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A Model for First-Generation Students Least Likely to Engage
in High-Impact Practices: A Mixed Methods Study

by

Ann F. Koopmann

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska
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(Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Under the Supervision of Professor James V. Griesen

Lincoln, Nebraska

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A Model for First-Generation Students Least Likely to Engage
in High Impact Practices: A Mixed Methods Study

Ann F. Koopmann, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2014

Advisor: James V. Griesen

This study examined the use of a model of required participation in high-impact practices on first-generation students who were undecided in their college major choice. This study used a concurrent mixed methods strategy to understand the effect of required participation on academic self-concept, student adaptation, academic achievement and their valuation of participation. In this study the Self Perception Profile for College Students, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire and semester grade point averages were used to measure the relationship between required participation and academic self-concept, adaptation to college and academic achievement. At the same time, the students' perceptions of change in their academic practices and their evaluations of the seminar were explored using survey instruments.

Students least likely to engage were defined as full-time, first-generation students who had not identified a major and indicated low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience. Both the treatment and control groups were college students attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln beginning the fall of 2013.

The treatment designed for this study was a first-year, one-semester seminar designed with an extended orientation to the university and a cognitive approach to

college major choice. The treatment was itself a high-impact practice and consisted of required participation in additional high-impact practices. Students participated in mentor led groups, faculty interactions, writing exercises and small group discussions among other course content. Central to the treatment was the discussion regarding students' responsibility for their own education.

The study found no significant increase in academic self-concept, levels of adaptation to college or higher academic achievement. It also found students valued the seminar experience and increased in the ability to match interests to career and major choices.

In conclusion, the study reveals a model of required participation for students least likely to engage in high-impact practices. It offers a method for analysis that can be used in future studies, a discussion of current practices and implications for future research.

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*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.
Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If we agree that honors program students contribute to the success metrics of a university such as higher freshmen to sophomore retention rates, lower student to faculty ratio, higher six year graduation rates and that these students report better undergraduate experiences, then how can we justify not providing for more students? (Steven Lynn, Dean of the Honors College, University of South Carolina, 2013)

Background and Context

Historically, the honors movement at large public universities was fueled by the launch of Sputnik and the realization that talent was being wasted. The need to reclaim quality, and urgency for more rigorous academic standards promoted the “superior student” cause (Andrews, 2011). This movement, the establishment of honors programs at large public universities, criticized the democratic principle “education for all,” stating it was a cry that neglected talented students. Andrews (2011), paraphrasing the first edition of the *Superior Student Scholar* newsletter, notes “for a democratic society to survive it must create a real leadership within” (p. 25). Later editions of the newsletter argue that “ability grouping should not automatically be called “undemocratic . . . that a pluralistic democracy . . . can offer the highest and most intensive cultivation of the mentally superior” (p. 25). This approach might be termed an “equal-opportunity argument; democracy does not mean the same education for all but the opportunity for all to develop their potential as far as they can” (p. 25).

Beyond the criticism of elitism there seems to be a school of thought that believes offering an honors education can benefit all students at the institution. The claims vary. Clauss (2011) notes students from these honors programs typically take 75% of their

coursework outside the honors offerings, thus bringing engaged and sometimes intellectually aggressive students to interact with their peers and instructors in non-honors settings. Additionally, honors programs can model curricula that hold students responsible for synthesizing their education. Although general education requirements are in place at virtually all colleges and universities they often are delivered in large lecture courses and diverse non-major areas.

The honors program model. At its inception, a university honors program is developed to accommodate the special needs and abilities of superior students (Schuman, 1989). *The Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Task Force on Honors at The Ohio State University* states:

The educational objectives of an honors program are:

1. to identify students whose ability and motivation are so high that their academic needs would not be adequately met by existing programs;
2. to provide academic opportunities of such caliber that the students thus identified are challenged to perform at the highest level of excellence of which they are capable and through which they may become independent learners;
3. to establish an environment that will encourage the aspirations of and the achievements by these students and that will foster in them dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of their potential;
4. to derive from the program benefits for the wider academic community, such as focusing attention on quality education and a concept of excellence, giving faculty members the psychic reward that derives from working with gifted students, and attracting to the campus scholars and speakers who would not otherwise be there. (Halverson, 1973; as cited in Friedman & Jenkins-Friedman, 1986, p. 7)

It seems the above mentioned objectives, with the exception of number one, should apply to all students in higher education. Fowler and Boylan (2010) and other academic persistence researchers indicate that interaction (good interaction) with the academic advisor and faculty can be the single most important and underestimated characteristic of

student success and retention. These interactions are the foundations for a fully developed honors program. The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) is the professional association of undergraduate honors programs and colleges. Schuman (1989) references NCHC as an association of institutions that overtly cultivate “the superior student” (p. 7). Although unique and institution specific, honors programs must submit to recognized standards. NCHC has defined a set of basic standards (see Appendix A). These standards include:

The honors program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves.

The honors curriculum, established in harmony with the mission statement, meets the needs of the students in the program and features special courses, seminars, colloquia, experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, or other independent-study options.

Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.

The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus. (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2013)

The above mentioned standards and honors program practices serve as a basis for research into the probability to use such prototypes as a model to institutionalize across campus.

The call to action for higher education. Administrators in higher education are being called to task. High tuition costs and low retention and graduation rates are cause for concern. Below is an excerpt from United States President Barack Obama in his remarks on the American Graduation Initiative (2009):

But we also have to ensure that we're educating and preparing our people for the new jobs of the 21st century. We've got to prepare our people with the skills they

need to compete in this global economy. (Applause.) Time and again, when we placed our bet for the future on education, we have prospered as a result -- by tapping the incredible innovative and generative potential of a skilled American workforce. That's what happened when President Lincoln signed into law legislation creating the land grant colleges, which not only transformed higher education, but also our entire economy. That's what took place when President Roosevelt signed the GI Bill which helped educate a generation, and ushered in an era of unprecedented prosperity. That was the foundation for the American middle class.

And that's why, at the start of my administration I set a goal for America: By 2020, this nation will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. We used to have that. We're going to have it again.

But today I'm announcing the most significant down payment yet on reaching the goal of having the highest college graduation rate of any nation in the world. We're going to achieve this in the next 10 years. (Applause.) And it's called the American Graduation Initiative.

Utilizing an honors program model can answer the call to action toward student engagement, persistence to graduation, and overall satisfaction of the student's undergraduate education. Moritz (2011) asserts

As higher education falls under increasingly frequent attacks for low retention and graduation rates . . . ironically, the elitist approach of honors programs, with their throwback pedagogies of small class discussion, mentor-guided independent projects, and focus on critical thinking and problem solving provides an important tool in addressing this educational need. (p. 67)

Moritz further maintains that the honors program's sense of community, "that small liberal arts feel" (2011, p. 67), can benefit the institution with persistence rates, noting for example, the first generation student in an honors setting learns to set his/her own academic expectation, and gains confidence and acceptance from fulfilling his/her potential through small discussion-based colloquia. These discussions lend to the evidence that honors programs can provide opportunities to develop prototypes and pilot

programs that can be scaled up to serve the general student population, indicating that a good education should be attainable for all students.

High-impact practices. Higher education administrators have also put out a call to action. Research demonstrates that certain educational practices have an impact on student learning outcomes and progress toward graduation (McNair & Albertine, 2012). In his most widely cited publication, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, George D. Kuh (2008) asserts that participation in certain high-impact practices (HIPs) leads to gains in increased knowledge of campus and first to second year retention goals as well as gains in personal and social development among other positive outcomes.

An array of evidence points to the value and utility of HIPs in providing an improved learning experience for all students. In fact, HIPs can provide students exactly the kinds of active and engaged learning experiences that help them develop the skills and knowledge essential for success in work, life and citizenship. (McNair & Albertine, 2012, p. 4)

Kuh (2008) identifies the following educationally researched high-impact practices increase rates of student retention.

- First-year seminars
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Service learning, Community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone courses and projects (pp. 9-11)

First year experiences and common intellectual experiences are noted as two high-impact practices. A 2011 Noel-Levitz report indicates that the highest ranked

practices that work for retention in higher education are academic support and first-year student programs. The report goes on to say “honors programs and mandatory advising were among the top-ranked practices across institution types” (p. 1).

Least likely to engage in high-impact practices. While there is much research on high-impact practices and first year transition of college students (i.e., Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Upcraft, Gardner, & Associates, 1989, etc.) there is still the question of who participates. The research indicates that participation in these high-impact practices is far from the norm.

A majority of college students do not have the opportunity to participate in high-impact activities, and as Kuh notes, underrepresented students—such as first-generation college students and African American students—are far less likely to participate. (Brownell & Swaner, 2009, p. 26)

The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended through 2009 defines the term first-generation as follows:

- (A) an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or
- (B) in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree. (Sec. 402Ah, 2009, p. 190)

Padgett, Johnson and Pascarella (2012) note that first-generation students are significantly at a disadvantage in cognitive and psychosocial measures compared to students whose parents have higher levels of education.

Academic self-concept and student adaptation to college. The research on academic self-concept suggests that students form perceptions of their own academic competence based on two sets of comparisons: (a) an external comparison by which they assess their abilities in particular subjects with the abilities of other students in those

subjects and (b) an internal comparison by which they assess their own ability in one subject relative to their ability in another subject (Byrne, 2002). Academic self-concept is susceptible to the influence of the college and university environment, including interactions with peers and faculty (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Furthermore, House (2000) found that academic self-concept is “significantly, but weakly” (p. 262) associated with certain types of involvement.

“How well students meet the demands of college has been labeled *adjustment*” (Feldt, Graham & Dew, 2011, p. 92). Adjustment to college and the ability to adapt to the college environment can be a predictor of student success. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt and Associates (2010) state, “What students do during college counts more for what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college” (p. 8).

Problem Statement

The literature suggests that first generation students are least likely to participate in high-impact practices. Strayhorn (2006) found that being a first-generation student had a significant effect on achievement in college even in the presence of control variables. Research on the basics of an honors program found an expectation or “requirement” to participate in high-impact practices.

The national discussion on high-impact practices cites great gains in student satisfaction regarding their college experience and their persistence to graduation. Although these practices are collectively effective they are not necessarily uniformly effective (Finley, 2011). To achieve successful outcomes the research suggests that

students participate in at least two practices. Again, the research shows that participation in these high-impact practices is far from the norm (Brownell & Swaner, 2009). Those underrepresented students who do participate, typically do so in activities mandated by scholarship funding, programs such as honors programs, or other types of academically engaging programs. Restating Moritz (2011) . . . for example, the first generation student in an honors setting learns to set his/her own academic expectations, and gains confidence and acceptance from fulfilling his/her potential through small discussion based-colloquia.

A perusal of the internet to investigate the requirements of honors programs at various institutions indicates that in general, the following requirements or opportunities are afforded honors students in the majority of the programs:

- Students must take a first year seminar designed to be small and discussion driven.
- Students are given additional advising resources.
- Students are expected to engage in discussion with faculty through honors work and undergraduate research.
- Students are encouraged to study abroad.
- Students are expected to participate in campus activities and leadership opportunities.

These “requirements/opportunities” are set as an expectation as the student enters the honors program. The student not involved in an honors program or scholarship mandated program has little if any “required” opportunities.

It is this expectation of participation in high-impact practices and the expectation of graduation that must be used as a model and taken to the larger, general student population. It is the intention of this researcher to examine the effect of using an honors

program model of “required participation” on those students least likely to engage in high-impact practices.

Theoretical Framework

Academic self-concept is a particularly important developmental outcome due to its link to academic performance and retention (Cokley, 2000). Originally published in 1984, Astin’s theory of student involvement focuses on factors that facilitate development, defining student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin 1999, p. 518). He explains that involvement is the behavior, not the student’s feelings or thoughts. Astin (1999) argues that for growth and development to occur the student needs to actively engage in the environment. Astin’s 1984 theory of involvement has five basic postulates:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry examination).
2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times.
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student’s involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams).
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. (Astin, 1999, p. 519)

Using Astin's theory of involvement, this study examines two areas of development:

1. The relationship between participation in high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008) and academic self-concept for first-year, first-generation students.
2. The relationship between participation in high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008) and adaptation to college for first-year, first-generation students.

This study explores the use of a first-year seminar incorporating "required" involvement and academic experiences to determine the effect of high-impact practices on students least likely to participate in these practices.

Research Design

This mixed methods study used a concurrent embedded strategy for data collection and analysis. A mixed methods design employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The design is suited to studies where the aim is to consider both quantitative explanation of trends and qualitative probing behind stated trends. The concurrent strategy can be identified by the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, with a primary method that guides the project and a secondary method embedded within the primary method. The secondary method addresses a different question than the primary method. (Creswell, 2009) This mixed methods approach used a quantitative quasi-experiment approach, administering three quantitative instruments combined with two qualitative surveys.

Research Setting

The setting for this study was the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), recognized by the Carnegie Foundation as a Comprehensive Doctoral/Research Extensive university with high undergraduate enrollment. UNL is a land-grant university, a member of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and a member of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (Big 10 Universities, plus the University of Chicago). The University prides itself on being a Carnegie Research University/Very High Research Activity institution with an extraordinary focus on undergraduate education. The University Honors Program has been in existence for 26 years and has seen positive trends in enrollment, retention and graduation.

Research Questions

Quantitative research. One central quantitative question guided this research. Can the high-impact practices employed in university honors programs be utilized effectively with first-time, full-time, first-generation college students who have not identified a major and who indicate low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience?

Converting this question to testable research hypotheses yielded the following:

- H₁ Students in the treatment group will demonstrate a significant increase in degree of academic self-concept between pre- and post-tests.
- H₂ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher degree of academic self-concept than students in a matched control group.
- H₃ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate

significantly higher scores on a measure of student adaptation to college than students in a matched control group.

- H₄ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher level of academic achievement during their first semester than students in a matched control group.

For the purpose of research converting these questions to the null hypotheses yielded the following:

- H₀₁ There will be no significant change in degree of academic self-concept for students in the treatment group between pre- and post-tests.
- H₀₂ There will be no significant difference in degree of academic self-concept between the treatment and control group.
- H₀₃ There will be no significant difference in scores on the measure of student adaptation to college between the treatment and control group.
- H₀₄ There will be no significant difference in level of academic achievement during the first semester of college between the treatment and control group.

Qualitative research. Central to the qualitative measurement of the study was the student's valuation of the seminar, and the student's perception of change in the assessment of their academic practices in college. These measurements were obtained through the following means:

- End of course feedback was collected from all seminar students regarding the value of the seminar.
- Follow-up surveys were given to assess impact of the seminar and perceptions of change in:
 - Confidence in ability to earn a college degree.
 - Knowledge of resources available to help students succeed in their college career.

Participants

This study used a treatment group of $N = 20$ and one control group. The groups are defined as follows:

Treatment Group ($N = 20$). Students least likely to engage. For this study, least likely to engage is defined as first-time, full-time, first-generation students who have not identified a major and indicate low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience. More specifically, to be involved in the treatment group a student had to meet the following traits:

- first-time, full-time, first-generation student
- admitted with an undeclared major to the University's Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center
- indicated they were not involved in activities such as learning communities, Honors Program, scholarship communities, Marching Band/Music Ensembles, ROTC, Varsity Athletics, and other academic communities.

Matched Control Group ($N = 20$). The control group included students identified with the treatment group characteristics who did not participate in the treatment/intervention. More specifically, they were matched based on the following traits:

- first-time, full-time, first-generation student
- admitted to the Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center
- indicated they were not involved in activities such as learning communities, Honors Program, scholarship communities, Marching Band/Music Ensembles, ROTC, Varsity Athletics, and other academic communities.
- did not volunteer to participate in the treatment group
- matched with treatment group participants based on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln two best predictors of success: high school class rank percentile and ACT.

Treatment/Intervention

A specifically designed two-credit hour seminar was offered to first-time, full-time, first-generation students who were admitted with undeclared majors to the Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center. The course description is shown in Figure 1.

Career Development Seminar
Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan
EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours
Days/Time: T-Th 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Location: TCH 205

Focus of the class

This class will focus on your personal/professional development, providing tools to help you seize the most you can from your undergraduate career. Active exploration, examination, and pursuit of career possibilities, including discussion pertaining to involvement in both academic and co-curricular experiences, will provide a broad perspective of what exactly the purpose of each individual's education means to him or her. This course will also challenge each participant to view his or her education in a new way.

Each student will produce an academic plan, a “plan of action,” which will ultimately lead to a career development plan. (a complete syllabus is found in Appendix B)

Figure 1. Career Development Seminar course description.

Research Instruments

This study will use three measures to evaluate the students' growth and development during their first semester in college. The measurements are as follows:

- The Self Perception Profile for College Students: The Self-Perception Profile for College Students provides a domain-specific scale that allows the researcher to discern differences in college students' evaluations of

competence in twelve different domains, plus global self-worth. In addition, one can determine the importance or centrality of each of these domains, as well as the types and quality of social support students receive. The Social Support Scale allows one to also inquire about which and to what extent these sources of social support are providing the student with positive regard. (Neeman & Harter, 2012) (Appendix C)

- The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ): This quick, convenient instrument helps determine how well a student is handling the demands of college. SACQ assesses overall adjustment to college, as well as adjustment in four specific areas:
 - Academic Adjustment
 - Personal-Emotional Adjustment
 - Social Adjustment
 - Attachment (to the institution)

Used by many universities for routine freshman screening, SACQ is a cost-effective way to detect problems early in the student's college career. And because it indicates the nature of those problems, SACQ provides clear guidelines for subsequent intervention. It is particularly useful in identifying potential dropouts. (Baker & Siryk, 1989) (Appendix D)

- The Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory (UNSEI) (Appendix E): This inventory is given to students prior to their first meeting with an academic advisor to set up a first year class schedule.

To quantitatively measure the effectiveness of high-impact practices, the Self-Perception Profile for College Students was given to all participants in the treatment group both pre- and post-intervention and to the control group after the intervention. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire was given to both the treatment group and the control group after the intervention. The Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory (UNSEI) was administered to both the treatment and control group prior to their enrollment at the University. Additionally, semester grade point averages were compared for the treatment and matched control group.

The UNSEI was used to develop a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative measures to be given to the treatment group after the completion of the course.

Additionally, all course participants were asked to complete a course evaluation (Appendices F &G) to assess the value and impact of the course for first-time, full-time students.

Definition of Terms

High-Impact Practices—Educational practices that research suggests increase rates of student retention and engagement. Kuh (2008) notes the following ten high-impact practices (pp. 9-11):

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Service learning, community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone courses and projects

First-time, full-time students—Recent high school graduates entering college for the first-time carrying a full-time course load.

Students most likely to engage—Students in specialized programs and/or benefitting from scholarships which mandate participation, such as honors program students.

Students least likely to engage—Research indicates “Transfer and first-generation students appear to be the most consistently lacking in their participation in high-impact practices compared to other underserved populations” (Finley, 2011, p. 32). For the purpose of this study first-generation students were identified as least likely to engage.

First-generation college student—(a) an individual both of whose parents did

not complete a baccalaureate degree; or (b) regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree. (Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended through 2009, Sec. 402Ah, 2009, p. 190)

Required participation—University honors programs and other scholarship mandated programs require students to become involved in high-impact practices to remain in good standing with the program. For purposes of this study, required participation is enrollment in a first-year seminar designed to “require” involvement in campus and academic experiences. The course grade is dependent on involvement in and outside the class time.

Academic practices—Those matters that may have an impact on academic success in the classroom and are not the typical content found in the subject matter, i.e., awareness of time management skills, confidence in ability to persist to graduation, and knowledge of university resources.

Delimitations

This research only studied students who attended a specific university: A public research university classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University/Very High Research Activity. It is a case study that reflects the particular environments in which the university operates, and the findings of this study may not be relevant to other types of universities or even to the same type of universities operating in different environments.

Limitations

This study is limited to students in the treatment group who elected to enroll in the freshman seminar. Another limitation of the study is that only students with the means to pay for two elective credit hours were likely to enroll in the freshman seminar course. The potential impact to the study is the likelihood of a small sample size and a missed opportunity to capture those least likely to engage.

Significance of the Study

It is well documented that college student participation in high-impact practices leads to greater gains in learning and personal development. Institutions also report higher retention rates for those students participating in these high-impact practices. Students most likely to engage are doing so by choice, in some cases applying to and being selected into programs that mandate participation through scholarship. These programs often provide meaningful and consistent methods and opportunities to engage in high-impact practices. One such program is a university honors program. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University Honors Program requires participation in small first year seminars, peer mentoring groups, specialized academic advising, and interaction with faculty both in and out of the classroom. It is also well documented that the majority of students on college campuses do not engage in these practices.

Given the research on the benefits of participating in high-impact practices, it seems evident that all students should not only have the opportunity to engage in these high-impact practices, but higher education administrators should consider requiring participation. The significance of this study is to determine if an honors program model

of required participation in high-impact practices can be successful when applied to freshmen students who are least likely to participate in such practices.

This study examined the use of an honors program model for high probability impact on the general student population. These program models with “required participation” often show evidence of engagement in high impact practices. More specifically, the study examined the effect of high-impact practices utilized in honors program education on students least likely to participate in high-impact practices.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Democracy does not mean the same education for all but the opportunity for all to develop their potential as far as they can. . . . (Andrews, 2011, p. 25)

Restatement of the Problem

The standards of an honors program and the practices employed by scholarship-based programs serve as a basis for research into the probability to use such prototypes as a model to institutionalize across campus.

As higher education falls under increasingly frequent attacks for low retention and graduation rates . . . ironically, the elitist approach of honors programs, with their throwback pedagogies of small class discussion, mentor-guided independent projects, and focus on critical thinking and problem solving provides an important tool in addressing this educational need. (Moritz, 2011, p. 67)

It is the intention of this researcher to examine the effect of using an honors program model of “required participation” on those students least likely to engage in high-impact practices.

Least Likely to Engage in High-Impact Practices

Review of the literature suggested that first generation students are least likely to participate in high-impact practices.

A majority of college students do not have the opportunity to participate in high-impact activities, and as Kuh notes, underrepresented students—such as first-generation college students and African American students—are far less likely to participate. (Brownell & Swaner, 2009, p. 26)

First-generation students. The demographic profile of students entering higher education is projected to change over the next decade. Many of these students will come from low-income homes and be the first in their families to pursue postsecondary

education (Levine & Associates, 1989). The Chronicle of Higher Education reports in their *Profile of Freshman at 4-year colleges, Fall 2010* that 20.6% are first-generation college students (Profile of Freshman 4-Year Colleges, 2012). The Undergraduate Office of Admissions at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln indicates that Nebraska has a higher population of first generation students and states over 50% of college students are first in their family to attend college (UNL, 2014). “Nationally, first-generation college students represent approximately 30% of all college enrollments, and they have increased in numbers over the last 10 years” (Strayhorn, 2006 p. 83).

The term “first-generation college student” means —

- (A) an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or
- (B) in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree. (Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended through 2009, Sec. 402Ah, p. 190)

First-generation students and engagement in college experiences. Padgett et al. (2012) stated that compared to their non-first-generation peers, first-generation students are specifically impacted in the level of engagement in various college experiences. First generation students are more likely to live off-campus, participate in fewer involvement opportunities, such as volunteering and student organizations, and maintain lower levels of interaction with their peers. First-generation students indicate less class involvement, and report having fewer resources to aid in the academic rigor of college. Padgett et al. (2012) expressed that the experiences most beneficial for first-generation students include enhanced academic experiences. The researchers found a positive relationship between first-generation students who participate in effective

educational practices and their subsequent cognitive and effective growth. Additionally, the researchers indicated, compared to their non-first-generation peers, first-generation students may be underprepared to interact with faculty, as they may not have been encouraged to seek help or interact with teachers in high school. Padgett et al. (2012) wrote that the lack of preparation may cause intimidation and discomfort. First-generation students will be well served to seek help and begin academic discussions in high school, and if not then, then in early advising sessions at the collegiate level. The same is true for peer interactions; there should be an emphasis for first-generation students to utilize collaborative learning and integrate co-curricular activities into their college experience.

When students are not as engaged in college, their overall experiences can be isolating and disconnecting (Soria & Stebleton, 2012). While investigating the differences in academic engagement and retention between first-generation and non-first-generation undergraduate students, Soria and Stebleton (2012) noted that such experiences are magnified for students at large research universities, where classes tend to be larger and interaction with faculty limited. The researchers noted that first-generation students may lack social capital in the higher education environment, and are more likely to miss opportunities to develop supporting mentoring relationships with faculty and become less engaged in their overall academic pursuits. Soria and Stebleton (2012) found evidence to suggest a statistically significant difference between first-generation and non-first-generation students in all academic engagement measures, including contributing to class discussion, asking insightful questions in class, bringing

up ideas and concepts from different classes, and interaction with faculty during classes. First-generation students were associated with lower retention rates than their non-first generation peers, and consistently reported lower measures of academic engagement than their non-first-generation peers. Citing earlier research coupled with their research, Soria and Stebleton (2012) suggested that first-generation students may benefit from having access to communities of belonging such as first-year seminars.

Kuh (2008) stated that although the effects of participating in high-impact practices are positive for all students, historically underserved students tend to benefit more from participation than majority students. He further noted that those first in their family to attend college are less likely to participate in such practices.

First-generation students and academic achievement. Strayhorn (2006) studying the factors that influence academic achievement of first-generation students found cumulative grade point average (GPA) was a function of the linear combination of independent variables such as background traits, precollege and college experiences and first-generation status. He asserted that students who were satisfied with the intellectual life of college achieved higher GPAs, and noted that educators should consider this when designing opportunities conducive to the academic success of first-generation students. Additionally, Strayhorn (2006) suggested academic advising, peer tutoring and seminars designed to teach students study skills and good writing habits may be particularly important for first-generation students.

Brost and Payne (2011) conducted a study comparing learning outcomes of the dismissal testimony for first-generation and non-first-generation students who were

academically dismissed. The researchers indicated that academic dismissal learning outcomes differ for first-generation students. First-generation students directly connect choosing the wrong major with underperformance whereas, non-first-generation students also connect accountability for underperformance. First-generation students indicated time management and academic rigors as reasons for underperformance whereas, non-first-generation students indicated issues rooted in responsibility and transition to adulthood. Brost and Payne's (2011) results suggested that underperformance can be helped through early promotion of cognitive engagement, interpersonal awareness, competency in practical skills and more engagement in the university setting.

Ramos-Sánchez and Nichols (2007) studied the self-efficacy and relationship between academic performance and college adjustment of first-generation college students in comparison with non-first-generation students. Their results support previous research findings suggesting that non-first-generation students perform better academically, regardless of the first-generation student's confidence in his/her ability. They maintained that the self-efficacy levels of first-generation students were lower than non-first generation students. Their results suggested that the higher the self-efficacy, the better the college adjustment. This relationship between self-efficacy and college adjustment has implications for the way in which universities design services for first-generation students (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007).

A 2011 report prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) documented the attainment rates of students who have historically been less successful in college than their peers. The report notes that those students who have historically been

less successful in college are low-income dependent students, students whose parents did not attend college, students with dependents, students who work full time, and Black and Hispanic students (NCES, 2011). Citing the American Graduation Initiative (2009), the report indicated the importance of increasing the number of Americans who obtain a college degree. The means to accomplish higher college attainment rates for students, such as first-generation students; who previously had lower rates of educational progress (see Table 1), must become more successful.

High-Impact Practices

Past research demonstrated that certain educational practices have an impact on student learning outcomes and progress toward graduation (McNair & Albertine, 2012). In his most widely cited publication *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, George D. Kuh (2008) asserted that participation in certain high-impact practices (HIPs) leads to gains in increased knowledge of campus and first to second year retention goals as well as gains in personal and social development among other positive outcomes. Kuh (2008, pp. 9-11) notes the following ten high-impact practices:

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Service learning, community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone courses and projects

Table 1

Percentage Distribution Comparison of First-time Beginners in Postsecondary Education

Percentage of first-time beginners entering postsecondary education	1989-1990	1995-1996	2003-2004
All first-time beginners	100	100	100
Parents did not attend college	42.6	41.7	35.8
All first-time beginners Public 4-year	31.0	28.9	25.5
Parents did not attend college Public 4-year	22.7	18.9	16.8
Percentage distribution for 5-year cumulative persistence for first-time students	1990-94	1996-2000	2004-08
All first-time beginners no longer enrolled	35.5	35.6	38.7
Parents did not attend college no longer enrolled	43.7	44.3	47.1
All first-time beginners no longer enrolled, Public 4-year	26.2	23.4	23.8
Parents did not attend no longer enrolled, Public 4-year	32.3	34.1	35.3
All first-time beginners no degree still enrolled	13.3	17.1	19.9
Parents did not attend college no degree still enrolled	10.6	14.3	18.3
All first-time beginners no degree still enrolled, Public 4-year	19.0	23.0	23.9
Parents did not attend college no degree still enrolled, Public 4-year	19.9	25.8	27.6
Percentage distribution for 5-year cumulative attainment for first-time students	1990-94	1996-2000	2004-08
All first-time beginners bachelor's degree attained	26.5	25.1	24.1
Parents did not attend college bachelor's degree attained	16.0	12.8	10.8
All-first-time beginners Public 4-year, bachelor's degree attained	45.5	46.8	48.2
Parents did not attend college Public 4-year, bachelor's degree attained	33.2	31.9	32.5

Note: Percentage of all first-time beginners compared to first-time beginners whose parents did not attend college: including distribution of 5-year cumulative persistence and attainment rates.

* summarized to include only first-time beginners in postsecondary education and first-time beginners in postsecondary education whose parents did not attend college.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2011)

Kuh (2008) suggested that to raise achievement and engagement institutions must make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high-impact practices; one in the first year and one later. He noted the obvious choice for first year is participation in seminars, learning communities and service learning.

First-year seminars.

In a broad sense . . . freshmen who participate in the University 101 seminar view themselves and their university in a new light. They discover hidden strengths that add to their self-esteem. They learn that you can go through college and earn a degree without ever discovering the real value of college, or you can establish special relationships that can provide inspiration and motivation over the course of a lifetime. (Jewler, 1989, p. 199)

Some educational activities are unusually effective (Kuh, 2008). A writing-intensive first-year seminar, taught by a faculty member (who is also the adviser for the student) and an upper-division peer mentor, coupled with a small class size ensures that every student will get to know at least one faculty member well in the first year of college, in addition to other students in the class. Light (2001) found that students are enthusiastic about classes that are structured to maximize personal engagement and collegial interaction. He noted that the correlation between the numbers of small classes any student takes and the self-reported personal satisfaction with the overall academic experience indicates a very strong relationship. There is also a strong correlation between the number of small classes and students' grades.

Brownell and Swaner (2009) asserted, the success of the seminar may be related to the seminar's ability to meet the needs of the students of a given campus. They stated, "For example, institutions with many first-generation college students might place priority on teaching their students how to navigate the college environment and will find

the extended orientation content most useful” (p. 28). Swing (2002) reported that at over 70% of American institutions first-year seminars are a key feature of the first college year. Swing (2002) in his essays describing the results of a national survey of first-year seminars, stated that the survey represents 62 institutions and over 30,000 students, while providing data about seminar structures and classroom environments that support best practices in first-year seminars. Swing (2002) found the following in his research:

- Learning Outcomes and course effectiveness
 - The use of a variety of teaching methods, challenging assignments, meaningful homework, and productive class time are associated with greater learning outcomes and higher student ratings on the overall course effectiveness factor.
- Contact hours:
 - If the course goal is to introduce students to campus policies and practices, then a one-contact hour course is as effective as courses that meet for more hours per week.
 - If the course goals also include increased knowledge of campus services, improvement in time management and other study skills, increasing student/student and student/faculty connections, and increased out-of-class engagement, then at least two contact hours per week are more effective in producing these learning outcomes.
 - If the course goals also include gains in academic skills and critical thinking, then a three-contact hour course is more likely to produce the desired learning outcomes.
 - The final decision on contact hours should be based on an array of institutional variables.
- Content
 - The first year instruction (FYI) data clearly support that the discipline-specific seminars were less effective than college transition theme or special academic theme seminars in producing learning outcomes.
 - The low rating for the factor, “Engaging Pedagogy” suggests that discipline-specific courses might be improved with greater attention to the way these courses are delivered to students. A comparison would be more fair if these courses had used the same level of engaging pedagogy as the other formats.
 - The difference between college transition theme and special academic theme seminars is more subtle. Both are highly effective formats and each excels in some unique dimensions. The differences probably reflect the

divergent goals of the two courses as they relate to institutional mission and context.

- College transition theme courses are best at learning outcomes associated with college success skills and behaviors.
- Special academic theme courses are best at learning outcomes including academic skills and critical thinking skills. (Swing, 2002)

Porter and Swing (2006), studying which aspects of first-year seminars affect persistence in college, stated that choice of content in first-year seminars may make a difference. Their results indicated two areas have a substantial impact on early intention to persist; those areas are study skills and academic engagement and health education. Porter and Swing (2006) affirmed that the study skills and academic engagement content are consistent with the philosophy of many first-year seminars. Students who gained confidence in their study skills will believe they are likely to succeed thus plan to continue their enrollment. The researchers acknowledge that it may be less clear why health education might provide an impact on persistence. Porter and Swing (2006) speculated that the real value may be that when faculty spend time on wellness they are “de facto expressing caring about students” (p. 106). Additionally, Porter and Swing (2006) found “that faculty often report that their least favorite part of the first-year seminars is teaching study skills, and that the area they feel least prepared for is the counseling aspects of helping students develop holistically” (pp. 106-107). The researchers concluded that if institutions want their first-year seminars to be effective in impacting persistence, the selection of topics must be carefully orchestrated to create the outcomes that best match the institutional goals.

Goodman and Pascarella (2006) in their article *First-Year Seminars Increase Persistence and Retention: A Summary of the Evidence from How College Affects*

Students observed that although first-year seminars vary greatly in form and function across institutions, there is substantial evidence to show these seminars increase first to second year retention rates. The benefits to participants in first-year seminars include: an increased likeliness to graduate in four years, more frequent and meaningful interaction with faculty, more involvement in co-curricular activities, an increased level of satisfaction with the college experience, more positive perceptions of themselves as learners and the achievement of higher grades.

First-generation students, first-year seminars and advising. Darling and Smith (2007) stated that first-generation students experience a disconnect between orientation and advising in the first year. They suggested that first-year seminars that emphasize early and continued contact with advisors will help bridge the gap for first-generation students. Advisors are in a unique position to serve as an advocate and campus educator. Advisors who serve as first-year seminar instructors can develop courses that build opportunities for students to connect with faculty, learn valuable campus resources, gain academic confidence and develop meaningful peer groups (Darling & Smith, 2007).

Undecided students and first-year seminars. Hansen and Pedersen (2012) investigated the effects of a career development first-year seminar course on self-efficacy, college adjustment, learning integration, academic achievement, and retention among undecided undergraduate students. They found that undecided first-year students who completed the course showed significant increases in college adjustment and learning integration. Hansen and Pedersen (2012) also found that these students had

significantly higher levels of academic achievement and retention rates compared to undecided students who did not participate.

Interaction with Faculty

“Given that learning is a social process; relationships—especially those with faculty—are powerful tools that aid in students’ personal and professional development” (Baker & Griffin, 2010, p. 2). Komarraju et al. (2010) found that students who perceive their faculty as being approachable, respectful, and available for interactions outside the classroom are more likely to report being confident of their academic skills and motivated, both intrinsically and extrinsically. They maintained that as students previously relied on parents for professional guidance, they can now look to faculty as a resource.

This would be of particular relevance in the case of students who might be first-generation. . . . Hence, students who perceive their faculty member as being approachable and are able to engage them in conversation outside the immediate classroom could likely benefit career-wise. Students could possibly come away feeling more confident, motivated and interested in performing well. (Komarraju et al., 2010, p. 340)

The researchers recommended that University administrators who value the psychological and interpersonal aspects of teaching and learning could direct resources to programs such as living-learning communities, and mentoring programs that foster informal student-professor interactions. These interactions will lead to increased motivation and confidence in academic abilities (Komarraju et al., 2010).

Cokley (2000) found significant differences in academic self-concept and academic motivation in students with positive perceptions of faculty encouragement compared to those with negative perceptions of faculty encouragement. Noting that the

experience of the college student is both academic and psychosocial, Cokely (2000) states that faculty are responsible for facilitating the academic growth and student affairs practitioners are expected to promote students' personal and emotional growth. He asserted that rather than working in isolation from each other, these entities should join together to more precisely define the goals of student development.

Smith and Zhang (2010) found that first-generation students were more likely to have an academic ethic but earn a lower grade point average. They explained that first-generation students, worked more hours, interacted less with faculty and were less-likely to avoid tough graders than second-generation students. The relationship between being a first-generation student and academic ethic may in fact work against achievement of a higher grade point average. With regard to first-generation students the researchers recommend the following:

The first-year seminar should be geared more to fostering the development of academic ethic. . . . Students may benefit from developing a mentoring relationship with faculty and academic support staff . . . colleges must develop strategic measures that assist these students' particular needs . . . first-generation students should be given opportunities to . . . interact more with their professors. (Smith & Zhang, 2010, p. 68)

Advising and Mentoring

While faculty interaction and encouragement is important to academic engagement, first-generation students may need support from a variety of relationships. Kuh (2008) stated "Advising is no longer a once-a-semester meeting with a person the student hardly knows, but an ongoing set of conversations about issues students are facing in real time" (p. 14). Light (2001) noted one remarkably simple suggestion, "part of a great college education depends on human relationships" (p. 85). In his book

Making the Most of College, Light (2001) gives poignant advice to first year students. He advises the students that in each semester of college it should be their goal to get to know at least one faculty member reasonably well and that one faculty member should get to know the student reasonably well.

Light (2001) suggested that for some students the single biggest contribution an advisor can make is to encourage students to join a campus group that will give them social and personal support. He stated that when asked, first-generation students stress the importance of encouragement from the advisor: “Our work on advising reveals the extraordinary importance of some sort of support group for each student” (p. 98). Students who underperform may feel lonely and may not integrate easily into the community; and for many their academic and social life will suffer. The association between academic performance and out of the classroom experience can be strong connection.

Good advising throughout the undergraduate career is critical. Baker and Griffin (2010) suggested that the importance of good advising is often overlooked. They asserted that students not only need good advisers, but mentors and developers. Advising is built on a series of tasks and information sharing. Mentorship requires a series of interactions involving an emotional commitment that extends beyond sharing degree requirements and conveys a long-term caring about a student’s personal and professional development. The developer extends the support provided by mentoring through engaging in knowledge development, information sharing and support as students set and achieve goals. Developers are focused on future outcomes, asking the student to think

forward. In some ways the development role is like an apprenticeship (Baker & Griffin, 2010).

Levitz and Noel (1989) contended that in order to make the freshman connection, institutions must adopt the concept of front-loading: putting the strongest, most student-centered people, programs, and services in the freshman year. They quoted Forrest (1982) “The single most important move an institution can make to increase student persistence to graduation is to ensure that students receive the guidance they need at the beginning of the journey through college to graduation” (p. 44). The successes of freshmen are enhanced when they feel attached to some person in the institution (Johnson, 1989). Since these early published writings about retention and mentoring there have been many studies on mentoring and its’ effect on retention.

Responding to the mounting national support provided for mentoring programs and initiatives in higher education, Crisp and Cruz (2009) summarized a review of the literature between 1990 and 2007. They noted, although there is ambiguity in the literature regarding the definition of a mentor, they used Miller’s (2002) definition of mentoring stating that the concept and origin of the word “mentor” stems from Greek mythology, where Odysseus’s mentor serves as a wise, responsible and trusted advisor who guides Odysseus’s development. Crisp and Cruz (2009) observed with importance that within the mentoring literature, the role of the mentor may not be limited to faculty. They state that many of the core functions of mentoring are provided by college staff, senior students, peers, and friends among others.

Impact of mentoring. Crisp and Cruz (2009) noted that the overall findings in the literature review show the positive impact of mentoring on numerous outcome variables. They specifically noted a “positive relationship or an impact of mentoring on student persistence and/or grade point average in undergraduate students” (p. 532). They remarked that although there is disagreement about what mentoring is, the literature reinforces three ways in which researchers agree about mentoring. First, mentoring relationships are focused on the growth and accomplishment of an individual; second, a mentoring experience may include broad forms of support including assistance with professional and career development, role modeling and psychological support; and third, mentoring relationships are personal and reciprocal (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

Involvement Theory

Astin (1999) described his theory as simple. *Student involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education* (original 1984, reproduced 1999) explained most of the empirical knowledge about environmental influences on student development that researchers have gained over the years. The theory is capable of embracing principles from such widely divergent sources as psychoanalysis and classical learning theory. Finally, the theory of student involvement can be used by both researchers and college administrators.

Astin’s 1984 theory of involvement has five basic postulates:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry examination).
2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object,

and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times.

3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student's involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams).
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. (Astin, 1999, p. 519)

The involvement theory resembles what learning theorists refer to as time-on-task; it emphasizes the behavioral aspects. "It is not so much what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves, that defines and identifies involvement" (Astin, 1999, p. 519). It does not deny that motivation is an important factor; however, it emphasizes active participation and a learning environment that is structured to encourage participation by the student. Involvement becomes the behavioral manifestation of the psychological state of motivation. The theory of student involvement focuses on the how of student development; that is, what processes or behavioral mechanisms facilitate student development. Long before the current research on high-impact practices, Astin's research on the theory of student involvement found that:

Nearly all forms of student involvement are associated with greater than average changes in entering freshman characteristics. And for certain student outcomes involvement is more strongly associated with change than either entering freshman characteristics or institutional characteristics. (p. 524)

Astin's (1999) early studies showed that students who participate in honors programs gain substantially in interpersonal self-esteem, intellectual self-esteem, and artistic interests.

In sum, the student involvement theory is simple and comprehensive. It offers educators and administrators a tool for designing more effective learning environments. "The greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (Astin, 1999, p. 529). The involvement theory provides the foundation for using an honors program model of "required participation" for those students least likely to engage in high-impact practices.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the use of an honors program model for high probability impact on the general student population. More specifically, the study examined the effect of high-impact practices utilized in honors program education on students least likely to participate in high-impact practices.

Approach and Rationale

This mixed methods study used a concurrent embedded strategy for data collection and analysis. A mixed methods design employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The design is suited to studies where the aim is to consider both quantitative explanation of trends and qualitative probing behind stated trends. The concurrent strategy can be identified by the collection where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, with a primary method that guides the project and a secondary method embedded within the primary method. The secondary method addresses a different question than the primary method. (Creswell, 2009) This mixed methods approach used a quantitative quasi-experiment approach, administering three quantitative instruments combined with two qualitative surveys.

The qualitative methods used were intended to complement the quantitative methods by providing a more complete picture of the impact of “required participation” on those least likely to participate. By garnering the perspectives of those involved, the

participants' subjective experiences and perspectives were used to further explain the quantitative results.

Participants

Study population. The population consisted of first-time, full-time, first-generation, college students attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All participants in the study entered college and were enrolled as full-time students in the fall of 2013.

Treatment group selection. Invitation to participate was based on a roster of 271 students identified through the Office of Admissions as first-time, first-generation, full-time students who were admitted to the Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center, who had not declared a major and were not associated with any other types of first-year programs or communities. The students on this list were identified as students least likely to engage. For this study, students least likely to engage was defined as first-time, full-time, first-generation students who have not identified a major and indicated low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience. During their New Student Enrollment day advising session, the identified students were invited to participate in a specifically designed career seminar course for the fall 2013 semester (see invitation in Appendix H). The course was limited to 25 students.

Treatment and Control Groups. After schedule adjustments, 21 students entered the course in the fall 2013. Of the 21 students enrolled in the course, 20 met the study criteria. Those 20 students became the treatment group. The control group included students on the invitation list who either chose not to participate in the course or

could not participate based on space availability in the course. The groups are defined as follows:

Treatment Group (N = 20). To be involved in the treatment group a student had to meet the following traits:

- full-time, first-year, first-generation student
- admitted with an undecided major to the University's Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center
- indicated they were not involved in activities such as learning communities, Honors Program, scholarship communities, Marching Band/Music Ensembles, ROTC, Varsity Athletics, other such academic communities.

Selected Matched Control Group (N = 20). The control group included students identified with the treatment group characteristics who did not participate in the treatment. More specifically, they were matched based on the following traits:

- full-time, first-year, first-generation student
- admitted with an undecided major to the University's Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center
- indicated they were not involved in activities such as learning communities, Honors Program, scholarship communities, Marching Band/Music Ensembles, ROTC, Varsity Athletics, other such academic communities.
- did not volunteer to participate in the treatment group
- matched with the treatment group participants based on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln two best predictors of success: high school class rank percentile and ACT.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants learned that data collected from them was held confidentially and reported anonymously. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained before conducting the study (Appendix I).

Treatment/Intervention

A specifically designed two-credit hour seminar was offered to first-time, full-time, first-generation students who were admitted with an undecided major to the

University's Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center. The course description is in Figure 2 (see Appendix B for a course syllabus).

Career Development Seminar
Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan
 EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours
 Days/Time: T-Th 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Location: TCH 205

Focus of the class
 This class will focus on your personal/professional development, providing tools to help you seize the most you can from your undergraduate career. Active exploration, examination, and pursuit of career possibilities, including discussion pertaining to involvement in both academic and co-curricular experiences, will provide a broad perspective of what exactly the purpose of each individual's education means to him or her. This course will also challenge each participant to view his or her education in a new way.

Each student will produce an academic plan, a "plan of action," which will ultimately lead to a career development plan.

Figure 2. Specifically designed two-credit hour seminar for first-year students.

Research Questions

Quantitative research. One central quantitative question guided this research.

Can the high-impact practices employed in university honors programs be utilized effectively with first-time, full-time, first-generation college students who have not identified a major and who indicate low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience?

Hypotheses. Converting this question to testable research hypotheses yielded the following:

- H₁ Students in the treatment group will demonstrate a significant increase in degree of academic self-concept between pre- and post-tests.
- H₂ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher degree of academic self-concept than students in a matched control group.
- H₃ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate significantly higher scores on a measure of student adaptation to college than students in a matched control group.
- H₄ Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher level of academic achievement during their first semester than students in a matched control group.

Null hypotheses. For the purpose of research, converting these questions to the null hypotheses yielded the following.

- H₀₁ There will be no significant change in the score of academic self-concept for students in the treatment group between pre and post-tests.
- H₀₂ There will be no significant difference in scores on the academic self-concept measure between the treatment and control group.
- H₀₃ There will be no significant difference in scores on the measure of student adaptation to college between the treatment and control group.
- H₀₄ There will be no significant difference in level of academic achievement during the first semester of college between the treatment and control group.

Quantitative research design and data collection. To quantitatively test hypothesis one, the effectiveness of high-impact practices on academic self-concept, the Self-Perception Profile for College Students was given to all participants in the treatment group both pre and post the intervention. Specifically the domains of Intellectual Ability

and Scholastic Competence were measured. A paired sample t-test was used to measure the effect. The Self-Perception Profile for College Students can be found in Appendix C.

To test hypothesis two, the effectiveness of high-impact practices on academic self-concept, the Self-Perception Profile for College Students was given to participants in the treatment and control groups post the intervention. Specifically the domains of Intellectual Ability and Scholastic Competence were measured. An independent sample t-test was used to measure the effect. The Self-Perception Profile for College Students can be found in Appendix C.

To test hypothesis three, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire was given to the treatment and the control groups after the intervention. Independent sample t-tests were used to measure the effect. Information regarding the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

To test hypothesis four, end of the semester grade point averages were compared for the treatment and matched control group. Independent sample t-tests were used to measure the effect.

Qualitative research. Central to the qualitative measurement of the study was the student's perception of the impact of the course on their academic practices and the student's valuation of the seminar. Additionally, the qualitative research explored the student's knowledge of university resources. The following questions guided the qualitative research:

1. How will the student's perception of their academic practices change from first semester to second semester of college?

2. Did the students value the seminar experience?
3. What knowledge does the student have about university resources?

Qualitative research design and data collection. A mixed-methods design for assessing the course impact was used to quantitatively and qualitatively measure question one. The Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory (UNSEI) was administered to the treatment group prior to their enrollment at the University. The UNSEI instrument was used to form the questions for the post-intervention measure and explanation of perception of academic practices. The researcher used the UNSEI to create an electronic follow-up survey that was sent to all members in the treatment group (Appendix J). The follow-up survey was designed to assess the perception of change in confidence in academic practices as they relate to success in college, and the confidence in persistence to degree completion.

Descriptive averages were run to illustrate the scale scores. The survey answers were summarized to look for phenomena in the subjective answers. The phenomena explain the students' perception in their academic practices and their confidence in ability to persist to degree.

To measure question two: Did students value the seminar? End of course feedback was collected from all seminar students regarding the value of the seminar. Two evaluations were collected; the standard university course evaluation and an evaluation designed to assess the specific EDPS 150 course content and value of the seminar (see Appendices F & G). These evaluations formed a quantitative and qualitative

explanation of the value of the seminar. Using a Likert scale, the evaluations measured the following topics:

- Did the students perceive they learned something worthwhile?
- Would the students recommend the class to others?
- Was the course content meaningful?
- Did the students think certain topics were worthwhile in the course?

Open-ended questions were asked to explain the responses in the quantitative measures.

The questions included:

- The thing you found most helpful?
- The thing you found least helpful?
- What did you like most about the course?
- What did you like least about the course?
- Additional comments?

Research Instruments

This study used three measures to evaluate the students' growth and development during their first semester in college. The measurements are as follows:

The Self Perception Profile for College Students (SPPCS) (see Appendix C).

The Self-Perception Profile for College Students provides a domain-specific scale that allows the researcher to discern differences in college students' evaluations of competence in twelve different domains, plus global self-worth. In addition, one can determine the importance or centrality of each of these domains, as well as the types and quality of social support students receive (Neeman & Harter, 2012). Harter's research in self-perception with children, adolescents and adults was expanded to college students with the work of Neeman and Harter in 1986 and then revised in 2012. Most relevant to this research were the Intellectual Ability and Scholastic Competence domains on the

Self-Perception Profile for College Students; therefore, those domains were measured for this study.

The Intellectual Ability subscale taps general intellectual competence, and is similar to the intelligence subscale on the adult instrument. It differs from scholastic competence in that it assess a more global intelligence with items such as whether one feels just as smart as or smarter than other students.

The Scholastic Competence subscale was patterned after the children's subscale of the same name, and similarly, items are directed toward actual schoolwork and classwork, and ask whether one feels competent that he or she is mastering the coursework. It was of interest to discover whether college students make a distinction between scholastic competence and intellectual ability. (Neemann & Harter, 2012, p. 8)

Psychometric properties and subscale reliabilities of the Self-Perception Profile for College Students. This scale approach was designed to be domain-specific and reliable, with each of the subscales factorial sound. Reliabilities of Self-Perception subscales were assessed by coefficient alpha, an index of internal consistency. Across subscales, these values ranged from .76 to .92 for the group as a whole (see Table 2). (Neemann & Harter, 2012)

Relevant to this study are the intellectual ability and scholastic competence scales with reliabilities at .86 and .84 respectfully. To offset the tendency to give socially desirable answers, a question format asked the students to identify with a reference group most appropriate for them (Neeman & Harter, 2012). The researchers designed the instrument with a specific purpose in mind, to discourage socially desirable responding and to enhance honest choices.

Table 2

Reliabilities for Self-Perception Subscales

Scale	Reliability
Creativity	.89
Intellectual Ability	.86
Scholastic Competence	.76
Job Competence	.76
Athletic Competence	.92
Appearance	.85
Romantic Relationships	.88
Social Acceptance	.80
Close Friendships	.82
Parent Relationships	.88
Humor	.80

Although limited research has been done on the validity of the instrument, validity evidence is provided through correlations with external criteria. Rinn and Cunningham (2008) found “Among average-ability students, both measures of academic achievement were significantly correlated with students’ scores on the Scholastic Competence subscale of the SPPCS, such that with student’s grade point averages, $r = .40, p < .01$, and with student’s ACT scores, $r = .23, p < .01$ ” (p. 238).

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (see Appendix D). The 67 item version of the SACQ was used for this study. This instrument determines how well a student handles the demands of college. It is an instrument that can detect

problems and the nature of those problems early in the student's college career. The SACQ assesses overall adjustment to college, as well as adjustment in the following four specific areas (Baker & Siryk, 1989):

- Academic Adjustment
- Personal-Emotional
- Adjustment Social Adjustment
- Attachment (to the institution)

The SACQ is used by many universities for routine freshman screening, and provides clear guidelines for subsequent intervention. It is particularly useful in identifying potential dropouts (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Psychometric properties for the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire.

Reliability. Estimates of internal consistency reliability are most appropriate for the SACQ. Internal consistency is the degree to which all items measure a common characteristic of the person and are free from measurement error (Thorndike, 2005).

When reliability is high, the correlation between two measurements should be strong and positive. The highest reliability is 1.00 and .00 is the lowest reliability; all other things being equal the higher the reliability the better. Because all item responses occur during a single testing they represent the individual as he or she is at a single moment in time.

The SACQ variables are not expected to be stable and enduring properties of the individual, but states that can vary with changes in the student's environment and life events among other variables, thus the appropriateness of internal consistency reliability (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

For the 67-item version of the SACQ, studies were conducted involving first- and second-semester freshmen at three institutions and data was gathered over several

years (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Those studies produced the following coefficient alpha values for the SACQ 67 item version:

- Academic Adjustment subscale range from .81 to .91
- Social Adjustment subscale from .83 to .91
- Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale from .77 to .86
- Attachment subscale from .85 to .91
- Full scale from .93 to .95.

Validity. Criterion-related validity; in specific, predictive validity reported for the SACQ is most appropriate for this study. Predictive validity using the Pearson correlation measures the degree and direction of linear relationships between two variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). Most relevant for this study are the validity studies measuring correlation between the Academic Adjustment subscale and grade point average. “Significant correlations were found between Academic Adjustment and grade point average (GPA) . . . in all eight administration of the 67-item version” (Baker, & Siryk, 1989, p. 45). Additional relevant studies and their findings for validity are listed below:

- A study measuring the Social Adjustment subscale correlated with a social activities checklist for a freshmen class. The purpose of the checklist was to provide the extent of involvement with, and commitment to, the immediate social system of which the student is part. This study found, for the first semester, a significant relationship was discovered between the Social Adjustment Scale and the social activities checklist, but there was no significant finding for any other subscales.

- A point-biserial correlation study, (a correlation used to measure the relationship between two variables in situations where one variable is measured on an interval or ratio scale but the second variable has only two different values (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004)), between SACQ scores and attrition after one year of college found consistent significant findings in the expected direction for all samples on the Attachment and Social Adjustment subscale. The Academic Adjustment subscale was significantly related to attrition in half of the administrations and the Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale also showed significant correlations. (Baker, & Siryk, 1989, pp. 45-49)

The Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory (UNSEI). This inventory (Appendix E) was given prior to the student's first meeting with an academic advisor as they prepared a first semester class schedule. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln New Student Enrollment Office emails new students information about their class registration day. In the information sent, students are asked to complete the UNSEI prior to their orientation day on campus. If the students do not complete the form prior to arrival, they are assigned a time to take the UNSEI prior to meeting with an advisor. The advisor reviews the student's UNSEI prior to the advising session and references it during the discussion about the first semester class schedule. The UNSEI is designed to provide advisors with information regarding students' perceptions of their confidence in their academic practices. Questions on the inventory include "I plan to graduate from UNL in four years" and "I am used to making decisions for myself (I decide what classes

to take, I decide how to plan my schedule).” Specific questions from the UNSEI, relevant for this study of students least likely to engage, were reviewed and analyzed. Using questions from the original UNSEI the researcher developed a follow-up electronic survey which included relevant questions from the original UNSEI and additional forced choice and open-ended questions. The follow-up survey and questions can be found in Appendix J.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis. Simple T-tests were used to test for the significance of difference between means in academic self-concept for the pre- and post-intervention scores noted in hypothesis one.

H₁: Students in the treatment group will demonstrate a significant increase in degree of academic self-concept between pre and post-tests. (H₁: $\mu_{\text{before}} < \mu_{\text{after}}$)

Simple T-tests were used to test for the significance of differences between means of academic self-concept, student adaptation and academic achievement between the treatment and control group scores noted in hypotheses two, three and four.

H₂: Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher degree of academic self-concept than students in a matched control group. (H₂: $\mu_{\text{treatment}} > \mu_{\text{control}}$)

H₃: Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate significantly higher scores on a measure of student adaptation to college than students in a matched control group. (H₃: $\mu_{\text{treatment}} > \mu_{\text{control}}$)

H₄: Students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program will demonstrate a significantly higher level of academic achievement during their first semester than students in a matched control group. (H₄: $\mu_{\text{treatment}} > \mu_{\text{control}}$)

Mixed-method quantitative and qualitative analysis. The UNSEI electronic survey results were gathered pre- and post-intervention for the treatment group. The results were tallied and averaged to examine changes in pre- versus post-intervention responses to assess the impact of the course on perception of academic practices. The open-ended survey questions were compiled to clarify and explain the quantitative data.

The results of the course evaluations were tallied and averaged to produce mean scores to assess the value of the seminar. The open-ended questions on the course evaluations and the follow-up individual interviews were compiled to clarify and explain the quantitative data.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the use of an honors program model for high probability impact on the general student population. Chapter 4 is organized to report the results from quantitative and qualitative measurements, as well as present explanatory information. The first section presents the quantitative results and analysis. The second section of this chapter presents the mixed methods quantitative and qualitative results with the explanatory analysis.

Quantitative

One central question guided the research. Can the high-impact practices employed in university honors programs be utilized effectively with first-time, full-time, first-generation college students who have not identified a major and who indicate low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience?

The following considerations were studied in answering the above question:

- College students' academic self-concept: an evaluation in perception of competence in intellectual ability and scholastic competence
- The ability to adapt to the demands of college
- Academic achievement

Treatment/Intervention. To test the impact of high impact practices on this sample a specifically designed two-credit hour seminar (EDPS 150 sec. 003) was offered to first-time, full-time, first-generation students who were admitted with undeclared majors to the Exploration and Pre-Professional Advising Center. Figure 3 is the course description.

<p>Career Development Seminar <i>Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan</i> <i>EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours</i> <i>Days/Time: T-Th 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Location: TCH 205</i></p> <p><i>Focus of the class</i> This class will focus on your personal/professional development, providing tools to help you seize the most you can from your undergraduate career. Active exploration, examination, and pursuit of career possibilities, including discussion pertaining to involvement in both academic and co-curricular experiences, will provide a broad perspective of what exactly the purpose of each individual’s education means to him or her. This course will also challenge each participant to view his or her education in a new way.</p> <p>Each student will produce an academic plan, a “plan of action,” which will ultimately lead to a career development plan. (A complete syllabus is found in Appendix B)</p>
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Figure 3. EDPS 150 Section 003 course description.

Academic self-concept.

Treatment group results pre- and post-intervention. The Self-Perception Profile for College Students was used to measure academic self-concept. The treatment group completed the profile survey before and after taking a specific course designed to assist students in their acclimation to college and introduce them to high-impact practices. The null hypothesis is as follows:

H₀₁ There will be no significant change in the scores of academic self-concept for students in the treatment group between pre- and post-tests.

The academic and intellectual subscales of the Self-Perception Profile were combined to provide an evaluation of perception of competence in academic ability. Paired samples t-tests were used to measure the effect. The paired samples t-tests statistics, correlations and differences results for academic self-concept, are found in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3

Paired Samples Statistics for Academic Self-concept

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	St. Error Mean
Pair 1				
Academic_pre	2.8125	20	.62368	.13946
Academic_post	2.9438	20	.57708	.12904

Table 4

Paired Samples Correlations for Academic Self-concept

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1			
Academic_pre & Academic_post	20	.865	.000

There was no significant increase in degree of academic self-concept between pre- and post-test means. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Students in the treatment group did not show a significant increase in perception of competence in academic ability after completing the EDPS 150 course specifically designed for this research project.

Treatment group results compared to matched control group results. *The Self-Perception Profile for College Students* was used to measure academic self-concept. The treatment group scores were compared to the control group scores. The profile survey was administered to the treatment group and the control group after the

Table 5

Paired Differences for Academic Self-concept

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1								
Academic_pre- & Academic_post	-0.13125	0.31538	0.07052	-0.27885	0.01635	-1.861	19	0.078

intervention. Students in the treatment group took a specific course (EDPS 150) designed to assist with acclimation to college. The control group consisted of students from the original sample who did not take the course. The null hypothesis to be tested was as follows:

H₀₂ There will be no significant difference in scores on the academic self-concept measure between the treatment and control group.

The academic and intellectual subscales of the Self-Perception profile were combined to provide an evaluation of perception of competence in academic ability. Independent samples t-test were used to measure the effect. Tables 6 and 7 report the group statistics and significance results for null hypothesis two.

Table 6

Group Statistics

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic-post				
Treatment	20	2.9438	.57708	.12904
Control	11	2.8068	.50733	.15297

There was no significant degree of difference between the treatment group and matched control group in degree of academic self-concept, thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis. The treatment group did not show a significant difference in perception of competence in academic ability after completing the EDPS 150 course specifically designed for this research project than those in the matched control group who did not complete the course.

Table 7

Test for Equality of Means

	t-test for Equality of Means								
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Academic-post									
Equal variances assumed	.072	.790	.658	29.000	.515	.13693	.20797	-0.28841	.56227
Equal variances not assumed			.684	23.131	.501	.13693	.20012	-0.27693	.55079

Ability to adapt to the demands of college. The 67 item version of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was used for this portion of the study. This instrument determines how well a student handles the demands of college. It is an instrument that can detect problems and the nature of those problems early in the student's college career. The SACQ assesses overall adjustment to college, as well as adjustment in the following four specific areas:

- Academic Adjustment
- Personal-Emotional
- Adjustment Social Adjustment
- Attachment (to the institution)

The questionnaire was administered to the treatment group and the control group after the intervention. Students in the treatment group took a specifically designed course (EDPS 150); the control group consisted of students from the original sample who did not take the course. The hypothesis to be tested was as follows:

H₀₃ There is no significant difference in scores on the measure of student adaptation to college between the treatment and control group.

Independent t-test analyses were run for each subscale and the full scale to determine student adaptation to college. Tables 8 and 9 report the group statistics and the significance results for null hypothesis three.

There was no significant difference in scores on the measure of student adaptation to college between the treatment and control group. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Students in the treatment group did not show significantly higher scores on the Student Adaptation to College questionnaire than the control group. The treatment

Table 8

Group Statistics for Ability to Adapt to the Demands of College

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic				
Treatment	20	141.1000	27.27810	6.09957
Control	11	149.1818	32.84454	9.90300
Social				
Treatment	20	134.9000	21.20303	4.74114
Control	11	122.1818	33.92880	10.22992
Emotional				
Treatment	20	85.9000	18.75577	4.19392
Control	11	87.8182	23.27152	7.01663
Attachment				
Treatment	20	103.8000	19.62437	4.38814
Control	11	102.7273	22.07755	6.65663
Full-scale				
Treatment	20	418.2500	65.00921	14.53650
Control	11	419.0000	85.19742	25.68799

Table 9

Independent Samples Test for the ability to Adapt to the Demands of College

Group	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Academic									
Equal variances assumed	0.822	.372	-0.734	29	.469	-8.08182	11.00505	-30.58967	14.42603
Equal variances not assumed			-0.695	17.687	.496	-8.08182	11.63074	-32.54814	16.38451
Social									
Equal variances assumed	3.245	.082	1.288	29	.208	12.71818	9.87109	-7.47045	32.90682
Equal variances not assumed			1.128	14.407	.278	12.71818	11.27518	-11.40068	36.8704
Emotional									
Equal variances assumed	1.321	.260	-0.250	29	.804	-1.91818	7.66749	-17.59995	13.76359
Equal variances not assumed			-0.235	17.262	.817	-1.91818	8.17447	-19.14490	15.30853
Attachment									
Equal variances assumed	0.211	.650	0.139	29	.890	1.07273	7.69657	-14.66852	16.81397
Equal variances not assumed			0.135	18.719	.894	1.07273	7.97286	-15.63163	17.77708
Full-scale									
Equal variances assumed	1.843	.185	-0.028	29	.978	-0.75000	27.25531	-56.49337	54.9937
Equal variances not assumed			-0.025	16.537	.980	-0.75000	29.51580	-63.15584	61.65584

group did not show a significant difference in student adaptation after completing the EDPS 150 course specifically designed for this research project than those in the matched control group who did not complete the course.

Academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured using the end of the first-semester grade point average. Students in the treatment group took a specifically designed course (EDPS 150) to assist with acclimation to college. The control group consisted of students from the original sample who did not take the course and who were matched based on high school class rank percentile and ACT score. The hypothesis that guided this component is as follows:

H₀₄ There will be no significant difference in level of academic achievement during the first semester of college between the treatment and control group.

Table 10 reports the mean of the grade point averages for the treatment group with the EDPS grade and without the EDPS grade which are compared to the control group's first-semester grade point average. Tables 11-13 report the paired sample statistics, correlations and differences for grade point averages of the treatment group and the control group. The treatment group's grade point average was calculated with and without the EDPS 150 course grade to control for any grade point average inflation.

There was no significant difference in level of academic achievement during the first semester of college between the treatment and control group. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. In their first semester of college, students in the treatment group did not achieve a significantly higher grade point average compared to those in the matched control group.

Table 10

Academic Achievement

Group	N	Mean Grade Point Average
Treatment Group with EDPS	20	2.771
Treatment Group without EDPS	20	2.572
Control Group	20	2.416

Note: Grade point averages calculated for the treatment and matched control groups. The treatment group's grade point average was calculated with and without the EDPS 150.

Table 11

Paired Samples Statistics for Grade Point Average

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1				
Control	2.4161	20	0.99429	.22233
TermGPA with EDPS 150 Grade	2.7715	20	1.01143	.22616
Pair 2				
Control	2.4161	20	0.99429	.22233
TermGPA w/o EDPS 150 Grade	2.5717	20	1.19318	.26680

Table 12

Paired Samples Correlations for Grade Point Average

Group	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1			
Control & TermGPA with EDPS grade	20	.067	.780
Pair 2			
Control & TermGPA w/o EDPS grade	20	.052	.826

Table 13

Paired Samples Test for Grade Point Average

Group	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1								
Control—TermGPA With EDPS 150 Grade	-0.35536	1.37013	.30637	-0.99660	.28588	-1.160	19	.260
Pair 2								
Control—TermGPA Without EDPS 150 Grade	-0.15551	1.51260	.33823	-0.86343	.55241	-0.460	19	.651

Mixed Methods: The Quantitative with Qualitative analysis. Students in the treatment group were given an advising inventory (Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory (UNSEI)), prior to their first semester in college. The advising inventory was used to assist the academic advisor in suggesting courses and resources for the student as s/he entered college for the first time. The UNSEI is designed to provide advisors with information regarding students' perceptions of their confidence in their academic practices. The academic practice was defined for this research project as those things other than subject content knowledge that may have an impact on academic success in the classroom. These can range from time management skills to confidence in decision making skills. Specific questions from the UNSEI were relevant for this study. A follow-up electronic survey with open-ended questions was developed from the questions asked on the original UNSEI to determine the college students' perceptions in their confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. The following questions guided this phase of the research:

- Will students' perception of their abilities change from first semester to second semester of college?
- Will students value a seminar experience designed to engage them in high impact practices?
- How knowledgeable are students of resources available to help facilitate success in college?

The results were examined for changes in pre- versus post-intervention responses to assess the impact of the course on perception of abilities. The open-ended questions

provided explanatory information regarding the value of the seminar and students' knowledge of resources.

College students' perceptions of their confidence in their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. Figure 4 represents the statements relevant in measuring the students' perception in their confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. The students answered on a Likert scale representing strongly agree to strongly disagree. Paired samples t-tests were used to measure the effect of the intervention; completion of the specific EDPS 150 course designed to assist in acclimation to college.

st. 9	My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently (i.e: science strength needed to be a doctor, writing aptitudes needed to be a journalist)
st. 10	I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years
st. 11	I am confident about being in a new social environment
st. 12	I have good study habits (Good habit examples: reading textbook, managing time, reviewing class notes, outlining chapter notes to prepare for tests)
st. 13	I tend to procrastinate
st. 14	I am used to making decisions for myself (I decide what classes to take, I decide how to plan my schedule)
st. 16	I am confident about managing my time
st. 17	I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college

Note: UNSEI statements relevant in measuring the students' perception in the confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college.

Figure 4. UNSEI questions for perceived success in college.

Tables 14, 15, and 16 represent the mean scores on the confidence levels for perception of confidence in academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college.

There was a significant difference in mean scores on st9: “My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently” between the pre-intervention (M = 3.4, SD = .516) and the post-intervention st9p (M = 4.0, SD = .667) conditions; $t(9) = -3.674$, $p = .005$. All other statements show no significant difference between pre- and post-intervention scores.

The broader perspective in the analysis. In this section a presentation of information is presented to better understand the students’ perceptions of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. The follow-up survey was administered to only the treatment group. Tables 17-19 present explanations of perceived abilities on the pre- versus post-intervention survey. Students were asked to choose the top two items that concerned them the most about college.

The students indicated on both the pre- and post-intervention survey that “making the right major/career decision” was of most concern; however the pre-intervention survey reports a lesser concern. “Paying for college,” “doing well in classes,” and “being away from family” increased from pre- to post-intervention survey. “Knowing how to study” had a small decrease in concern and “managing my time” remained the same in concern (see Table 17).

Table 14

Paired Samples Statistics for Academic Practices

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently				
	st9	3.40	10	0.516	0.163
	st9p	4.00	10	0.667	0.211
Pair 2	I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years.				
	st10	4.50	10	0.527	0.167
	st10p	3.60	10	1.578	0.499
Pair 3	I am confident about being in a new social environment.				
	st11	4.10	10	0.568	0.180
	st11p	4.60	10	0.516	0.163
Pair 4	I have good study habits.				
	st12	3.60	10	0.966	0.305
	st12p	3.40	10	0.843	0.267
Pair 5	I tend to procrastinate.				
	st13	3.67	9	0.707	0.236
	st13p	3.56	9	0.882	0.294
Pair 6	I am used to making decisions for myself.				
	st14	3.90	10	0.568	0.180
	st14p	4.20	10	0.919	0.291
Pair 7	I am confident about managing my time.				
	st16	3.50	10	1.080	0.342
	st16p	3.90	10	0.738	0.233
Pair 8	I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college.				
	st17	4.10	10	0.876	0.277
	st17p	4.30	10	0.675	0.213

Table 15

Paired Samples Statistics for Academic Practices

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently			
st9 & st9p	10	0.645	0.044
Pair 2 I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years.			
st10 & st10p	10	-0.134	0.713
Pair 3 I am confident about being in a new social environment.			
st11 & st11p	10	0.152	0.676
Pair 4 I have good study habits.			
st12 & st12p	10		
Pair 5 I tend to procrastinate.			
st13 & st13p	9	0.535	0.138
Pair 6 I am used to making decisions for myself.			
st14 & st14p	10	0.682	0.30
Pair 7 I am confident about managing my time.			
st16 & st16p	10	0.349	0.324
Pair 8 I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college.			
st17 & st17p	10	0.508	0.134

Table 16

Paired Samples Test for Perceived Success in College

Group	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently							
st9 & st9p	-0.600	0.516	0.163	-0.969	-0.231	-3.674	9	0.005
Pair 2	I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years.							
st10 & st10p	0.900	1.729	0.547	-0.337	2.137	1.646	9	0.134
Pair 3	I am confident about being in a new social environment.							
st11 & st11p	-0.500	0.707	0.224	-1.006	0.006	-1.236	9	0.052
Pair 4	I have good study habits.							
st12 & st12p	0.200	0.632	0.200	-0.252	0.652	1.00	9	0.343
Pair 5	I tend to procrastinate.							
st13 & st13p	0.111	0.782	0.261	-0.490	0.712	0.426	8	0.681

Table 16 continues

Group	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 6 I am used to making decisions for myself.								
st14 & st14p	-0.300	0.675	0.213	-0.783	0.183	-1.406	9	0.193
Pair 7 I am confident about managing my time.								
st16 & st16p	-0.400	1.075	0.340	-1.169	0.369	-1.177	9	0.269
Pair 8 I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college.								
st17 & st17p	-0.200	0.789	0.249	-0.764	0.364	-0.802	9	0.443

Table 17

The Things that Concern Me Most about College

	Pre	Post
Knowing how to study	4	3
Making friends	0	0
Being in a larger environment	0	0
Paying for college	4	6
Doing well in my classes	3	4
Being away from family	1	2
Finding help if I need it	0	0
Making the right major/career decisions	9	5
Managing my time	1	1

With regard to expected hours per week of study time and actual hours per week of study time, there was only a slight change. Most students estimated and actualized between 10-20 hours per week studying outside of class (see Table 18).

With regard to involvement in activities, it appears that students' expectations of involvement were slightly different than the actual involvement. In the pre-intervention survey (prior to attending classes), students expected to be involved in more activities in their first semester than they actually were during their first semester of enrollment (see Table 19).

Table 18

In College I study Outside of Class this Many Hours per Week

	Pre (estimate)	Post
Less than 10	1	0
10-15	3	3
15-20	5	6
20-25	1	1
25-30	0	0
More than 30	0	0

Table 19

I am Involved in This Many Activities at UNL

	Pre (estimate)	Post
1	2	5
2	4	1
3	3	2
4	0	1
Five or more	1	0
None	0	1

Tables 20-24 represent the questions presented only to the treatment group students on the electronic follow-up survey. Ten of the 20 students in the treatment group responded to the follow-up survey.

Students in the treatment group were undecided and undeclared in a college major area at the beginning of the fall semester (pre-intervention). After the fall semester seven (7) of the ten (10) who responded to the follow-up survey reported a declared or decided major (see Table 20).

Table 20

Where are You in the Process of Deciding Your Major?

	Number
Still Deciding	3
Decided	7

Seven (7) of the ten (10) respondents to the follow-up survey indicated they intended to continue their education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, two (2) reported deciding on majors that required only an associate's degree and one (1) was considering a transfer to another in-state, four-year institution. Eight (8) of the ten (10) respondents to the follow-up survey indicated they intended to complete a bachelor's degree. Two (2) indicated they intended to complete an associate's degree. All ten (10) respondents to the follow-up survey indicated they were aware of resources available on campus to help them succeed in college and onto graduation (see Table 21).

Seven (7) of the ten (10) respondents to the follow-up survey indicated they were very confident in completing a degree, two (2) were confident and one (1) was somewhat confident in completing a degree (see Table 22).

Table 21

*Confidence in Completing Post-secondary Education and Knowledge of Campus**Resources*

	Yes	No	Maybe
Will you continue your education at UNL?	7	2 Transferring to schools offering associate degrees	1 Possible transfer to UNL
Do you intend to earn a Bachelor's degree?	8	2 Associate's degree	
Do you know the resources available on campus to help you succeed	10	0	

Table 22

How Confident are You in Finishing a Degree?

	Number
Not Confident	0
Somewhat Confident	1
Confident	2
Very Confident	7

In response to what was most helpful in the first year of college, the phenomena most observed were a connection to someone on campus or inclusion in a community. The other responses indicated a support network and development of a skill (see Table 23).

Table 23

What was the Most Helpful to You in Your First Year?

	Number
EDPS Class	3
Greek community	1
Making connections	1
Meeting advisor	1
Talking with professor	2
Supportive parents/family	2
Learning how to manage time	1

The follow-up survey sent to the treatment group students was sent in the middle of their second semester of college; this allowed the students time to formulate ideas about additional interests or needs in college. With regard to what students wanted to know more about, the phenomena most observed were additional connections, indicating a need for continued information leading to career possibilities. Additionally, students wanted to continue to develop abilities in time management and understand financial aid options. In the earlier part of the survey, paying for college increased in concern for the students; the want for more information regarding financial aid options may have been an explanation of the concern for paying for college (see Table 24).

Table 24

What do you Want to Know More about After Your First Year?

	Number
Internships	2
Involvement in leadership roles	1
Match career with interest	1
Find a mentor/continue to make connections	1
More about different activities	1
Travel abroad	1
Time management	1
Financial aid options	1

Do students value a seminar experience designed to engage them in high-impact practices? The results of the course evaluations were tallied and averaged to produce mean scores to assess the value of the seminar. Two course evaluations were given to the students: (a) a College of Education and Human Sciences standard course evaluation survey sent electronically via email, this evaluation produced ten (10) respondents, and (b) an instructor designed evaluation given on the final day in class, this evaluation recorded all 20 treatment group members' responses. The open-ended questions on the course evaluations were compiled to clarify and explain the quantitative data of the above mentioned evaluations. The components were relevant to the question "Do students value the seminar?" Tables 25 and 26 report the mean scores of the quantitative components of each evaluation. Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 present the responses of the open-ended questions on each evaluation. These averages and responses indicate and explain the students' valuation of the seminar.

Table 25

College of Education and Human Sciences Course Evaluation

Question	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Usually (4)	Always (5)	N/A	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
The course content was meaningful to my personal or professional goals.	0	1	1	7	1	0	3.80	4.0	0.79
I learned something worthwhile in this course.	0	0	2	5	3	0	4.10	4.0	0.74
I would recommend this course to others.	0	2	1	3	3	1	3.78	4.5	1.20

Quantitative results of the relevant components of the evaluations. The CEHS on-line evaluation with a Likert scale of 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Usually, 5-Always. The average score of four (4) indicated the students usually found the content meaningful. The students also indicated they learned something worthwhile and would recommend the course to other students.

The in-course evaluation given to students at the end of the term was created to determine which specific components of the course were valuable. It also provided opportunity for students to answer open-ended questions for explanation of the most and least helpful components as well as suggestions for future course content. Table 26 provides the mean averages of the specific components of the course. The Likert scale used for the in course evaluation was 5-Strongly Agree (SA), 4-Agree (A), 3-Neutral (N), 2-Disagree (D), 1-Strongly Disagree (SD)

The quantitative results of the in-course evaluation present phenomena of the value of the small group and making connection type activities. Professor interviews, mentor meetings and individual meetings with the instructor scored strongly agree. The students also strongly agreed that the MyRed course registration activity should be continued. Additionally, students agreed that activities which allowed them to get together outside of class should be continued. Group activities such as attending a Lied Center event, attending a theatre production, dinner meetings, and visiting career services were scored “to be continued” indicating the students found those experiences to be valuable. Activities related to in the classroom academic assignments scored lower with only neutral feelings as to whether they should be continued. The phenomenon that is

present here indicates that first-year students value opportunities to make connections and get to know faculty and classmates.

Table 26

In-Course Evaluation

	Mean
This EDPS 150 course should be offered again next year	4.10
I would recommend this course to incoming undecided students.	4.05
Use the same textbook.	3.30
Keep the mentor meetings.	4.75
Keep the individual meeting with the instructor.	4.60
Keep the visit to the First Year Experiences Open House.	3.95
Repeat the campus names assignment.	2.40
Attend a University Theatre production (with Actors in class).	4.35
Keep the final paper assignment including academic plan.	3.40
Keep the first lecture presentations.	2.80
Add additional small group discussions in class.	3.85
Attend the Mid-semester check assignment.	3.75
Attend the EN Thompson Lecture	2.45
Keep the visit to Career Services.	4.00
Keep the class dinners before the evening events.	3.85
Keep the Lied Center Event.	4.55
Keep the overview of MyRed and course registration.	4.55
Keep the Professor Interviews.	4.50

Note: Qualitative results from the in-class survey.

Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 present the responses of the open-ended questions on each evaluation. These responses explain the students' valuation of the seminar, as well as the value of individual components of the seminar.

Students responded to the "What did you like most about this course?" question with statements relating to the small size of the class and the opportunities to get to know their classmates. They also liked that the course provided opportunities to get to know the resources on campus as well as the instructor and mentors (see Figure 5).

The students responded to the "What did you like least about the course?" with statements regarding the book and some of the assigned work. They also indicated a desire to learn more about major opportunities (see Figure 6).

As to what was most helpful in the course, the open-ended question provided information regarding the students' thoughts. Approximately 20 responses supported the quantitative data regarding making connections and small group activities. The inclusion of a mentor group in the course was the most helpful in eight of the 20 surveys, the required professor interview assignment was noted in 5 surveys and 4 surveys indicated one-on-one meeting with the instructor as most helpful. Twenty of the 30 responses indicated a value in small group or a making connection type activity as the most helpful. Figures 7 and 8 provide information of the value of the specific components as they related to helpfulness.

Helped me to find classes I am interested in taking. I also got to know my campus more.

I liked how little of a class it was so you get to know your classmates also the peer mentor groups were nice because they really helped.

This course really made me think and that's what I really liked about it.

I liked that the course provided resources on campus that I didn't know about or if I did know, didn't know what they offered to me in detail. I was instructed to get out more and was also given helpful advice, which was appreciated.

I liked getting to know my classmates, and having the peer mentor groups.

I liked how personable this class was and how easy it was to relate to Ann. I also liked how Ann allowed me to get to know other students.

I loved the peer mentor groups, and the out of class activities. I genuinely feel like I made friends in this class, and have other people (my peer mentor and Ann) that I have formed helpful connections with.

I liked how as a class we attended shows and had dinner together.

Note: College of Education and Human Sciences electronic survey results from the open-ended questions.

Figure 5. College of Education and Human Sciences open-ended question: What did you like most about this course?

I thought the reading assignments were pointless and then we had to take quizzes over them.

Some of the projects were irrelevant to the course

There's was nothing I didn't like about the course. Everything helped me decide on a major and that is the point of the class.

The book and the material that went with the course did not seem to helpful, some chapters yes but not all of the book was related to the course.

Some things were unclear about the assignment.

I didn't like the fact that I didn't really get the opportunity to explore my major.

The final paper, only because it was tedious. With that said, I understand its value and feel as though it was helpful.

I wasn't a huge fan of the book for this course, but it had a couple helpful tips.

Note: College of Education and Human Sciences electronic survey results from the open-ended questions.

Figure 6. College of Education and Human Sciences open-ended question: What did you like least about this course?

Helped me be more comfortable with being new in college	1
Professor interviews	5
How to sign up for classes	1
Meeting with the instructor one-on-one	4
Mentor groups	8
Becoming more familiar with services	3
UNL.edu	1
Having connections to people in similar classes and environments	1
Study habits	1
Outside activities such as the play and dinner	1
Registering for classes using MyRed	1
Creating an academic plan	1
Mid-semester check	1
Having a small class and getting to know the professor	1

Figure 7. In-class survey question: What was most helpful in this course?

NA	1
Campus names	7
EN Thompson lecture	2
First Year Experience open house	1
Academic plan paper	2
First lecture presentation	3
Long assignments	1
Textbook	2
Exam	1

Figure 8. In-class survey question: What was least helpful in this course?

As to what was least helpful the open-ended questions provided additional explanation regarding the students' thoughts. Those responses are in Figure 8.

The phenomena that presented itself with regard to the question of “What was least helpful in this course?” was that the least helpful components of the course were some of the academic assignments. For example, the Campus Names assignment is an assignment requiring the students to research the name of certain building on campus. This is an assignment that requires the students to work in small groups and present the information to the larger class.

The responses in Figure 9 represent additional explanation regarding suggestions first- year students have for a course specifically designed to assist them with acclimation to college.

Explore more career options	4
This class was enjoyable I learned a lot about UNL resources	1
Great way for a first-semester freshman to get acquainted to college	1
Move professor interview to earlier in the semester	1
Peer mentor groups helped to get a perspective of a student who has recently been through the first year	1
Better planning for mentor groups	1
Talk more about book content in class	1
This class was a huge help to me and I love how many friends I made through this.	1

Figure 9. In-class evaluation open-ended statement: Please offer any suggestions you might have.

The responses present the phenomena of making connections in class. The course, in-part, was designed to provide students with information and strategies for choosing a college major; the responses above indicate students would like to see more career options as they choose a major in college.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the use of an honors program model for high probability impact on a general student population; specifically, a population least likely to engage in high impact practices in college. The research examined the effect of a specially designed course on college students' academic self-concept: an evaluation in perception of competence in intellectual ability and scholastic competence; the ability to adapt to the demands of college; academic achievement; college students' perceptions in the confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college; and the students' perception of the value of the seminar.

Summary of quantitative results. Contrary to the research hypotheses stating students in a treatment group would see an increase in academic self-concept and the ability to adapt to the demands of college there were no significant findings. The research did not find that students in the treatment group achieved, on average, a higher first-semester grade point average than those in the control group.

Summary of mixed methods quantitative and qualitative results. The research did find that college students' perceptions in the confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college do change. Specifically, as

students discuss academic major possibilities and career interests they have more confidence that their strengths in academic areas will match their career interests.

The research also found that students do value a seminar experience designed to engage them in high-impact practices. Students valued the opportunities to engage in a first-year seminar designed to be small and interactive, to receive additional advising resources, the expectation to engage in discussion with faculty, and the encouragement to participate in campus activities and leadership opportunities.

Finally, the research indicated that students were appreciative of information regarding knowledge of resources available to them. Students in the study asked for more information on resources as they moved from first semester to second semester in college and provided insight for additional information first-year students should have as they enter their first year in college.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this concurrent embedded mixed methods study was to determine if an honors program model of required participation can be successful when applied to freshmen students who are least likely to participate in such practices. Chapter five presents an overview, research focus and an integrative look at the quantitative and qualitative results in answering the following questions:

- Can the high-impact practices employed in university honors programs be utilized effectively with first-time, full-time, first-generation college students who have not identified a major and who indicate low levels of anticipated engagement in the collegiate experience?
- What is the impact of the course on the students' perceptions of their academic practices?
- Do the students value a seminar designed to engage them in high-impact practices?

Additionally, the qualitative research explored the students' knowledge of university resources. Chapter five concludes with a discussion of implications and future research studies.

Overview

The literature suggests that first generation students are least likely to participate in high-impact practices. For example, Strayhorn (2006) found that being a first-generation student had a significant predictive effect on achievement in college even in

the presence of control variables. The national discussion on high-impact practices cites great gains in student satisfaction regarding their college experience and their persistence to graduation as a result of these practices. Although these practices are collectively effective they are not necessarily uniformly effective (Finley, 2011). Underrepresented students, who do participate, typically do so in activities mandated by scholarship funding, programs such as honors programs or other types of academically engaging programs. Moritz (2011) suggested, the first generation student in an honors setting learns to set his/her own academic expectations, and gains confidence and acceptance from fulfilling his/her potential through small discussion based-colloquia.

It is well documented that college student participation in high-impact practices leads to greater gains in learning and personal development. For example, Cokley (2000) found significant differences in academic self-concept and academic motivation in students with positive perceptions of faculty encouragement. Institutions also report higher retention rates for those students participating in these high-impact practices. A 2011 Noel-Levitz report indicates that the highest ranked practices that work for retention in higher education are academic support and first-year student programs. The report goes on to say “honors programs and mandatory advising were among the top-ranked practices across institution types” (p. 1). Given the research on the benefits of participating in high-impact practices, it seems evident that all students should not only have the opportunity to engage in these high-impact practices, but higher education administrators should consider requiring participation.

The standards of an honors program and the practices employed by scholarship-based programs serve as a basis for research into the probability to use such prototypes as models to institutionalize across campus.

As higher education falls under increasingly frequent attacks for low retention and graduation rates . . . ironically, the elitist approach of honors programs, with their throwback pedagogies of small class discussion, mentor-guided independent projects, and focus on critical thinking and problem solving provides an important tool in addressing this educational need. (Moritz, 2011, p. 67)

Research on the “basics” of honors programs found an expectation or “requirement” to participate in high-impact practices. A perusal of the internet investigating the requirements of honors programs at various institutions indicates that in general, the following requirements or opportunities are afforded honors students in the majority of the programs:

- Students must take a first year seminar designed to be small and discussion driven.
- Students are given additional advising resources.
- Students are expected to engage in discussion with faculty through honors work and undergraduate research.
- Students are encouraged to study abroad.
- Students are expected to participate in campus activities and leadership opportunities.

(National Collegiate Honors Council, 2013;
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Honors Program, 2014)

These “requirements/opportunities” are set as an expectation as the student enters the honors program or scholarship mandated programs. The student not involved in an honors program or scholarship mandated program has little if any “required” opportunities.

Astin's theory of involvement (1984), emphasizing active participation and a learning environment that is structured to encourage participation, was the theoretical framework for this study. Involvement becomes the behavioral manifestation of the psychological state of motivation. The theory of student involvement focuses on the how of student development; that is, what processes or behavioral mechanisms facilitate student development. Long before the current research on high-impact practices, Astin's research on the theory of student involvement found that:

Nearly all forms of student involvement are associated with greater than average changes in entering freshman characteristics. And for certain student outcomes involvement is more strongly associated with change than either entering freshman characteristics or institutional characteristics. (Astin, 1999, p. 524)

In sum, the student involvement theory is simple and comprehensive. It offers educators and administrators a tool for designing more effective learning environments. "The greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (Astin, 1999, pp. 528- 529). The involvement theory provides the foundation for using an honors program model of "required participation" on those students least likely to engage in high-impact practices. Astin's early studies show that students who participate in honors programs gain substantially in interpersonal self-esteem, intellectual self-esteem, and artistic interests. The research in this study focused on the expectation of participation that is used in an honors program model and took it to a population considered the least likely to engage in such high-impact practices.

Research Focus

The purpose of this mixed methods concurrent embedded research was to examine the impact a specific course (EDPS 150, section 003, fall 2013), modeled after a successful honors program design would have on students least likely to engage in high impact practices. The design of the course included successful components of the honors model, such as a peer mentor component, small class size, the expectation of faculty interaction, additional advising resources and encouragement to participate in campus activities. The research was designed to understand the effect of required participation in high-impact practices on students least likely to participate in these practices in the first year of college. Furthermore, the research explored academic practices as they related to perceived success in college. Academic practices were defined as those matters that may have an impact on academic success in the classroom and are not the typical content found in the subject matter of the course, i.e. awareness of time management skills, confidence in ability to persist to graduation and knowledge of university resources.

The academic content of the course focused on students' understanding of cognitive processes, specifically the processes focused on the transition from high school to college. The class discussions and assignments were designed to provide students with knowledge on their own cognitive processes. Students were asked to think about how they think. Students were provided with information on the following:

- Models of learning styles
- Time management practices
- Academic nomenclature
- Goal setting as it related to academic majors and career interests
- Student faculty relationships

Assignments for the class included a professor interview (could not be the instructor of the EDPS course), a one-on-one meeting with the EDPS instructor, developing an academic plan, tracking time used in a week and taking a learning style inventory.

This primary quantitative phase of the research examined whether a required course designed to make students think about their transition from high school to college and introduce the students to high-impact practices would, in fact, increase their academic self-concept, assist in their adaptation to college and help them achieve a higher grade point average in their first semester of college.

The out of the class content focused on relationship building and increasing the students' knowledge of university resources. The course was designed to have one hour a week required in class participation and one hour a week required out-of-class participation. The out of class content assignments included the following:

- Small group meetings with an upper-class student who served as a mentor
- Attending a theatre production
- Attending an on-campus national lecture
- Visiting campus resource offices such as career services
- Occasionally attending dinner meetings with class members and the instructor

The qualitative phase examined college students' perceptions in the confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. This stage of the research, i.e., the class evaluations and follow-up electronic survey, probed into the value of the seminar and the components of the course that students found to be the most meaningful in their first semester of college. The embedded strategy researched the phenomenon happening in a group of students who were identified as least likely to engage in high-impact practices who were now required to participate in these practices.

This component of the research focused on the value of the experience modeled after an honors program design. It also provided information on the students' knowledge of university resources.

Confounding Variable

The group studied in this research were those least likely to engage. This became obvious in the control group data collection and also in the follow-up electronic survey and on-line course evaluation. That these students were those least likely to engage may have affected the data results, providing a small sample size and response set.

Students were asked to participate in a control group via email and through phone calls. The students were offered the opportunity to earn a \$20 gift card to the University Bookstore for taking two surveys that would take approximately a total of 30-40 minutes to complete. Four emails and two phone calls were made to each eligible student to solicit participation. In the end, of the 46 eligible participants only 11 students agreed to participate in the control group.

In the electronic follow-up stage of the research, all 20 students in the treatment group were sent two emails asking them to complete the follow-up. Of the 20 students in the course only 10 replied to the email and submitted the follow-up survey. Ten was also the number of respondents to the College of Education and Human Sciences electronic course evaluation request.

Findings

Competence in academic ability. The treatment group did increase in mean score in perception of competence in academic ability; however, there was not a significant difference in perception of competence in academic ability after completing the EDPS 150 course specifically designed for this research project. Thus, students participating in a specifically designed course did not demonstrate a significant increase in degree of academic self-concept between pre- and post-tests. Nor did the treatment group show a significant increase in academic self-concept than those in the matched control group who did not complete the course. Thus, students who participate in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program did not demonstrate a significantly higher degree of academic self-concept than students in a matched control group who did not participate in the course.

Students' abilities to adapt to college. In measuring adaptation to college, four areas were examined: academic adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, social adjustment and attachment (to the institution). There were no significant findings in the measure of adaptation. Students who participated in a freshman seminar course employing high-impact practices typical of a university honors program did not demonstrate significantly higher scores on a measure of student adaptation to college than students in a matched control group.

Academic achievement. In measuring academic achievement, mean grade point average scores were computed for the treatment group and the control group. The groups were matched on high school class rank percentile and standardized ACT scores. Of the

46 students eligible to participate in the control group, 20 were selected for best match on the above variables. The grade point averages for the treatment group were computed for the treatment group with the EDPS course grade and without the course grade to control for any possibility of grade inflation. The findings did not show significantly higher grade point averages.

College students' perceptions in the confidence of their academic practices as they relate to perceived success in college. The treatment group did see a significant increase in their perception of confidence in using their academic strengths for a major or career interest. However, there were no significant findings with regard to confidence in persistence to graduation, study habits, time management skills, ability to make decisions and overall confidence in becoming academically successful in college.

Valuation of the seminar. The qualitative findings and explanatory follow-up indicate students do value a seminar experience designed to engage them in high-impact practices. Students scored positively those opportunities designed to engage them in high impact practices. They indicated an appreciation of participation in a first year seminar designed to be small and interactive. Additionally, they indicated positive scores for those activities that gave them additional advising resources, expected them to engage in discussions with faculty, and encouraged them to participate in campus activities and leadership opportunities. This phase of the research also indicated that students were appreciative of information regarding knowledge of resources available to them through the course. They also indicated an increase in engagement through follow-up questions

asking for more information on resources and providing suggestions for additional information first-year students should have as they enter college.

Significance of the Findings

Fowler and Boylan (2010) and other academic persistence researchers indicated that interaction (good interaction) with an academic advisor and university faculty can be the single most important and underestimated characteristic of student success and retention. Goodman and Pascarella (2006) in their article *First-Year Seminars Increase Persistence and Retention: A Summary of the Evidence from How College Affects Students* note that the benefits to participants in first-year seminars include: an increased likelihood to graduate in four years, more frequent and meaningful interaction with faculty, more involvement in co-curricular activities, an increased level of satisfaction with the college experience, more positive perceptions of themselves as learners and the achievement of higher grades. Students most likely to engage in these high-impact practices are doing so by choice, in some cases applying to and being selected into programs that mandate participation through scholarship. These programs often provide meaningful and consistent methods and opportunities to engage in high-impact practices.

The significance of the findings of this study indicate that students will value required participation and will see gains in confidence of using academic strengths in their major and career choice. The significance of this study was to determine if an honors program model of required participation in high-impact practices would be successful when applied to freshmen students who are least likely to participate in such practices. The findings neither conclude that students completing a course designed to

require participation will significantly increase their academic self-concept or experience an increased ability to adapt to college. The findings additionally conclude that students completing a course designed to require participation will not achieve significantly higher grades. However, the study found students did increase in confidence of their academic practices. As Brost and Payne (2011) suggested, underperformance by first-generation students can be helped through early promotion of cognitive engagement, interpersonal awareness, competency in practical skills and more engagement in the university setting. McNair & Albertine, (2012) suggested that certain educational practices have an impact on student learning outcomes and progress toward graduation. And, Kuh (2008) asserts participation in certain high-impact practices leads to gains in first to second year retention. The findings of this study combined with the literature noted suggests students participating in the study model (first-year seminar with required participation) may be better retained by the institution and persist to graduation.

Implications for Practice

Although this study did not find significant increases in academic self-concept, student adaptation or higher grade point averages, it did inform the researcher in practical application methods for continued practice and research. The sample size was small; the results may have something to do with this factor, it is the belief of this researcher that given the propensity toward higher grade point averages in the treatment group versus the control group a larger sample size may have produced significant results in academic achievement. Additionally, a longitudinal study following the treatment and control

groups through their time at the university may produce important information on persistence to graduation.

Other factors, such as the initial requirement to participate in the course may also have affected the results. Students were invited to participate, and choose to participate in the course; the study may have provided different results if there was no choice to participate in the course and students were placed into the course based on a prediction of their engagement in the collegiate environment both in and out of the classroom. Additionally, the researcher did not evaluate any resources available or embedded in to the control group's activities in their first semester.

Future Recommendations

This study was limited to one university and a small sample of students. With a larger population and sample the research may reveal different degrees of significance. Further research should explore the relationship of required participation in class activities to the likelihood of future involvement in campus and leadership activities. The study found students wanted additional connections and resources beyond the first-semester seminar, thus future research should explore the phenomena of intrusive advising on the success of students' persistence to graduation. Specifically, the impact of academic advisors as instructors of the first-year seminars should be explored for first-year students who are undecided about a major. Additionally, early intervention of campus resources such as the career services office as it relates to declaring college majors should be explored as a requirement for first-year students who are undecided

about a major. Students in this study reported a high need for discussion and guidance to a major area of study.

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Appendix A

Basics of a Fully Developed Honors Program

Basics of a Fully Developed Honors Program

Although no single or definitive honors program model can or should be superimposed on all types of institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council has identified a number of best practices that are common to successful and fully developed honors programs.

1. The honors program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves. A clearly articulated set of admission criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT score, a written essay, satisfactory progress, etc.) identifies the targeted student population served by the honors program. The program clearly specifies the requirements needed for retention and satisfactory completion.
2. The program has a clear mandate from the institution's administration in the form of a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors and defines the place of honors in the administrative and academic structure of the institution. The statement ensures the permanence and stability of honors by guaranteeing that adequate infrastructure resources, including an appropriate budget as well as appropriate faculty, staff, and administrative support when necessary, are allocated to honors so that the program avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival. In other words, the program is fully institutionalized (like comparable units on campus) so that it can build a lasting tradition of excellence.
3. The honors director reports to the chief academic officer of the institution.
4. The honors curriculum, established in harmony with the mission statement, meets the needs of the students in the program and features special courses, seminars, colloquia, experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, or other independent-study options.
5. The program requirements constitute a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work, typically 20% to 25% of the total course work and certainly no less than 15%.
6. The curriculum of the program is designed so that honors requirements can, when appropriate, also satisfy general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and pre-professional or professional training requirements.
7. The program provides a locus of visible and highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus.
8. The criteria for selection of honors faculty include exceptional teaching skills, the ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for able students, and support for the mission of honors education.
9. The program is located in suitable, preferably prominent, quarters on campus that provide both access for the students and a focal point for honors activity. Those accommodations include space for honors administrative, faculty, and support staff functions as appropriate. They may include space for an honors lounge,

- library, reading rooms, and computer facilities. If the honors program has a significant residential component, the honors housing and residential life functions are designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students.
10. The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the director or other administrative officer and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. The composition of that group represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and also elicit support for the program from across the campus.
 11. Honors students are assured a voice in the governance and direction of the honors program. This can be achieved through a student committee that conducts its business with as much autonomy as possible but works in collaboration with the administration and faculty to maintain excellence in the program. Honors students are included in governance, serving on the advisory/policy committee as well as constituting the group that governs the student association.
 12. Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.
 13. The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus.
 14. The program engages in continuous assessment and evaluation and is open to the need for change in order to maintain its distinctive position of offering exceptional and enhanced educational opportunities to honors students.
 15. The program emphasizes active learning and participatory education by offering opportunities for students to participate in regional and national conferences, Honors Semesters, international programs, community service, internships, undergraduate research, and other types of experiential education.
 16. When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs.
 17. The program provides priority enrollment for active honors students in recognition of scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program(s) requirements.

Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee on March 4, 1994; amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on November 23, 2007; further amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on February 19, 2010

Appendix B

EDPS 150 Section 003: Career Development Seminar

Fall 2013

Syllabus

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Educational Psychology 150: Career Development Seminar
 Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan
 First Semester, 2013-14
 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Ann Koopmann, M.A. Office: 2100 Neihardt
 Office Telephone: (402) 472-3678 Cell Phone: (402) 499-6202
 E-Mail: akoopmann1@unl.edu
 Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Course Description:

Career Development Seminar
Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan

Focus of the class

This class will focus on your personal/professional development, providing tools to help you seize the most you can from your undergraduate career. Active exploration, examination, and pursuit of career possibilities, including discussion pertaining to involvement in both academic and co-curricular experiences, will provide a broad perspective of what exactly the purpose of each individual's education means to him or her. This course will also challenge each participant to view his or her education in a new way.

Each student will produce an academic plan, a "plan of action," which will ultimately lead to a career development plan.

Syllabus is subject to change. Blackboard will have the most current version.

You are responsible for knowing any changes in the syllabus.

The purpose of the course is threefold:

- 1) To develop an understanding of the college environment and your responsibility in your education.
- 2) To learn strategies for becoming successful college students.
- 3) To provide an opportunity to begin to develop academic and career goals.

Grading Policy: Five (5) areas of evaluation will be considered, with the following relative weights:

Assignments – 25%
 Final Paper – 25%
 Attendance and class participation – 25%
 Mid-term Exam – 15%
 Presentations to Class – 10%

Final Paper Assignment Description:

A seven - ten page paper will be due (posted to Blackboard) Tuesday, December 10, 2013. The paper must present your academic plan, a well presented resume, and a “first lecture” for next fall’s EDPS 150.

Prompts:*Academic Plan:*

Given the information you received over the semester, how will you define and chart your academic path here at UNL? What classes might you take to supplement your learning? What opportunities might you pursue outside of the classroom? How can you take responsibility for your education and get the “most out of college?”

You must also include an outline of the intended course work and out of class activities.

Resume: The resume must be reviewed at least once by a Career Services professional.

First Lecture:

Two pages must be dedicated to giving a lecture to first year, first time students about what it is to be educated and what they should expect in their first semester of college.

Attendance:

It is expected that enrolled students will attend each regular class session, plus the required special events that occur outside of the regular class meeting time.

Classroom Etiquette:

I expect students to be engaged in the classroom discussion and presentations. Laptops and other electronic devices may be used before and after class, but use of these devices during class is inappropriate due to the nature of the seminar course. We also ask that during classroom presentations your full attention be given to the speaker, whether that is the instructor, guests, or your fellow students. Additionally, caps/hats should not be worn in class.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to have a thorough understanding of academic integrity as presented in “Academic Integrity” written by Professor James McShane and the Student Code of Conduct as found in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Any academic dishonesty associated with an assignment or an examination will result in no points being awarded for that element of the final grade determination, and a report will be filed with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

Textbooks:

Foundations for Learning: Claiming Your Education (third edition) Hazard, L., and Nadeau, JP. Pearson Education Inc., Boston, MA 2011

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Academic Planner (given to you at New Student Enrollment)

Other selected readings will be assigned via Blackboard and in class.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Class Schedule:		University of Nebraska-Lincoln Educational Psychology 150 Fall Semester, 2013-14
Tuesday August 27	<p>Introductions Syllabus & Blackboard Review Complete Bio Sheets Small group “get to know you” activities Discuss Introduction and Academic Areas & Campus Names assignments</p> <p>Assignment: All due on Tuesday, September 3 Read the following: Introduction and Chapter 1 in <i>Foundations of Learning Having a Degree and Being Educated</i>, Pellegrino, E. What’s so Good About a College Education?, Mills, A.</p> <p>Complete the Introduction Forum on Blackboard Written Reflection: Why did you choose to come to college? This is a reflection on your view of education. What is college for? What are your goals and expectations for college? How has your life before college (previous education, family and peer groups, etc.) influenced your answers to these questions?</p>	
Thursday August 29	Continue Introductions and meet Dr. Griesen	
Tuesday September 3	<p>Your education – Your responsibility Academic Nomenclature – Faculty description - how to address faculty, emails, etc. Learning in College</p> <p>Assignments: All due Tuesday, September 10 Read Chapters 2 and 3 in <i>Foundations of Learning</i> Bring some thoughts on the first few days of college to Tuesday’s class. Your notes should include your thoughts on move-in, your living arrangements, classes; anything about the first few days on campus. Answer Question 9 on page 40 “Describe your academic self-concept...”</p>	
Thursday September 5	<p>Meet in Peer Mentor Groups Questions from the first few days, begin discussion about campus involvement Explore the Student Involvement Office</p>	
Tuesday September 10	<p>Love South 127 Open House Discuss scheduling time with Ann about academic goals and/or intended majors</p> <p>Assignments: All due on Tuesday, September 17 Read Chapter 4 in <i>Foundations of Learning</i> Bring an account of how you spend your time. Complete Activity 4.1 on page 84</p>	

- Thursday
September 12 Meet in Peer Mentor groups
Visit the Career Services Office
- Tuesday
September 17 Small and large group discussion: *What does it mean to be educated?*
Discussion on Diversity
Discuss Professor Interviews
- Assignments: All due Tuesday, September 24
Read Chapter 5 in *Foundations of Learning*
Complete the study habits inventory on pages 88-92
Complete the trice academic locus of control scale on pages 96-97
Be prepared for a quiz over Chapter 5
- Thursday
September 19 Attend Mid-Semester Check any evening September 16-19
(you can attend as a group or individually)
- Tuesday
September 24 Scheduling and Time Management – Bring your Academic Planner to class
Learning and Instruction
Quiz
Discuss Professor Interviews
- Assignments: All due Tuesday, October 1
Read Chapter 6 in *Foundations of Learning*
Read Academic integrity cases (posted on line)
Find UNL's student code of conduct (read section 4.2)
- Thursday
September 26 Peer Mentor meeting
- Tuesday
October 1 Academic Areas/Campus Names Presentations
Assignment: Review Chapter 6 and Academic Integrity cases
- Thursday
October 3 Peer Mentor Groups: Academic Resources on Campus
Writing Assistance Center, Math Resource Room, Chemistry Resources, etc.
- Tuesday
October 8 Review schedule
Discuss Professor Interviews
Review Chapter 6
Begin discussion on the Academic Plan
- Assignment: Before class on Tuesday, October 15
Read Chapter 7 in *Foundations of Learning*
- Thursday
October 10 Peer Mentor Groups
Review Priority Registration Issues

Tuesday October 15	Discuss College Success and Goal Setting (chapter 7) Begin Academic Plan <i>Please bring your laptop and a copy of your degree audit to class.</i>
	Assignment: Read Academic Integrity cases before the Tuesday, October 29 th class
Thursday October 17	Actors in Class
Tuesday October 22:	Fall Break
Thursday October 24	Theatre Production with Peer Mentor groups “No Exit” 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday October 29	Small group discussions w/ case studies on Academic Integrity Ethics and Large group discussion
	Assignment: Read Chapter 8 before the Tuesday, November 5 th class time.
Thursday October 31	Peer Mentor Meeting Discussion on getting to know professors
Tuesday November 5	Professor Interview Presentations
Thursday November 7	Preparing for the Exam
Tuesday November 12	Review for the Exam Preparing the First Lecture Work in small groups to begin preparing the First Lecture
Thursday November 14	No Peer Mentor meetings, Dinner and Comedy on Friday the 15 th
Friday, November 15	5:30 p.m. Dinner 7:30 p.m. Jim Bellushi and the Chicago Board of Comedy
Tuesday November 19	Exam
Thursday November 21	Work with mentors on the first lecture
Tuesday November 26	First Lecture Presentation

Thursday
November 28 Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday First Lecture Presentation
December 3

Thompson Lction Reflection paper due Thursday, December 5 posted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.

Thursday First Lecture Presentation
December 5 Wrap up and questions about final paper

Tuesday First Lecture Presentation
December 10

Thursday People's Choice Awards
December 12 Last class – surveys and evaluation of course

Appendix C

Self-Perception Profile College Students Questionnaire

Self-Perception Profile College Students Questionnaire

What I Am Like

Name or ID _____ Age _____ Male Female

The following are statements that allow college students to describe themselves. There are no right or wrong answers since students differ markedly. Please read the entire sentence across. First decide which one of the two parts of each statement best describes you; then go to that side of the statement and check whether that is just *sort of true* for you or *really true* for you. You will just check **ONE** of the four boxes for each statement. Think about what you are like in the college environment as you read and answer each one.

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students like the kind of person they are	BUT	Other students wish that they were different	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are not very proud of the work they do on their job	BUT	Other students are very proud of the work they do on their job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel confident they are mastering their coursework	BUT	Other students do not feel so confident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are not satisfied with their social skills	BUT	Other students think their social skills are just fine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are not happy with the way they look	BUT	Other students are happy with the way they look	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students like the way they act when they are around their parents	BUT	Other students wish they acted differently around their parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students get kind of lonely because they don't really have a close friend to share things with	BUT	Other students don't usually get too lonely because they do have a close friend to share things with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel like they are just as smart or smarter than other students	BUT	Other students wonder if they are as smart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students often question the morality of their behavior	BUT	Other students feel their behavior is usually moral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel that people they like romantically will be attracted to them	BUT	Other students worry about whether people they like romantically will be attracted to them	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When some students do something sort of stupid that later appears very funny, they find it hard to laugh at themselves	BUT	When other students do something sort of stupid that later appears very funny, they can easily laugh at themselves	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel they are just as creative or even more so than other students	BUT	Other students wonder if they are as creative	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel they could do well at just about any new athletic activity they haven't tried before	BUT	Other students are afraid they might not do well at athletic activities they haven't ever tried	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are often disappointed with themselves	BUT	Other students are usually quite pleased with themselves	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel they are very good at their job	BUT	Other students worry about whether they can do their job	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students do very well at their studies	BUT	Other students don't do very well at their studies	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students find it hard to make new friends	BUT	Other students are able to make new friends easily	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are happy with their height and weight	BUT	Other students wish their height or weight was different	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students find it hard to act naturally when they are around their parents	BUT	Other students find it easy to act naturally around their parents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me	
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are able to make close friends they can really trust	BUT	Other students find it hard to make close friends they can really trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students do not feel they are very mentally able	BUT	Other students feel they are very mentally able	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students usually do what is morally right	BUT	Other students sometimes don't do what they know is morally right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students find it hard to establish romantic relationships	BUT	Other students don't have difficulty establishing romantic relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students don't mind being kidded by their friends	BUT	Other students are bothered when friends kid them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students worry that they are not as creative or inventive as other people	BUT	Other students feel they are very creative and inventive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students don't feel that they are very athletic	BUT	Other students do feel they are athletic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students usually like themselves as a person	BUT	Other students often don't like themselves as a person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel confident about their ability to do a new job	BUT	Other students worry about whether they can do a new job they haven't tried before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students have trouble figuring out homework assignments	BUT	Other students rarely have trouble with their homework assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students like the way they interact with other people	BUT	Other students wish their interactions with other people were different	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students wish their body was different	BUT	Other students like their body the way it is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me
32.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel comfortable being themselves around their parents	BUT	Other students have difficulty being themselves around their parents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
33.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students don't have a close friend they can share their personal thoughts and feelings with	BUT	Other students do have a friend who is close enough for them to share thoughts that are really personal	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
34.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel they are just as bright or brighter than most people	BUT	Other students wonder if they are as bright	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
35.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students would like to be a better person morally	BUT	Other students think they are quite moral	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
36.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students have the ability to develop romantic relationships	BUT	Other students do not find it easy to develop romantic relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
37.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students have a hard time laughing at the ridiculous or silly things they do	BUT	Other students find it easy to laugh at themselves	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
38.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students do not feel that they are very inventive	BUT	Other students feel that they are very inventive	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
39.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel that they are better than others at sports	BUT	Other students don't feel they can play as well	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
40.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students really like the way they are leading their lives	BUT	Other students often don't like the way they are leading their lives	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
41.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are not satisfied with the way they do their job	BUT	Other students are quite satisfied with the way they do their job	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students sometimes do not feel intellectually competent at their studies	BUT	Other students usually do feel intellectually competent at their studies	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
43.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel that they are socially accepted by many people	BUT	Other students wish more people accepted them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students like their physical appearance the way it is	BUT	Other students do not like their physical appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students find they are unable to get along with their parents	BUT	Other students get along with their parents quite well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are able to make really close friends	BUT	Other students find it hard to make really close friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students would really rather be different	BUT	Other students are very happy being the way they are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students question whether they are very intelligent	BUT	Other students feel they are intelligent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students live up to their own moral standards	BUT	Other students have trouble living up to their moral standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students worry that when they like someone romantically, that person won't like them back	BUT	Other students feel that when they are romantically interested in someone, that person will like them back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students can really laugh at certain things they do	BUT	Other students have a hard time laughing at themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students feel they have a lot of original ideas	BUT	Other students question whether their ideas are very original	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students don't do well at activities requiring physical skill	BUT	Other students are good at activities requiring physical skill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students are often dissatisfied with themselves	BUT	Other students are usually satisfied with themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Permission to copy and use this instrument was given by Neeman and Harter in Self-Perception Profile for College Students: Manual and Questionnaires 2012, p 10.

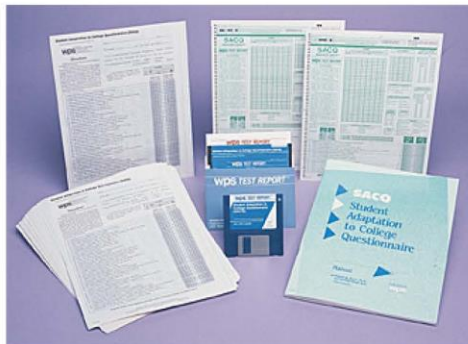
Appendix D

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

by Robert W. Baker, Ph.D. and Bohdan Siryk, M.A.



This quick, convenient instrument helps determine how well a student is handling the demands of college. SACQ assesses overall adjustment to college, as well as adjustment in four specific areas:

- Academic Adjustment
- Personal-Emotional Adjustment
- Social Adjustment
- Attachment (to the institution)

Used by many universities for routine freshman screening, SACQ is a cost-effective way to detect problems early in the student's college career. And because it indicates the nature of those problems, SACQ provides clear guidelines for subsequent intervention. It is particularly useful in identifying potential dropouts.

This 67-item, self-report questionnaire can be administered to individuals or groups in just 15 to 20 minutes. It can even be mailed to students, self-administered at home, and then returned for scoring. The convenient AutoScore™ Test Form simplifies scoring and profiling results.

If you are testing large groups of students, you may prefer computer scoring and interpretation. You can use WPS TEST REPORT prepaid Mail-In Answer Sheets to get detailed interpretive reports. Norms are based on a sample of more than 1,300 male and female college freshmen and stratified by semester of attendance (first and second semesters in college). The SACQ Manual includes an extensive list of studies using the test.

The questionnaire helps overcome the reluctance of many students to seek help--90 percent of those with low SACQ scores accept offers of a posttest interview. The questionnaire gives you reason for follow-up, as well as specific topics for discussion and a clear path toward effective intervention.

By detecting adjustment problems early, SACQ can help colleges retain students who might otherwise drop out.

Appendix E

Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory

Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory

Undergraduate New Student Enrollment Inventory

Name: _____ College/Major: _____ NUID: _____

Advanced Placement (AP)/ International Baccalaureate (IB)

Some students take accelerated classes in high school through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. If you have taken any of these courses please check the appropriate boxes.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers Advanced Placement Test credit for certain tests administered through the College Board. The current University policies regarding specific subject areas accepted and scores required are in the table below. Students not eligible to receive AP credit for courses in which they are dual-enrolled for college credit. Students must have official copies of their scores submitted to the Office of Admissions by the College Board in order for credit to be awarded. To obtain copies of official grade reports, you can contact Collage Board directly at (888) ALL-4-AP.

- Yes, I have taken Advanced Placement Tests.
- Yes, I have taken International Baccalaureate Tests.

Test	Score

*If score is unknown please mark N/A

Dual/Transfer Credit

Transfer and Dual Enrollment Credit

Institution	Course	Credit	Grade

Self-Assessment

We are interested in learning more about your education experience.

My reasons for attending college are:

I plan to live

- On Campus
- Off Campus

I plan to work

- Not working
- Plan to work but not my first semester
- On Campus
- Off Campus

I plan to work this many hours

- Not working
- Plan to work but not my first semester
- Less than 15 hrs/week
- Greater than 15 hrs/week

My strongest subject is

- Writing
- Math
- Science
- Reading

My most difficult subject is

- Writing
- Math
- Science
- Reading

My parent(s) have earned a bachelor's degree

- Both
- One
- Neither

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently (i.e: science strength needed to be a doctor, writing aptitudes needed to be a journalist)					
I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years					
I am confident about being in a new social environment					
I have good study habits (Good habit examples: reading textbook, managing time, reviewing class notes, outlining chapter notes to prepare for tests)					
I tend to procrastinate					
I am used to making decisions for myself (I decide what classes to take, I decide how to plan my schedule)					
I read books even when I don't have to					
I am confident about managing my time					
I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college					

The things that concern me most about college are (Choose your top two)

- Knowing how to study (what to study, etc...)
- Making friends
- Being in a larger environment that I am used to
- Paying for college
- Doing well in my classes
- Being away from family
- Finding help if I need it
- Making the right major/career decision
- Managing my time

Other:

In high school I spent this many hours per week studying outside of school

- 0-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- More than 10

In college I plan to study outside of class this many hours per week

- Less than 10
- 10-15
- 15-20
- 20-25
- 25-30
- More than 30

I plan to be involved in this many activities at UNL

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or More
- None

Activities I am planning on participating in during my first year which include

- ROTC (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines)

 Learning Community
 Varsity Athletics

 Honor's Program
 Instrumental/Vocal Ensembles

 Pepsi Scholars
 Marching Band

 Chancellor's Leadership Class
 EN Thompson
 None

Other, please list:

Math Courses Completed in High School

Please provide us with information about each math course you completed in high school. Below you will find fields to enter each math course.

Math Course	Grade

Permission to copy given by Patrick McBride, Director of New Student Enrollment
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2013.

Appendix F

EDPS 150 section 003 Fall 2013

University Issue Individual Course Report

Individual Course Report – EDPS 150 Sec. 003 Fall Semester 2013

Scale

Never Rarely Sometimes Usually Always N/A
 1 2 3 4 5

1. I was an active participant in class.
2. I completed course assignments thoughtfully and thoroughly.
3. The course was intellectually challenging.
4. The course content was meaningful to my personal or professional goals
5. The course content was attentive to issues of diversity.
6. The course content was up-to-date and relevant.
7. The course materials (e.g., texts, readings, websites) were appropriate and useful.
8. The instructor communicates well.
9. The instructor motivated me to think for myself and work in this class.
10. The instructor was well-prepared.
11. The instructor's evaluation procedures were fair and reasonable.
12. The instructor was willing and available to help me.
13. The instructor provided clear and useful feedback to improve learning.
14. The instructor treated students fairly regardless of race, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
15. The instructor's assignments were clear and were part of an appropriate work load.
16. The instructor acknowledged opposing views and permitted open discussion on controversial topics related to this course.
17. I learned something worthwhile in this course.
18. The course made me think.
19. I would recommend this course to others.

Scale

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent
 1 2 3 4 5

My overall rating of the course is

Open-ended questions

What did you like most about this course?

What did you like least about this course?

What other comments do you have about this course?

Appendix G

EDPS 150 Section 003 Fall 2013

Course Evaluation

EDPS 150 Section 003 Fall 2013: Course Evaluation

Please use the following scale to evaluate this course:

EDPS 150 section 003: Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan.

1-Strongly Agree (SA) 2-Agree (A) 3-Neutral (N) 4-Disagree (D) 5-Strongly Disagree (SD)

1. SA A N D SD This EDPS 150 course should be offered again next year.
2. SA A N D SD I would recommend this course to incoming undecided students.
3. SA A N D SD The instructor did a good job in this course.

The following items are to solicit your advice regarding course content/resources in the event that the course is offered again next year. You may add comments next to the item or at the end.

4. SA A N D SD Use the same textbook.
5. SA A N D SD Keep the mentor meetings.
6. SA A N D SD Keep the individual meeting with the instructor.
7. SA A N D SD Keep the visit to the First Year Experiences Open House.
8. SA A N D SD Repeat the campus names assignment.
9. SA A N D SD Attend a University Theatre production (with Actors in class).
10. SA A N D SD Keep the final paper assignment including academic plan.
11. SA A N D SD Keep the first lecture presentations.
12. SA A N D SD Add more small group discussions in class.
13. SA A N D SD Attend the Mid-semester check assignment.
14. SA A N D SD Attend the EN Thompson Lecture
15. SA A N D SD Keep the visit to Career Services.
16. SA A N D SD Keep the class dinners before the evening events.
17. SA A N D SD Keep the Lied Center Event.
18. SA A N D SD Keep the overview of MyRed and course registration.
19. SA A N D SD Keep the required attendance at Mid-Semester Check.
20. SA A N D SD Keep the Professor Interviews.

The thing you found most helpful in this course was...

The thing you found least helpful in this course was...

Please offer any other suggestions you might have: (feel free to use the backside of this sheet)

Appendix H

Invitation to Participate in

Career Development Seminar

Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan

EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours

Invitation to Participate in Career Development Seminar: Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan: EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours

Dear XX:

The Explore Center will be offering a new course in the fall for first-year, first-generation undecided students. There are only 25 seats available in the class and seats will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. Below is the course description.

Career Development Seminar
Claiming Your Education and Formulating Your Academic Plan
EDPS 150 Section 003: 2 credit hours
Days/Time: T-Th 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Location: TCH 205

Focus of the class

This class will focus on your personal/professional development, providing tools to help you seize the most you can from your undergraduate career. Active exploration, examination, and pursuit of career possibilities, including discussion pertaining to involvement in both academic and co-curricular experiences, will provide a broad perspective of what exactly the purpose of each individual's education means to him or her. This course will also challenge each participant to view his or her education in a new way.

Each student will produce an academic plan, a "plan of action," which will ultimately lead to a career development plan.

Please fill out the form below and bring this sheet to your adviser during your NSE advising appointment.

- Yes, I am interested.
- No, I am not interested at this time.

This part is to be completed as you meet with an adviser:

The course is full:

- I would like to be placed on the wait list for fall.
- I am interested in taking this class in the spring if it is offered.

Student:
 NU ID:
 NSE date:

Appendix I

Institutional Review Board Approval

Institutional Review Board Approval

From: njgrant-irb@unl.edu
To: [James Griesen](#); [Ann Koopmann](#)
Subject: NJgrant Message - Official Approval Letter for IRB project #13610
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 7:09:48 AM



January 14, 2014

Ann Koopmann
 Department of Educational Administration
 2100 NRC, UNL, 68588-0659

James Griesen
 Department of Educational Administration
 125 TEAC, UNL, 68588-0360

IRB Number: 20130813610EP
 Project ID: 13610
 Project Title: Using an Honors Program Model for Students Least Likely to Engage in High Impact Practices

Dear Ann:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has completed its review of the Request for Change in Protocol submitted to the IRB.

****It has been approved to add a control group.****

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

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

This letter constitutes official notification of the approval of the protocol change. You are therefore authorized to implement this change accordingly.

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

Sincerely,



Julia Torquati, Ph.D.
 Chair for the IRB



Appendix J

**Treatment Group Follow-up Survey
Administered Electronically**

Treatment group follow-up survey (electronic version)

Please complete the following survey by placing an X in the box next to the statement that best describes how you feel about the statement on the left.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My academic strengths are used in the major or career interest I have currently (i.e: science strength needed to be a doctor, writing aptitudes needed to be a journalist)					
I plan to graduate from UNL in 4 years					
I am confident about being in a new social environment					
I have good study habits (Good habit examples: reading textbook, managing time, reviewing class notes, outlining chapter notes to prepare for tests)					
I tend to procrastinate					
I am used to making decisions for myself (I decide what classes to take, I decide how to plan my schedule)					
I am confident about managing my time					
I feel confident that I will be academically successful in college					

Now that you have completed one semester of college and are far into your second semester please place an X next to the box that best describes your answer(s) to the questions below.

The things that concern me most about college are (Choose your top two)

- Knowing how to study (what to study, etc...)
- Making friends
- Being in a larger environment that I am used to
- Paying for college
- Doing well in my classes
- Being away from family
- Finding help if I need it
- Making the right major/career decision
- Managing my time

Other:

In college I study outside of class this many hours per week

- Less than 10
- 10-15
- 15-20
- 20-25
- 25-30
- More than 30

The number of hours I study outside of class is

More than I studied in high school

Less than I studied in high school

The same as I studied in high school

The number of hours I study in college compared to high school was a surprise to me

True False

I am involved in this many activities at UNL

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One | <input type="checkbox"/> Five or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four | |

Finally, please answer the following questions – you may type right on this sheet.

1. You entered college undecided on your major. Where are you in the process of deciding your major?
2. Are you intending to continue your education at UNL and earn a Bachelor's degree? If, not are you intending to finish a college degree? Where?
3. How confident are you that you will finish your degree? (circle one)

Not confident at all Somewhat confident Confident Very Confident

Feel free to elaborate with comments:

4. Do you feel you know the resources available on-campus to help you succeed in college?

Yes No
5. What has been most helpful to you in your first year of college?
6. What types of things would you like to know more about as you continue in college?

THANK YOU!!