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Graduate student persistence in a program of study is seldom the result from the influence of one factor. The following review of selected studies in the field highlights findings most influential in doctoral students’ decisions to complete or drop out from a program of studies. The review is organized according to persistence in doctoral programs, distance education student profile, persistence in distance education, and student persistence in distance education doctoral programs. While emphasizing advanced graduate study, the information is relevant for students beginning their graduate work as well as for undergraduates.

**Persistence in Doctoral Programs**

**Academic and Social Integration**

Nerad and Miller (1996) studied doctoral student cohorts who had been enrolled at the University of California – Berkeley for over three decades. They found doctoral student attrition seldom was the result of academic failure. Instead, it usually was a result of several factors, including student frustration with academic policies and procedures, student disappointment with program offerings and faculty advising, and student experiences with an inhospitable departmental culture.

Other researchers (Bair & Haworth, 1999; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Lovitts, 2001; Ferrer de Valero, 2001) reported causes of attrition in doctoral education were not due to a deficit of academic skills, but a result of a lack of integration into a department. Ferrer de Valero’s study (2001) identified departmental factors positively or negatively affecting time to doctoral degree and completion rates at a major mid-Atlantic region research university. These factors included departmental orientation, amount of advising, relationship between course work and research skills, relationships with academic advisor and committee members, attitudes towards students, student participation, and peer support.

In her study of doctoral students’ experiences, Golde (1996) argued some reasons to leave a doctoral program were rooted in departmental and disciplinary characteristics. She conducted case studies of four departments at a major research university. Interviews with 58 doctoral students who dropped from the programs were the primary
data source. The analysis of each case described the problematic features of each department, which contributed to the attrition decision. Based on her examination of departmental contextual factors, Golde concluded “departmental context is a central contributor to attrition” (p. 156-157).

Other studies by Golde (1998; 2000) confirmed integration into the academic systems of a department played a critical role in doctoral student persistence. Even seemingly integrated students may lose their commitment to complete the degree because other opportunities surfaced, encroached on time and interest, and subsequently took precedence.

Positive relations between a student and academic advisor were found to be important for doctoral student persistence (Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Gell, 1995; Golde, 1994; Lovitts, 2001; Manis, Frazier-Kouassi, Hollenshead, & Burkam, 1993; Presley, 1995/1996). In studies of doctoral student attrition, students’ departure was reported to be due, in part, to inadequate or inaccurate advising, lack of interest or attention on the part of an advisor, unavailability of an advisor and/or faculty, or a negative relationship or even conflict between a student and the major advisor or significant faculty (Campbell, 1992; Golde, 1994, 2000; Huguley, 1988; Lovitts, 2001).

The style of advising can impede a doctoral student’s progress. Bowen and Rudenstine (1992), for example, pointed out the most common type of advisors were those who allowed students to work at their own pace, without establishing any work schedule or timetable. Students too often become lost at different stages in their research, which created negative psychological states, inducing students to drop out of a program. At the same time, many students have reported that they were satisfied with their advisors, and that they admitted positive mentoring relationships, including the quality and quantity of time spent together (Golde & Dore, 2001; NAGPS Survey Team, 2001).

Lack of persistence in traditional doctoral programs often has been attributed to lack of support and encouragement (Cesari, 1990; Tinto, 1987), while commitment to group and commitment to degree were found to be highly interdependent aspects of membership in a doctoral cohort (Dorn & Papalewis, 1995). The interest in and support of doctoral students for each other was reported to be an important factor in many studies (Brien, 1992; Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Hagedorn, 1993), although not as prominent as student/faculty relationships and student involvement in academic life (Lovitts, 2001).

Stages in Doctoral Education and Student Persistence

The first year in a doctoral program is reported to be crucial to the intention to stay and persist (Golde, 1998). Golde interviewed 58 students who had started and left one of four Ph.D. programs offered by four different departments. First-year attrition accounted for about one-third of the overall attrition in three of the four departments. Common reasons for leaving were the difficulties adjusting to the lifestyle of a graduate student, a young and inexperienced faculty, wrong department, job market, and advisor mismatch.

As noted by Bowen and Rudenstine (1992), attrition during the first year of graduate school accounts for nearly a third of all doctoral student attrition. Another third drop out
before getting candidacy and a final third post candidacy, however, this data varies considerably by department and discipline. In their study of Ph.D. students at six major research universities (Berkeley, Chicago, Cornell, Princeton, Stanford, and the University of North Carolina), Bowen and Rudenstine identified three stages in doctoral education: (1) before the second year, (2) from the start of the second year until the completion of all the requirements besides the dissertation, and (3) after completion of all requirements but the dissertation (ABD). They found “more than twice as many students left these Ph.D. programs prior to achieving ABD status as left after achieving ABD status” (p. 111).

In the appendix to his work on undergraduate student attrition, *Leaving College*, entitled “Toward a theory of doctoral persistence” Tinto (1993) identified three stages of doctoral persistence: (1) the first year of study, which he called the transitional stage, (2) the period leading to candidacy, and (3) the completion of the dissertation. During the first stage, a student sought establishing membership in the academic and social communities of the university. During the second stage, interactions within the classroom and department or program pertaining to issues of academic competence played the central role in students’ persistence. In both the first and second stages, student’s experience appeared to be dependent on interactions with a wide range of faculty members. In the third stage, however, the focus shifted to the relationship with the advisor and the dissertation committee members. At this stage, persistence might be contingent upon the behavior of a specific faculty member, especially if there is not a trusting relationship with the advisor.

**Dissertation Progress**

A number of studies focused on the factors related to dissertation progress. Failure to complete a dissertation accounted for about 20% of the overall attrition from doctoral programs in education (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992). The study conducted by Faghihi, Rakow, and Ethington (1999) examined relationships among doctoral candidates’ background characteristics, research preparation, environment and involvement, student-advisor relationship, research self-efficacy, and dissertation progress. Faghihi et al surveyed 97 students from three departments within a College of Education at an urban Southern research university who had completed their course work and passed comprehensive examinations during 1987-1997, but had not competed their degrees by December 1997. The study focused on differences in research self-efficacy and dissertation progress among the ABDs. Faghihi et al found both students’ research self-efficacy and their relationships with advisors and committee members significantly contributed to dissertation progress. At the same time, none of the student background characteristics had a significant effect on dissertation progress.

The qualitative study by Kluever (1997) explored personal and program experiences presumably affecting dissertation completion. Thirteen graduates and nine ABD interviewed students believed there was more structure and direction associated with courses than with the independent activity required to complete a dissertation. They
described the need for self-motivation and self-direction as important attributes for successful completion of their programs.

The lack of structure in the dissertation stage was found to be an obstacle to completion to 50% of All-But-Dissertation (ABD) students (Hugeley, 1988). Jacks, Chubin, Porter, and Connolly (1983) studied the doctoral candidates from 18 departments at 15 universities who never complete their dissertations (ABDs). Through the interviews conducted with 25 ABD individuals from such fields as psychology, sociology, physics, electrical engineering, and biochemistry, they identified nine reasons why students failed to complete a dissertation. Listed in priority order, based on the percent of significance for interviewed ABDs, these included: financial difficulties, poor working relationship with advisor and/or committee, substantive problems with the dissertation research, personal or emotional problems, receipt of an attractive job offer, interference of paid work with dissertation work, family demands, lack of peer support, and loss of interest in earning a Ph.D.

In her multiple regression study of psychology doctoral students and graduates, Muszynski (1988) identified seven factors aiding in dissertation completion: (1) supportive, interested, competent, and secure advisor; (2) accessible, manageable, and interesting topic; (3) internal strength, including independence, high motivation, ability to endure frustration; (4) self-imposed deadline or goal; (5) limited or no employment; (6) delaying internship until completion of dissertation; and (7) externally imposed incentives, like future employment. She also reported depression, as well as stressful life events may hinder dissertation completion. Too often students either do not seek appropriate support for such difficulties, or fail to recognize their gravity.

Such particular aspects of the dissertation process as topic selection and time available to work on dissertation were found to be important for successful degree completion (Allen, 1996; Grissom, 1985; Hugeley, 1988; Lenz, 1994; Mah, 1986; McCabe-Martinez, 1993; Pinson, 1997). In a dissertation study on time to completion of doctorate (Allen, 1996), a majority of graduates reported longer completion had been problematic to them. The reasons cited most for discrepancies between expected and realized completion times were the need to work and alleviate financial concerns.

Based on a study of 192 graduates of the Department of Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Tech College of Education, Pinson (1997) identified factors impeding rapid completion of the dissertation. Results of the regression analysis showed four significant predictors of time to complete the dissertation: (1) how dissertation writing time was scheduled; (2) computer skills at the beginning of the dissertation; (3) perceived difficulties caused by job demands; and (4) changes in advisor or committee membership.

Motivation and Personal Goals

Doctoral student motivation is well explored in the literature on doctoral student attrition and persistence (Bauer, 1997; Brien, 1992; Butler, 1995; Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Lees, 1996; Lovitts, 2001; McCabe-Martinez, 1993; Reamer, 1990; Skudlarek, 1992).
Motivation and goal setting were reported to be strongly related to doctoral degree completion. Students who had a “never give up” attitude were more likely to complete the doctorate than others (Brien, 1992; Reamer, 1990).

Based on the survey of 297 adult learners in two professional doctoral programs, Reamer (1990) reported a determination to succeed against all odds might be a personal quality to help students persist. Although most participants admitted they contemplated and even wanted to leave the programs, unwillingness to experience failure kept them in school. According to Brien (1992), the belief in what the doctorate degree could offer for a student’s career aspirations often were strong enough to encourage many students to diligently continue in a program.

In her dissertation, Bauer (1997) looked, in particular, at goal setting for Ph.D. candidates in the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, and whether doctoral candidates who set goals and a reasonable timeline were more likely to finish their dissertations within a normative period. The findings of the study were presented as claiming goal setting was related to timely completion of the dissertation. The advising practice, which impacted most on timely dissertation completion, was for advisors to encourage students to goal setting with a time schedule, as a strategy to help advisees structure the dissertation process.

The significance of student self-concept and self-efficacy to doctoral students’ persistence has not been well-studied. Presley (1995), in her study of first-year African-American doctoral students, however, found students’ positive views of themselves may relate to the successful completion of the doctorate, while students’ negative views of themselves may relate to withdrawal. No significant difference was reported between completers and non-completers with respect to self-concept.

External Factors

Golde (1998) argued among the many reasons for leaving a doctoral program some were personal or external to the program. In a qualitative study grounded on the experiences of 139 doctoral graduates, Dinham and Scott (1999) identified factors presumably inhibiting and/or facilitating students’ success in doctoral programs. Factors identified as hindering doctorate completion included financial difficulties, family lifestyle problems, cultural difficulties and isolation. According to the preliminary results of the AHA Survey of Doctoral Programs in History (American Historical Association, 2002), financial problems and personal and family reasons were identified as the most important factors causing history major student drop out from doctoral programs.

Employment and financial factors were reported to be an obstacle for some doctoral students who failed to complete their programs. In the mixed-design study of Hispanic school personnel (McCabe-Martinez, 1993), employment and related job responsibilities were identified as the most significant factors affecting degree progress and program completion.

Financial problems also were found to be an impediment to persist (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Dolph, 1983; Lenz, 1994; Lovitts, 2001; Murrell, 1987; Tinto, 1993).
The financial support offered to doctoral students by colleges and universities was related to attrition and persistence. Students who held research assistantships, teaching assistantships, fellowships, or graduate assistantships were more likely to complete their degrees than students who relied on other sources of funding. Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) studied minimum completion rates at five universities to determine whether the financial support for the students came from "institutional" or from "own support" sources. They found minimum completion rates for one of the institutions were as low as 14.2% for students relying on their own support. This contrasted sharply to 41.8% for students receiving institutional support (p. 179). The same pattern was found at the other four institutions, which led the authors to conclude "students forced to rely primarily on their own resources have had markedly higher attrition rates and longer TTD (time to degree – N.I.) than comparable students who received financial aid" (p. 178).

In her case studies of six women, three "completers" and three ABDs, Lenz (1994) found time and money constrained ABDs. In Murrell’s (1987) study of 489 graduates and non-graduates from the College of Education at Texas A & M University, graduates were more affected by financial problems than non-graduates. However in some studies financial factors were reported to be of smaller significance (Campbell, 1992; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988).

Giles (1983) conducted an ethnographic study to determine the effects of the graduate education experience on intra- and inter-family relationships, and how doctoral students balanced their dual student/spouse roles. Four principal themes affecting doctoral students’ persistence were identified: (1) support from spouse and parents (financial, emotional/psychological, and basic needs); (2) factors affecting marital stability (financial problems, time pressures, children, communication, sexual concerns, role conflict, physical and emotional separation); (3) social relationships and interaction (status change, absence of married peers, fears associated with terminating relationships after graduation, special needs of the non-student); and (4) status (living arrangements, student-spouse role conflicts, locus of control, and financial conditions). Giles found relationships, which generally developed while in the degree program, did not serve as important support roles. Enrollment in a program of doctoral studies altered a student’s perceived or actual status positively or negatively, and the significant factors tended to be external to the community of a program of study. The so-called community support system created by proximity to other students was not as important as factors directly impacting a student.

At the same time, the findings of Dolph (1983), Frasier (1993), Girves and Wemmerus (1988) and Wagner (1986) indicated marital status was not related to either persistence or attrition. The number of children or dependents of doctoral students was found not to be a significant predictor of persistence (Dolph, 1983; Frasier, 1993).

The reported findings related to student attrition in doctoral programs were interpreted to mean there were meaningful relationships between certain individual, institutional and external factors and doctoral student persistence. In different combinations, unique to each student, they provided either a supportive and positive or impeding and negative context for a student’s progress in the doctoral program.
Distance Education Student Profile

Distance education students have become a major focus of study in distance education research within the last two decades (Thompson, 1998). A distance learner is perceived as a “dynamic individual” whose characteristics often change in response to both educational and life experiences (Gibson, 1992).

Holmberg (1995) pointed out there was no evidence to indicate distance students should be regarded as a homogeneous group. However, many distance students “do share broad demographic and situational similarities that have often provided the basis for profiles of the typical distance learner in higher education” (Thompson, 1998, p. 12). Characteristics included in such a profile are varied, but generally reflected some combination of demographic and situational variables, such as gender, age, ethnic background, disability, location, and life roles (Thompson, 1998).

The large majority of distant students were reported to be adults above 25 years of age, most of them employed and with family obligations (Schutze, 1986; Feasley, 1983). Holmberg (1995), citing studies from three decades, wrote “the 25-35 age group seems to be the largest in most organizations” (p.12).

Most studies of distance learners in North American higher education report more women than men are enrolled in courses delivered at a distance (Thompson, 1998). For example, in telecourses provided by four universities, 61% of the students were women (Hezel & Dirr, 1991).

In many institutions a typical distance learner no longer is place-bound (Thompson, 1998). Increasingly, students in close geographical proximity to traditional educational institutions are choosing distance study not because it is the only alternative, but rather because it is the preferred alternative. For example, Robinson (1992) reported more than 67% of the distance students in his study lived within 50 miles of the Open College.

With regard to the pursued goals, Schutze (1986) singled out four categories of distance learners: (1) those who enter or re-enter higher education to pursue mainstream studies leading to a full first degree or diploma; (2) those who re-enter to update their professional knowledge, or seek to acquire additional qualifications; (3) those without previous experience in higher education, who enroll for professional purposes, especially in courses of short duration; (4) those with or without previous experiences in higher education, who enroll for courses with the explicit purpose of personal fulfillment.

Since the majority of distance learners are time-bound adults with multiple roles and responsibilities, most have educational goals that are instrumental rather than developmental. Robinson (1992) reported most students at the Open College had instrumental goals, such as increased knowledge of a specific content area or performing more effectively in some aspects of their lives. Only three of the twenty students studied by Eastmond (1995) had goals considered personal or academic.

At the same time, Jegede (as cited in Buchanan, 1999) found distance learners characterized by autonomy, persistence, independence, self-direction and flexibility. Such qualities as maturity, self-discipline, and assertiveness have been recognized as qualities inherent to a successful distance education student (Buchanan, 1999).
Motivation is one major difference between distance learners and traditional classroom learners (Office of Technology Assessment, 1989). In the majority of studies, distance learners were found to be highly motivated (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2000). Motivated, highly intelligent students will learn under the most adverse circumstances, provided they have access to satisfactory and appropriate learning materials (Rumble, 1992).

Thus, the profile of a distance education (DE) learner includes the following characteristics: older than a typical undergraduate, probably female, likely to be employed full time, married, self-motivated and self-disciplined, often with instrumental rather than developmental educational goals. The convenience and flexibility offered by programs free from the constraints of place and often time, represent major benefits to learners attempting to “juggle multiple adult roles and responsibilities” (Thompson, 1998, p. 15).

Persistence in Distance Education

Selected demographic characteristics of DE students, as well as pursued educational goals, might have some relation to their academic success and hence, completion of the course or program of studies. Several studies reported a positive relationship between success and student age (Cooper, 1990; Dille & Mezack, 1991; Fjortoft, 1996; Souder, 1994).

For example, in Fjortoft’s (1996) study of adult persistence in DE post-baccalaureate professional program in pharmacy, based on the sample of 395 persisting and non persisting students, it was identified that older students were more likely to persist than were younger students. Gibson and Graff (1992) claimed higher levels of success for older students were explained on the basis of the increased maturity, self-discipline, life experience, and financial responsibility for their educations. In addition, older students were more likely to have higher levels of education at the time of enrollment, so the process of being responsible for their own learning was familiar and welcomed.

A number of studies (Ross & Powell, 1990; Powell, Conway, & Ross, 1990; Robinson, 1992) revealed higher success rates among female than male distant students. Women’s persistence was attributed to the lower proportion of women working fulltime outside the home, the higher rates at which women accessed institutional support structures, and the appeal of the distance format to women who had to integrate education into lives characterized by multiple roles. Research has also noted that women have potentially higher levels of motivation because they more often worked in occupational sectors in which career advancement was closely tied to academic upgrading. Martin (1990) offered evidence DE for many women was a “liberating and confidence building experience” (p.8)

The number of DE courses previously completed was reported as significantly related to future success in distance learning environment. This hypothesis was supported in several studies, which found first time students often lacked the necessary independence and time management skills needed for persistence in DE (Eisenberg &
Dowsett, 1990; Ehrman, 1990), and assuming responsibility for their own learning often was a foreign concept.

Though demographic characteristics and prior experience with distance learning might be important for completion of a distance education course or a program, numerous studies indicated dropout was a multi-causal phenomenon influenced by a number of factors. Moore and Kearsley (1996) argued dropout usually was a result of no one cause, but of an accumulation and mixture of causes. The situation was further confounded by the heterogeneity of students. Therefore, there was no single reason for student dropout, or no single measure, which will “dramatically reduce drop-out at a stroke” (Kember, 1990, p. 11).

Woodley and Parlett (1983) found sex, age, previous educational qualifications, occupation, and region of residence all were related to persistence for UK Open University students. The Open University example was interpreted as an almost linear relationship between DE students’ dropout and their previous educational level (Simpson, 2000). Students with higher previous educational qualifications tended to do better than those with poorer qualifications. Those who found it difficult to reconcile the conflicting demands of their jobs, family, and studies tended to do less well than do those who found it difficult to direct their own learning. Rekkedal (1972) related age, previous education, years of school experience, and even month of enrollment with persistence. Kember (1981) found a significant relationship between persistence and age, number of children, housing conditions, sex, sponsorship, and region of residence.

In an ethnographic study of barriers to persistence in five introductory academic courses in the natural resource sciences offered via DE by the University of British Columbia, Garland (1993) singled out four barrier categories: situational, institutional, dispositional, and epistemological. Thirty persisting students were compared to 17 students who had withdrawn from a program. The latter encountered barriers to persistence in all four categories. Situational barriers included lack of time and poor learning environment, such as lack of support from family and peers, resource availability and course load. Institutional barriers included institutional procedures, cost and course scheduling/pacing. The largest number of barriers to persistence in DE related to the psychological and social nature of DE students: uncertainty of an educational goal, stress of multiple roles, time management, learning style differences, overachievement, and fear of failure.

A number of researchers developed formal models for predicting student completion specifically related to DE. Billings (1989) found students who made the most progress had the intention of completing a course in three months, submitted the first lesson within 40 days, had higher entrance examination scores and high GPAs, had completed other corresponding courses, had a supportive family, had high goals for completing the program, lived closer to the instructor, and had good college-level preparation. The single most important variable was a student’s intention to complete.

Kennedy and Powell (1976) proposed a “descriptive model” which related the dropout process to characteristics and circumstances. Characteristics slow to change included such factors as educational background, motivation, and personality.
Circumstances, which changed faster included items such as health, finance, occupational changes, and family relationships. Characteristics and circumstances were brought together in a two-dimensional model. The pressure of adverse circumstances was seen as more likely to lead to at-risk situations or drop-out for students with weak characteristics than it was for those with strong characteristics.

Thompson (1984) discussed dropout from external courses in terms of the cognitive style of field-dependence. She postulated field-independent people would be better suited to correspondence study because of their greater levels of independence and autonomy. For field-dependent people to be more successful in DE, she proposed greater interaction with an instructor by methods such as systematic telephone tutoring. The advent of computer mediated distance learning certainly can benefit from Thompson’s work.

Fjortoft (1995) developed a model of persistence in DE based on the literature of adult education. The variables studied included age, gender, GPA, satisfaction with college experience, intrinsic job satisfaction, ease of learning on one’s own, intrinsic benefits of degree completion, and extrinsic benefits of degree completion. Based on a survey of 395 students, the results were interpreted to mean a positive relationship existed between perceived intrinsic benefits and persistence, whereas a negative relationship was found between both age and ease of learning on one’s own and continued enrollment.

Kember’s (1989; 1990; 1995) in his longitudinal-process model of dropout from distance education tried to integrate all available models developed for conventional higher education (Bean, 1980; 1985; 1990; Tinto, 1975; 1987; 1993). The model integrated findings on DE students’ academic success and attrition, as well as left room for variations and individual differences within each constituent category.

**Student Persistence in Distance Education Doctoral Programs**

Most research on graduate student persistence in DE has been conducted on single courses (Woodley & Parlett, 1983; Morgan & Tam, 1999). Research on student persistence in doctoral programs delivered via DE is limited. For the most part, these have been dissertation studies, examining various issues related to doctoral student experiences in the distance learning environment and how such experiences affected their persistence in a program.

Using a phenomenology approach, Sigafus (1996) studied experiences of adult students pursuing a distance learning telecast program in Educational Administration at the University of Kentucky. The analysis of the interview transcripts with 25 participants yielded four themes permeating the students’ doctoral experiences: structure, pressure, support, and authority. Structure meant personal life role adjustments made to respond to increased demands on time, energy and the program structure itself. Pressure was associated with feelings of stress and strain in situations of increased demands on time and personal energy. The source of support students found most helpful came from peers in the program cohort, faculty members, families, friends, and employers. The theme of authority had two variations: authority or control from faculty members, employers, and
significant others over specific aspects of life, and personal authority, maintained through structural and individual self-growth.

In a study of doctoral student persistence in an interactive compressed video distance learning environment, Huston (1997) found significant factors of success were spousal and financial support, intrinsic motivation, and positive interaction with the teachers and institution. The distance learning format did not affect the persistence of these graduate students. The findings also revealed the importance of group support provided by a cohort, the importance of an actively involved site coordinator, and the importance of access to e-mail.

Huston’s (1997) findings were consistent with the results of Riedling’s (1996) study of DE doctoral students in the field of educational policy studies and evaluation at the University of Kentucky. Student perceptions of the actual impact of social factors on distance learning were analyzed based on individual interviews with distance doctoral students, on-site observations of their classes, and supporting documentation. The students pointed out collegiality and community as major motivators in their choice of DE. The students did not perceive themselves as alone, and said the intensity of good dynamics was remarkable. Students reported the joy of learning as being of equal importance. Notably, the attitude and skill of site coordinators were perceived as key variables for helping ensure the learning experiences were successful.

Summary

The literature review allowed for identifying seven broad factors most likely to impact persistence of doctoral students in their programs of study; four internal and three external. Internal factors were: self-motivation and personal goals; finances and employment; family support and encouragement; prior experience with postsecondary learning and access to requisite materials and/or technology. External factors included: academic advisor; program policies, offerings, practices and culture; sense of academic and social community.

Despite variability in how students responded to the internal factors, the most prominent appeared to be self-motivation and personal goals. Mature students, especially those with experience in postsecondary and/or higher education, were better able to accommodate to financial and family-related stresses. Furthermore, those students apparently were able to adjust to unsupportive external factors of department program policies, offerings, practices and culture. This was most pronounced with the students engaged in distance learning.

Interestingly, the external factor of academic and social community reportedly did not have much influence on persistence, especially with the doctoral students. Distance learners pointed out they were able to cultivate a sense of academic and social community with peers, despite a lack of geographical proximity.

Probably the most influential of all factors was the role of advisor. For graduate students it seemed pivotal. Both the style (directive, non-directive, supportive) and type (quantity, access, and responsiveness) were important for students to persist.
Extrapolating to undergraduates, it seems reasonable to say academic advisors who appear knowledgeable, accessible, and willing to display being interested in students beyond scheduled appointments would be important for their persistence.

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Enabling Tutors to Identify Learning Style Preferences in Students with Learning Disabilities

Carol A. Layton and Robin H. Lock

Academic success for students with learning disabilities is of critical importance as more students with disabilities enter higher education. Colleges and universities provide a variety of services for these students ranging from simple accommodations to fee-for-service support programs, and many students with learning disabilities receive tutoring services designed to improve their opportunity for success in the classroom. Often, tutors are academically successful students who have no specific training in working with persons with learning disabilities. As a result, the type of study skills promoted by these student tutors typically match their own learning styles without regard for the learner’s needs. Additionally, they may have little knowledge of the specific intrinsic processing strengths and deficits associated with their student’s learning disability. Mitchell and Sedlacek (1995) reported that study skills training designed to meet individual strengths and weaknesses is important, and that this lack of knowledge both of the disability characteristics as well as appropriate study techniques commonly results in tutoring sessions that may be only moderately helpful. Olson and Platt (2000) reported that students with learning disabilities should receive tutoring that includes both an academic emphasis as well as cognitive strategies that tap into the student’s learning style profile.

Rationale for Investigating Learning Characteristics

Higher education success is often perceived as content-laden rather than linked to the mastery of fundamental, and complex principles and concepts contained within a knowledge base (Murray-Harvey & Keeves, 1994). Students with learning disabilities may fail to master simple content-related tasks such as memorization and appear to be unable to pass a given course. With appropriate instruction, however, they may prove capable of learning and utilizing the principles and concepts required for successful course achievement.

The reasons behind academic failure for students with learning disabilities may include a variety of intrinsic processing problems such as poor information processing, lack of efficient strategies for learning both content and underlying principles, and failure to recognize learning preferences as well as strengths and weaknesses. Without specific knowledge about intrinsic processing strengths and weaknesses, students with learning disabilities and their tutors must simply guess about the reasons for their academic failure.

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Postsecondary student learning processes and progress in higher order thinking have been explored by Murray-Harvey and Keeves (1994). College faculty members may presume that students have the ability to master both a “body of knowledge” (content) as well as the “how to learn” (process) without their direct intervention. For students with learning disabilities, problems in university instruction occur when they are not prepared to meet both sets of academic demands and have limited resources for dealing with their “ineffective strategies and misconceptions” (Murray-Harvey & Keeves, 1994, p. 4).

Murray-Harvey and Keeves (1994) highlighted the following keys to higher education academic success: an internal locus of control; high levels of motivation, persistence, and responsibility; adaptability to a variety of physical learning environments; independent study skills; and well developed meta-cognitive processing skills (i.e. self-knowledge about what it takes to learn). Information critical to success at the university level includes student knowledge about personal learning preferences, skills, strategies, and academic strengths and weaknesses. Providing tutorial services that emphasize the student’s strengths as opposed to accentuating the disabling condition allows for more comprehensive learning opportunities.

Intrinsic Processing as Learner Characteristics

Intrinsic processing disorders are defined as “physiologically-based mental actions or operations that lead to an end” (Hammill & Bryant, 1998, p. 7). Students with learning disabilities engage in processing strategies that are ineffective and lead directly to difficulties in reading, writing, or other academic areas. By pinpointing these behaviors and highlighting the student’s intrinsic processing strengths, a tutor can develop strategic study activities.

“Individuals with learning disabilities deal with certain kinds of information differently which is why they have learning disabilities” (Hammill & Bryant, 1998, p. 7). The Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory (LDDI) provides information about a student’s intrinsic processing skills. This information, obtained through self-report (Lock & Layton, 2001), can provide a tutor and student with a better understanding of which abilities to emphasize in order to avoid using deficit intrinsic processing skills during a tutoring session.

Identifying Classroom Learning Style Preferences

Riechmann and Grasha (1974) described the Grasha Riechmann Learning Styles Scale (GRLSS) for use with college students to explore classroom learning style preferences. The scales focus on student interactions in learning situations by categorizing social indicators. The GRLSS is organized into three categories: competitive/collaborative; avoidant/participant; and dependent/independent. The scales require the selection of one type of learning style from each of the three categories that characterize academic classroom activity preferences. The student’s learning style profile is then identified within the three categories.

While all students exhibit a variety of the learning styles identified on the GRLSS in
The role of modality preferences in effective tutoring

Sensory modality preferences are typically conceived of as auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, and visual (Wallace, 1995). Like the GRLSS, while students exhibit a learning modality preference, most people utilize the modalities in fairly evenly distributed ways. While people may be able to identify one modality preference, they will concede that all three are useful in their learning process. Vail (1992) proposed that most people have a predominant style with secondary strengths that complement their abilities. For students with learning disabilities, however, the absence or faulty operation of one modality may cause the student to depend on one of the three more heavily (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2000). Many checklists exist to enable students to easily self-identify their learning modality preference, but the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is the most commonly used and one of the most powerful instruments to identify modality preference/functioning (Wilson, 1998).

For students with learning disabilities, this information is critical and provides the third piece of the instructional puzzle for their tutors. Students with auditory modality deficits will experience difficulty when presented with isolated auditory learning tasks (i.e. lecture courses without visual aids). Likewise, tutors who insist on using visual examples for students with visual modality deficits may be wasting valuable time. The identification of the student’s modality strengths and weaknesses clarifies the tutor’s understanding of the most appropriate methods for facilitating the student’s learning.

Linking multiple intelligences to effective studying

Jordan (1996) proposed that one reason for academic boredom and lack of motivation in secondary students can be attributed to a failure on the part of the teacher to use strategies that look beyond the typical reading and mathematics emphasis in the curriculum. She described student learning as coming from a multitude of intellectual sources such as those described by Gardner (1993) in his Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI). Gaining competence in typical school curriculum can be accomplished more readily when utilizing a variety of unique intelligences.

Gardner (1993) described the theory of MI as a pluralistic method for viewing the varying degrees, most students benefit from instruction that matches their preferences and encourages the development of the dormant styles (Grasha & Yargarber-Hicks, 2000). Therefore, information about student learning style preferences can be used to provide meaningful instruction particularly for students with other learning difficulties. For example, a student who self-identifies a learning style in the collaborative/participant/dependent category will prefer instruction that allows work in groups with a teacher who provides direct instruction and has clear expectations for class performance. For tutors of postsecondary students with learning disabilities, this information provides additional, valuable input regarding both the role of the tutor and the needs of the student in study sessions.

The Role of Modality Preferences in Successful Tutoring

Linking multiple intelligences to effective studying

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Gardner (1993) described the theory of MI as a pluralistic method for viewing the
mind in which nine different types of cognitive strengths and styles are identified. These specific strengths and styles are descriptive of the person’s ability to solve problems or design products. Gardner suggested that the utilization of a person’s area of MI strength in order to reinforce learning will enhance performance and ability to learn.

Effective Tutor Training

To maximize the effectiveness of tutoring sessions and ensure that the student masters the material at a more complex level, tutors working with these students need additional training (Mitchell & Sedlacek, 1995). In order to examine a method for increasing the tutors’ ability to create more complex and effective tutoring sessions, a training session was developed for the current study. The session highlighted the following areas: the significance of knowledge about a student’s intrinsic processing strengths and weaknesses in the learning process as identified by the Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory, (LDDI) (Hammill & Bryant, 1998); the relevance of discovering specific classroom learning styles as demonstrated in the Grasha Riechmann Learning Styles Scale, (GRLSS), (Hruska-Riechmann & Grasha, 1982); the importance of recognizing and utilizing the strongest modality in study sessions as shown in the Learning Styles Inventory, (LSI), (Dunn & Dunn in Wilson, 1998); and the identification of strong multiple intelligence areas, (Armstrong, 1994) as well as modality strengths to create productive study sessions and subsequent learning.

While the importance of learning style preferences, multiple intelligences, modality factors, and intrinsic processing strengths and weaknesses is critical for quality learning, questions remain as to whether tutors will actually be able to utilize this information to plan effective tutoring sessions. After the training session, this study examined the ability of a group of tutors to increase their selection of appropriate learning strategies to match a student’s individual cognitive preferences on the LDDI, GRLSS, the LSI modality strengths scale and the MI profile. The following research question was addressed: Is there a difference between the tutors’ selection of learning strategies after training with and without a visual reminder (see Figure 1) of the concepts on the LDDI, GRLSS, LSI, and the MI?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 68 tutors participated in this study. Each tutor was a currently enrolled undergraduate student representing various academic colleges at a research-focused university. Each student was classified as a junior or senior, and included 28 males (41%) and 40 females (59%).
Training

Tutor training consisted of three areas. First, the tutors were provided with an informational session concerning classroom learning style preferences, modality preferences, the theory of multiple intelligences, and the role of intrinsic processing deficits in learning disabilities. Second, the instruments for each of these concepts were demonstrated (LDDI, GRLSS, LSI, and MI). And finally, each tutor designed a personal program for a case study illustrating a postsecondary student with learning disabilities both with and without a learning style chart.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from each tutor’s analysis of the case study completed in the training session were analyzed by examining four factors: the inclusion of the four variables identified by using the LDDI, GRLSS, LSI, and the MI; the number of responses produced with and without the learning style chart; the responses that were obtained from the tutors most frequently; and finally the most appropriately designed suggestions offered by the tutors that matched the data presented in the case study. In evaluating the tutors’ ability to include the information provided by the LDDI, GRLSS, LSI, and the MI assessment devices, each response page (utilizing the case study information) was analyzed by two examiners independently. The examiners pinpointed the specific study suggestions that matched the information elicited from each assessment device. Tallies were kept for each tutor. There was 100% inter-rater reliability between the examiners.

The examiners also tallied the number of responses for each tutor with and without the learning style chart (Figure 1). Again, each examiner tallied independently with 100% inter-rater reliability. The number of responses for each category was then averaged to determine the mean. The two examiners then analyzed the types of responses provided by the tutors by listing all responses and tallying the number of times each was repeated. T-tests were computed to determine if there was a significant difference between the responses when tutors used the learning style chart (Figure 1) or did not. Finally, the responses were reviewed to determine which best fit the information provided in the case study and demonstrated a unique study method for the student described in the case study.

Results

The results indicated that all 68 of the tutors were able to identify some learning style needs even without using the learning style chart (Figure 1) to aid them in remembering all of the student’s strengths. Depending on the category, the percentages of response without the chart ranged from a low of 22% identifying strategies in the MI variable, to a high of 83% identifying strategies in the LSI variable. In the LDDI variable, the identification of strategies was accomplished by 38% of the respondents.
while in the GRLSS, the strategies were identified by 46% of the participants. In the second part of the analysis, the descriptive statistics for the sample were analyzed to determine the mean number of responses for tutors both with and without the learning styles chart. When the tutors used the learning style chart, the mean response rate was more than twice as productive (see Table 1).

Third, as shown in Table 2, the percentage of responses by the tutors both with and without the learning style chart was calculated. Each variable is represented in relation to the assessment results from the case study and is divided into the sub-components that identify the case study student’s strengths. For example, the GRLSS collaborative results are presented in one category with the GRLSS participant results in another. Without the learning style chart, the tutors most easily constructed strategies that represented the student’s interpersonal strengths (MI, 100%). Additionally, the collaborative area on the GRLSS was highly depicted in their strategies at 90%. They had the most difficulty with the skills that represented dependent learning styles as identified by the GRLSS (10%).

Next, as shown in Table 3, paired sample t-tests were computed to determine if significant differences existed between the responses obtained with and without the learning style chart. Seven of the 10 sub-components (LDDI reading; GRLSS participant, dependent; MI bodily, musical; and LSI auditory, tactile) were significant at the .001 level. One variable, GRLSS collaborative, was significant at the .05 level. Two variables, MI interpersonal and LSI visual, showed no significant differences.

In the final analysis, the data were reviewed to identify the responses that were most appropriately designed for the student in the case study. Strategies were analyzed using the following criteria: Is the strategy individually designed and does it specifically match the student’s needs? Examining the responses, the tutors tended to record more generalized strategies for the student for the case study without the use of the learning style chart. When utilizing the learning style chart, the tutors were able to provide more specific strategies to aid in this student’s study procedures. Figure 2 presents a comparison of the strategies both with and without the learning style chart.

Discussion

This study sought to demonstrate the efficacy of both training and the learning style chart to increase tutors’ selection of study activities that reflect an individual student’s learning style strengths. The significant differences in the tutors’ ability to indicate strategies that reflected each of the four variables (LDDI, GRLSS, LSI and the MI) while using the learning style chart is important. These findings indicate that the tutors were more successful at creating individualized strategy plans for a postsecondary student with learning disabilities when they were visually-cued by the learning style chart. The tutors were more successful at providing individualized strategies that matched the student’s needs in excess of a 2 to 1 ratio. Secondly, when using the learning style chart, the tutors were able to reflect each variable as identified by the LDDI, GRLSS, MI, and LSI assessments at a 100% level with the exception of one indicator (GRLSS...
dependent). Furthermore, the dramatic increase in the percentage of responses that matched each category jumped from 47% without the chart to 93% while using the learning style chart.

While examining the quality of the responses provided by the tutors both with and without the learning style chart, an increase was identified in both the specificity and individuality of the responses. These more highly developed, tailor-made learning strategies may prove helpful in enhancing a student’s study sessions. The chart may also enable the tutor to generalize knowledge about learning style information to increase their effectiveness with a variety of learners.

Educational Implications

Knowledge concerning the relationship between learning styles and effective study strategies promises to provide information about quality methods for tutoring individuals with learning disabilities in higher education. The significant differences identified indicate that tutors must not only be aware of learning styles, but must also have methods for increasing their ability to utilize each strength specifically. The results would appear to indicate that tutors are more successful when they have visual reminders such as the learning style chart when planning study strategies for their students.

Limitations of Study

The current study was conducted at one university, and further exploration across a variety of postsecondary institutions might provide for greater generalization. The case study forced tutors to make educational decisions based on contrived results for one student, using the learning style chart for students with learning disabilities to examine grade point average changes. This further evidence would then provide increased documentation of the method for peer tutors.

Future Research

While use of tutoring for college students with is widely accepted, methods for tutor training have not been established. Using unproductive pedagogy wastes valuable resources that could be used for constructing strategies that enable tutors to be effective. Research accountability of such training can establish the impact that tutors have on the success of college students with learning disabilities. Another interesting variation of the current study would be to determine the effectiveness of training students with learning disabilities regarding the self-use of learning style data. An in-depth needs assessment of successful tutoring programs can also provide the data needed to drive viable systems to increase the achievement of students with learning disabilities in higher education.
Summary

The current study explored the use of training with tutors coupled with a visually-cued learning style chart to describe individual cognitive styles. The ability of the tutors to construct specific study strategies was investigated, and tutors were trained and given the inventory results of a hypothetical student. Results from the LDDI, GRLSS, LSI, and the MI inventories were used to formulate a case study profile. The tutors were asked to design a program that incorporated the four learning and cognitive styles into specific study strategies. Moderate success was noted in the tutors’ initial attempts. The tutors were then asked to design a program using a visually-cued chart with learning and cognitive factors. Their ability dramatically increased with the use of the learning style chart. Results of the study indicated that training tutors on learning and cognitive styles and providing the learning style chart as a visual reminder enabled the tutors to individually design programs based on specific personal needs and strengths. Consequently, tutor training with the learning style chart may have a positive impact on the academic success of college students with learning disabilities.

References


### TABLE 1

**Descriptive Statistics for Tutors With and Without the Learning Styles Chart.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Without Chart</th>
<th>With Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>7.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2

**Percentage of Response by Tutors With and Without Learning Styles Chart by Assessment Devices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDDI</th>
<th>GRLSS</th>
<th>MI</th>
<th>LSI</th>
<th>UR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>With Chart</strong></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Bodily</td>
<td>Auditory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 (23)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Without Chart</strong></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Bodily</td>
<td>Auditory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 (26)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td>67 (45)</td>
<td>67 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 (32)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
<td>100 (68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- **LDDI** = Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory
- **GRLSS** = Grasha Riechmann Learning Styles Scales
- **MI** = Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences
- **LSI** = Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic
- **UR** = Unrelated to an assessment device
TABLE 3

Paired Samples t-Test Results Between Responses with and without the Use of the Learning Styles Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>No Chart (N=68)</th>
<th>Chart (N=68)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LDDI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1.39 (.49)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>-10.40**</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRLSS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>1.91 (.29)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>- 2.55*</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>1.47 (.50)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>- 8.68**</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>1.00 (.00)</td>
<td>1.39 (.48)</td>
<td>- 5.85**</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily</td>
<td>1.43 (.49)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>- 9.49**</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>1.13 (.34)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>-20.96**</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LSI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td>1.81 (.40)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>- 3.98**</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td>1.67 (.48)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>- 5.85**</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td>2.00 (.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviation appears in parenthesis

*p<.05  
**p<.001
### Learning Styles Chart

#### Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic Processing Strengths</th>
<th>Grasha-Riechmann Learning Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening:</strong> provide spoken directions, utilize taped lectures, use oral rehearsal</td>
<td><strong>Competitive:</strong> play games, give extra credit, give rewards, set up win-lose situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> talk about assignments, respond to assignment orally, use group discussions</td>
<td><strong>Collaborative:</strong> work in groups, provide social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> reread assignments, use vocabulary cards, read related materials</td>
<td><strong>Avoidance:</strong> provide independent studies, internet courses, chances to work independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing:</strong> rewrite notes, write study facts into summaries, select written assignments</td>
<td><strong>Participant:</strong> works in groups, learns from social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics:</strong> use mathematical thinking to analyze issues, organize notes/assignments numerically</td>
<td><strong>Dependent:</strong> provide structure and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning:</strong> use problem solving, organize materials, generalize learning</td>
<td><strong>Independent:</strong> provide time for student to develop own ideas, allow student to use their own ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Modality Learning Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality Learning Styles</th>
<th>Multiple Intelligences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auditory:</strong> Listen to it, listen to your self talk about it; talk about it with others</td>
<td><strong>Linguistic:</strong> talk about it, write about it, read about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual:</strong> Read it, look at pictures (maps, designs), make lists</td>
<td><strong>Logical-Mathematical:</strong> put it in sequence, use numbers, place in order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tactile:</strong> Practice it, examine it, touch models, walk though it</td>
<td><strong>Spatial:</strong> draw pictures to represent concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical:</strong> sing it, tap it, use rhythms to remember it</td>
<td><strong>Bodily/Kinesthetic:</strong> perform activities to relate concepts to real world experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal:</strong> work in groups with others</td>
<td><strong>Musical:</strong> sing it, tap it, use rhythms to remember it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrapersonal:</strong> relate to personal experience</td>
<td><strong>Naturalistic:</strong> study outside, take walks with study cards, relate data to environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FIGURE 2

**Examples of Qualitatively Different Strategies Responses Developed With and Without the Learning Styles Charts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Without Chart</th>
<th>With Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LDDI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Taped texts</td>
<td>Annotate sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRLSS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>Maintain consistent study partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperative groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>Role-play discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write discussions in rap form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide chapter outlines, summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently pair verbal/written instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide numerous examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily</td>
<td>Flash cards</td>
<td>Place flash cards in various locations around room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recite while moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Taped background music</td>
<td>Rhythmic mnemonic devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Study partner</td>
<td>Compare written notes and organization with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LSI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td>Reread notes into recorder</td>
<td>Use self-talk to organize, study, and plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td>Hands on activities</td>
<td>Take apart and reassemble models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewrite notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Mnemonic devices</td>
<td>Highlight while listening to recorded notes</td>
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</table>
Student Work Issues:  
Implications for College Transition and Retention

William Hey, Kristine S. Calderon, and Denise Seabert

With ever-rising college tuition costs, reductions in the availability of financial aid (Curtis & Nimmer, 1991), and an increased desire for financial independence (Canabal, 1998), it is becoming increasingly necessary for a greater number of today’s college students to work their way through college. Students working while in college has become the rule rather than the exception (Kane, Healy, & Henson, 1992). Due to the ever-increasing number of students working while in college, a number of job-affected outcomes such as reduced semester course load, grade fluctuations, persistence in school, cognitive development, and overall school performance have been observed and studied by researchers (Canabal, 1998; Gleason, 1993; Kuh, 1993; Parcarella, Bohr, Nora, Desler & Zusman, 1994; Parcarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn & Terenzini 1998). Stern and Nakata (1991), based on analyses of several studies concerning the effects of holding a job while in college, concluded that students who work during college are more likely to drop out or take longer to complete their programs, and will have a higher positive correlation with performance in school when the job is more closely related to their chosen major.

Despite all of these issues regarding student employment, limited research has been done that examines employed student job stress and its relation to aspects of college life. Job stress can be defined as work demands that exceed the worker’s ability to effectively cope with surroundings such as school (Rice, 1987). Ross, Niebling, and Heckert (1999) reported that holding a job while in college contributes to overall stress levels and therefore higher perceived stress. Because of the increased levels of stress and constant challenges of college life for working college students, student affairs personnel are being asked for advice, counsel, and recommendations regarding how students can effectively balance working while attending school (Hencke, Lyons, & Krachenberg, 1993). Moreover, the effects of job stress on college life could have serious effects on retention.

Recent research regarding employed student job stress indicates a difference in stress levels among employed and non-employed students. However, what has yet to be investigated is the relationship between student job characteristics and student job stress and the total college experience. In order to counsel working students, student personnel need some kind of tool to assess student job stress and the relationship of the student’s job characteristics to the overall college experience, including the student’s transition into college life and retention. The purpose for conducting this study was to examine...
college student work issues and differences in job stress among student job characteristics using a survey designed to measure the job stress of employed college students. Employed student characteristics and their implications for college life and retention are discussed.

Research Methods

The Job Stress Measure for College Students (JSM-CS) survey was administered to a convenience sample of 275 college students at two Southeastern U.S. universities (one in Florida and one in Alabama) to examine employed college student characteristics and job-related factors affecting student life. The survey was administered to students in general health education undergraduate classes who volunteered to complete the survey for extra credit, outside of class. The survey was also administered to two graduate classes at one university. This provided a cross-section of student interests, maturity, and class standing.

Instrument Development

The JSM-CS was developed from an adapted version of Rice’s Work Stress Profile (Rice, 1987). The initial Work Stress Profile was a 57-item questionnaire designed to provide information on adult work stress examining work conditions, job environments, and personal feelings towards jobs. The instrument has been tested in a sample of 275 school psychologists to measure job stress of these professionals. For the total scale, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .921 and the coefficient for all the three sub-scales were .898.

The JSM-CS was reduced to 45 items that were adapted for administration to college students. The reduction occurred by eliminating questions not applicable or appropriate to college students. The instrument was pre-pilot tested with 177 undergraduate students along with other stress-related measures. Specific methodology for this pre-pilot instrument is reported elsewhere (Calderon, Hey, & Seabert, 2001).

For the current study, the pre-pilot instrument data was further analyzed to construct a more refined instrument to measure college student work issues. Due to inadequate sample size for factor analysis from the pre-pilot data, items to be included in the pilot test were determined by correlation analyses. The 45 items from the pre-pilot administration of the instrument were categorized into sub-categories based on item context. The categories included job demands, job conditions, job/school schedules, job satisfaction, job responsibilities, competing sources of stress, job/school effects, and job security and were named based on item content and cross-correlations. Items with correlations higher than r = 0.8 with other items were retained for the final instrument. From these procedures, the number of items on the job stress measure was reduced from 45 to 25 items. Some items were reworded for further clarity and the instrument underwent expert panel review by college of education faculty with expertise in survey
development. The independent item format was kept by using Likert-type Scale responses (i.e., response choices being “never” to “almost always,” assigning a score from 0 – 4 respectively, for an item score total). This total job stress score may be able to provide the user/examiner with a general assessment of not only the stress endured by students from their jobs but also their job satisfaction. Based on the correlational analyses and item context, the first 25 items resulted in job-related statements, followed by eight items regarding job-related characteristics and seven general demographic items. Some of the items of the JSM-CS may also indicate how a student’s job is affecting important aspects of life such as class work and attendance, study time for exams, and preparing out of class assignments, recreation and leisure time, participation in campus clubs, organizations, and other extracurricular campus events, etc.

Analyses

A total job stress score was calculated from the JSM-CS. To examine college student work issues, relationships between this total stress score and student/student job characteristics such as income, GPA, number of work hours, and job type were analyzed using Pearson Correlation Coefficients. ANOVA procedures were run to determine differences in total stress among these variables. All results were determined significant at the .05 significance level.

Results

Sample Demographics and Job-Related Characteristics

The internal reliability coefficient for the JSM-CS was fair (\( \alpha = 0.66 \)). All students answered all items on the measure; however for purposes of this study, only results for students having jobs are reported. Approximately, 154 students reported having jobs from the two university samples (resulting in 56% of the students being used for analyses). The employed student sample consisted of 47% male and 53% female; 67% Caucasian and 25% African-American; 68% junior and senior classification and 19% sophomore classification. The remainder of the students were 10% freshman classification and 4% graduate students. Seventy-nine percent of the students were under 24 years of age with only 21% being 24 years of age or older. Forty percent of the students were taking 7-12 semester hours, 45% were taking 13-15 semester hours and roughly 14% were taking over 16 semester hours. Thirty-nine percent of the students had a GPA between 3.01 and 4.0 and 56% had a GPA between 2.01 and 3.0, while the remaining 5% of the students had a GPA below 2.0.

As for the employed student demographic characteristics, 53% of the students had annual incomes of $5000 or less from their jobs, 21% had annual incomes between $5000 and $9000, 13% made between $9000 and $12,000 and 12% made over $12,000 from their jobs. Thirty percent of the students had jobs related to their major and only 23% had on-campus jobs. Roughly 23% worked 12 or fewer hours per week, 38%
worked between 13-24 hours per week, 25% worked 25-39 hours per week, and 14% worked 40 or more hours per week. In addition, 35% of students had one part-time job, 6% had one full-time job and the remaining 59% reported having multiple part- or full-time jobs or both. Twenty-five percent reported that their current job is the only work they could find.

Response frequencies for the 25 job stress items are presented in Table 1. A notable observation was that 43% of students reported that their lives would (always) be less stressful if they did not have to work and go to college at the same time. Some other observations include 26% reporting (almost always) that their job interferes with studying for exams; roughly 42% reported either always or almost always arranging their class schedule around their job schedule and 24% reporting (almost always) being physically exhausted when they get home from work.

As for relationships between total job stress and student/student job characteristics, a higher stress score was significantly related to higher income ($r = 0.32$, $p = 0.0001$); having a job not related to the declared major ($r = 0.23$, $p = 0.004$); having an off-campus job ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.01$); having a job that was the only work that could be found ($r = 0.18$, $p = 0.03$); and working more hours ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.0001$). In examining differences among certain job stress characteristics using ANOVA procedures, total job stress differences were found for job income ($F = 6.51$, $p = 0.0004$). In other words, higher reported annual income levels were related to higher total job stress as compared to the lower level incomes. For income, the effect size was a 10-point difference in total stress score between the highest and lowest income, with average stress score of 70 and standard deviation of 13.

In addition, higher reported work hours ($F = 9.01$, $p = 0.001$) and semester hours taken ($F = 3.49$, $p = 0.009$) had differences in total job stress than lower reported work hours and semester hours taken. The effect sizes for work hours ranged from 9.7 to 16.9 in total stress score between fewest work hours and most work hours. For semester hours, effect sizes ranged from 11.8 to 16.4 in total stress score between fewest semester hours taken and most semester hours taken. Overall, the effect sizes for income, work hours, and semester hours were moderate. No significant GPA relationships in job stress were found at a .05 level of significance.

Discussion

The results suggest that for some students having a job adds more stress to their lives, increases exhaustion levels, and interferes with school responsibilities. In addition, certain job characteristics such as income, having a job unrelated to major, and having an off-campus job were all related to higher stress levels. Additionally, stress levels seemed to differ among working students depending on their job characteristics and number of semester hours taken.

These findings can have serious implications for students transitioning to college life as well as student retention. For those students transitioning to college life, having a demanding job may interfere with the ability to attend college functions outside the
classroom. In addition, having jobs that add more stress to students’ lives can create strain in course performance, and having to keep a stressful or high-demanding job in order to pay tuition may influence students to drop out of school, skip semesters, or reduce course loads in order to hold easier, less stressful jobs. These actions may have serious effects on student retention. Overall, students having those job characteristics related to high stress may be at risk for poor college transition and possible drop-out.

With time, student personnel may be able to identify which jobs are most stressful for students, in turn providing students with important job selection information. This may also encourage student personnel to develop and make accessible to working college students a list of available jobs in the community or on campus which are more suited for the students’ major and/or course schedules.

Administering instruments such as the JSM-CS can provide student personnel with an assessment of job-related characteristics such as the employed student’s salary, work hours, and types of jobs. These characteristics, in combination with general demographics such as number of semester hours taken can help college professionals ascertain what impact the employed student’s job may have on their college experience and retention. Information gathered from the JSM-CS may help academic advisors of students with jobs, classroom instructors who have students in their classes who work, college recruiters attempting to identify future students who have to work to attend college, guidance counselors who help new students adjust to the expectations of the college experience, administrators, and faculty for the purposes of course scheduling and possibly curriculum development.

The results of the current study are limited to a small, convenience sample of students. However, results indicated that job characteristics differed in their relation to stress levels. The JSM-CS needs to be administered to a greater number and more representative employed college student population. This will be beneficial to gain a clearer understanding of employed student issues and the relationship between job characteristics and stress level. Moreover, the JSM-CS is just one tool that can assist student affairs personnel, psychologists, and counselors in reaching out to employed students to understand not only job stress, but other job-related issues as well. Hopefully, this strategy of college job stress assessment will provide insight into problems with college transition and retention.
References


### TABLE 1

**Item Response Frequencies for JSM-CS©**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I consider my job to be stressful.</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My college classes are more stressful than my job.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job schedule interferes with my class schedule.</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job interferes with my studying for exams.</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job affects my grades.</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I arrange my job schedule around my class schedule.</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job takes such a toll on my energy, I cannot enjoy my leisure time.</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider my job rewarding.</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physical work environment at my job is crowded.</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job is more stressful than the classes I take at college.</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life would be less stressful if I did not have to work and go to college at the same time.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is discrimination in my job.</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is time for relaxation or breaks on my job.</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I arrange my class schedule around my job schedule.</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job interferes with my completing class assignments.</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a chance for personal or professional growth in my job.</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would continue working at the job I now have even if I did not need to pay for college.</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work environment at my job is noisy.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physical demands of my job are excessive (heavy lifting, excessive standing/walking).</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace at which I have to work is too fast.</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am physically exhausted when I get home from work.</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep interested in my job because of its complexity.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I may lose my job.</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I leave my job each day feeling burned out.</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The job requirements go beyond the range of my ability.</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many stressful changes occur in young people’s lives when they make the transition from high school to college. Although many individuals cope with these changes with relative ease, others may become overwhelmed and experience significant adjustment problems. These adjustment problems may manifest themselves in academic difficulties and social problems. Significant numbers of first year students also struggle with varying degrees of loneliness (Cutrona, 1982), health problems, and emotional problems in the first weeks and months of college (Fisher & Hood, 1987). Given an unpleasant first experience at college, many of these struggling students will probably contribute to the school’s attrition statistics. Devising a means of predicting which of the incoming students may struggle with the transition to college has been a goal of college student affairs administrators as they attempt to increase the retention rates. In recent years adult attachment theory has suggested that attachment status may be one such indicator of those incoming students who may be particularly at-risk for adjustment problems. The current study presents an empirical test of that theoretical prediction.

Attachment theory

Bowlby’s (1982) attachment theory has become an important framework for understanding intrapsychic and interpersonal processes from infancy to late adolescence, and even into adulthood. Using an ethological approach, Bowlby hypothesized an innate mechanism whereby certain caregiver/infant behaviors would, in most cases, create both a secure emotional base for the child and a cognitive “working model” for participation in future relationships. This secure emotional base becomes the foundation for venturing out into the world. The nature of the child’s cognitive model for relationships becomes the template for future self and other relationships. The lasting effects of these early relationships are the cognitive and emotional “filters” through which relationships with others are experienced. If the child does not develop the capacity to form secure and supportive relationships, the theory would suggest that serious consequences may result in the child’s later life. Although attachment figures may change throughout a life, the individual’s past experiences with significant others creates a distinct attachment style which may make finding support in new relationships more difficult depending on the internal filters each person brings with them to new situations.

Early empirical work with young children revealed three types of attachment styles...
which had important consequences for the child’s behavior. Based on observations of the child’s responses to stressful situations, children were identified as Secure, Anxious-Avoidant, or Anxious-Ambivalent. The Secure style is associated with caregiving which is responsive to the child’s behaviors and needs. As a result, the child learns that needed caregiving can be elicited from others and that others can be trusted to be attentive and responsive. The Secure child experiences an emotional “confidence” in relationships with others that the other two styles do not. The Avoidant child and the Ambivalent child are both described as “anxious” in that their behavior reveals an emotional vulnerability to stressful situations. Many factors may be at work, but the cumulative impact of caregivers’ relative lack of responsiveness is to create in the child a distrust of others and feelings of vulnerability and fearfulness in times of need. They lack the secure emotional base from which to face the challenges of life. In the case of the Avoidant child, it appears that the child has decided to keep a distance from others and to be as independent as possible. The Ambivalent child, on the other hand, wants close and secure relationships with others, but fears that others are undependable and, therefore, fears the risk that comes with being dependent on them.

The seminal work with infants has spurred a large body of research with older children which has demonstrated lasting effects of early experiences and predictable differences in behavior due to attachment style differences. The significant others in the child’s life may change as the child gets older, but the nature of these relationships still results in emotional and cognitive assessments of self and others. For example, in adult relationships peers are shown to take the place of parents in the attachment model (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Adults who are characterized by a secure attachment style have a comfort with closeness, a positive view of themselves, and a relatively more positive view of the world and the people around them than do individuals who have an “anxious” attachment style.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) expanded the initial attachment style model and have based their measure of adult attachment on four patterns or styles of attachment. In attempting to better understand the reasons why an individual may be avoidant, they designed a four-cell model of attachment based on the relationship between the two constructs “model of self” and “model of others.” “Secure” individuals have a positive view of self and others. They perceive themselves as relatively independent and competent to deal with life’s challenges. Others are seen as potential friends and as sources of support when needed. The “Preoccupied” individuals have a negative sense of self as needy and dependent on others. Others, however, are seen in positive ways and are sought after for close relationships. Those with a negative view of others but a positive view of self are the “Dismissing” attachment style. They are suspicious of others and avoid close relationships, but are comfortable with their own independence. The “Fearful” individuals are insecure about their own capacities and also see others as threatening.

The four category model would predict that the Fearful freshmen would have the most difficulty adjusting to college as they leave familiar settings and encounter many new strangers. They would be apprehensive about their abilities to meet the multiple...
demands of academic and social environments. They may perceive other students as threatening and view even well-intentioned student affairs personnel as intrusive. As a result, they may be more likely to leave.

Attachment and Adjustment to College

Given the importance of the transition to college, a great deal of research attention has been directed at the factors that affect successful adjustment. In 2000, *The Journal of Adolescent Research* published an entire special issue devoted to “Transitions from Adolescence” which addressed such variables as parental influence, normative pressures and academic environment, past experiences, expectations, and identity status and processing style (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000; Wintre & Ben-Knaz, 2000; Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Alisat, 2000; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). The impact of attachment style on this phase of life has also been addressed in recent research, for example, by Burge, Hammen, Davila, and Daley (1997) who found that students who had more secure attachments developed less chronic strain in college two years later and fewer and less stressful events related to school.

Attachment theory predicts that because of entrenched negative views of self and others, certain individuals will have trouble forming new relationships. Problems forming new relationships may affect various aspects of a person’s life, including adjustment to college. As much of college adjustment involves new interpersonal relationships with peers, roommates, and faculty members, difficulties forming new relationships may lead to obstacles in the college experience. In these first few months of the college experience, students may also become distant from the relationships that they had already established at home to make them feel secure. This challenge of moving to college and forming new relationships necessitates adjustment, and it is during this transition time that students are particularly vulnerable to develop symptoms of poor adjustment.

In this study the relationship between attachment style and college adjustment was examined, using measures of various aspects of adjustment, including social self-esteem, acceptance of others, depression and health-related symptoms, loneliness, and a standardized measurement of college adjustment. Hypothesized was that the securely attached students would show higher self-esteem, higher acceptance of others, and lower depressive symptoms, resulting in better adjustment to college as indicated by the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Those individuals found to be preoccupied in attachment style were predicted to have lower self-esteem, higher acceptance of others, and lower depressive symptoms, resulting in better adjustment to college as indicated by the SACQ. Participants with dismissing attachment styles would have high self-esteem, low acceptance of others, and would vary in depressive symptoms. These individuals’ adjustment to college scores would be distributed similarly to those categorized as preoccupied. Fearful individuals would have relatively low self-esteem, low acceptance of others, and a high number of depressive symptoms, also resulting in a poorer adjustment to college score. Hypothesized was that those participants found to be fearful
would have the most difficulties in adjustment to college, and ultimately, would be more likely to leave college.

With the assumption that some new students will have a relatively greater need for support as they transition to college, many colleges provide a variety of support services. This study is an attempt to increase the efficiency of those support services by empirically demonstrating a model which may help identify those students who may be most in need and least likely to seek out such services.

**Methods**

**Design and Participants**

Within two weeks of their arrival at Eckerd College, nearly all of the incoming freshmen completed the Social Perception Inventory and the Relationship Questionnaire to identify their attachment styles. This initial phase of the study was conducted in August of the students’ first year during Autumn Term—a specially designed transition course exclusively for first year students prior to the start of the Fall semester. The 284 freshmen included 129 males and 155 females. The results of the initial inventory revealed the attachment styles were 49% Secure, 22% Dismissing, 21% Fearful, and 8% Preoccupied.

Since this was a test of the theoretical prediction, it was necessary to derive a subject pool where all four categories were equally represented. The attachment measure yields both categorical and continuous scores of attachment. Based on the continuous scores, the 20 to 25 students with the highest scores in each of the attachment styles received personal invitations and follow up phone calls to participate. Equal numbers of males and females were selected.

In October, these freshmen (N = 84) completed the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), the Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI), the UCLA Loneliness Scale, several subscales from the Symptom Checklist 90-Revised (SCL-90R), and the Revised Social Perception Inventory.

To test the differential attrition risk prediction, college records were checked to determine how many of the 20 students with the most extreme scores in each attachment style had enrolled in each subsequent Fall semester.

**Instruments**

**Social Perception Inventory**

The Social Perception Inventory was created for this study in order to assess each student’s perceptions of relationships with friends in high school, perceived parental support and predictions of their ability to transition from high school to college.
The Relationship Questionnaire

The Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) is designed to measure attachment style. Bartholomew and Horowitz’s scale consisted of four brief paragraphs, each relating to the different attachment styles of Secure, Dismissing, Preoccupied, and Fearful. Students were asked to rate themselves on each of the four paragraphs using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“Not at all like me”) to 7 (“Very much like me”). They then selected the one paragraph that best described themselves.

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

The SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1984; 1989) is a 67-item scale divided into four subscales: academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal/emotional adjustment, and goal commitment/institutional attachment. The scale incorporated items such as “I feel that I fit in well as a part of the college environment” and “I really haven’t had much motivation for studying lately.” Students responded to the questions on a nine point scale that ranges from 1 (“Does Not Apply to Me”) to 9 (“Applies Very Closely to Me”). High scores indicate better college adjustment.

UCLA Loneliness Scale

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980) is a 20-item scale seeking to measure the psychological experience of loneliness. The scale incorporates items such as “I lack companionship” and “I feel left out.” Students respond to the questions on a four-point scale that ranges from 1 (“Never”) to 4 (“Often”).

Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI)

The Texas Social Behavior Inventory (Helmreich & Stapp, 1974) is a 15-item scale that measures social self-esteem. The scale incorporated items such as “Other people look up to me” and “I am a good mixer.” Students responded to the questions on a four point scale that ranged from 1 (“Not at all characteristic of me”) to 4 (“Very much characteristic of me”).

The Symptom Checklist 90-R (SCL-90-R)

The SCL-90-R (Derogatis & Cleary, 1977) quantifies problematic symptoms in terms of nine primary symptom subscales: somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobia-anxiety, paranoid ideation and psychoticism. The four scales used in this study were: somatization, depression, anxiety, and hostility. The somatization subscale included items such as “crying easily” and “feeling lonely.” The anxiety subscale included items such as “nervousness or shakiness inside” and “feeling so restless you couldn’t sit still.” The hostility subscale
included items such as “having urges to beat, injure or harm someone” and getting into frequent arguments.” Students rated how often they feel the way described on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“Extremely often”).

**Revised Social Perception Inventory**

Students responded to the same questions asked during the initial phase of the study. The questions were rephrased from high school experience to current college experience as the students were now fully immersed into their first academic year. In addition, a list of free response questions was added to the end of the Inventory to provide students with an opportunity to give their perceptions of their first year of college experience.

**Results and Discussion**

The current study contrasted four, theoretically different types of incoming students. Students’ attachment styles were identified with a brief screening instrument shortly after their arrival on campus during their first year. Their scores on various adjustment indicators, assessed in the middle of the fall semester, were analyzed using a series of planned comparisons to determine whether the groups differed significantly in their adjustment to college.

**Social Relationships and Social Support Perceptions**

By mid-semester, the predicted significant difference between the Secure and Fearful groups with the Fearful reporting fewer friendships at college was observed. Compared to the Secure students, both the Fearful and the Preoccupied students had significantly lower self-esteem in social situations as measured by the TSBI. The Fearful students differed significantly from both the Secure and Dismissing students in their expectation that they would make fewer friends in the future. The Fearful students scored significantly higher than the Secure and the Preoccupied students on the UCLA Loneliness scale. Both the Dismissing and Fearful groups held negative views of others, but the Dismissing students rated their friends as significantly more supportive than did the Fearful students. There was a significant difference between the Secure and Dismissing groups for the number of friends (p = .063), with Secure making slightly more friends.

**Adjustment and Health**

The Fearful students had significantly higher scores on the Symptom Checklist than did the Secure and Dismissing students, indicating a greater number of physical and stress-related symptoms. The Fearful students also had significantly more visits to the Health Center than did the Secure and Dismissing students, even though it was only the second month of the semester. On the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire, the
Fearful students were significantly lower than the Dismissing students on the Physical/Emotional Adjustment subscale. The Fearful students were significantly more likely to have been to the Campus Counseling Center than students in the other three groups (which did not differ from each other). The measures used in this study are self-report instruments, which implied that the Fearful students knew that they were struggling with the transition to college.

Attrition/Retention from Freshman to Senior Year

On the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire, the Fearful students were significantly lower than the Dismissing students on the Academic Adjustment subscale, perhaps serving as an early prediction that they would not complete their college degree. In order to assess whether or not there was a difference in retention over their sophomore to senior years, the 20 students with the most extreme scores in each of the four attachment styles (i.e., the most clear-cut examples of each style), were identified from the original sample of 284 incoming first year students. Table 1 presents the retention percentages for the four groups for each of the subsequent Fall semesters until their senior year. The Fearful first year students, identified before they even started their first semester of college, were most likely to leave the college prematurely.

Conclusions

The Fearful students seemed to struggle the most with their early adjustment to college. Close examination of the mean scores for the other three groups revealed that the Secure students usually adjusted the best, just as the Attachment theory would predict. They have little need for additional support services and probably become quickly integrated into the life of the college community, thus feeling comfortable seeking out such services if needed. Similarly, the Dismissing students showed a very strong adjustment on the various measures. They have developed a resourcefulness and self-sufficiency which results in a relatively lower need for social support. Across the several adjustment indicators used in the study, the Preoccupied students typically had mean adjustment scores that fell between those of the top two groups and those of the Fearful group and, as a result, they were not statistically different from the others. Attachment theory and research would predict that the Preoccupied students are probably quick to utilize the array of support services available at a small college. They may be more likely to use their faculty and resident hall advisors to help them with the transition because of their positive view of others and their immense need for close relationships and social support systems.

The intent of the current study was to determine if there was empirical support for the theoretical prediction that certain attachment groups would be at risk for poor adjustment to college. Having found that an identifiable group of incoming freshmen is at significant risk for poor adjustment, academic, psychological, and health problems, and even relatively greater attrition risk, the need for appropriate intervention with these
students is obvious. Results suggest that student support service personnel should become familiar with the attachment style literature and train Resident Advisors and other Student Affairs staff to recognize those students who demonstrate “Fearful” attachment style characteristics. Because of their negative view of self and others, these students are likely to experience college life as challenging in ways that exceed the normal academic and social adjustments. While it is likely that most colleges and universities already provide support services for students who experience difficulties, the Fearful students may actually avoid these services because of their distrust of others. This study provides a tool to those who attempt to serve students by calling attention to the incoming first year students who are most likely to need support. Negative statements about self and wariness of others should trigger a greater level of care. Since these students are not as likely to become engaged in campus life and activities, it would certainly be helpful if an upper-class student could actively “shepherd” these students to campus events. These results should also serve as a reminder to college personnel that those overzealous students who spend significant amounts of time in their office may not be the ones who are at-risk of attrition. A small college can do a great deal to detect and care for these students, and it is hoped that this study will encourage those who work with students in transition to seek them out.

References


### TABLE 1

**Percentage of Students Who Re-enrolled Each Academic Year by Attachment Style.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2000</th>
<th>Fall 2001</th>
<th>Fall 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore Year</td>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>Senior Year$^1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^1$ Students who completed requirements for graduation early were omitted from the cohort study for senior year and analyses were performed with the reduced total number.
The Role of the Campus Visit and the Summer Orientation Program in the Modification of Student Expectations About College

Wren Singer

In the United States today only 47.6% of students graduate from the college or university at which they first enrolled (Durhams, 2000). The other 52.4% transfer to other colleges or drop out of the higher education system. Why is this happening? One college student answers the question this way: “For some reason, this college isn’t exactly what I had pictured, so I am not really happy here” (Boyer, 1987, p. 45). This quote epitomizes one of the reasons new students cite for leaving college: unmet expectations. “Too often we forget that students come to us with uninformed expectations about college learning and college life- another factor contributing to attrition” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, pp. 68). Bean (1990) agreed “one fairly constant finding is that students leave school because they do not fit in. They may not fit in socially or academically or religiously or economically or for some other reasons, they leave because the school is not a good match for their needs” (p. 149).

Students form their expectations of college from many sources, including popular media, parents, friends, high school counselors, and indirect and direct communication from the university. Among these factors, the most direct one that an individual institution can influence is its own intentional communications with students. Given the evidence that unmet expectations are one of the reasons students cite for leaving a particular university, what are institutions intentionally doing to help students form more realistic expectations about what they will find at their institution?

Research examining college student attrition advises that the first year student’s most critical transition period occurs during the first semester, therefore programs and services designed to combat student attrition should be front-loaded (Tinto, 1988). However, even before the first year student attends a class, the university has two opportunities to convey realistic expectations of college life: the campus visit and the summer orientation program. Both programs are ideally positioned to purposively modify and shape student expectations about the university experience.

The campus visit is a variable that predicts college selection and is a tool used by students during the college choice process. Gasperetti (1974) concluded that “the campus visit has a vital role to play in the decision making process for new applicants. Indeed, it is the fundamental step for an eventual commitment to apply for admissions to college by many students” (p. 19). While a number of studies substantiate the

correlation between visiting campus and enrollment, there are few that examine the ability of the campus visit to convey clear expectations about college life. Magolda’s (2000) qualitative examination of the campus visit concluded that the campus tour, while a fairly routine ritual, is a powerful tool for conveying cultural messages to prospective students. However, the extent to which prospective students on the tour received the messages “sent” through the program is not addressed.

The ability of orientation programs to modify unrealistic expectations was tested by Krallman and Holcomb (1997). Students’ expectations about college were assessed before and after attending orientation at Miami University in Ohio. Results indicated that student’ expectations in a number of key academic, social and personal areas changed after their orientation experience.

Method

The purpose of this study was first to identify the messages being conveyed to prospective students, and to determine how students’ expectations about these messages were modified due to their campus visit and orientation program. Program personnel from UW-Madison were surveyed to determine the core messages they intended to convey through the programs. After the messages were identified, students were surveyed before and after attending the programming to determine the impact on their expectations. UW-Madison’s programming is similar to that used nationally at large universities (Strumpf & Sharer, 1993), making the results of this study applicable to similar institutions.

Identification of themes

Focus groups, surveys, program observation and document review were used to isolate the message “themes” conveyed through the campus visit and orientation program. First, focus groups were conducted with program employees to explore what these individuals hoped to convey through the visit and the orientation program. Second, 14 higher-level planners of the visit and orientation programs completed questionnaires about what they hoped to convey to students during the programs. In order to supplement and triangulate data gathered from the employees and the planners, the researcher observed a full session of the campus visit and orientation program and reviewed all printed documents that students received prior to and during the programs. The data were coded and categorized into themes, then the complete data set was reviewed to determine how many times each theme appeared in the data. The themes that were most often present were designated as the strongest themes for the program.

Modification of student expectations

A survey was designed to measure the ability of the visit and orientation program to modify student expectations related to the themes the programs intended to convey.
Between one and five questions were developed to measure expectations related to each of the themes. Responses to the questions were measured on a seven point Likert-type scale.

Baseline measurement consisted of results from 497 students who were surveyed before their on-site visit began. The group consisted of high school students who were at the UW-Madison campus to attend a formal campus visit. For a two-week period every student attending a campus visit received a survey. Four hundred and ninety seven surveys were returned, for a response rate of 76.5%. The sample was not random, but there is no evidence that students who attended the campus visit during this two-week period were different from students who attended the campus visit at any other time during the spring semester.

The second group was surveyed after their visit and before summer orientation. The surveys for this group were mailed to 1,000 randomly selected students after they made a reservation to attend the orientation program. Four hundred and twenty-nine surveys were returned for a response rate of 42.9%. Sixty percent of this group had attended a campus visit.

A final 600 students were surveyed after summer orientation on four randomly selected dates. Four hundred and ninety-seven surveys were returned and used for the data analysis, for a response rate of 82.8%. Sixty-five percent of the sample had attended a campus visit; it was coincidental that the first and third groups had exactly the same number of returned surveys.

The data gathered from the survey was analyzed using linear trend analysis and analysis of variance. All tests used an alpha of .05.

Results

Identification of themes

The analysis of the program employee/planner focus groups and questionnaires yielded 13 themes that the campus visit and the orientation program intend to convey to students. The themes are presented in Table 1. In addition, the analysis of the strength of the themes in the data yielded two leading themes for each program. The strongest themes for each program have been designated with an asterisk in Table 1. Strength was determined by noting how many times a theme appeared in the complete data set.

Modification of expectations

Overall results showed that expectations on eight of 13 themes were modified in the university-desired direction over the course of the three measurements. Table 2 illustrates this result.

An examination of demographic interactions illustrate that female students showed a greater fluctuation in their self-confidence over the course of the three measurements, and showed significantly less self-confidence than males at the final measurement.
Figure 1 depicts this interaction. Secondly, students of color who did not visit the campus showed less awareness of the variety of campus options than white students who did not visit and students of color who did visit. This effect was significant at the measurement taken between the visit and orientation. Figure 2 depicts this interaction.

**Conclusions**

1. *The campus visit and the orientation program may be effective in modifying student expectations about college on a number of factors.* Students showed change in the university-desired direction on eight of 13 factors over the course of the three measurements. While this does not prove a causal relationship between attending the programs and changing expectations, it is encouraging to see that expectations are changing in the desired direction over the course of this critical transition period. Clearly there are other, uncontrollable, factors at play, such as messages from family, friends, and the media, but it would take a creative researcher to isolate the impact of the programs without denying students the chance to attend these programs. Because UW-Madison shares a similar orientation philosophy to other large research institutions (Strumpf & Sharer, 1993), these results may suggest how students are reacting to messages conveyed by a variety of similar institutions.

2. *Programs are trying to communicate too much.* The results demonstrate that the campus visit and orientation programs at UW-Madison may be trying to communicate too much information for the new students to absorb. The university is attempting to convey 13 core messages to students during a campus visit that lasts three hours and a summer orientation and registration visit that lasts 24 hours. The fact that two of the most complex and critical themes, personal responsibility and respect for others, did not show significant change in any of the analyses performed may be an indication that students are not ready to process these complex behavioral and developmental concepts at this stage. Consequently, institutions should strive for quality over quantity and pare down the messages they intend to convey to students through visits and orientation.

3. *Expectation development varies for demographic sub-groups.* One of the most important findings to emerge from this research is the advantage of attending a campus visit for students of color. The students of color who did not visit showed less awareness of UW-Madison’s many options than students of color who did visit. Additionally, among non-visitors, students of color showed less awareness of options than white students. Clearly students of color who do not visit the campus lack access to effective information communication channels to tell them about what is available at UW-Madison.

**Implications for Program Administration**

1. Implement outcome based program evaluations. The evaluation of the visit and the orientation program should inform the university about how effective the program is at conveying its core messages. Current evaluation methods for the visit and orientation
focus primarily on students’ satisfaction with the program (Wiese, 2000). In order to fully understand the impact of the programs it is critical to assess knowledge and messages that students take from the programs. Customer service elements of current evaluations should be supplemented with learning outcome assessment questions.

2. Encourage students of color to attend campus visits. The results showed that students of color who do not visit have less awareness of UW-Madison’s many options than students of color who do visit and white students who do not visit. Perhaps students of color have less awareness of the many options offered by UW-Madison because they have fewer informal opportunities to learn about UW-Madison. If the university is not able to encourage more students of color to visit campus, then alternative measures of conveying the variety of options available should be developed for students.

3. Help females maintain confidence in their ability to succeed. The results demonstrated that after attending orientation females had significantly less confidence in their ability to succeed at UW-Madison than males, and it is unclear what the impact of this finding might be. Perhaps females have a more difficult transition to college because they are less sure of themselves, or perhaps the lower confidence levels cause females to work harder during their first few semesters. The effect of this result might be partially understood by comparing first semester GPAs of males and females. For example, at UW-Madison, the GPA of first semester females in 2001 was 3.133 and first semester males was 2.996, indicating that perhaps females students are working harder during their first semester. Regardless, it is important for institutions to recognize that there are gender differences in the way that students experience visits and orientation programming.

In conclusion, this research used a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative techniques to understand what messages UW-Madison hopes to convey to new students and how new students’ expectations change over the course of the pre-matriculation period. Some promising and interesting results were gathered and explained that appear to apply nationally, but plenty of room is left for future research examining the development and modification of student expectations about college. In order to increase the percentage of students who remain at the college where they began, universities must help students develop clear expectations about the college experience during the pre-matriculation period.
References


### TABLE 1

**Themes UW-Madison attempts to communicate through visits and orientation**

1. UW-Madison provides many options (* visit)
2. UW-Madison will begin to feel smaller
3. Find academic/social balance
4. Basic knowledge about UW-Madison
5. Academic work is challenging
6. Support is available (* orientation)
7. Personal responsibility (* orientation)
8. Respect for others
9. Take care of yourself and others
10. Students change and develop
11. Pride in UW-Madison (* visit)
12. Confidence in self
13. Learning occurs outside of the classroom

### TABLE 2

**Means for linear trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Pre-visit</th>
<th>Between visit and orientation</th>
<th>Post-orientation</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW-Madison provides many options</td>
<td>20.29</td>
<td>20.49</td>
<td>20.76</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW-Madison will begin to feel smaller</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find academic/social balance</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>NS (negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic knowledge about UW-Madison</td>
<td>20.99</td>
<td>20.99</td>
<td>21.65</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic work is challenging</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>10.98</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support is available</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>19.13</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal responsibility</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>13.95</td>
<td>13.56</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for others</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td>15.91</td>
<td>15.53</td>
<td>NS (negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take care of yourself and others</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students change and develop</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in UW-Madison</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.02</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in self</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning occurs outside of the classroom</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significant p < .10  
NS = non-significant  
Negative = non-significant negative trend
FIGURE 1

Confidence in self and gender

Dot/Lines show Means

**Gender**
- Female (N=845)
- Male (N=532)

FIGURE 2

Race and awareness of university options

Bars show Means

**Race**
- Students of Color (N=37)
- White Students (N=348)
Mandatory Computer Purchases and Student Preparedness: Implications for New Student Orientation
Darla J. Twale and Molly A. Schaller

Although a computer in the classroom is not a new phenomenon, the mandatory purchasing of personal computers and common software by entering first year classes is a relatively recent expectation. Kenneth Green of the Campus Computing Project notes at present that approximately 50 colleges and universities require such purchases (Olsen, 2002). Mandatory computer programs specify that entering students must arrive on campus prepared to use a predetermined computer and its software applications. Universities are wiring their physical infrastructures and/or using wireless communication systems to increase student access to both on and off campus computer networks (Segawa, 1999). They have taken the stance that computer usage is not an option but an expectation (Levine & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1997). The university also assumes that all students have technological savvy (Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001; Gumport & Chun, 1999; Mina, 2001; Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001; Segawa, 1999). At most institutions computer usage and Internet access continues to become an integral facet of student coursework, assignment preparation, term paper research, and ultimate success (Furst-Bowe, Bolger, Franklin, McIntyre, Polansky, & Schlough, 1995; Griffith, 1999; Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001). Due to a paucity of research on mandatory computer programs, little is known about student technical competence to use computers for academic tasks. The purpose of this investigation was to assess first and second year student perceptions of their preparedness and technical competence at entry to use the computer and its software applications.

Review of Literature

According to Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1993), first-year students begin their psychosocial development with relatively little confidence in their ability and a lower level of competence than more seasoned college students. Embodied within the first of their seven vectors of student development is Developing Competence, that is, a student’s need to assess entering skills and capabilities that assist in thinking critically, reasoning logically, and solving problems accurately. To develop competence with computers at an institution that mandates their purchase implies that competence is integral to a student’s academic development, grades, self-confidence, and is perhaps significant at matriculation to subsequent persistence (Levine & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1997; Tinto, 1987). Initially first-year students need to feel they possess adequate computer skills when they matriculate which is contingent upon the depth and breadth of use in
high school and home (Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001). However, all institutions do not mandate minimum levels of computer technical competence for incoming students. Therefore, mandatory purchase of a computer could raise concerns regarding persistence for less prepared students (Hawkins & Paris, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987), because students who lack strong computer skills would matriculate onto an uneven campus playing field (Furst-Bowe, et al., 1995; Karsten & Roth, 1998; Levine & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1997).

Traditionally new student orientation programs have sought to provide a variety of activities to help ease entering students into campus academic and social environments (Twale, 1989) and meet academic and career needs (Daddona & Cooper, 2002). The onslaught of mandatory computer purchase programs for first-year students raises the issue as to whether orientation programs should contain specific content to address technical competence (Miller & Viajar, 2001). For instance, research indicates that all students may not begin college with the same level of competence due in some cases to socio-economic level rather than intellectual ability (Sax, Ceja, & Teranishi, 2001).

McAulay (1993) reported that only 17.6% of the students at University of Massachusetts-Amherst had a great deal of familiarity with computers, while 51% reported having little or no exposure to computers. In a subsequent study, Furst-Bowe, et al. (1995) found that students acquired familiarity with computers mainly at home (23%) or in high school (47%). In this Wisconsin-Stout (UW-S) study, faculty regarded student computer skills to be at least somewhat important to student academic success. Since then, UW-S has required laptop purchases and offers a 4 hour comprehensive training session for incoming students. Stout encourages integrated classroom use of laptops, collaboration, university services access, and on-lines courses.

Olsen (2000) reported that first-year students were not as familiar with basic computer software commonly used in entry-level courses. Schumacher and Morahan-Martin (2001) established a positive correlation between experience and competence. They found first-year student Internet competency greatly lacking as compared to basic computer application. As a result some students may experience higher anxiety and lower confidence levels in their ability than students whose computer skills are relatively strong (Ayersman, 1996; Zhang & Espinoza, 1998).

Studies have also shown that uneven distribution of computer resources, expectations, and interest levels have been coupled with race and gender differences (Hawkins & Paris, 1997; McAulay, 1993; Shashaani, 1997). More recent data show that computer usage among incoming students was high at 78.5%, with male usage slightly higher and female usage slightly lower. As a result, women’s level of confidence in computer usage was lower than men’s. In other studies, men were more likely than women to have computer and Internet experience, spend more time in front of the computer locating information, were encouraged by parents to use their computers, and developed higher levels of self-confidence (Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001; Shashaani, 1997).

Differences in computer usage and technical competence also vary by major course of study. Mina (2001) found that minority business students at a large research institution expressed “frustration and unfamiliarity with technology” (p. 2). In addition, arts and
humanities majors were less likely than technical and pre-professional majors to use computers (Flowers, Pascarella, & Pierson, 2000).

Even though with each new academic year, university administration might presume that more students will be exposed to computers through home purchase and high school usage, concomitant levels of perceived preparedness, comfort with computers, and ability to use computers to achieve academic success cannot always be presumed to be equal. A survey of orientation professionals agreed that programs should consider student technical competence, include on-line demonstrations, and consider introducing students to campus technical support services, but they were slightly less agreeable on the matter requiring a technical component during orientation (Miller & Viajar, 2001).

The study was designed to answer the following questions: what is the perceived level of preparedness and technical competence for students participating in a mandatory personal computer purchase program? And, what are the differences in their perceptions based on sex, race, and year in school, and school?

Method

Procedures and Instrumentation

For the past four academic years, all freshmen at a private, religious, Midwestern university have been required to purchase a personal computer; the university stipulated the model and software. In the spring of 2000, a five-person focus group of first-year students judged by their hall directors to have a high degree of technical competence was assembled. They were asked about their experience with their new computer, the software, and the mandatory policy.

With their input and the existing literature on technical competence (Furst-Bowe, et. al., 1997; Hawkins & Paris, 1997; Jones & Pearson, 1996; Levine & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1997; Smith & Necessary, 1996), a two-part, survey instrument was developed that addressed student perceptions of technical competence, especially with regard to usage and application. The paper discusses only the items related to initial usage and academic application. Using a combination of 11 scaled items (5-point ordinal and interval scales) including one multi-item 6-point scale (daily to not at all) and one multi-item 5-point scale (very often to never), two nominal questions, and four demographic items, students were asked about their level of computer access, perceptions of technical competence, computer savvy, attitudes toward the mandatory purchase, familiarity with select computer applications at entry and currently, frequency of usage of specific software for academic purposes, faculty incorporation of the computer into coursework, and benefits derived, and problems encountered. Alpha reliability levels for the scales ranged from .82 to .86.

Participants

In the fall of 2000, resident students housed in three first-year halls and three sophomore halls were approached as they entered their hall or dining facility and asked
to complete the questionnaire. Each participant received a computer diskette and entered a prize drawing to win one of several $25 campus bookstore gift certificates. From a possible combined population of approximately 3300 first and second-year students, 338 students responded (167 first year and 169 second year) to the on-site request. Students were evenly distributed across both classes with regard to sex, race, and school and despite a slightly higher number of women in the sample, were representative of university demographics.

Campus Setting

The university does not have an orientation session on technology for all entering students. The university does offer students the Help Desk Hotline, a voice messaging system, and a residence hall floor technician, which according to a university computer satisfaction survey were not widely used by students. Currently, the university offers a Training Channel on cable television where students can view video sessions on Word, Excel, Windows, Lotus Notes, and FrontPage. The School of Business also offers a one hour, one semester computer course for students. Students in the other three academic schools were encouraged to visit the Training Channel, ask for help from roommates and classmates, or call the Help Desk.

Data Analysis

Means, standard deviations, frequencies, chi-square, and paired and independent t-tests were used to answer the first research question. Analysis of variance distinguished the differences in demographic data between groups with regard to technical competence to answer the second question. Significance levels were established at p < .05.

Results

The sample consisted of 65% women and 35% men. Ninety percent of the students indicated they were Caucasian and 10% were African-American, Asian American, Hispanic or other students. Representation among the four schools on campus included 14% from education, 21% from business, 50% in the arts and sciences, and 15% from engineering. As shown in Table 1, overall student access to computers either at home or high school or both was 98%. There was a significant difference as entering freshmen reported greater access than the previous class (t=11.48, df=4, p=.02).

At entry, first-year students reported a slightly higher level of perceived technical competence than the sophomores (43% and 35% respectively). More freshmen (57%) than sophomores (46%) reported setting up their own system, and this was true particularly of engineering versus other students (t=31.63, df=12, p=.002). First-year students needed significantly less time getting set up (t=28.89, df=4, p<.000) than sophomores, and relied significantly less on others for additional help (F=30.84, df=1,331, p<.000).
Students rated their perceived familiarity with such computer applications as email, Excel, web pages, word processing software, Power Point, Claris works, Napster, Netscape/internet, and Lotus Notes (campus email). On all applications, t-tests showed a significant increase in familiarity over time. For instance, students who entered knowing little of the university email system, Lotus Notes (M=1.97) made notable strides in proficiency over time (M=4.42). While the first-year students consistently recorded higher mean scores at entry than did sophomores with regard to these computer applications, current proficiency levels for each class showed increased mean scores and no significant differences with the exception of excel usage. Mean scores for auxiliary academic applications such as bulletin boards (M=2.25), threaded discussions (M=2.0), and learning space (M=2.35) indicated infrequent student usage. Also infrequently used was library services such as on-line searches (M=2.34), e-reserve (M=2.78), or book renewal (M=1.86).

Due to the imbalance with regard to race, no calculations were performed. Significant differences, however, were found for gender. Females were significantly more pleased than males with the mandatory purchase (F=10.09, df=1,329, p=.002), but more women than men asked for help getting the computer set up (F=48.80, df=4, p<.000). Specifically, men needed less than a week to become familiar with the computer and applications and women typically needed more time (F=21.59, df=4, p<.000). Women were more likely than men to ask for additional assistance as the semester progressed (F=18.57, df=4, p=.001). Males were more likely than females to report a significantly higher rate of preparedness and technical competence at entry (F=35.73, df=1,331, p<.000), and indicted an overall higher degree of proficiency than female classmates during the semester (F=14.61, df=1,327, p<.000). Comparisons between mean scores indicted that male perceptions of preparedness and technical competence increased from M=3.72 at entry to M=4.13 currently, while female perceptions increased from an entry level of M=3.13 to a current level of M=3.84.

Significant school differences showed business and engineering students were more likely than education and arts/sciences majors to use certain types of software at entry such as Excel (F=5.28, df=3,321, p=.001) and Microsoft Word (F=2.93, df=3,321, p=.034). However, while business and engineering majors remained highly adept, all groups showed mean score increases in usage of all software applications over time. Students were asked to rate advice they might give to incoming students as to how they could become more technically competent. Women were significantly more likely than men to suggest asking for help from classmates (F=4.13, df=1,326, p=.043) or from university technical support services (F=24.44, df=1,327, p<.000). Being patient and learning how to use the software was also suggested by more women than men (F=8.91, df=1,324, p=.003). First-year (M=4.04) and second-year students (M=3.95) believed that taking a computer applications course in high school or at a community college would be helpful. Gleaned from the vast majority of written comments, students valued their computer either as a mode of convenience, a medium for communication, or a tool for ready access to people, places, and information.
Discussion

This study explored the new computer mandate at one university in light of students’ perceived technical competence to use personal computers and software. This study offered data to university officials for future planning regarding mandatory computer purchases for entering classes of students, to new student orientation directors who have been asked to consider incorporating computer sessions in their orientation programs, and to faculty who wish to incorporate technology into their curriculums and classes. Findings did not clearly determine, however, if in this study, this year’s entering class is just savvier than last year’s class, or if the university is simply more prepared each fall to deal with problems and concerns. Results also have implications for university support services, especially in the first several weeks of the term when, for some, technical competence is lower and for most, stress and anxiety run disproportionately higher than usual (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reiser, 1993). The results also have implications for ensuring that all students begin on a level playing field, especially women and non-business and science majors.

In response to the first research question, students indicate overall that regardless of their perceived level of technical competence at entry, they make gains over time in hardware and software usage. With the passage of time and increased exposure to the computer, the playing field appears to become more even, but students still indicated preparation prior to entry is a good idea. The fact that all students have the same computer, software, and access level increases the possibility that deficits at entry will diminish during the course of the first year. Increased usage implies easier acclimation to their computer which may contribute to increased competence, but in the meantime students risk falling behind other classmates who are more savvy and competent.

With regard to the second research question, gender differences appeared to parallel the Shashaani (1997) and Schumacher and Morahan-Martin (2001) studies where men indicated greater usage of software applications, the Internet and web, while women indicated more willingness to ask for help, such as tapping into more university help services. Daddona and Cooper (2002) found that women in general desire more information at entry than men. In addition, the first-year class appeared more prepared than last year’s freshmen, which may stem from greater preparation on the part of the administration having worked through the inaugural year. This higher degree of preparation may also be due to incoming students’ greater awareness of the mandate over the previous year’s students and some having had an opportunity to increase their level of competence prior to matriculation. With increased knowledge of totally wired/wireless campuses, the computer mandates, and informative University websites, students are made aware of the expectations and could self-assess competence levels before applying as well as participate in computer instruction to reach a comfortable, acceptable level of competence. However, depending upon a chosen major, students may not know at entry what they will need to know to succeed in some courses. Even though this is a residential campus, first and second-year students reside in different residence halls or in one case, separate wings of the same hall, first-year students may not necessarily benefit from the sophomore’s expertise and ability to mentor in close
proximity.

Because students new to college find the integration of computers into their class work may vary, especially across schools and majors, it may take more time to see the software as integral to their specific studies (Altschuler & McClure, 2002; Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001; Furst-Bowe, Bolger, & Franklin, 1995; Griffith, 1999). Inability of students to reach adequate competence levels negatively impacts the mandate and perhaps curtails student learning. Perceptions of competence may be more compelling depending not only upon students’ exposure to computers, but also the frequency and type of usage, including integration of computers by faculty in class. At present, integration level among faculty probably varies across the four schools helping explain the moderate level of perceived competence (see Olsen, 2002). How faculty members integrate computer usage into their courses is an area of future research that will again test student competence levels. Lynch (2002) reported from the Campus Computing Project that despite the technology available, only 20% of faculty members incorporate computer applications into their classes. More incorporation, while causing initial anxiety for some of the less prepared students, would mean more opportunities for students to gain or hone the skills they need to succeed in academically. This might also be an opportunity for faculty and computer professionals to work with new student orientation directors.

Specific populations such as students with learning disabilities, first-generation college students, transfer students, or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Lehnig, 2000A, 2000B), however, may also experience different levels of perceived competence which may pose additional challenges to universities instituting mandatory computer policies. Integrating computer usage into academic areas and support services and its impact on special populations remains an area for further study into student technical competence. Because of the small number of students of color represented in the survey, further study with a larger, more diverse population is recommended. Given that female students lag behind males in computer savvy and they report asking classmates for help more often, specific services targeted to women may be useful. Only one school on campus pays specific attention to their student’s computer competence. Other schools might evaluate their students’ computer needs and consider if remedies should be sought in-house or in collaboration with new student orientation directors and computer personnel. Additionally, virtual orientation programs can be conducted through campus websites prior to students arriving on campus.

With wired/wireless campuses, on-line applications, and computer mandates as marketing tools used by admissions offices, inquiries from less technically competent students are likely to diminish. By the same token, students who wish to matriculate to this type of environment should be encouraged to demonstrate a reasonable level of technical competence at entry to compete with other more competent students, especially in majors that rely more on computer applications. As faculty members learn more about and experiment with computers in the classroom, there may be a need to adjust the time allotted and the content needed to help all entering students in achieving computer competence. Limited funding, time, and human resources may preclude structured offerings but individual campus assessments need to be made to determine the degree,
student groups, and type of computer information required such that time, money, and personnel can be allocated when, where, and how needed. Perhaps the university feels that with the on-line only application process, high home/school access, and current offerings, campus wide computer orientation is not a priority. However, the need for structured orientation sessions will likely change as students’ needs change and as technology becomes a more integral part of the campus and the curriculum (Miller & Dyer, 2002). Needs may move beyond technical competence to spatial and ethical issues associated with usage, downloading from the Internet, and bandwidth capacities. All areas warrant further investigation.

References


### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information of Respondents</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56 (33)</td>
<td>59 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>111 (66)</td>
<td>107 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>150 (90)</td>
<td>152 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>4 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>22 (13)</td>
<td>25 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>32 (20)</td>
<td>37 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>84 (51)</td>
<td>81 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>26 (16)</td>
<td>23 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computer access</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home &amp; school</td>
<td>165 (99)</td>
<td>168 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No access</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computer set up</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>93 (57)</td>
<td>73 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>69 (43)</td>
<td>86 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived competence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More prepared than others</td>
<td>72 (43)</td>
<td>59 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less prepared than others</td>
<td>27 (16)</td>
<td>25 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before opening the cover, “Traveling through the Boondocks” suggests an uncommon theme. Demolished cars, deserted highways, and empty stairwells are not expected to portray the context of higher education, but this is the first of many unexpected contradictions. Authentic campus scenes played out by real characters resembles a farce unmatched by fiction, spotlighting participants entangled in an inescapable lifestyle. Wry humor renders a remorseful message digestible as first hand observations expose hierarchical circumstances that cement the academic condition of exclusion. From the volumes that have discussed and theorized unending lists of inequities, Terry Caesar is unique. Challenging an unwritten authority, the open dialogue sparks recognition among educators and in an unexpected twist of events invites revitalization of American higher education.

Educator hopefuls will be enlightened and with this account of covert activity that has an influence on lives and careers. With railing sarcasm a professor of American literature artfully develops personal encounters at Clarion University to expose constraints devised and maintained by upper level interests. Exceptional scholars summarily situated at second-rate universities are eager to compete as major participants, but Ivy League schools, along with a number others, have secured enduring status as the primary purveyors of knowledge. Exclusion is recognized in events that confront academics daily, and secondary status eliminates a level of participation that fosters faculty development in the noble sense of expected performance. Scholastic overseers hold the privilege of disseminating wisdom that immobilizes subordinates with bureaucratic power.

Reputations are solidly marked with boundaries that are fixed by political correctness to contest the existence of institutional distinctions, but in reality a second rate perception is contrived by a salient positioned hierarchy. Pragmatic differences are cited, but any respectful reference to the espoused teaching purpose loses meaning within a structure that systematically removes the rewards of achievement. Nowhere is this restriction more obvious than in the field of research. Production and acceptance, rather than the project’s scholastic contribution are rewarded, and the opportunity for publication is confined by campus affiliation.

A personal account of departmental politics suggests a pattern that works to
maintain the order. While Clarion purports to make employment selections based on scholarship, the witnessed process finds familiar and socially compatible acquaintances securing a place on campus. Caesar leaves no doubt that selections are based on strong departmental influences. Hiring for compatibility perpetuates consistent behavior and expectations that ward off any thought of alteration or innovation. On noted campuses chosen colleagues must exhibit real evidence of exemplary scholarship. The additions to and formation of departments offer an opportunity to bring contrast and stimulation. Compatible inclusions at Clarion limit invention, and communal satisfaction along with the security of tenure install a cybernetic system of complacency.

Academic forums invite the opportunity for participants with correct affiliations to illuminate large groups about academic injustice. When race, gender and class run dry, a myriad of considerations exist for theorizing academic inconsistency. Theory is the established design for maintaining issues without informing, much less providing a solution. An ideology can offer rhetoric that never identifies the source and has no claim towards resolution. What this style of presentation does allow is an endless conjecture of little pragmatic advantage to the unnamed subject. If a cure is found, the game is over, and who among the privileged wants to join the ranks back at the university. Conferences are held for affiliates to posit and hold the lines on debated topics.

Grants that permit travel options are controlled by nebulous sources. Requirements are not obvious, and the winning papers are never available to define expectations. Scholastic considerations are often not divulged, and creativity is assumed to eliminate competition. Practiced research directs the course for a particular knowledge that assists the habit of exclusion and arbitrary determinations from empowered sources have predictable outcomes based on names.

Caesar’s account of observation reports takes the time to introduce delightfully creative products of his contempt for forced accountability. These required assessments of colleague performance play a conspicuously prominent role in encouraging class structure within the institution. An entertaining interlude among other educational imperatives, this chapter is well positioned in the middle of a book full of bitter commentary. Equally engaging are the author’s suppositions on where results are filed and the uselessness of such endeavors.

In a chapter of contrast, humor is lost to a discussion of applying for positions. Caesar vividly describes the original baptism into academia as a series of repeated rejections after which applicants are reconciled to the job of seeking employment. The reception for one among hundreds does not mirror past hiring ease. Endless attempts to secure a position provoke little response and certainly no revelation for clarification or improvement. Ironically, muted replies are a result of legal mechanisms installed to prevent injustice in corporate dynamics that erase the hope of reinstating traditional familiarity. Without a voiced reason for unsuccessful employment, personal failure is often assumed, and a once distinct professional calling is lost to intense networking and resume improvement.

Discussion of theory evolves into an elaboration on student inadequacies in the classroom. An introduction to reasoning at Clarion University proved the futility of teaching advanced literature in a second-rate university. The top, he asserts, dictate rules
that muddle literary understanding for an audience not intellectually prepared or inclined towards high scholarship. Exposure to politicized rhetoric offends a contingency of learners who refuse to partake of thoughtfulness specifically aimed at broadening current exposure. A scathing report on student ineptness mellows with a protectionist commentary suggesting the inappropriate nature of this learning for local purpose, but conspicuously skirts taking responsibility for teaching inadequacies.

The importance of understanding theory is a masked agenda within the text on sabbatical privilege. Time away is so far removed from the original intention that the reward has lost all meaning. Only the elite regime moves about so freely that the experience can be taken for granted, while any favor has been removed from the bottom sector.

Thoughts digress, and the text is abandoned to recognize a noble intention has been diverted. This ultimate experiential encounter mimics the academic condition. Caesar’s purpose is conveyed and leads a call for change. The unspoken topic resounds in the mind of educators who know the real subject is “teaching,” and Caesar’s book is well worth a read.

Harassment, Hazing, Housing and Other Issues: The Law and Your Campus
Edited by Daniel J. Gephart

Reviewed by Dr. Thomas Ware
Director, Student Support Services
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The prudent college administrator and faculty member has a real interest in keeping abreast of the rapid changes that occur in the legal environment as it relates to colleges and universities. Failure to do so can result in some unpleasant consequences for the institution with needless legal expenses and court settlements. This can be especially difficult for institutions in an age of shrinking public resources. The surest method of avoiding legal pitfalls is education (training). Therefore, Gephart’s work should be required reading of all personnel employed in colleges and universities that deal with academics, student records, housing, and extracurricular activities.

The book was logically organized into chapters covering the most common areas of litigation that occur in higher education, including harassment, housing, fraternities, disabilities, FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), athletics, and other notable cases organized together in a chapter entitled, “Etc.” Each case began with a descriptive title and a lesson to be learned from the case followed by a brief narrative of the case and its results. At the conclusion of the summary, the actual court case was
cited. The appendix of the book contained the full text of the majority opinion of some of the more significant and groundbreaking decisions.

The first chapter on harassment contained a variety of interesting cases to the higher education professional. One case involved university liability for a hostile environment created by a visitor. Another cautionary case demonstrated the need for colleges and universities to take email harassment claims seriously. The major area of concern with regard to harassment for colleges and universities is sexual harassment. Three cases are discussed that involve sexual harassment between agents of the university and students. The reader can glean from these cases that one should be vigilant, consistent, and strictly adhere to established procedures in dealing with harassment claims.

Student housing is another area full of possible litigation for higher education institutions, and Gephart’s second chapter discussed several cases from this aspect of student affairs. One case of interest was in New York where a court ruled that colleges and universities in that state have final authority over roommate selection in student housing. A different case found that the university was not liable for a student falling from a bed because bed rails were not legally mandated in that state. Another case involved a student with a disability claiming discrimination and harassment by university officials. The student was cited for safety violations for having boxes and furniture blocking egress from the student’s room. When the student was eventually asked to move out of the residence hall for failing to take action, the student claimed discrimination. The court found that the university was not responsible for moving the items for the student because that would constitute services of a “personal nature,” which, according to the Office of Civil Rights, are not required.

The third chapter covered was Greek affairs, which has been noted for numerous incidents of litigation. The first case involved the issue of hazing, and it was determined that national fraternities must take an active role in enforcing prohibitions on the hazing of pledges. Further cases illustrated the need for institutions to be proactive in preventing hazing and to make sure such measures will hold up under scrutiny in court. One case of note found that colleges could face liability for injuries if they allow employees to supervise fraternity parties.

The next chapter outlined several important cases in the area of individuals with disabilities. One major case ruled that colleges do not have to make accommodations for students with disabilities if doing so would compromise the integrity of the academic program. Another case demonstrated the wide latitude that courts give to academic affairs administrators. A student with a disability was dismissed from an academic program for having poor grades even after accommodations were made. The court found no wrongdoing on the part of the college. Another case ruled that colleges and universities, not the college officials themselves, were liable for claims of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Other cases included those covering the scope of ADA, contact personnel for ADA, and accessibility.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) constituted the fifth chapter of the book. FERPA is certainly a source of liability issues for higher education institutions. Gephart’s selection of cases was representative of the varied nature of FERPA. A noteworthy case informed the reader that only tangible records are covered.
by the legislation, not personal notes, conversations between college officials, or records that are kept in the sole possession of their creator. Other cases involved disclosure of records to third parties acting on behalf of the institution, tape recordings of student teaching activities, and testing for properly informing students of a subpoena of their educational records.

In light of recent injuries surrounding celebrations of collegiate sporting events, Gephart’s chapter on liability in the realm of athletics was particularly enlightening. A cited case illustrated this point when numerous students at the University of Wisconsin were injured in a stampede while trying to get on the football field during a post-game celebration. The students were trampled when fans tried to get through gates in a fence that surrounded the field. Students sued the university claiming that they should have been aware that a stampede was possible. The Wisconsin Supreme Court disagreed when it ruled that the university officials were free from liability because they used professional judgment in having the fence erected. Other cases pertained to liability for intramural athletics, injuries to ballplayers at university playing fields, and repayment of scholarships for athletes who fail to qualify academically.

The final chapter of the book was a collection of cases in a variety of areas and appropriately entitled, “Etc.” Some of the more interesting cases presented by Gephart identified that trespassers have no right to use university facilities, committees that appropriate student activities fees must hold public meetings, and colleges are not responsible for student safety during off-campus activities. The final case consisted of a ruling that college yearbooks are nonpublic forums and, therefore, a university may restrict their distribution without infringing on the free speech rights of the students.

*Harassment, Hazing, Housing and Other Issues: The Law and Your Campus* would make a useful resource for any higher education employee. However, there is one caveat to consider. Most of the cases presented by Gephart are from the mid- to late-1990s. The legal environment in America, particularly with regard to education, is quite fluid, and it would be irresponsible for a college or university official to read this book and assume that these cases are a definitive guide to follow in liability decision-making. Also, the legal environment does vary from state to state, so Gephart’s work should certainly not be considered an exhaustive work on the topic. The book would, however, make a great addition to a comprehensive plan to educate employees about legal issues they may encounter in conducting the day-to-day activities related to their jobs. The book would also be useful in graduate programs training higher education leaders of tomorrow.
Cabell’s Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Psychology and Administration

*Edited by David W. E. Cabell and Deborah L. English*

ISBN #0-911753-19-2

Reviewed by Myron L. Pope
Assistant Professor, Adult and Higher Education
University of Oklahoma

The internet is not exhaustive. Library stacks can be incomplete. Personal knowledge can go only so far. And Cabell’s Director not only fills in those blanks, it expand opportunity. Cabell’s *Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Psychology and Administration* (*Directory*) is one of the most valuable and perhaps underutilized resources in the entire higher education industry.

For many researchers and practitioners who are interested in publishing a manuscript, the process can be perplexing, so the *Directory* provides the guidelines for publication for over 225 journals classified under twenty-eight topic areas. These topical areas include adult career and vocational, counseling and psychological services, education management/administration, higher education, and urban education, among others. The *Directory* also provides information about the review process, number of external reviewers, and acceptance rate for these journals.

As there are various writing styles required for varying journals, including the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, the *Directory* provides specific guidelines about the style and format requirements of most of the included journals. This specifically applies to those journals that have their own unique publication submission guidelines.

Also important in considering the compatibility of a manuscript for publication in one of these educational journals is an understanding of the review process. The *Directory* provides instructions on the type of review process utilized by the editor(s), the number of reviewers, the acceptance rates, the amount of time required for review, the availability of the reviewers’ comments, any fees required for review and publication of the manuscript, the number of copies of the manuscript required for review, and also potential manuscript topics. These characteristics of the *Directory* allow an author to narrow down the number of journals that will be interested in publishing a work. The *Directory* assists an author in determining which journal is most appropriate for a topic, format, or design, and can save an author time and resources by educating an author about a journal’s expectations.

The *Directory* also does an excellent job of defining what a “refereed article” is, and additionally assists in understanding the steps that are included in the process of publishing a refereed article. For example, the *Directory* provides information about relating the theme of a manuscript to the topics published by each journal, sending the manuscript, and understanding the comments of the reviewers regarding a manuscript. These guidelines are important in not only ensuring that the proper journal is selected...
and submitted, but it also allows for an understanding of what to expect and how to respond to reviewer comments.

The Sixth Edition (2002-03) Directory for educational psychology and administration, which is edited by David W. E. Cabell of McNeese State University, is divided into two separate volumes. These volumes are divided alphabetically: A-J and J-Z. There is also a separate directory which specifically focuses on educational curriculum and methods for those individual researchers who need publication guidance in these areas of specialization. The educational psychology and administration volumes can be published for $89.95 through www.cabells.com, or by contacting the company at Cabell’s Publishing Company in Texas. The educational curriculum and methods volume, which contains 350 journals categorized under twenty-eight topics, can be purchased for $99.95 through the same outlets.

The Directory is an exceptional resource for faculty members and graduate students, but it is also an excellent resource for virtually any student affairs office. Every vice president’s office should have one copy. This type of resource can expand opportunities for the orientation professional, and provide excellent direction for research or best practice queries.

**Embrace the Oxymoron: Customer Service in Higher Education**

*By Neal Raisman*

Published by LRP Publications, 2002, 191 pages

Reviewed by Todd Adams

Assistant Dean of Students

Duke University

In Neal Raisman’s book, *Embrace the Oxymoron: Customer Service in Higher Education*, he reinforces the value of service in an era of ever-increasing consumerism and establishes its worth within the hallowed halls of higher learning. Although colleges and universities have long been seen as bastions of intellectual and moral development and thus were exempt from traditional market mechanisms, Raisman suggested that providing good service should be inherent in higher education jobs, as it is every institution’s mission to “serve students.” By serving students well, he contended, campuses will see direct benefits in their student enrollment and retention.

Raisman, who is president and the founder of AcademicMAPS and has served as a community college president, divided the book into three primary sections. In the first 19 chapters he discussed what customer service is, why it is important, and the value it has in an academic community. Raisman did not suggest that providing quality service to students is the same as a merchandiser, like Wal-Mart, providing quality service to its customers. He accurately pointed out that students are not really customers, but rather, clients. As clients, students are sometimes unhappy, and, in his view, that is perfectly
acceptable. Raisman used the analogy that colleges and universities are like doctors; they may have to give suggestions and feedback that are unpleasant and/or untimely, but ultimately are in the best interest of the people they serve. In fact, students expect excellent service, even if it means giving unpopular direction or advice. To do something different would be cheating the students, thereby devaluing the educational experience.

In Chapter 20, Raisman introduced 13 Principles of Customer Service in Higher Education. He used the next 13 chapters to more fully detail each of the principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle One</th>
<th>Students should be given courteous and concerned attention to their needs and valued as people.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle Two</td>
<td>Students should come before personal or college-focused goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Three</td>
<td>The processes, rules and regulations of higher education should be fully and actually student-centered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Four</td>
<td>Be honest in all communications and do not patronize students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Five</td>
<td>Students can never be an inconvenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Six</td>
<td>There must be a proper match between product and the customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Seven</td>
<td>Just because it was someone else who did something that would hurt a student does not relieve you of doing what is right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Eight</td>
<td>Students deserve an environment that is neat, bright, welcoming and safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Nine</td>
<td>Student are not really customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Ten</td>
<td>The customer is <em>not</em> always right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Eleven</td>
<td>Satisfaction is not the gauge of successful customer service in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Twelve</td>
<td>Do not cheapen the product in the name of customer service. No pandering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Thirteen</td>
<td>To every problem there is more than one solution and they often are external rather than within academia.</td>
</tr>
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His chapters on Principles Ten and Eleven are particularly notable. With Principle Ten, he argued that students are not always right, although they do have the right to question and to be informed when they are incorrect. Raisman used the example of a student seeking a high grade to illustrate his point. “Simply because a student feels he or she paid for a good grade is not a reason to automatically provide her all A’s” (p. 103). Students should expect to be wrong and to learn from their mistakes as part of the educational process for which they (or their families) are paying. The chapter on Principle Eleven delves into student satisfaction, and why it should not be used as a measure of a college’s success in serving its customers. According to Raisman, if it was an institution’s goal to satisfy everyone, then all students would receive high marks and, at some point, the value of an A or B+ becomes just as unsatisfying as a C. Since satisfaction itself is short-lived, Raisman contended it is “too low a target” to use in assessing an institution’s service. Besides, Raisman suggested, “satisfaction is not the service the customer is purchasing” (p. 105). Value for their money and the return on their investment is what students and their families desire most from a college or university.

In the final grouping of chapters, Raisman established the Tier Zero Customer Service concept. This concept employed the 13 principles for organizations to provide customer service in a preemptive way so that potential problems may be avoided. The Tier Zero concept did not assume that problems are eliminated, or that by being a Tier Zero institution the school will be nationally ranked, but it did imply that by recognizing needs and addressing them before they are problematic, students, faculty and staff are assured that their voices are heard. An example Raisman gave of a Tier Zero solution centered on the traditionally long lines at registration, bursar, and record’s offices. In a “better” effort, a school might use an attendant, not unlike the airlines at their ticket counters, to direct people to the proper station and even take their completed forms and checks whenever possible. In a “best” Tier Zero solution, the institution would remove the lines altogether by utilizing software for on-line registration, bill paying, and record checking. In this model, students needing to see a college representative would not have to wait in long lines to speak to someone about their particular situations and circumstances. This concept also allows the staff in those offices to focus on working directly with students in a personalized way that often can not occur when long lines and frayed nerves are the norm.

Embrace the Oxymoron is a quick read that provides valuable insight for organizations within academia that are exploring service as a tool to improve their reputations. The book is particularly beneficial to those institutions that struggle with enrollment and retention. By simplifying the issue of customer service into small, direct points, and encouraging Tier Zero solutions to problems, Raisman created a resource that can be used by administrators, staff, and faculty.
College students will define “civic responsibility” very differently. Some will equate it with volunteering and community service, some might discuss the responsibilities of citizenship and why it is important to vote. Still others might describe organizations in their hometown that represent civic involvement and contributions to one’s community.

Thomas Ehrlich’s excellent collection of essays about higher education’s important role in civic responsibility addresses a broad range of thoughts and practices. In addition to providing specific examples of various institutions’ civic engagement initiatives, it is a comprehensive look at the historical and philosophical foundations for higher education’s responsibilities as well as a timely and critical argument for institutional engagement. Today’s college students will face complicated moral and social problems in their professions and in the communities in which they do and will live. The contributors to this collection suggest ways to help students not just face these challenges but contribute to solutions. Student affairs professionals should recognize this as both a way to enhance and expand students’ learning and leadership experiences, and an opportunity to partner with academic affairs on an important and timely issue. Similarly, academic leadership should recognize the opportunity for interdisciplinary research and programming. All students of leadership can benefit from reflecting on the importance of the civic engagement and community involvement beyond a particular campus border.

The book’s introduction provides the context for the importance of preparing today’s students for responsible citizenship. The rest of the book is divided into five parts: (1) What are the problems: Higher education and its students; (2) What are colleges and universities doing about the problems: An overview; (3) Interactions with other sectors of society; (4) Perspectives from different sectors of higher education; and (5) Special challenges.

Part one’s emphasis on student attitudes and behavior makes clear that this entire collection is directly related to students, and how educators can help them develop as citizens. The case is clearly made for being concerned about college students’ attitudes about civic engagement and the challenges faced in addressing civic responsibility. The second part of the book provided a survey of good practices aimed at promoting civic responsibility among colleges and universities. Part three focused on the intersections that exist between civic education and other social sectors such as the media, public education at the primary and secondary levels, and the special challenges to civic and community engagement posed by the digital age and the move toward the on-line
Campus. The fourth part of the book showed the editor’s respect for the mission and culture of individual institutions and the need for each institution to consider the kind of college or university they are, the needs of the community in which they are located, and the unique resources and opportunities they offer. Essays about enhancing civic education reflect many perspectives, including the community college, comprehensive university, liberal arts college, historically black college, religious-based college, and the research university. This section provided a rich set of examples of how institutions actually incorporate civic responsibility and education into their curriculum and campus culture. The last part of the book addressed the themes that cut across institutional type and mission and make a case for partnerships and regional, as well as national, collaboration among institutions.

Student affairs professionals with an interest in measuring their own institution’s attitudes and commitment to civic education might consider using Nancy L. Thomas’ chapter, *The College and University as Citizen* as a starting point. Thomas listed and gave innovative examples of ten historical and contemporary institutional activities and how they can be more strongly related to civic engagement and education. She included the following in her inventory: (1) Responsive curricula; (2) Cooperative extension and continuing education programs; (3) Clinical programs and field-based learning opportunities for students in professional programs; (4) Top-down administrative initiatives; (5) Centralized administrative-academic units with outreach missions; (6) Academically based centers and institutes; (7) Faculty professional service and academic outreach; (8) Student initiatives; (9) Institutional initiatives with an economic or political purpose; and (10) Access to facilities and cultural events.

Thomas concluded her section with a discussion of strategies for identifying and implementing these kinds of initiatives and finding the ones that best fit an institution. This was an inspirational chapter for engaging college leadership to talk with students, colleagues, and community leaders about possibilities.

The President’s call to Americans to volunteer and engage in community service following the September 2001 terrorist attacks contributed to a renewed interest in service, and current events define a “teachable moment” in terms of civic responsibility. In July 2002, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching announced the creation of a program studying the political engagement of students. The Political Engagement Project will be co-directed by Ehrlich and Anne Colby, a senior scholar at the Carnegie Foundation. Thomas Ehrlich’s *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* is an excellent resource for educators, leaders, students and citizens who wish to contribute to greater civic responsibility.
College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College

By Sherrie Nist and Jodi Patrick Holschuh
ISBN 1-58008-357-9

Reviewed by Darrell C. Ray
Educational Program Specialist in University Housing
University of Georgia

Historically, the holistic development of students has been a major objective of higher education (Stanford, 1992). The transition from high school to college can be both a difficult and defining time in many students’ lives. Shifting from parental authority and the defined curriculum of secondary education to the freedom of choice afforded by higher education can prove to be the demise of even the most talented student. Trends in higher education, including rising tuition costs, declining state financial support, and increased student attrition has led to many institutions creating specific interventions promoting the retention of their students. There has also been increased research on the adaptation to and ultimately the retention of college students. Nist and Holschuh in this text provide practical and easy to follow solutions for today’s college students to acclimate to the academic life of college. The text consists of 22 chapters covering preparation steps for academic and personal success in college.

Though not done by the authors, the text could be further broken down into four main sections: (1) introduction to college, including information to prepare the student for understanding the importance of college, providing operational definitions and explanations for institutional processes; (2) an academic overview, understanding the importance of selecting an academic major, time management, and other related issues; (3) study techniques, how to best prepare for coursework and handle stress related to academics; and (4) examination preparation and tips for successfully conveying information retained.

Many students achieved academic success in high school through route memorization, but have failed to master the ability of information integration. Chapter one provides students with six ways in which college differs from high school and places the transition in an easy to follow context. The subsequent three chapters (2, 3, 4) moved through the resources that may be available on campus for both personal and academic assistance, working with and understanding professors as opposed to the previous experiences with high school teachers, and a realistic approach to course selection and course load balance for optimal performance. Information is provided for professor selection and when to withdraw from a course. Which can be important points as an early academic disappointment may shake a student’s self-confidence and esteem. The section concludes with a base understanding of grade point average calculations.

Chapter 5 highlights major selection, campus resources available, and what to consider when making academic decisions. Balancing the demands and responsibilities of college life, social life, emotional, financial, and academic adjustments are then covered. Chapter 7 discussed time management and the mindset that students should
enter college with. The authors suggested that students approach college with a 40-hour week mentality. Unfortunately, that can be unrealistic for many students in that they may not have ever placed that much focus on academics prior to college. This mentality does, however, give students realistic ways in which to manage tasks and accomplish goals. The next three chapters address motivation, goal setting, balancing stress and learning styles and how an understanding of an individual learning style can be beneficial.

The authors provide direction on how students can create a positive environment conducive to studying and also provide ways to remove distractions. This can be important for students that may live in traditional residence hall settings and must adjust to a shared living space. Understanding the expectations of professors and instructors and how to successfully take notes follows a complete understanding of the syllabus, how to read it, and what information is critical to understand is also covered. Chapters 15-19 cover how to read college textbooks for increased information retention through active reading, memorization, and how students should study for different subjects and understanding how changing methods depending on the subject can enhance learning. Learning in the context of technology and computers in classroom learning experience are mentioned including studying, taking exams, and doing research on the computer. Plagiarism is briefly mentioned, but students might benefit from a more detailed discussion of academic honesty.

The final three chapters of the text discuss examination preparation, specifically in the case of objective exams (multiple choice, true-false, etc.), preparation for essays and other types of subjective examinations, and finally, a conclusion about midterm and final examination preparation and success.

The text does a wonderful job of explaining inherent differences or adjustments that might have to be made when transitioning to college. The material is not written to specific to certain types of institutions. Students, in general can benefit from this material no matter what type of institution they attend. The chapters are not long, but do provide an overview and direction for additional assistance for students seeking more information. Whenever applicable the authors have provided short bulleted lists and checklists of items for the reader to consider. Detailed graphics are provided to ensure that the reader understands the intent and allow for greater clarity of the information. An additional feature to this text is the use of sidebars to convey information that would be useful to different student populations. There are seven topics for the sidebars:

1. Sad but True; detail actual stories of student experiences
2. The Inside Scoop; advice based on research
3. Listen Up; study tips based on experience
4. Do you Homework; advice for experiences outside the classroom
5. For Adults Only; tips directed toward non-traditional students returning to higher education
6. Get Wired; information for the use technology in education
7. Urban Legend; the myths and false assumptions of many students

These sidebars contribute a wealth of information to supplement the text and make for a
smooth transition between chapters.

Though filled with vital information for prospective and current students, there is concern of whether students, rather than their parents, would invest the time into reading the book. The information could also be used as a supplement to University 101 courses, orientation programs, and student activities planning. Ensuring the academic success of students can promote their involvement in the social atmosphere of the campus. The authors cover a broad range of subjects that any student could find beneficial. Nist and Holschuh throughout the text encourage the use of campus resources to the students. This connection with campus services and resources, along with individual responsibility, could work well to promote academic success.

References


Making the Most of College Revisited

ISBN 0-674-00478-7

Reviewed by Christopher W. Tremblay
Director of Admissions
Gannon University in Erie, PA.

Special thanks to Stanley Henderson, associate vice president for enrollment management at the University of Cincinnati, for recommending this text to me. Stan helped me make the most of my college experience and continues to serve as a mentor to me.

The function of orientation and transition programs is to help students make the most of college. Richard Light’s Making the Most of College is a text that contains findings, insights and wisdom from college students about the role colleges play and should be playing in helping students maximize their college experience. On the most simplistic, metaphorical level, this book is to higher education administrators what transition books are for incoming new students: it offers perspective on the interconnectedness of college life. There are more than a dozen topics covered in the book that relate to orientation, ranging from study skills to diversity.

Chapter one is an introduction to the purpose behind the book. The philosophy of Light’s writings comes down to two elements: (1) what the student does to benefit from
college and (2) what the college does to support a student’s college education. The combination of these two efforts should facilitate the best possible undergraduate experience. While the findings may seem basic upon first review, they are grounded on extensive conversations from hundreds of college students. Throughout the book are testimonials from some of the 1600 undergraduate students who were interviewed for the study. These short stories serve as examples that reinforce the student development and transition theories being taught in classrooms nationwide. The other eight chapters narrow in on the elements that have a significant impact on the undergraduate educational experience.

According to Light, the students who are most satisfied with college are those who make connections among their in-classroom and out-of-the-classroom experiences. Light continues to re-iterate the importance of good academic advising. At the end of this chapter, Light used the phrase “educational package” as a descriptor of the interconnectedness yet he did not refer to it later as expected. The overall message of this chapter is that there is a responsibility to help students make the connections that serve as the foundation of success.

Light honed in on the specific suggestions from students, ranging from time management to extracurricular participation, and reminded readers of the strong relationship between outside commitment and satisfaction in college. What is most surprising is when Light described the lack of a significant relationship between paid work and grades earned in courses. Furthermore, patterns of adjustment and living patterns along with symptoms of academic trouble were explored.

Light next described the learning process of students, focusing significantly on the dilemma that faces most faculty and academic deans: the writing levels and competencies of college students. Light pointed out, “writing plays a pivotal role in the academic lives of most students” (p. 55). His key points were that (1) the best learning takes place when writing is specific and substantial, and (2) writing improvement occurs when students enlist the help of peer reviewers. Light’s research revealed that one of the best classroom organizational techniques is based on the use of current controversial topics to foster student engagement. He also offered advice to science and foreign language faculty for enhancing the classroom environment with changes in writing assignments.

Chapter five began with a statement “(g)ood advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (p. 81). He believed the role of the advisor is pivotal for students because the advisor can help the student connect the relationship of their academic work to their personal lives. He reminded readers that advising should be customized to the student and advisors should encourage students to become involved.

In the next chapter he offered a prescription for how to become an unforgettable professor. An academic theme was continued, this time discussing the roles faculty play and their impact. Light emphasized that students gain confidence from working with faculty and they appreciate faculty who can link curriculum to student experiences. What stood out in this chapter was the example of the professor facilitating a “pick a number” exercise that demonstrated the behavior of large group settings like a lecture
class. According to Light’s research, an interdisciplinary approach to classroom instruction also is extremely effective.

Light also addressed the evolution of people on college campuses, referring to it as the “new student diversity” (p. 129) and saw it as the biggest change on campuses. Despite having poor diversity experiences in high schools, students must enter college with an open mind because the interactions they have are critical. He explained that even disagreements help in learning and maturation.

Using Chapter seven as a foundation, Light focused on the diversity of religion and the impact of diversity on college living in this chapter. Few college students grew up knowing of other religions other than the one they practiced as children. Light asserted that religious diversity is learned from peer social interactions rather than in the classroom. He also verbalized the challenge of integrating religion into academics. The latter part of the chapter described the importance of creating diverse living situations. Surprisingly, students choose to live with people who are different. Through these living situations, students gain self-awareness, helping them to become reflective practitioners.

Light then provided an outline of how to translate the information in the previous chapters into an action plan. Light used the language of the students in describing “campus culture builders,” (p. 195), the people on campus who take the initiative, serve as the student advocates and who have an impact on their colleagues and the students. Part of being an effective administrator comes down to the basic principle: reminding students that college is a unique opportunity. Another noteworthy practice noted was scheduling classes in the residence halls before dinner because the conversation that continues during dinner can be powerful. The final message in this section was that administrators must get in the students’ way.

One of the final parts of the text is an overview of the research project and provides insight into the creation, evolution and implementation of this massive undertaking to collect student perspectives. Involving faculty and students along with having support from senior administrators were the keys to the success of the project. For educational professionals who wish to initiate assessments on their campuses, this section is most helpful.

The book is highly recommended and has great value in having new faculty and staff read it upon arriving on campus. The book represents the voice of the students placed in context with developmental and transition theories. Throughout the book Light points out that the findings can be applied to all types of educational institutions, not just Harvard. Overall, this publication serves as a prescription for improving the quality of life for students.
Guidelines for Manuscript Authors

The Journal of College Orientation and Transition focuses on the trends, practices, research, and development of programs, policies, and activities related to the matriculation, orientation, transition, and retention of college students. Also encouraged are literature reviews, “how-to” articles, innovative initiatives, successful practices, and new ideas.

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