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GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) GRADUATES IN THEIR
FRESHMAN YEAR IN COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY AT A LARGE MID-WESTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY (249 pp.)

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The primary purpose of this study was to identify the adult GED graduates' perceptions of transition from GED education to college during the freshman year and to examine the support systems available to these students at post-secondary institutions. The barriers these students perceive, the challenges they must overcome, and the mechanisms that post-secondary institutions have in place to retain GED graduates were investigated in this study. A qualitative case study method was utilized.

Findings in this study were generated in response to the study's four research questions that framed GED graduates' perceptions of their transition to college. Data was collected from the following sources: (a) GED study survey; (b) interviews with eight GED graduates; (c) interviews with five stakeholders from a large, public university; (d) document analysis. Triangulation, member checking, and inter-rater reliability were used to ensure the highest possible dependability and accuracy for the study. The results of this study demonstrated that the adult GED graduate can be as academically successful in college as the traditional-aged high school graduate when certain academic support services are available to them at the post-secondary institution.

The recruitment and retention of adult students is an important issue in higher education today. The findings of this study may provide those in higher education with a more comprehensive understanding of the GED graduate's perception of transition to college during their freshman year. This examination may help to identify some of the reasons why GED graduates have made a successful transition to a large mid-western state university. The concerns they describe about the transition process from GED program to college classes have not been broadly articulated to leaders in post-secondary education. This study provides a vehicle for such communication. Upon recognition of a problem, detailed plans of action can be developed to rectify the concerns raised.