resources relative to these programs.

The prospective results of this study are to feature the experiences of the dislocated workers, which is a variable that needs exploration. Highlighting their experiences will also add a dimension to this area of research that needs more
examination and will also make evident how existing programs and policies impinge on participants and the choices they make after the loss of a job. The information in this study can also be used as a tool for governmental agencies as well as the community colleges. There is a void in research information on the specific educational experiences and outcomes of the dislocated workers attending training programs. Having a greater understanding of the realistic experiences of dislocated workers who are attending training may form new designs and can also provide implications of changes in policies.

Through the stories of the dislocated manufacturing workers, this study seeks to highlight how to emphasize the issue of job loss, the transitional period of retraining, and reemployment. It also adds a component to the foundation of research of information pertaining to the dislocated workers in Mississippi and community college education/retraining; it also offers a stratagem, economically. This study also observes the relationship between governmental programs and education. Lastly, this study imparts propositions for policies, government programs, and the community college.

**Definitions**

This section presents definitions for key terms as they were used for the purposes of this study.

- Acceptance: Generally confused with the notion of being all right or okay with what happened this stage of grief is about accepting that the old reality is gone and recognizing that the new reality is the permanent reality (Kubler-Ross, 1969).
• Anger: An emotion that can manifest as rage, resentment, and envy; it is
sometimes displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment
at random (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

• Community colleges: Colleges awarding no higher than a 2-year degree;
generally, comprehensive institutions that provide: (a) general and liberal
education, (b) career and vocational education, and (c) adult and
continuing education (StateUniversity.com, 2009).

• Denial: A “psychological defense mechanism in which confrontation with
a personal problem or with reality is avoided by denying the existence of
the problem or reality” (Webster, 2003, p. 333).

• Depression: “Sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentrating”
(Webster, 2003, p. 335).

• Displaced workers: Individuals who lose their jobs owing to a facility shut
down or layoff and who have previously maintained a stable employment
history but face structural barriers to reemployment (Jacobson, Lalonde, &
Sullivan, 2005).

• Growth: The process by which one overcomes a difficult situation and
advances to achieve established goals.

• Guilt: The emotion one feels when one wishes a devastating event
happened to oneself instead of to others.

• Shock: The initial feeling of surprise and disbelief followed by numbness
a person experiences when confronted with devastating news.
Electronic Database Searches

The dissertation utilizes various electronic databases, journals, online libraries, and reviews. These published resources will prominently include the information from Ebsco, Sage Journals, Datamonitor, and various websites that provide reliable researched material.

Theoretical Framework

This study will be examined under the scope of the human capital theory as a basis and framework, as this theory assesses postsecondary training and can observe the benefits and advantages of training and workforce development education. Being that the basis of the human capital theory, it is only fitting that this theory is incorporated, as the crux of this theory is that the higher the education attainment is, the higher the returns are to the economy (Sweetland, 1996). Human capital evolves out of pursuits and investments that elevate the productivity of workers and increase their potential earnings/income (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Becker (1992) argued that the theory of human capital proposes that the investments that go into training and education increase earnings through the attainment of knowledge and skills. Education and training are primary pillars of most of the information pertaining to the human capital theory.

According to Sweetland (1996), “While forms of education are diverse, so too are the benefits of education” (p. 341). The human capital theory is useful in its framework for describing many levels of education. Basically the sociological theory and goal achievement theory are applicable to the human capital theory to examine and assess the socioeconomic of workforce training.
Through these theories, the insubstantial and distinctive traits of educational preferences can be examined more comprehensively for a better understanding of the economic benefits and recorded outcomes. Sociological theory informs that dislocated workers attend community college training for educational advancement and for occupational prospects. Goal theory directs to understand the dislocated workers’ attainment goals upon entering training and will inform the valuation of the success of the achievement. Finally, human capital theory links education investment to economic success and higher productivity. Human capital theory can also be applied to intangible, nonmonetary benefits of learning such as getting a better job, being able to perform better at the current job, or maintaining employment status. This operational definition is applied to the independent variables and dependent variables selected in this study.

The human capital theory implies the acquisition of knowledge via the means of education, productivity, efficiency, performance, and output. This theory is applicable to this study as it explores dislocated workers and their quest to be retrained and become successfully reemployed. This theory is also relevant to this study as it is applicable in today’s practices and work life, economy, and the national economy (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). This correlates to this study as it is an established theory that the more educated the workforce is the better the effect it has on the economy. “Competition in the labor market does not commence with employment. It begins in school. Formal education provides the skills, knowledge and to some degree, the work habits and experiences that prepare individuals for entry and advancement in the labor market” (Loomis & Rodríguez, 2009, p. 510).
Theorist John Dewey, through his perception of the human capital theory and education, focused on the advancement of individual growth, which gives way to more important factors such as economic growth that correlates with social welfare (Loomis & Rodriguez, 2009, p. 514). Dewey’s concept applies to this study in that his theory points to educational advancements equaling individual growth that lends credibility to the theory that this advances socioeconomic growth.

Because this theory puts an emphasis on education and training, this particular theory is essential to competitiveness in our changing global economy. Education is an instrument of advancement and vital to development in any society, based on its eminence and magnitude. Higher educational attainment is essential in order for a contribution to be made toward economic growth. There has been a shift in trends and changes in recent years geared toward improving knowledge and making the expansion of knowledge a main concern. The aforementioned statement could be a result of the realization that higher education is interconnected with economic development.

Education is considered a good for the economy, and while education can be inaccessible to some, it is important that both areas (education and the economy) are properly allocated. Education is considered both a consumer and capital good because its function is twofold; it gives a sense of achievement to the consumer, but it also is a variable that contributes to the economy. Education being a capital good is relative to the human capital theory, which accentuates that the expansion of abilities is a significant feature in production pursuits. It is extensively acknowledged that the role of education generates a better pool of citizens and helps to enhance the overall standard of living. The belief that education is the instrument of transformation has given way to a substantial
There is a notion that higher education has been bolstered by the assessment that there is a financial/monetary attainment by pursuing a higher level of education. There is also a notion that advancement in education leads to an increase in economic growth.

In a broad spectrum, human capital characterizes how people can make an investment into themselves, thus enhancing their own economic prosperity. The theoretical framework most accountable for the practicality of education and economic development has come to be known as human capital theory.

The research subject is introduced in the beginning and consists of the aims and objectives of the research as well as its logic and reasons. Additionally, detailed research questions are mentioned in order to give an analysis of argumentation, and the main themes are introduced that the research desires to analyze.
Nearly all of the research on displaced workers has been conducted since the mid-1980s. In the period since, a number of studies have attempted to determine the characteristics of displaced workers and the various determinants of the wage loss they experience following displacement. There is still, however, much unknown about the losses sustained by these workers. Very little research has been conducted, for example, on the importance of union coverage. Although many studies have included some aspect of pre-displacement union coverage in their analyses, its explanatory value has generally been downplayed.

This research will study the displaced manufacturing workers with respect to their educational transition for the purpose of reemployment. It will observe the role of community colleges in educating and retraining the displaced workers. The current section discusses the background, fundamentals, and general aspects of the topic under study.

**Introduction**

During the past 10 years in the Mississippi Partnership area, and more recently around the nation due to the receding economy, a number of manufacturing plants have closed. The Mississippi Partnership is the 27 county area facilitated through Three Rivers
Planning and Development District. The Mississippi Partnership is responsible for instituting and maintaining a workforce system that offers the highest quality services while providing a skilled workforce. Local community colleges, planning and development districts, MDES, and the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services supply the services that the Mississippi Partnership has to provide. The plant closures and downsizings have been the result of mergers, market fluctuations, and outsourcing to other countries to take advantage of cheap labor (Levine, 2004). Although these actions are beneficial to companies, they create a strain on families who have to relocate if there are no comparable businesses or start-up plants in the area to fill the void. In many cases, this also results in an increase in enrollment in community colleges as laid-off individuals prepare for new careers (Hupp, 2009).

Due to the recent closures of many iconic plants in the Mississippi Partnership area, which includes United Technology, Domtar, Bryan Foods (Sara Lee), and Georgia Pacific, workers have been laid off from their positions after numerous years of employment. Some workers had been employed with their companies for more than 30 years and had been out of school even longer. Facing life-changing experiences, many of them decided to return to community colleges for retraining programs using funding from the TAA.

The initial phase of becoming dislocated workers originates when the workers are notified that they will be laid off from their jobs. At that point, Rapid Response, a service offered by the government, usually a one stop career center in the case of Mississippians, who are unemployed, is notified; those services would be rendered through the Win Job Center office. The Mississippi Partnership houses 17 Win Job Center locations in the
Northeast corner of the state, including the Lowndes County area. A Rapid Response team is deployed to the manufacturer or business that is shutting down to discuss with those displaced workers their options and services that are available. Those services usually discuss unemployment benefits, options pertaining to health insurance, and school or training programs that are available for the workers.

My experience as an employee with the MDES Golden Triangle Win Job Center working with dislocated workers started in 2002. During this time, an emerging pattern began of plant closures in the manufacturing profession, and it shortly thereafter became a frequent occurrence. As a Win Job Center employee, I was part of the Rapid Response team. This team was comprised of community college personnel, officials from local community agencies, and MDES employees. This team visited the jobsite and spoke with workers about their options, and vital information was shared about their possibilities for the future. Workers would often appear attentive to the information presented to them, but the overall consensus of my experience of being on the Rapid Response team was that most of these individuals were fearful about their financial future and whether they were re-employable. Our role was to encourage these individuals and to help them believe that higher educational attainment was the best option for them to secure a better future for themselves.

The emerging issue/topic of the observation of displaced manufacturing workers in their transition for successful reemployment through community college education/retraining programs is a topic of particular interest, particularly during a time where the unemployment rate is high; with the number of closings and layoffs, it is
important to look into other options that will allow the dislocated workers to be retrained and to be successful in their training to secure a career in another field.

While I counseled many who were very excited about the school option, there were also a vast amount of people who were more concerned about getting right back to work and finding other employment. Many of the individuals counseled had never been to college, and a lot of them had joined the workforce right out of high school. Some had not even completed high school. It was important for the Rapid Response team to drive home the fact that pursuing higher educational attainment needs to be a strong preference because the advantages of an education are far-reaching.

Over the last decade, globalization and technological changes have caused a surge in manufacturing plant closures in the United States, which has in turn left thousands of workers unemployed and unable to find suitable work. The globalization movement started to gain energy in the 1980s and 1990s when manufacturing executives and the powers that be discovered that they could acquire low skilled labor for less pay in other countries, resulting in the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 (Aheron, 2004; Estes, Schweke, & Lawrence, 2002; Rocha, 2001). By the early 2000s, technology amplified by global trade and the usage of logistical supply chains resulted in a substantial decline in manufacturing jobs (Drayse, 2008; North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2009a). This economic shift led to significant job loss in Mississippi with many plant closures over the course of the past decade as a result of these closures.

**Displaced Workers**

Who is considered a dislocated worker? The empirical literature review of Fallick (1996) describes “dislocated workers” as a variable term; however, in the research of the
area, many authors have agreed that in order to be considered dislocated, the workers must meet the following criteria: (a) be unemployed due to technological changes or governmental regulations, (b) have a slim possibility to return to a similar job, and (c) have a strong connection to the industry sector in which they were employed. Fallick (1996) further states that there are a disproportionate number of dislocated workers that tend to be from the manufacturing industry.

In the literature, the common definition of a displaced worker was “a person on layoff with a stable employment history who has little chance of being recalled to a job with their old employer or even in their old industry” (Owen & Fitch, 2003, p. 191). Another researcher defined displaced workers as “fulltime workers who have been permanently separated from their jobs and their pay checks against their wishes” (Uchitelle, 2006, p. 5). And still others, such as Jacobson et al. (2005), defined displaced workers as individuals who lose their jobs owing to a facility shut down or layoff and who have previously maintained a stable employment history but face structural barriers to reemployment.

Terms “displaced workers” and “dislocated workers” are often used synonymously. Centers established in Illinois as a result of Title Ill of Job Training Partnership Act were called dislocated worker centers. Therefore, in this study when reference is made to particular programs or centers, the term dislocated is used. The term displaced worker is used when referring to the individual worker or groups of workers who qualify under Title Ill. The American economy has recently experienced a downturn. In order to grow and prosper, the economy must adapt to rapidly changing conditions and capitalize on opportunities. While adaptation may improve economic conditions,
displacement of workers from their jobs often results. For example, one-fourth of the automotive workforce was jobless at the end of 1980 (NAB, 1983).

Between the years of 2003 and 2005, at least 3.8 million workers had been dislocated from their jobs. Dislocated workers in the manufacturing field made up 28% of that 3.8 million. The reemployment rate for dislocated manufacturing workers was by and large lower than the overall rate.

Displacement of workers is often stimulated by changes in demand for goods being produced, technological change and shifts in location, and relocation of jobs and occupations. The displaced worker problem has escalated since 1981, as pointed out by Balfe (1983):

In comparing the unemployment statistics in 1979 with those of 1982, we find the number of unemployed teenagers remained constant at 1.6 million. However, the number of unemployed adults over the age of 25 rose from 3 million to 7 million. The number of unemployed blue collar workers rose from 2.5 million to 5.5 million. The number of persons unemployed for over six months rose from one-half million to 2.2 million, a fourfold increase. (p. 56)

A number of people have developed definitions of displaced workers in an effort to estimate the numbers actually affected by structural changes in the economy. The actual number of displaced workers varies depending on characteristics used to define displacement. Kolberg (1983) defined displaced workers as people who are unemployed and unlikely to return to their previous occupations because their skills have become obsolete or because of structural changes in the smokestack industries. Clark and Nelson (1983) defined displaced workers as persons with considerable labor market experience
who have been laid off and are unlikely to return to the same company within a period of 6 months. Their study of displaced workers in the Northwest found that these workers were most likely to have worked at the same job or company for years and were suffering significant financial and status losses. Their study also investigates the results that unemployment have on displaced individuals and characterizes them in four categories: (1) economic effect; (2) psychological effects (3) family/sociological effect; and (4) barriers for further education, retraining, and relocation to find employment (Clark & Nelson 1983).

No agency presently keeps count of displaced workers; however, in the spring of 1983, various independent survey organizations reported between half a million and 2 million unemployed workers as a result of displacement (Kolberg, 1983). Currently, there appears to be some indication of economic recovery with a drop in unemployment figures. In spite of this trend toward economic recovery and the resulting benefits, one group of workers will still find their skills and experiences obsolete and unneeded. These groups will likely increase in numbers due to technological changes and increasing emphasis on service-related occupations. Terms used to describe this group of workers include dislocated and/or displaced.

Displaced workers differ from unemployed workers who quickly find a new job with the same skills because displaced workers are more affected by the cyclical economic downturns in the region. They tend to work in declining industries. Moreover, reemployment for dislocated workers is more difficult because their job search skills are extremely outdated and they either lack basic skills or possess skills that are no longer desired in their regional economy (Jacobson et al., 2005).
Due to recent plant closings, downsizing, outsourcing, and technological advances, many people find themselves out of work. Retraining of workers from industries and jobs that have either moved abroad or ceased to exist also has become a growing need, and President Bush designated community colleges as the primary agent for accomplishing that retraining (Levine, 2004). Many displaced workers have no other choice than to enroll in community colleges for either technical training programs or other training programs in order to eventually find meaningful employment. Typically, dislocated workers range in age from 25 to 54, and their racial characteristics mirror those of the national labor force. Males, however, tend to be slightly more affected by this type of job loss (Templin, 2004). In his article “Meeting the Needs of a Changing Society,” Templin (2004) stated, “Capacity is rapidly becoming the most critical challenge facing community colleges” (p. 231). More students ages 35 and up are enrolling in community colleges. Not surprisingly, older adults choose community colleges because of their academic and special programs (Laanan, 2003). Older adults are increasing the community colleges’ enrollment rate as well.

Community colleges are considered to be the channel for change in areas where there is high unemployment and a high number of dislocated workers. Gradually more dislocated workers are enrolling in training programs due to a reduction in work or the workforce and economic downturn from job loss. Due to the partnership of one stop center (Win Job Center) and the federal programs that are facilitated through them and local community colleges, pursuing a higher education has become more popular.
I have an interest to explore an area of research concerning unemployment, dislocated workers, and community college attendance. The following programs are provided under the WIN centers:

- Unemployment Compensation
- Job Seeker Services
- TRA provides programs to assist individuals who have become unemployed as a result of increased imports from foreign countries.
  (Under TRA is TAA, which provides for a dislocated worker to attend school or training, relocation allowance/move, job search allowance, health coverage tax credit.)

During my tenure with the MDES agency, I have seen unemployment rates fluctuate, but in the past year, it has been the highest I have ever seen. The goal of MDES is to increase employment in Mississippi, and that has been a difficult task lately. With the number of industries closing in the area, workers are considered “dislocated workers;” therefore, they are eligible for additional programs, other than just receiving monetary benefits. MDES is a state agency; however, it must follow certain regulations, as mandated by the U. S. Department of Labor, so my years of experience with MDES has allowed me to become adept in my knowledge of workforce development programs and the important role that community colleges play with MDES.

Community colleges are considered a hub for workforce development. Being an employee of a one stop center, which is the Win Job Center for the Golden Triangle, I often see individuals who are unwilling to go to school, but they feel like they are too old, not smart enough, or have been out of school too long; however, these individuals are
encouraged to explore the option of training so that they can acquire a new skill in a field or trade, which could allow them to become reemployed. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 provides for reemployment services and training for dislocated workers, including those workers who are laid off permanently as a result of plant closings or other substantial layoffs. What I do find interesting about WIA is that it could not thrive without the support of the community college to provide that training. I think there are many areas of interest to be explored in terms of workforce development and the function of the community college.

Dislocated workers are individuals who are unemployed due to no fault of their own. Mainly this would be due to being laid off, and in the instance of this study, these workers are laid off due to their job or plant moving or shutting down. In the instance of trade-impacted workers, they are eligible for financial assistance in many capacities such as relocation and also reemployment through the TAA program. President Obama has called for a proposal to create an American Job Center network that will work to fuse together all one stop career centers with electronic resources. Although one stop career centers are known by various names throughout the country, they are known as the WIN Job Center in the state of Mississippi. Often times, those who are seeking employment do not know or understand the services that are available and opportunities that their one stop career center might be able to provide for them; therefore, President Obama has proposed a $500-million- deal to advance and develop these workforce centers. The President has also proposed a commitment to enhance the pool of the workforce by ensuring that workers are adequately trained which can help them ascertain high-quality jobs. The President has also recently proposed a new Community College to Career Fund
that will create a partnership between community colleges and businesses and manufacturers to train workers for jobs that are in high demand.

**Figure 1.** Chart of Displaced Workers by Industry


The above chart pertains to reemployment rates of dislocated workers from data collected from January 2007 through December 2009, and it shows that 6.9 million workers were dislocated during that period from jobs that they had held for 3 years. It notes that in January 2010, 49% of the 6.9 million had been reemployed. These data also reveal that the industries of financial activities, education/health services, and the government sector exceeded the overall unemployment rate. This chart also reveals that
workers in the manufacturing sector were least likely to be reemployed at 39% at the time the survey was conducted.

Figure 2. Chart of Displaced Workers by Age and Sex

The above chart indicates the employment status of dislocated workers from January of 2009 through December 2011, where 6.1% workers where dislocated from jobs that they had held for at least 3 years. 56% of the workers displaced between the years of 2009–2011 were reemployed in January 2012, which is up from 49% from the
January 2010 data. As of January 2012, the reemployment rate was nearly 62% for workers between the ages of 20 and 54.

**Experiences of Displaced Workers**

Many displaced workers shared the same sentiment of being betrayed by the company that had shown them loyalty for so many years. They were once proud to work for the company and proud of the skills they possessed. Their employment provided them with a comfortable lifestyle. Often there was prestige that was associated with the company and the occupation, making it difficult for workers to detach themselves from them. According to Carroll, Blatner, Alt, Schuster, and Findley (2000), remaining in the occupation but leaving the company provided a sense of continuity and mitigated the sense of loss associated with losing one’s job. It is not easy for displaced workers to find employment that pays close to the amount they were making. They have to take a pay cut and find jobs that offer health benefits. According to Mauer (2001), these workers, considering their age and experience in different areas have a difficult time finding jobs because of their lack of training or education.

In a report by the NAB (1983), these needs, which often differ from other unemployed workers, were discussed. For example, displaced workers typically have an established work record and therefore do not need job readiness instruction or opportunities to develop a track record in the labor force. Yet they may need to be convinced that their jobs are over and that they must begin a job search. Therefore, they may need job search assistance and information. In addition, retraining and assistance in relocating and readjustment may be required. Income assistance and psychological support may also be needed until their re-absorption into the labor force. Displacement of
experienced workers has been a serious problem for several years. Unemployment projections indicate that this problem is likely to persist and probably worsen; although it is not a national crisis, the problem is serious for both individuals and affected localities. Between the years of 1996 and 1999, there were 1.2 million displaced workers as a result of job loss (Knapp & Harms, 2002). In the United States in the 1990s, a lot of work was outsourced overseas because many of these U. S. companies saw a financial advantage in moving to countries where labor and production were cheaper. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002) found that the largest number of mass layoffs occurred in 2001. The manufacturing sector was the industry with the larger share of those affected by mass layoffs. Needless to say, the effects of job loss can affect a dislocated worker in many ways, physically and psychologically.

An example of an observation of displaced manufacturing workers in their transition for successful reemployment through community college education is seen in a study by conducted by Ghilani (2008) who examines a company called Techneglas, which was a glass manufacturing plant located in Pittston, Pennsylvania. The layoff was effective August 2, 2004. This study was done to make a determination of how these workers fared after job loss. This study also explores these workers’ quest for reemployment in a new occupational field after completing training at a local community college. The findings revealed that most of these individuals were able to secure employment, although in most cases it was in a lower salary range. There were a total of 670 workers affected by the Techneglas closure, and by November 2004, over 120 of these displaced workers availed themselves to the services offered by their local community college, Luzerne County Community College, and by the following year over...
100 of the former Techneglas workers were enrolled in community college. The final results of this study were that a majority of the former Techneglas workers revealed that 84% of the 70 individuals who participated in the study indicated they had successfully found employment.

Earning changes and reemployment based on the sector have played an important role in examining reemployment patterns to help understand the changes that occur with displaced workers. The primary notion is how labor that has moved overseas has reallocated and restructured the labor market in the United States as a whole.

Manufacturing workers who have been impacted by job loss due to dislocation may find it to be a difficult task to secure work, as the new labor market as their prior training and skill set may not be sufficient (Beneria & Santiago, 2001; Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2006). Many dislocated workers have to face the fact that their jobs have permanently ended, which can be emotional; however, this gives these individuals an exceptional uniqueness among the larger pool of unemployed individuals (Estes et al., 2002; Owen & Fitch, 2003). In additional to these dislocated workers facing the fact that they are unemployed, often they find themselves lacking the education needed to obtain another job, or they are foreign to the community support and resources that are available, which can serve as either barriers or obstacles (Crews-Klein, Beacham, & Moga, 2002; Estes et al., 2002; Howland & Peterson, 1988). Researchers predicted in the 1980s and 1990s that due to the rapidity in technological change and global economic growth, by the 2000s the job market would lack stability and that dislocated workers seeking a new career field would find more complexities in their search as these new
careers would require more postsecondary education (Caro & Morris, 1991; Fallick, 1996; Simmons, 1995).

Manufacturing workers who have been affected by layoffs due to changes in the economy may find trouble in acclimatizing to a new labor market where there is no longer a necessity for their particular workplace skills (Beneria & Santiago, 2001; GAO, 2006). Dislocated workers have to accept the fact that their jobs are permanently over, which is an emotional undertaking. However, it gives them an inimitable identity among larger populations of the unemployed individuals (Estes et al., 2002; Owen & Fitch, 2003). Furthermore, the lack of education, the emotional distress that comes along with permanent job loss, archaic job search tools, and lack of familiarity with community support systems all serve as obstacles to reemployment (Crews-Klein, Beacham, & Moga, 2002; Estes et al., 2002; Howland & Peterson, 1988).

This paper will illuminate the process of how these workers made a transition of being unemployed to being retrained and to being successfully reemployed again. The effects of being laid off can be far-reaching. “Every year, thousands of workers all over the world are affected by negative consequences of displacement” (Kuhn, 2002). Since 2000, more than 3 million people have suffered from job loss.

Problems Displaced Workers Face after Job Loss

As in any crisis situation, displaced workers are faced with feelings of scorn, resentment, fear, inadequacy, depression, and hope, to name a few. With the loss of health benefits there is an increase in the number of mental health issues that go undetected and untreated (Longworth, 2008). There are a lot of feelings of “down and
out” because society “mandates” that people should work hard for a living. The loss of a job to many means the loss of identity.

Maida (1989) stated that a person with a lengthy attachment to a company, when threatened with job loss, experiences crisis and separation similar to that experienced during bereavement, divorce, or a natural disaster. It is difficult for some displaced workers to reinvent their life stories for themselves. They no longer find identity within their jobs. In today’s job market, people are switching careers and places of employment within a couple of years. Some displaced workers have been on the same job for 20 years or more. Sennet’s (1998) work showed that adaptation to these new economic conditions may be particularly difficult for those with few resources with which to reconstruct themselves into new kinds of workers. This can cause depression or other mental health issues. Although there are programs to help displaced workers through these trying times, some issues are not attended to because of lack of insurance (Sennet, 1998).

One problem quite evident during any loss of employment is financial hardship (Makawatsakul, 2003). Once the loss of employment sets in and the unemployment check runs out, life starts to spiral downhill if displaced workers are not prepared. The financial burden of house payments, utilities, car insurance, and other everyday expenses is difficult for many to maintain. Some bills go unpaid, and possessions may start being repossessed. Lack of money can cause displaced workers to buy cheaper products, which in turn could lead to poor health issues. Perrucci, Perrucci, & Targ (1997) stated that doctor visits are few and far between because of the lack of insurance or additional monies to pay co-payments; the co-payment for an office visit could be used instead for food.
Another problem that occurs is relocation. Often the company from which displaced workers have been laid off has moved overseas, and there are no other existing companies in the area that pay nearly the same wage. The jobs that are left in that area pay minimum wage and cannot support the displaced workers’ expenses or families. Being forced to relocate to another city is challenging in itself. In addition, there may be no money to relocate, and some displaced workers who previously owned houses may have to downsize to apartments. This affects the stability of the family. Owen and Fitch (2003), in their study on displaced workers, found that financial pressures due to plant closings increased marital problems as well as behavioral problems of the children. Children tend to act out their frustrations in school as well. The relocation of the family to a new town causes anxiety in children and the entire family.

Fear of change is consistent in many displaced workers and their families. Once the fear subsides and the displaced workers decide that continuing their education is a priority, new challenges of entering the classroom begin (Owen & Fitch, 2003). The loss of a job can be considered such a tragic event. The effects of job loss can affect one’s physical and psychological well-being.

**Brief History of Community Colleges**

During the 20th century of American higher education, community colleges came into existence. As a means to bolster postsecondary education, the first community college was developed in Joliet, Illinois, as an addition to high school, basically offering a fifth- and sixth-year extension to high school. There have been many strides within the community college system since that time, and the community college has firmly established its place as a viable option for higher education. Community colleges are
institutions that offer a variety of programs including 6-month vocational diplomas. Some offer 1- and 2-year vocational, technical, and pre-professional certificates. Two-year programs in general lead to associate degrees, which can be transferred to a 4-year college or university. Most community colleges are public institutions and have an open access policy. This means nearly everyone who applies may be accepted. Community colleges are a unique component of higher education because the curriculum is flexible and can be tailored to meet local and societal needs by providing one or more of five functions: general education; vocational education; technical education; adult continuing education, which includes remedial and college preparatory education, counseling, and placement; and student development services (Iowa Department of Education [IDE], 2008).

The major growth of community colleges occurred after World War II. Many veterans sought to retrain for different vocations and to continue their education utilizing GI benefits, which provided additional financial and economic security to colleges. Community colleges gain funding by applying for federal education grants to aid displaced workers in developing new career skills.

There are five important functions of the community college: general education/transfer, vocational education, continuing education, community services, and developmental education (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). In the initial stages of the community college, there were four vital stages that helped to set the foundation of the community college. The first stage, which was implemented in the early part of the 20th Century, was where the 2-year school was formed with an emphasis and focus on technical training. The second stage was where the 2-year school moved more toward offering job skills for
technical and semi-professional careers. In the third stage, the educational leaders started to transition from the 2-year school to the community college, and training started to transition toward highly specialized technical, managerial, and semi-professional career training. The fourth and final stage was the transition of the partnership between the community college and the business community (Katsinas & Lacey, 1989). These stages show the strong tie and bond that the community college has with technical training and with its relationship with their surrounding community.

**Education and Retraining Experiences through Community Colleges**

Many of the displaced workers enrolled in community college training programs and developmental education classes find it difficult to get into the “swing of things.” They are not used to being students and may feel overwhelmed with school as a whole. Literature shows that displaced workers are usually older than most of the students in the classroom (Templin, 2004). Some displaced workers have children the same age as their classmates. The feelings of being too old to learn new things can become a deterrent for displaced workers.

Community colleges offer basic skills classes. Many displaced workers have not had a math class in years (Owen & Fitch, 2003), and sometimes there is a need to be refreshed in the area. The fear of not being able to understand the material being taught can discourage many displaced workers. Once fear and pride dissipate and the displaced workers start to take advantage of the assistance offered to them, such as career counseling and study groups, there could be successful outcomes. Their stint in community college can be rewarding.
In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act modified the Trade Act of 1974 to sanction the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program. President Obama signed the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, which involved $2 billion over the course of 4 years to fund the Community College and Career Training Grant program.

TAACCCT will provide community colleges and other eligible postsecondary institutions with funding for expansion to enhance their aptitude to deliver the service of education and training programs that can be completed in 2 years or under to be able to obtain employment in a high-wage, high-skill job due to this training. These grants are distributed by the Department of Labor to ensure that educational institutions are assisting individuals to receive specialized skills and receive a degree or certification in order to have the qualifications needed to secure employment, hopefully earning a higher wage. Certainly being highly skilled will definitely broaden their horizons. The Department of Labor is also partnering with the Department of Education on this venture in order to appropriately implement the TAACCCT program.

On the other hand, Jacobson et al. (2005) stated that older displaced workers have shorter work lives than do younger students. Therefore, enrolling in a community college may not be a wise decision for some displaced workers. Time may be better spent looking for employment, especially if learning is not taking place as rapidly as it does for the younger students. Employment opportunities may pass by some displaced workers while they are pursuing education. Generally speaking, displaced workers who have chosen to further their education are willing to take that chance.
Research has shown that many of the displaced workers do not persist in college if they have high basic skills needed for employment (Simmons, 1995). The higher skilled displaced worker is defined as a worker who has had some formal education. This worker may finish a certification course only if employment does not come before completion of classes.

On the other side of this argument, Simmons (1995) stated that dislocated workers with little previous education and low basic skills were more likely to persist than were the better educated workers. This persistence is partially due to enrolling in training for high paying occupations, attending classes full time, completing the credits in which they were enrolled, and making long-term commitments to their retraining goals.

Occupational–technical certificate programs attract dislocated workers who want to become a more productive part of the workforce again. These programs provide students with the opportunity to meet their career goals while meeting the goals of the community colleges (Lohman & Dingerson, 2005). Still, even with these opportunities for new training skills, displaced workers seem to drop out of these programs before a certificate is awarded.

The probability of employment after attending community college depends on the length of training, class attendance, credits, and type of jobs for which displaced workers are applying. Literature suggests women, minorities, and less educated workers exhibit significant disadvantage in their reemployment outcomes (Vinokur, Price, Schul, & Juori, 2000). However, Jacobson and colleagues (2005) argued it is important to allow some transition time immediately upon leaving community college to find gainful employment.
Workers’ employment rate tends to be lower immediately after leaving community college than it is after some time has passed.

Research has shown that some displaced workers are worse off than they were prior to enrolling in community colleges. Within a year following training, employment rates of displaced workers tend to rise. There is hope for gainful employment after community college completion, but it is situational. Jacobson et al. (2005) suggested that data and a tracking system be developed to ensure complete data on displaced workers employment rates after completion of community college.

Because the community college culture is so diverse, there is an assortment of demographics, such as typical fresh-out-of-high-school students, nontraditional aged students, low-income students, and dislocated workers, which vary in age, race, and gender. The community college offers a variety of workforce training programs, which includes on-the-job training with financial incentives; WIA programs, which includes programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth; Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs; and industry-oriented programs for specialized workforce certifications. Workforce training programs help to sustain the economic need of the community by equipping the workforce with skilled workers. The primary goals of workforce programs are to enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities through training, thereby increasing employment opportunities for the worker and subsequently the community. The Workforce Training Imperative (1993) offers the following definition of workforce training:

Workforce training is defined as those activities designed to improve the competencies and skills of current or new employees of business, industry, labor,
and government. Such training is typically provided on a contract basis with the employer who defines the objectives of the employee training, the schedule and duration of the training, the location at or the delivery mechanism by which the training is provided, and, often, the competencies of the trainer. Workforce training is customer-driven, involves payment by the customer to the training entity, and is usually linked to some economic development strategy of the employer. (p. 3)

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006), there are more than 2 million jobs for nurses in the country, and the profession is one of the 10 occupations projected to have the largest numbers of new jobs in the coming years. Displaced workers who enroll in nursing programs have a higher probability for employment in these areas. Community colleges can track the number of students completing the nursing program as well as others.

Mississippi displaced workers can increase their probability of employment through community colleges and the training programs the state has established targeted toward workforce development. Those programs include Trade Readjustment Program, on-the-job training programs, and occupational skills training, just to name a few. Community colleges are responsible for delivering these programs, but the MDES, which is mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides funding. Programs administered through MDES assist businesses in the creation of new jobs or new positions in Mississippi. Training certificates are issued by the community college in the district where the new or expanding business is located. There are 15 community colleges in Mississippi that provide services for such programs. Each works with eligible businesses
to assess training needs of current employees, determine available funds, and provide training. In the 2010–2011 year, for instance, East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) provided workforce training to 6,591 participants. The goal of workforce development programs at community colleges in Mississippi is to provide employers with an enhanced, skilled workforce; this is achieved by supporting the development of educational programs. The importance of retraining through community college education can make the difference in the dislocated workers being able to get back on solid footing, as far as their livelihood. It is important to bridge the partnership with manufacturers and local community colleges because it is a win-win situation for the community. According to Dr. Wayne Stonecypher, former Executive Director for Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges:

Working together, Mississippi’s community and junior colleges, and WIN Job Centers help to produce a more competitive and technological workforce by meeting the needs of local businesses and job seekers. As the demand for more skilled jobs increases, it is imperative for both entities to continue designing and implementing programs that provide our citizens with a quality education and workforce training which allows them to gain the skills needed to move immediately into the workforce at higher wages, thereby, stimulating the state’s economy (Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2004, pg. 4)

Dr. Stonecypher’s quote is a testament to the strength of the partnership among area community colleges, businesses, and the local Win Job Center offices, as they all share a common goal to increase employment and economic opportunities for the state of Mississippi.
The education and retraining experience in the community college is important to business and to the community as a whole. The 15 community colleges in Mississippi administer the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund. This fund provides for a partnership with various companies and with local community colleges. Mississippi’s community colleges offer a variety of training programs. In particular, EMCC houses the Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence at its Mayhew location. This center offers certifications and training in the following areas:

- Avionics and Cabling
- Basic Machining
- Basic Manufacturing Skills
- CNC Operation
- Composite Manufacturing
- Intermediate Manufacturing Skills
- Mechatronics
- Precision Assembly
- Robotics
- Sheet Metal and Riveting

### Preparedness of Displaced Workers for Employment in a Different Field

Community colleges offer a variety of programs that meet the demand of the workforce. Some fields that displaced workers are entering are in the medical field, construction/manufacturing skills, or other occupational training courses. One way to understand how prepared a displaced worker is to enter the workforce after completing
training at a community college is to view self-efficacy during and after enrollment. Self-efficacy for development and improvement of career-related skills is the belief by the worker that he or she is capable of improving and developing his or her skills. The more confident the displaced worker is that a task can be performed successfully; the more apt he or she is to participate in other activities (Mauer, 2001).

As can be expected, there is some apprehension by displaced workers about returning to community college for retraining, but if the displaced workers hold a positive “can do” attitude, they are more likely to persevere to completion. Even with a “can do” attitude, some displaced workers face educational skill barriers and must enroll in developmental or remedial education courses. Community colleges are charged with the task of teaching students college course level material, but students and displaced workers arrive with low academic skills in a few subject areas. The community colleges address this issue by providing developmental education to strengthen skills so students can complete courses successfully.

Bailey (2008) stated that developmental education is not always successful in overcoming academic weakness because students that are referred to developmental education do not always finish the sequence of courses. They find the courses too complicated and choose to drop out of community college. Bailey (2008) recommends community colleges reform their developmental education programs by exploring new teaching techniques and continue to track students with weak skills through their experience in community colleges.
Retraining

Many states now acknowledge the significance of developing and sustaining a qualified workforce, as most states have invested revenue into workforce training programs. These workforce-training programs are expected to optimistically influence businesses, workers, and the state’s overall economic growth (Crosley & Roberts, 2007). “Research shows that low-skill, low-wage workers can gain from additional education and training” (Poppe, Stawn, & Martinson, 2003, p. 1). In general, educational attainment is considered to be a contributing factor for increased wages and occupational advancement.

It is generally accepted that training could broaden the range of employment for which a worker is qualified, thus increasing options with regard to residential location. Somers (1966) suggested there is some evidence that retraining and mobility are substitutes for each other in the preference scale of many workers. He stated, however, that retraining and relocation often complement each other, resulting in increased earnings for those who engage in both. Collaboration between the federal government and employers can enhance opportunities available for retraining. Retraining could have a negative or positive influence on mobility.

Somers (1966) described a negative influence by stating the following:

For many workers in a depressed area, out-migration is often seen as a substitute for retraining. Frequently, retraining is taken only as a last desperate resort by workers who are determined to find employment in their home area, and mobility is a last desperate resort for trainees who cannot find local work. Since training is
frequently viewed by the worker as a means to local employment it is found that training does not necessarily encourage mobility. (p. 26)

Mincer (1991) provides confirmation that the more educated the worker, the more capable he or she is in the quest and acquisition of searching for jobs. Employers are looking to fill these vacancies with more skilled workers.

A more positive influence is the suggestion that occupational retraining will increase geographical mobility. For example, Weber (1963) points out:

Once an unemployed worker acquires new skills, he has considerable incentive to use the skills in gainful employment. Therefore, if he does not obtain a job in his local labor market, he is likely to move to other areas in search or employment opportunities. In addition, the retrained job seeker may now feel that he has a marketable skill to offer so that the expectation of employment will be enhanced if he moves. (p. 285)

Gibbard and Somers (1968) found that completion of retraining courses by unemployed workers in West Virginia helped to induce out-migration of workers who had previously suffered long periods of unemployment and underemployment in chronically depressed areas. Although retraining may enhance workers’ job opportunities, a major problem is that of financing retraining programs. Financial obligations of displaced workers often do not allow for retraining costs. Numerous suggestions for financial support for retraining programs can be found in the literature.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are another means for financing retraining. These accounts provided a self-financing plan for displaced worker training. The ITA system is a savings- and equity-based system analogous to the Individual Retirement
Account (IRA) but with provisions that apply specifically to displaced worker retraining and relocation (Choate, 1982). The NAB suggested another system for providing assistance to help pay for training of displaced workers, which would take into account different needs of workers. The NAB advocates incorporation of a voucher system that allows for individual workers to use just that amount needed. The U. S. Department of Labor and several other agencies are experimenting with this concept.

Choate (1982) further advocated the voucher system in his suggestion for financing a voucher-based displaced worker training system through direct federal, state, and local grant-in-aid funding or low-interest loans, cashing out a portion of potential entitlements under the unemployment compensation system, or creating a new self—financing mechanism. Another alternative for financing retraining would be to permit lump sum payments from unemployment insurance funds as a means for creating a self-financing system. This approach, however, could be hampered by the funds’ present and anticipated financial difficulties. Choate (1982) suggested that such an approach would be hampered by lack of incentives—inherent in a general job tax—for workers or firms to make best use or funds. A revolving loan is another alternative, but it is less desirable since the entire burden is placed on the worker.

**Probability of Employment after Completing Community College**

The probability of employment after attending community college depends on the length of training, class attendance, credits, and type of jobs for which displaced workers are applying. Literature suggests women, minorities, and less educated workers exhibit significant disadvantage in their reemployment outcomes (Vinokur et al. 2000). However,
Jacobson and colleagues (2005) argued it is important to allow some transition time immediately upon leaving community college to find gainful employment.

Workers’ employment rates tend to be lower immediately after leaving community college than they are after some time has passed. Research has shown that some displaced workers are worse off than they were prior to enrolling in community colleges. Within a year following training, employment rates of displaced workers tend to rise. There is hope for gainful employment after community college completion, but it is situational. Jacobson et al. (2005) suggested that data and a tracking system be developed to ensure complete data on displaced workers’ employment rates after completion of community college.

**Family and Community Ties**

The family unit is a major concern when talking of a worker’s geographic mobility. The extended family unit usually refers to various blood relationships spread over more than two generations. A nuclear family unit, however, is limited to parents and children. Harbison (1981) reported the age-sex structure or the family and life-cycle state are aspects of the demographic structure of the family that may influence migration decision making. Having friends and relatives in a certain area or location is a determining factor in why many people choose to relocate. The migration process can be more tolerable with assistance of family and friends to aid with adjustments.

A mitigating factor in migration could be relationships and cultural influences, which can be a more persuasive aspect that than of the economic/financial aspect. Osterreich (1965) found that geographical mobility is not disruptive of kin relations because the extended family legitimizes such moves, and modern communication
techniques have minimized socially disruptive effects of geographical distance. Thus, the extended family can act as a “pull” factor when a worker considers relocation. The extended family can provide reliable information about jobs, housing, and social norms and provide both financial and/or psychological support during the time of adjustment to a new community. Schein (1978) suggested that mobility of a family unit may be primarily tied to the age of children, with the family being most mobile when children are either very young or have reached college age and have left home.

Adolescents are less willing to move and are more willing to question and confront parents about their own lifestyles, thus forcing a re-examination or something that may have never been thoroughly examined in the first place. Schein (1978) also pointed out that family strains might result from relocation. These include more responsibility for wives, loss of social contacts especially for men, fatigue from travel, guilt, worry on the part of each spouse, and fear of being alone.

Community ties also exert an influence on workers’ decisions to migrate. Workers who have strong local ties will not be as willing to leave their homes as those who do not have such ties. This may apply particularly to older workers who have become more settled and integrated into their communities (Somers, 1966). Most labor market studies have shown that job seekers have a great dependence upon information informally provided by friends and relatives. As the unemployed lapse into a chronic state of idleness, these sources are likely to dry up.

Since financial burdens related to unemployment often prohibit workers from moving, availability of relocation assistance is often viewed as an incentive for
relocation. Much of the literature on relocation assistance describes such programs in other countries, which may provide models for adaption in the United States.

Governments that have labor mobility programs use them to move unemployed workers out of areas with few employment opportunities to areas in which labor is in short supply. Transferring skills to places where they generate higher marginal physical products is the main objective of these programs. Governments are therefore underwriting some or all of the risks of workers who would probably not move in return for reasonable pay-offs through a more efficient allocation of the labor force.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the life experiences of displaced workers enrolled in community colleges and their views on obtaining employment after completion. Additionally, this study sought to understand how displaced workers viewed their experiences in community colleges. This chapter provides information on the philosophical assumptions of this study, the research approach, information about the participants, data collection, analysis procedures, trustworthiness criteria, and delimitations and limitations of the study.

Methodological Approach

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study, which allowed each displaced worker to voice his or her lived experiences in community colleges. Qualitative research attempts to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant’s perspective. All qualitative research is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and a richly descriptive end product (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Thus, “qualitative researchers try to understand the meanings of social events for those who are involved in them” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 3).
Esterberg (2002) described how “qualitative researchers . . . look at their own lives to see if they can find anything interesting to study, an unusual angle, or puzzling event or phenomenon” (p. 26). For this study, I chose a basic interpretative qualitative approach. In basic interpretive research, “the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the research as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6). This approach allows the researcher to identify common themes that cut across the data from the participants. Participants in this study provided rich descriptions of their experience as displaced workers in community colleges. For the purpose of this study, I will seek to understand the perspective and make meaning of the experience of workers displaced due to plant closures and enrolled in community colleges.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) ascribed to the notion that “stories function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived” (p. 8). These data were gathered using a narrative format from Mississippi workers concentrated in the Mississippi Partnership district that were laid off from their manufacturing jobs and were successfully reemployed as a result of retraining. Data will be collected through the notations taken during the participants’ interviews, and also purposive sampling will be used in choosing participants as this type of sampling allows the researcher to choose a specific group. Also, open-ended questions will be asked in order to obtain pure non-manipulated information from the participants regarding their experiences and their personal journeys. Again my knowledge as an
employee of the WIN Job Center and as a community college instructor will also be utilized as my professional experience will serve as data useful to this study.

**Research Design**

The design of the research involves the use of qualitative research approaches, which are broad in nature of coverage thus ensuring that all sections of the research are covered comprehensibly. The literature review section contains data that has been extracted from a number of sources like articles, journals, Internet publications, and books. Secondary research aims at gathering information through different mediums like broadcast media, literature, publications, and other kinds of sources that are categorized as non-human. This particular genre of research does not involve any kind of human subjects. This design is often the best one because if well executed it is capable of yielding data that are required in making the research successful in addressing all the research questions.

**Epistemological and Philosophical Assumptions**

The goal of this study was to make meaning of displaced workers’ life experiences in community colleges. The philosophical assumption underlying this study is constructionism. Crotty (1998) defined constructionism as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interactions between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). Thus, meaning will not be discovered but will be constructed by humans as they engage in and interact with their world. After all, the term “human being” literally means “being-in-the-
world” (Crotty, p. 45). Constructionists do not create meaning; rather, meaning is constructed through work with the world and the objects in that world. For the purpose of this study, I will explore each individual’s experience and interpretation of the phenomenon and how meaning was constructed.

Constructionism will be appropriate for this study because I will want to understand the unique journey of an individual experiencing a phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Through interviews with the participants, I will want to understand how they navigated through the experiences of being a displaced worker in community college.

**Research Approach**

To “understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon; this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6). This study will address how displaced workers I have interviewed have constructed meaning of their experiences as students in community college. The methodology employed will be the phenomenological perspective.

Merriam and Associates (2002) pointed out, “The defining characteristic of phenomenological research is its focus on describing the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon from the perspectives of those who have experienced it” (p. 93). Phenomenology focuses on the structure of the lived experiences. The goal for this study is to explain the transition of displaced workers, through community college, to educate and retrain themselves thus enabling career counselors, academic advisors, and administrators to understand the journey and begin making further accommodations for the influx of these nontraditional students. Phenomenology “involves a return to experience in order to obtain
comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for reflective structural analysis that portrays the essence of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13).

Moustakas explained that in phenomenological studies the investigator abstains from making suppositions, focuses on a specified topic freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives the findings that will provide the basis for further search and reflections. In addition, Moustakas posited that in a phenomenological investigation, the researcher, during the course of the study, becomes an expert on the topic, knows the nature and findings of prior research, has developed new knowledge on the topic, and has become proficient enough in recognizing the kind of future research that would deepen and extend knowledge on the topic.

**Participant Selection**

“Qualitative researchers usually choose research participants for the specific qualities they can bring to the study” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93). In keeping with qualitative research design, purposeful sampling techniques were used. “Purposeful sampling involves choosing particular informants for information rich cases that hold the greatest potential for generating insight about the phenomenon” (Jones, 2006, p. 66). The sampling criterion was that participants all experienced the same phenomenon of being a displaced worker (Creswell, 2007). The participants had to have been displaced from a closing plant or company and enrolled in a community college.

An additional sampling technique discussed by Patton (1990) is known as purposive sampling. He noted that “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposive sampling” (p. 169). For this study, I will interview five displaced
workers from closing plants who were enrolled in community college. Participants will be men and women over the age of 30. I will utilize purposive sampling, which occurs when researchers “sample research participants for the specific perspectives they may have” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93). Participants in this study will provide rich information about their experiences as displaced workers and students. The criteria that had to be met in order to be a participant in this study are that the individual had to have the following qualifications: (a) identify as a displaced worker, (b) have been employed for over 10 years with the closing company, (c) be over the age of 30, and (d) be enrolled in community college for retraining. Study participants will be students from the local community college in the Golden Triangle area.

Gaining Access to Participants

Access to displaced workers in community colleges is important to this study. “Because interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and the participant, how interviewers gain access to potential participants and make contact with them can affect the beginning of that relationship and every subsequent step in the process” (Seidman, 2006, p. 40).

Individuals will be recruited through the Win Job Center office, and they will be given a letter asking permission to conduct this study. Participants will be interviewed; each participant will be given an explanation of my study and the criteria. Participants will be interviewed face-to-face or by phone, whichever method is more convenient to the participants. Permission will be verbally granted by the participants. Interviews will be conducted with each participant, lasting no more than 20 minutes in length.
Participants will be given a brief outline of open-ended interview questions. Each participant will be advised that his or her participation is voluntary.

**Data Collection Procedures**

**Interviewing**

Qualitative researchers use a variety of methods to gather data. For this study, I will use interviews as the method to collect data. Janesick (as cited in Esterberg, 2002) defined an interview as a “meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas though questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic” (p. 83). Qualitative interviewing is meant to be more conversational than questionnaire-based survey interviewing. Qualitative interviewing involves the concept of the researcher as the instrument, whereby the researcher, as a social-interpretive being, is considered very central to the interview and interpretive processes. Thus, the researcher’s ability to react to the social situations within the interview is not nearly as constricted in the name of objectivity as it would be in the case of survey questionnaires. That said, the researcher often withholds at least some of his or her own personal views—a source of some debate among interview practitioners.

In terms of practical advantage over more structured methods, qualitative interviews are used in three interrelated types of research: (1) topics that have not yet been studied extensively, (2) exploratory research with groups of people who are hard to reach, and (3) studies that seek to understand personal or sensitive topics or that require participant reflection. In the case of new topics and by virtue of the flexible nature of interviews, they provide the opportunity to develop new theoretical concepts rather than simply test existing ones. In relation to the latter two types of research, because the
interview is more personable than questionnaires, interviews ideally allow the researcher and the participant to develop a positive rapport or social trust. This helps get at the deeper meanings that such research requires.

The selection of semi-structured interviews has been made for obtaining the needed and desired information. The collection of data from literatures, articles, theoretical concepts, and previous research enabled the researcher to form the questions based on the knowledge from different sources, which were experienced, examined, and analyzed by the semi-structure interview conduction. The questions are developed on the basis of different propositions, which had the connectivity and foundation.

**Analysis of Data**

For the analysis of qualitative data, there is a need for taking into account a few issues. Qualitative research explores the why and how of a phenomenon and provides opportunities for a researcher to go beyond the quantitative questions of how many and to what extent an experience might occur. Findings derived from a qualitative research study are commonly presented in a narrative style. The flexibility that is the hallmark of qualitative research is also present when the researcher designs the manner for presentation of findings.

The literature review defines the importance of a qualitative study. Through this review, a researcher could determine whether there is a gap in knowledge or if there are other relevant studies that could serve as the basis for further examination of a specific problem. A thorough review of relevant literature suggests direction for a potential study and helps the researcher to determine the research questions. Furthermore, it contributes
to the formulation of ideas throughout the study and serves to confirm the need for continued exploration of a phenomenon.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter will discuss the topic at hand in the light of literature review and the qualitative study done in the entire research process. It will facilitate the readers with proper view of the data gathered through the secondary research method. The analysis and the discussion presented in this chapter will form the basis for a proper conclusion at the end of the study. This study seeks to better understand Mississippi workers who have been dislocated and have experienced job loss due to their companies relocating. These workers seek to pursue higher education as a means to become gainfully reemployed, and they are doing so through the TAA benefits. While entities of the government, be it local, state, or federal, they all share a common goal of working to overcome the issue of the economic downturn that is as a result of job loss or industries relocating out of the country or out of the local area. Community colleges have emerged as a force and as a saving grace to those who have experienced job loss and have served as the hub of the community in many ways. The TAA program is a federal program designed to reduce the damaging effects of the economy in the United States that are a direct result of manufacturing industries/companies that have left the country. The TAA program is administered by the Department of Labor. Although there is prior research that is quantitative in nature, this study is qualitative in nature and seeks to illuminate the training and eventual reemployment of trade affected, dislocated workers. This will put a
focus on the discrepancy in the knowledge base of the transitional period, education, and reemployment process of dislocated manufacturing workers. Research participants will share their experiences of job loss and how they feel their training was beneficial to their becoming reemployed. Narrative qualitative research will be implored in this study. Also, as an employee of the Win Job Center and also as a community college instructor, my own partisanship is integrated with participants’ perspectives in a sense, as they cannot be separated.

The primary and pressing question of this study is “How do dislocated workers who were displaced from their manufacturing job attend school and become successfully reemployed again?” The following questions were asked of these workers:

1. What changes personally, socially, and professionally did these workers experiences as a result of retraining?

2. How will dislocated workers describe their community college experiences?

3. Did the dislocated workers feel that their community college education was of the quality they envisioned to become reemployed?

An exploration of dislocated manufacturing workers was pooled from the areas of academia, career, technical, or workforce certification programs. For participants who completed their program and became successfully reemployed as a result of being retrained, the data analysis will observe the research questions through the conceptual framework and from through the viewpoint of why and how the participants were successfully reemployed. The principal research question asks the dislocated workers to describe their overall experience of becoming successfully reemployed as result of their
retraining. Decisively the participants described their transition as life changing as well as successful. This chapter will introduce these participants and the data collected during the research process and offer dialogue of the findings that will shed light on how and why their experiences were successful.

Illuminating the experiences of the dislocated manufacturing workers is important because it can be used as a gage to determine the prospects and the occupational future for these workers. The narrative study gives a supportive understanding of how dislocated workers transition from their manufacturing jobs, becoming retrained through community college education and transition to reemployment. A central question of this study is also the topic of the study: “How do displaced manufacturing workers transition into successful reemployment through community college education/retraining programs?”

Participants

Five individuals were selected for this study. Convenience and purposive sampling was used as the selection tool for this study. Each of the five participants was displaced from a manufacturing facility. The participants all attended a local community college to received either an associate degree or a certification. Out of the five participants, only one already had an associate degree prior to becoming dislocated. The other four had never attended any college prior to their job dislocation. Of the five participants, all five completed a certification in a career technical program. Four of the five attended the same community college. All participants attended community colleges in Mississippi. The degree/certifications of the participants varied. Two participants received Manufacturing Skills certification, one received Cosmetology certification, one
received Phlebotomy Tech certification, and one received an associate degree in Hotel Restaurant Management. All of the participants shared the sentiment of being reluctant about starting school initially. All participants also shared a similar sentiment that they felt that the training programs were beneficial and that the school was helpful during the process of going through their training. They also shared that training better prepared them for a new career. All individuals had the advantage of attending school through the TAA program. The similarities of all five participants were that all worked for a manufacturing facility, all were laid off, and all ultimately made a decision to attend school; however, each participant’s story is unique and distinctive in terms of specifics about his or her personal life and how career paths were chosen. Post-training, each individual was ultimately successful at becoming reemployed, and each shared the perspective that training was the reason for his or her success and finding employment once again. The combined number of years in the manufacturing industry with the five participants is well over 100 years of manufacturing experience. Below is a breakdown of the participants in this study:

Table 1

*Participants in study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Certification/Degree</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Manufacturing Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammy</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Manufacturing Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Cosmetology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Phlebotomy Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>Hotel/Restaurant Mgmt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jeff was employed by a manufacturer and was laid off. He says he received an associate degree in welding several years ago, and he had worked in the welding field ever since. Jeff says his father was also a welder, which prompted him to pursue that same career field. Jeff states most people in his small town worked in factories or in a manufacturing capacity, so this type of work was all he knew. Prior to being laid off, Jeff worked as a welder for almost 15 years. He says when he found out he was being laid off it was devastating. He says he has a wife and small children and says although his wife works, he is the breadwinner for their household, and he says the first thing he thought about was how their finances would be affected.

The main issue Jeff says he faced was a loss of his primary income, and he says although he received severance pay and unemployment benefits, it still did not match his prior income. Therefore, money was scarce because he was used to living at a certain income level, and his financial situation changed dramatically. He says secondary to the financial issues, he found himself feeling down because he was used to working and staying busy. He says he typically worked 12 hours a day, so going from that to no work at all was quite an adjustment. Jeff says it was almost a year before he got enrolled into a training program at a local community college, and he initially was not interested in retraining, stating his primary concentration at the time was to simply find another job. However, he says that did not prove to be as easy as he thought. He says a former co-worker encouraged him to take classes, and he initially did so, out of sheer camaraderie. Jeff states he initially was overwhelmed when looking into school options because there was so much to choose from. He says since he already had a welding degree he wanted to
find a concentration that would complement his welding background. Jeff states he decided that he would seek a certification in Manufacturing Skills. He says this was a pretty challenging certification, and since he had been out of school for a number of years, he had to get back into the mode of studying.

Jeff says his community college experience was positive because he actually took courses with a couple of his former co-workers, so they worked together as a team and helped one another. He says the support system is what got him through the hard times. Jeff says he feels the manufacturing skills certification was beneficial for him because he has learned about a variety of different aspects regarding manufacturing and he felt confident it would come in handy when he would pursue other work. Jeff says after he completed his certification, he hit the ground running looking for work and he knew that the certification he received would likely give him an edge over those that did not have that certification.

Jeff says he got a lead for a job at a major manufacturer and after applying online he went through a battery test in hopes of becoming employed. He says after he went through an online test, three in-person interviews, and a job simulation assessment, he did not hear anything. Certain he did not get the job, Jeff says he started concentrating on applying for other jobs, and about 3 months after that, he was hired on with a major manufacturer. He says it was a dream come true for him because he is now making more money than he did at his previous job, and he did not fathom that he would ever get back to that pay range after he was initially laid off, but he did and he is thankful. Jeff says he looks back on his experiences and sees the peaks and valleys he had to endure, but he says it was worth it all in the end, stating that his salary range and benefits are better.
Since he lives in the same city which he works, noting that he had to travel a 30-mile distance to the prior job he was laid off from, he says the convenience of working and living in the same city is a bonus as well.

Jeff says although he really was not that interested at first in attending school, he is now happy that he did. He is also very pleased and grateful he chose the manufacturing skill certification because he says he feels it gave him an advantage, and he is certain it is part of the reason why he landed a great job. He says the support he received from the instructors at the community college he attended and the guidance from his local job center were of great help to him because he knew nothing and they helped him navigate the nuances of being dislocated to becoming successfully reemployed.

Sammy

Sammy worked at his manufacturing job for over 20 years prior to being laid off, and he had never stepped foot in a college other than to drop his children off. College, he says, was foreign to him because he started working when he was 20 years old. Sammy is married and has two adult children who are college educated. He says he never went to college, but he worked hard to make sure his children attained a higher level of education. Sammy says he comes from a blue-collar background and that was pretty much the environment and lifestyle to which he was accustomed. Sammy says he worked in maintenance at his previous job. He says he was kind of prepared for the layoff as it had been talked about for some time, so he kind of had a feeling it may happen. Sammy says he feels that he has always been a pretty good steward of his money, so he notoriously saved it for a rainy day, which he says came in handy. However, once he was
without a job, it still was a tough transition because he was so used to working that he
honestly did not know what to do with himself.

Sammy says the major issue he faced was that of upheaval because once you have
done something every day for 20 years, it is hard to transition from that. He says the only
reason he decided to take advantage of the school option was the fact that he did not have
to pay for it. Sammy said he basically told himself he had nothing else to do, so why not
go to school to see where it takes him. Uncertain as to what program he wanted to enter,
he discussed it with his wife, and he says she suggested the Manufacturing Skills training
because she heard the training was a great precursor for finding another job. Sammy says
after that he decided he would try it out. He says he honestly preferred to just work, but
that he decided he would give it a chance. Sammy says he had a positive experience in
the program and feels that his prior job really prepared him for the program, considering
he already had 20 years of manufacturing experience.

Sammy says he pretty much breezed through the program and the fact that he was
not working allowed him to fully concentrate and pour his all into school. Sammy says
his transition was not negative because he had his savings, and he also received a pretty
good severance package from his former employer. He says he was by no means rich, but
that he was able to continue his life and care for his family without worrying too much
about the finances. He says his community college training definitely helped to prepare
him for his new career. He has since been hired as a supervisor for another manufacturer.
He says he enjoys working in a supervisory capacity and that he feels his prior years of
manufacturing experience, coupled with his educational training, prepared him for his
new career. He says he has no doubt that the training he received prepared him for the job
market again, noting that he honestly thought that he would not work again after his layoff; he initially thought that he would just move into the retirement phase of his life. However, his training renewed his energy and helped him to realize he was not ready to throw in the towel and that he still felt he had a few more good years to contribute to the workforce.

Sammy does point out that his transitional experience was not negative at all; he says it only helped him to make a decision as to rather or not he should retire from the workforce altogether or continue working. He says he is glad he decided to attend training and to continue to work; he is now a supervisor. The upside to his new career, says Sammy, is that this job is within walking distance from his home. He further states that although he is a now a supervisor at this current job, he still is not making as much, salary-wise, as he was at the manufacturer he was previously laid off from, citing the company he is now employed by is a smaller company and he has not been there very long. Sammy says his Manufacturing Skills courses helped him to get his supervisor’s position, nothing that the manager who interviewed him for the job told him that Manufacturing Skills was a great program, so he says he knows it has helped him jump start his new career.

He says that of the support he received during his transition, he is very grateful and that the instructors at the community college he attended were very patient with him and provided him the hands-on guidance he needed. He says he thinks the community college is doing great things in helping to prepare displaced workers for a new career. Sammy says he initially had prepared himself for a life of retirement but that the actual
experience of becoming a student for the first time in his life was very positive and rewarding.

**Diana**

Diana worked for a manufacturer for over 20 years before being laid off. She had never attended college and grew up in a middle working class family. Diana says that prior to working her 20 plus years for the manufacturing company she was laid off from, she worked in various careers, such as restaurants, retail, and housekeeping. She says she worked as a lineman at her previous manufacturing job and that at the time, it was the best job she ever had financially. Diana says she has three children, and at the time her job shut down she was fearful as to how she would make ends meet. Diana states being a single parent, was tough being faced with the prospect of not having a job and says she felt hopeless and discouraged when the layoff occurred. She says that she felt like a fish out of water because she was fledging about not knowing which way to turn. Diana states that initially school was never an option for her because her first option was to find work because she had three mouths to feed. She says she set out pounding the pavement and her discouragement heightened when she was job searching. Since she had no education, most jobs were offering minimum wage, and at her prior job, she was making a pretty decent salary considering she did not have a college education. Diana states during her visits to the job center office to take care of unemployment matters, she inquired about the option of going to school, but she quickly dismissed it because she felt like school was not a viable option for her because she needed to work to pay bills. Diana says a friend then asked her one day about her dream career and that if she had one, she should strongly consider school so she could start that career. Diana says she still did not pay
any attention because she had no time to chase pipe dreams because she had children to
take care of and no spouse. Her main concern was ensuring that her children’s needs were
met. She says that after she continued her quest to find work and did not have any luck,
her oldest daughter reminded her, “Mom you have always wanted to do hair; why don’t
you try it out.” She says growing up she did have a dream of being a hair stylist but that
after she started having children her dreams no longer mattered. Diana says in the mean
time she started doing housekeeping work part time, but she was barely making ends
meet and that she and her children’s lifestyle had totally changed and that they operated
off very little income. Diana says she was frustrated and did not know which way to turn.
She talked to some former co-workers who had decided to go to school, and they told her
that school would be the only way that she could have a shot at a better career. She says
she knew there had to be a better option for her life, so after speaking with her daughters
and her friends and after much prayer, she decided to see if school would be an option for
her. Diana says a few months had lapsed during this time, so she decided to make a move
and went to her local job center and acquired about school. She says she decided she
needed to take a leap of faith and enroll in school. She says she opted for the cosmetology
program because it was a childhood dream of hers and it was time for her to put her
deferred dream into motion. She says once she got enrolled into the cosmetology program
it was a bit challenging for her at first, but that it was a challenge she was glad to accept
because she knew this would hopefully provide a better future for her and her family.
Diana says she persevered and completed the program and that this was a proud moment
for her and a lesson for her daughters that no matter how old you are, you can still follow
your dreams. Diana says she started her cosmetology career renting a booth in a shop
with another hair stylist and did that before she ventured out on her own. Now she has her own shop that she acquired through saving money and a small business loan. According to Diana, her cosmetology training is what jump started her career, and she says she shudders to think where she would be had she not decided to go to school. She says her training definitely prepared her for her new career because without her cosmetology training she would not be a business owner. She says about 20 years ago if someone had told her she would be a business owner, she would have laughed and thought and he was crazy. She says the way she feels now pales in comparison to how she felt about school prior to her beginning. She says she always thought she was not quite smart enough or that school just simply was not for her, but that notion has completely changed and she will tell anyone who will listen that you can do whatever you want to do if you set your mind to it. She says she feels the cosmetology program was a top notch program and thoroughly prepared her for new career. She says she received a great amount of support from the staff at the community college she attended, stating she needed the support and encouragement with her being a first time, nontraditional student. She feels that the school was a great breeding ground for her career, and although she was reluctant at that beginning, she feels it was the best decision she could have ever made.

**Linda**

Linda worked for a manufacturer for 19 years before the plant closure. Linda says for the most part manufacturing work was all she knew and that this career was the same career as those around her. Linda says she worked in a manufacturing plant as a general laborer and other than her employment at a local supermarket, this was the only job she ever had. Linda says it was a hard transition for her when she was laid off because she
had a family to take care of. She says she was nervous about how she was going to survive and make ends meet after her layoff. Linda says she eventually started working part-time at the same supermarket she worked at prior to the manufacturing job because she needed to make ends meet. She had never been to college and was afraid that she was not cut out for it, so she was pretty passive about school anytime the subject came up.

Linda says her main goal was to secure another job but says that in her small town she was not going to find another job paying enough and that her choices were few. She says after she came to that realization, she took the first job she could find which was the supermarket job. After working for the supermarket for a while, she decided she wanted and needed something more in her life. She says she knew she had a bigger calling, but she did not know what that calling was at the time. Linda says she did some soul searching and bantered back and forth considering the thought of pursuing a career in the medical field, as that had been a secret desire of hers. She says many thoughts flooded her mind, such as was she too old, was she smart enough, and would she be able to handle school. She says she played devil’s advocate with herself for a while before she made a leap of faith and decided to follow her heart. She says after looking at several majors in the medical field, she decided on the phlebotomy technician program. She says this transitional timeframe was challenging in many ways. Linda says that she was financially drained and that things were very strained, so while in school she continued to work part-time as needed at the supermarket. She says other challenges presented themselves with her trying to become adjusted to being a student for the first time ever in her life and working and balancing the demands of family, which was quite a task at times.
Linda says the program was very challenging and admits on at least a few occasions she wanted to drop out because she thought that was a better option than flunking out. She says she thought she had bitten off more than she could chew and questioned if she had made the right decision at times. She says the program was a struggle for her and some classes were easier than others. Linda says she opted for the certification and says there are more advanced levels of the field but that she felt she needed to keep things simple. She says it took her about a year to finish the program and she likely could have finished a little sooner if she did not have family responsibility and also work.

Linda said even though she was working part-time while she was in school, it was important for her to continue her side job because the extra income came in handy. Therefore, she says she had a lot of other factors in play that did not allow her to put her full concentration on school, and while she says school was a priority, she had a lot of other stresses in life that were preoccupying. She says she took school very seriously, but that the stresses of life, at times, took a toll on her and that she feels she could have had straight A’s had she not had other things to deal with in her personal life. Linda says she toiled her way through and completed the certification and now says returning to school was the best thing she could have ever done. She says that while it was not easy, her motivation was that she could do better for herself with having the training than without. She says she also knew more opportunities would be open to her stating that every time she would look for jobs most of the positions were in the medical field, so she knew she was making a good choice by pursuing a career in phlebotomy. She says that the training she received certainly prepared her and that her instructors were very encouraging when
she started to get discouraged. She says she knows the phlebotomy program prepared her for her career because without this training she would probably still be employed at the supermarket and that at least she has been able to make a career for herself that she enjoys.

Linda completed the program and now works as a phlebotomist. She says how she feels now in conjunction to how she felt when the journey began is vastly different, stating she went from a feeling of despair to a feeling of hope. She says that the phlebotomy program was challenging, yet she knows it gave her the professional preparedness she needed for this new career. She says that of the support she received, she could not repay those who encouraged her during what was a difficult time and that her instructors and program directors at the school were very patient with her. She says the college itself was wonderful as she felt they were very helpful when she felt lost or confused because she says the whole school thing was a new experience for her. Linda says her initial thought process was totally different than it is now. She says she was not a proponent of school at first, but now she advocates for higher education.

Dee

A manufacturer employed Dee for about 15 years. Dee says she came from a working middle class family. Dee says most of her life she had been surrounded by regular working class people. She states she was a single parent of young children and she was devastated and depressed at the time she found out she would be laid off because she did not know how she would be able to support herself and her family. Dee says this was a very desperate time for her, so she took advantage of the school option right away because she had always been taught that education was always the key to a brighter
future. She says she wished she had incorporated that lesson into her life sooner, stating she only had a high school education and worked odd end restaurant jobs prior to being hired at her previous manufacturing job. She says the manufacturing job she was laid off from had been the best job she had because they offered benefits, unlike the prior fast food/restaurant jobs she had worked at in the past. Dee says she has always had a passion for cooking and says since her prior work experience had been in the restaurant field, she decided to enroll into the hotel and restaurant management program at her local community college. She says she felt this was the best option for her because of her love for cooking and her past work experience; she says this field of study made perfect sense. Dee says her experience while in community college was positive and that she met and made lifelong friends with her classmates and that her instructors were always willing to lend a listening ear. Dee says this transitional period was not easy for her financially, stating she had very little income coming in besides her unemployment benefits, so things were very tight in her household. Dee says despite the personal financial situation, school was her escape from all of the madness of her monetary situation. She says that her community college training was immensely helpful to her as she embarked upon her new career, stating that without training she does not know where she would be. She says that she received training far beyond the realm of just cooking and that she learned the business side of managing a hotel/restaurant. Dee says of that time that she felt fairly confident that she would be able to secure a job after she completed her training. Because of the wealth of information she learned, she felt that she would be prepared to enter the professional world of managing a hotel or a restaurant establishment. Dee says she secured a job as a Dietary Manager for a local business and says she really enjoys her job.
She says that her education gave her the confidence as a manager. She says she feels the community college was successful in preparing her for the job market again and that she would have never imagined that she would have a management position in a field of work she so loves. Dee says in addition to her job, she also caters small parties and events, which is a self-employment venture. She says that she would have never been able to do such a thing without the professional training and that the business courses prepared her to not only be a manager for her day job but also a small business owner. She says that due to her work schedule, she only caters intermittently, but that it is something she hopes to see grow and flourish one day. She says prior to attending community college she was not very encouraged, coming off the hill of a job loss. She says she really was attending school out of duty and the fact that she did not have a job and really just needed something to do. Although at the beginning she was majoring in a field she loved, she never imagined that life would take her in this direction, but she says she is thankful that things turned out the way that they did. She also states that she had been out of school for quite some time and had never been to college, so she did not know what kind of student she would be. Dee says that the hotel and restaurant management program is a first rate program in her opinion and that the broad curriculum prepares you for a future in this line of work. She says that of the support she received, she has nothing but gratitude because everyone was so patient with her because when she started this journey she was confused and frustrated. Dee says the college she attended was extremely helpful and tolerant, as she had so many questions and was so perplexed when she first began. Finally, she says that her initial apprehension was definitely in direct contrast with her actual experience stating that overall her experience was positive.
The major themes of the story of the participants are their early influences, their disposition of school, and career identity. Their early influences greatly played into their experiences. Their backgrounds influenced where they were in life prior to becoming displaced. Of Jeff’s journey, his father was a welder, so that was the career he chose. His disposition of training was that of disinterest in the beginning, but that thought process changed. He says of his career identity that there was not much change because he went from working for a manufacturer to working in that capacity again.

The major themes for Sammy’s experience were that his early influence was blue-collar workers, which is what he was accustomed to, and he became a blue-collar worker himself, putting his family needs above his own. His disposition of training was that of reluctance because he had never attended school and was uncertain how it would pan out for him. His career identity post-training was not very different in the since he became reemployed for another manufacturer.

Diana’s theme of early influences originates from a middle working class background, which was the life she appeared to make for herself earning a working class

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Table 2

*Major themes of participant’s stories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Theme</th>
<th>Major Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>This theme denotes the background and history, the part of the past that shapes the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character towards Learning</td>
<td>This theme denotes the participant attitude and outlook toward training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Individuality</td>
<td>This theme denotes the path or directional change in occupation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
salary working for a manufacturer. She had a negative disposition of training due to her thought process of rather or not it would be beneficial for her. Her career identity changed completely after training as she now works as a hair stylist and is now a business owner.

People who worked in the same or similar capacity surrounded Dee’s early influences. She had an unenthusiastic disposition about training because she had certain insecurities about attending school. Her career identity has changed completely as she now works in the medical field.

Motivation paired with experience renders sustained ambition according to research by Alexander, Bozick, and Entwisle (2008), which this notion summarizes, and the findings of this study. Most dislocated workers’ entrance into training is brought on by the catastrophic event of job loss, resulting in the transition. When these workers were laid off, they were faced and tasked with making life changing decisions for their lives. There is an interim point between being laid off and attending training where these individuals sought guidance in order to make a transition. That guidance either came from employees of local job center offices or counselors or coordinators at the community colleges or even family members or friends. The career paths chosen for these individuals were reflective of their past careers or either an aspiration of a career field. It is important to note that as the economy shifts and trends change, TAA programs at community colleges must keep up with those changes and make adjustments accordingly based on those trend changes. One good accommodation of the trend changes particularly at EMCC is ingratiating the manufacturing skill certification courses that can go from basic to advanced level. This is important due to the number of
manufacturers that are locating or have recently located to the Golden Triangle or Mississippi Partnership region. With the addition of manufacturing facilities such as Severstal, Paccar, Aurora, and American Eurocopter, and with the Yokohama plant on the horizon, many of these manufacturers feel that those who have obtained this particular certification would be a great value to these facilities and possibly give those with this particular certification an edge in the hiring process. Keeping up with the trends is a good way to ensure that the workforce is prepared to meet the needs of the community.

There is a common theme of these individuals all coming from a manufacturing background and their transition into becoming college students that can evoke and make transformation in their identities. The other common theme among all of the participants is that they all had an inhibition or reservation to attending school. Venturing into the unknown can be a frightening ordeal, and this is a common theme within the transitioning period. Of the five participants, only one individual had previously attended college. There are other areas of research to be explored in that the transitional period is an important facet where a closer examination would be beneficial.

Lastly, the early influences, their disposition toward going to college, and their career identities, post-training, all come down to one familiar narrative, and it is the support factor. All of the participants had support during this period of dramatic change within their lives. Although each story is different and unique, each has a certain commonality regarding the three major themes. The following chapter will highlight the implications on the government offices that facilitate the federal programs that allow
dislocated workers to attend the community college and the economic impact workforce development has on a community.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter will look at the observations regarding successful transition and influence of retraining and education of the dislocated manufacturing workers. The current chapter will form a review and concluding section for the literature and the analysis presented through the primary methodology. Examining the life stories and experiences of displaced manufacturing workers and their transition for successful reemployment was the purpose of this study. This study takes an explorative look at Mississippi workers who faced job loss, hence becoming displaced; then it assesses the journey of their training experience and the transformation of their career, post-training. The use of the narrative research methodology is incorporated to explain the transition of displacement and the successfulness in securing employment after receiving community college education. This is a qualitative study that was created and constructed via the frameworks of social constructivism, Merriam’s (2001) notion of transitions and Kasworm’s (2008) notion of adult identity formation. The implications for this study as well as the limitations will be presented in this chapter.
Summary of the Study

As stated previously, an exploration of dislocated manufacturing workers was pooled from the areas of academia, career, technical, or workforce certification programs. For participants who completed their programs and became successfully reemployed as a result of being retrained, the data analysis will observe the research questions through the conceptual framework and through the viewpoint of why and how the participant was successfully reemployed. The principal research question asks the dislocated workers to describe their overall experience of becoming successfully reemployed as result of their retraining. Decisively the participants described their transition as life changing as well as successful. This study focuses on the narratives of five different manufacturing workers who experienced displacement, which is the basis for this qualitative study, as most of the prior research relative to the topic is quantitative in nature. The crux of this study is to illuminate the experiences of displaced individuals and their journey of job loss and community college training/retraining and reemployment so that there is a better understanding of this issue. As most of the prior research is quantitative in nature, this exploration gives a qualitative summation.

Overview of the Findings

The frameworks utilized in this study are interconnected and acted as a conduit for understanding this study. The theory of social constructivism is implicated due to the perspective this has regarding learning and the construct of real life experience. Because constructivism impacts instructional theory, it is incorporated in this study because of the aspects of how people can conceptualize knowledge from information spawned by prior experiences.
To “understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon; this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6). This study addresses displaced workers I have interviewed and highlights constructed meaning of their experiences as students in community college. The methodology employed will be the phenomenological perspective.

Merriam and Associates (2002) pointed out, “The defining characteristic of phenomenological research is its focus on describing the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon from the perspectives of those who have experienced it” (p. 93). Phenomenology focuses on the structure of the lived experiences (Merriam & Associates, 2002). The goal for this study is to explain the transition of displaced workers through community college and to educate and retrain themselves thus enabling career counselors, academic advisors, and administrators to understand the journey and begin making further accommodations for the influx of these older students.

**Implications of the Study**

The implication points out areas where there is room for improved research in certain venues that are relative to this study. This study featured the experiences of the dislocated workers, which is a variable that needs exploration. Drawing attention to their experiences adds a dimension to this area of research that needs more examination, and it also makes evident how existing programs and policies impinge on participants and the choices they make after the loss of a job. Because prior studies examine reemployment rates or their school experiences, not much in the way of research explores their transition. The information in this study can also be used as a tool for governmental
agencies as well as the community colleges. There is a void in research information on the specific educational experiences and outcomes of the dislocated workers attending training programs. Having a greater understanding of the realistic example paragraph experiences of dislocated workers who are attending training can form new designs and also can provide implications of changes in policies.

Through the stories of the dislocated manufacturing workers, this study seeks to highlight how to emphasize the issue of job loss and the transitional period of retraining and reemployment. It also adds a component to the foundation of research of information pertaining to the dislocated manufacturing workers in Mississippi and community college education/retraining; it also offers a stratagem, economically. This study also observes the relationship between governmental programs and education. Lastly, this study imparts propositions for policies, government programs, and the community college.

Limitations for Future Research

The limitation of this study provides room for further research on the transition of individuals who are laid off, receive educational training, and become reemployed. One major limitation of this study is that it profiles five individuals who, in the end, became gainfully employed once again; however, this is not always the case, as there are those who may not have had a positive ending. Another limitation would be a change in the rate of pay, meaning that while individuals may become successfully reemployed; they may have a change in their pay grade/salary, which can affect their lives, so this would also be an area of further research. The selection criteria used in this study could also serve as a limitation, as purposive and convenience sampling was incorporated; therefore there is a segment of this population such as gender differences, age, race, or other
demographic indicators. Another limitation is that we were concentrated in a specific area, which is the Mississippi Partnership area; perhaps other areas would have different conclusions or results.

**Conclusion**

Using an explorative means of narrating the life stories of the transition of work and education, the primary focus of this study is to have an enhanced understanding of how displaced manufacturing workers transitioned successfully through community college education/retraining programs and the experiences of the workers’ journeys. There is an emerging theme in this study that is analyzed: early influences, disposition for learning, and career identity. The theme serves as a means for justification of the research questions and to also shed light on the implications.

The themes of this study become visible from the interviews that are narrative in nature, and this information clarifies the intricacies of the transition of displaced workers to community college education/training up to their re-entrance into the workforce. Since the capacity of the research is restricted to the journey and life experiences of these displaced workers, there lies an area of research and exploration that can be conducted relative to governmental policies and the application of those policies to programs that assist displaced workers that may be impactful moving forward, regarding the relativity of this topic.
REFERENCES


doi:10.5539/ass.v9n4p150


APPENDIX A

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS
Sample Questions

• What is your educational background?

• Where did you grow up?

• What did your family do for a living?

• What did the people in your town typically do for a living?

• What company did you work for/job title?

• How long did you work for that company?

• What was your prior career before entering community college?

• What was it like when you were told you would no longer have your job?

• What issues did you face when you lost your job?

• How long before you decided to return to community college?

• How did you decide college was your best choice for career options?

• How did you choose what program to enroll in?

• How has your experience in community college been?

• What was the transition like from working and now attending community college?

• How has community college prepared you for your new career?

• What job opportunities have you found that your training in community college has prepared you for?

• Do you feel community college has been successful in retraining and preparing you for the job market again? Describe.

• What do you think of the program?

• What do you think of the support services?

• What do you think of the college?

• How do you compare your initial expectations with your actual experiences?
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM EMPLOYER
Dear Golden Triangle Win Job Center:

I am in the final stages of completing my dissertation at Mississippi State University. The topic of my dissertation is entitled, "An Observation of Displaced Manufacturing Workers in Their Transition for Successful Reemployment through Community College Education/Retraining Programs." The Golden Triangle WIN Job Center has been selected to participate in this study, therefore I am requesting assistance from this office (Golden Triangle Win Job Center) in gathering data for my research. I have already spoken with Mr. Billy Hamilton, Branch Manager I and Mrs. Daphne James, Branch Manager II with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (Golden Triangle Win Job Center Office) and they have agreed to help me with this study.

Attached are the interview questions that I will ask the participants who volunteer to take part in this study. These questions will be asked in an interview format and provided to dislocated workers/trade-affected individuals on a voluntary basis, without threat of punishment or denial of any services. I am requesting that participants (dislocated workers) be given an opportunity to be interviewed.

Also attached is a copy of the statement that will be distributed to the dislocated workers that explains the purpose of the research, whom to contact with any questions or concerns and assurances about their participation. The letter also describes why the data is being collected, what the data will be used for, and how it will be stored. The letter also ensures the participant that his/her confidentiality will be maintained during all parts of the research process.

I am looking forward to your response in this request. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 662-889-3187 or e-mail me at crg34@mssstate.edu.

Kindest Regards,

Christina Granderson

I agree with the above request.

1/21/14

1/21/14
APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS
Dear Participant:

The Golden Triangle WIN Job Center has been asked to assist in a survey of Displaced Manufacturing Workers who have attended community college training and have become successfully reemployed. This study is limited to dislocated workers who have been serviced by the WIN Job Center office. Your participation is both appreciated and vital to the successful outcome of this study. The interview should only take anywhere from 25-30 minutes to complete.

Please let me take this time to provide you with some assurances about your participation in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may reserve the right to decline to participate and be assured that this decision will have no bearings on the services you receive from the WIN Job Center. Only the data you provide will be reported in this study. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you would like to participate please see Christina Granderson, Researcher.

Thanks in advance for your participation. I immensely appreciate your willingness to participate and appreciate your time. Should you have any questions, suggestions or comments, you are welcomed to contact me or my dissertation advisor, Dr. Ed Davis, at the contact information listed below.

Christina Granderson  
Doctoral Candidate  
Mississippi State University  
E-Mail: crg34@msstate.edu  
Phone: 662-889-3187

Dr. Ed Davis, Advisor  
Mississippi State University  
E-mail: jed11@colled.msstate.edu  
Phone: 662-325-9258

If you have any question regarding human subject research you may contact the Office of Regulatory Compliance at Mississippi State University at: at 662-325-3994 or via e-mail at: irb@research.msstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Christina Granderson
APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT
Title of Research Study: Observation of Displaced Manufacturing Workers in Their Transition for Successful Reemployment through Community College Education/Retraining Programs

Study Site: Golden Triangle Win Job Center, 5000 North Frontage Road, Columbus, MS 39701

Researchers:
Christina Granderson, Mississippi State University, Doctoral Candidate
Dr. Ed Davis, Mississippi State University, Dissertation Advisor

Purpose
The purpose of this research is to study the experiences of displaced workers and their success at securing reemployment.

Procedures
This study will be conducted via a one-on-one interview in order to have a better understanding of the experiences of being a displaced worker. The one on one interview should be no longer than 30 minutes.

Benefits
The possible benefits are implications that will spawn further studies on the experiences positive/negative of dislocated workers.

Questions
If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Christina Granderson, Researcher, at 662-889-3187 or Dr. Ed Davis, Faculty Advisor, 662-325-9258.

For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or to discuss problems, express concerns or complaints, request information, or offer input, please feel free to contact the MSU Research Compliance Office by phone at 662-325-3994, by e-mail at irb@research.msstate.edu, or on the web at http://orc.msstate.edu/humansubjects/participant/.

Voluntary Participation
Please understand that your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.
APPENDIX F

RECRUITMENT LETTER
(Recruitment Flyer)

HAVE YOU BEEN LAID OFF FROM A MANUFACTURER?

HAVE YOU ATTENDED COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR A TRAINING PROGRAM AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE?

WERE YOU SUCCESSFUL IN FINDING ANOTHER JOB AFTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRAINING?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE BEING ASKED TO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY REGARDING THE EXPERIENCES OF DISLOCATED WORKERS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE SEE THE FRONT DESK STAFF FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.
February 3, 2014

Christina Granderson
Leadership and Foundations

RE: HRPP Study #13-365: Observation of Displaced Manufacturing Workers in Their Transition for Successful Reemployment through Community College Education/Retraining Programs

Dear Ms. Granderson:

This email serves as official documentation that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 2/3/2014 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, in accordance with SOP 01-03 Administrative Review of Applications, a new application must be submitted if the study is ongoing after 5 years from the date of approval. Additionally, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the HRPP prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The HRPP reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please note that the MSU HRPP accreditation for our human subjects protection program requires an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the HRPP approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. Your stamped consent form will be attached in a separate email. **You must use the stamped consent form for obtaining consent from participants.**

Please refer to your HRPP number (#13-365) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at nmorse@orc.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Finally, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on the HRPP approval process. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YZC7QOJ](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YZC7QOJ).

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse, CIP
IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: Dr. Ed Davis (Advisor)
APPENDIX H

MISSISSIPPI UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY COUNTY