EFFECTS OF ENROLLMENT IN COLLEGE SUCCESS SKILLS COURSE ON ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Keith Hill

Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University
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ABSTRACT

A nonexperimental, causal-comparative (ex post facto) research design was used in this study to examine the effectiveness and value of a College Success Skills course for students who tested into three developmental courses at the community college. The discussion and debate as to the efficacy of developmental education at community colleges has been continuing for decades. In many states, legislators seem to be prioritizing the issue of developmental education and the cost involved, both in time and money to students and taxpayers. The issue is complex as students arrive at community colleges with a wide variance in basic academic skills as most community colleges have open enrollment policies that permit all students to enroll in classes regardless of high school grade point averages or test scores. Although most students in community colleges graduated from high school, many also either earned a General Equivalency Degree (GED) or dropped out of high school. Adding to the challenges for these students is the fact that many students at community colleges receive full Pell Grant financial aid, which is approved only if income is at or near the poverty level. Many students have limited financial resources and struggle in the areas of suitable transportation, childcare, and daily living expenses. In addition to focused effort needed to overcome academic deficiencies in basic skills, many students have other distractions that usurp their time and energy. With this in mind, it is important that community colleges work with legislators to identify the strategies and policies needed to improve the outcomes for all students testing into developmental courses.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate the completion of my dissertation to my parents. Both of them were educators and instilled in us the importance of education. During the past few years, my dad has continued to encourage me and let me know how much it would mean to him when I completed the dissertation. Although my mother passed on almost two years ago, I have continued to benefit from her example of being a lifelong learner and never giving up. The daily thoughts of my mother and her efforts to empower my sister, brother, and I to love Jesus and help others has empowered me during this journey.
Acknowledgments

In completing the dissertation, one must maintain a focused effort, which requires sacrifices for the researcher as well as family and friends. This researcher counted on the unconditional support of family while often being distant emotionally or absent from family functions due to a commitment to research. Additionally, much credit to the Liberty University College of Education for providing a tremendous Ed.D program, consisting of excellent curriculum and instruction that supports students in completing their program.

I want to thank the Chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Vance Pickard. Dr. Pickard’s experience as a researcher and passion for education were evident as he guided me in the completion of the dissertation. While providing valuable insight and advice on ways to improve the study, he always ended our communication with words of encouragement which always gave me a lift. Since Dr. Fyock earned his EdD from Liberty University, his experiences proved to be an asset to the committee. His detailed review and comments were essential in making necessary changes throughout the dissertation process and were greatly appreciated in the final draft. Dr. Knesek brought many years of experience with community college students, including knowledge of academic support services, which provided additional contextual understanding of this study. His expertise in this area, as well as his continual encouragement to finish the study was inspirational to this researcher. Also I want to thank Dr. Watson as he was my professor for the proposal course and as the research consultant, provided recommendations and approvals to continue to the next step. I also want to thank Dr. Fouche, who as research consultant, provided recommendations for the final draft and participated in the defense. A special thank you to June Cline who provided tremendous support and guidance in professional editing and statistical analysis. June’s experience and professionalism was truly appreciated as she served as a mentor.
to me. I also want to thank Dr. Sawyer at the community college as he supported my research and gave me encouragement along the way. I also want to thank my colleagues at the community college, as they provided prayers and encouragement, especially during the final stages of my work.

Lastly, I want to thank members of my family. My dear mother, Regina, continually provided inspiration and encouragement during my writing and research. My mother passed away approximately two years ago; however, her legacy of teaching and helping others lives on in me. She gave her all to teaching and always had a heart for helping those students with the greatest needs. God Bless her. I want to thank my Dad, Ken, who continually has given me encouragement and I am blessed that he is planning to attend the commencement. I want to thank my wife, Kim, for her continued support and understanding. I also want to thank my children, Beth, Leo, Jenny, and Dennis for their encouragement. Also, I was motivated to complete my doctorate as I believed that it provide inspiration to my children as they know the amount of work and tenacity that it took to complete this, which may benefit them one day.

Finally I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus. “The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.” (Proverbs 19:21). During the past few years, at times I wondered if this day would ever come; however, I continually prayed and believed that I would achieve this if it was God’s will. Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”(Matthew 19:26). Amen.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Colleges are experiencing a significant increase in the number of students placing into developmental education courses in reading, mathematics, and/or English. Many of these students are unsuccessful in completing college-credit courses or attaining a degree. Despite years of work, actual student outcomes from developmental coursework in reading, writing, and mathematics have not often been successful. Recent research emphasizes the dilemma as studies have examined questions related to the definitions of developmental education, community college success, and how data is interpreted (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). The challenges are articulated by Goudas and Boylan (2012), who wrote on completion rates in community colleges. The authors mention that it will not be an easy task, as community colleges disproportionately serve first-generation, low-income, and academically underprepared students. Many students who struggle academically have challenges in the areas of transportation, financial, jobs, and information about how to achieve success in college. Often critics suggest that financial resources spent on developmental education would have a greater impact if spent on improving the quality of education within high schools. An additional suggestion is to offer students testing into developmental education more opportunities in high school to gain knowledge and exposure to training related to jobs in the skilled trades sector (VanOra, 2012).

Rigorous evaluation of many programs shows that innovations produce only modest improvement in student success and the most successful pedagogies have yet to be identified (Mellow, Woolis, & Laurillard, 2011). Determining the impact of academic support services for students completing developmental courses in college could provide useful information in targeting interventions for future students. There has been substantial research on developmental coursework and outcomes; however, few studies have identified specific academic support that
could yield significant improvements in grade point averages and persistence for students enrolled in developmental courses. Consequently, the purpose of this research was to determine if students enrolled in developmental courses, with an additional College Success Skills course, experienced significantly higher grade point averages and persistence rates than students in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

**Background of the Study**

**Theoretical Context**

Dewey continually stated that education and learning are interactive and social processes. He believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum. Dewey’s theory seems integral to understanding the complexities of developmental education, while providing methodology that could provide a more efficient overall learning experience. “Dewey’s concept of experience allows a holistic approach to education, in the sense that it is based on the interaction between the human being and the world. It takes all sides of human existence, its being in the world, as the methodological point of departure” (Hohr, 2013, p. 25).

Many students attending community colleges are nontraditional students and often face challenges and barriers to academic success. At most community colleges, the majority of students are enrolled as less than full-time students, as they balance school with work, family, and other responsibilities. Students who test into developmental courses often have left high school with deficient academic skills in reading, English, and/or mathematics. Additionally it is quite likely that they have not established consistent and effective study habits that would yield academic success in college. Knowles (1973) described how adults learn and used the term andragogy to describe the art and science of helping adults learn. Knowles’ (1973) basic
Argument was that adults and children learn in different ways and as such, different teaching methods should be utilized.

**Historical Context**

In the past, developmental education often was on the periphery of other college coursework and academic programs. If students were making progress in reading or mathematics, they did not meet with an academic advisor to develop a plan or establish an educational goal for further success. Today, stand-alone type courses, such as study skills taken by students as developmental coursework, are paired with first-year general education courses such as English Composition or Introduction to Sociology (Arendale, 2011). Currently, a substantial body of research has focused on identifying the specific needs of students, especially in community colleges, enrolled in developmental coursework. Although research has been published on the importance of providing academic support for students who test into development coursework (Boylan, 2009; Di Tommaso, 2010; Goudas & Boylan, 2012), there are gaps in the literature that describe successful models for appropriate academic support services. These models need to be replicated to show they yield substantial improvements in academic achievement and persistence.

**Educational Context**

In reviewing research by Willingham and Price (2009) on developmental education in community colleges, inadequate student vocabularies are often mentioned as a specific deficit area. Proficiency in language, both written and verbal is important if students are to optimize learning in college courses. Students may be at an academic disadvantage if these skills are not well developed. Often college vocabulary development instruction focuses on students’ expressive vocabulary – the words a student uses for speaking and writing rather than students’
receptive vocabulary, or the vocabulary needed for comprehension. Mnemonics and morphology are mentioned as two instructional strategies to build vocabulary. If students arrive at community colleges with weak vocabularies, other challenges that already exist can be exacerbated.

Educators are now considering models, such as Targeted Intervention for Developmental Education Students (TIDES), that provide an alternative for assessing, advising, and placing underprepared students in community colleges and universities. This model advocates combining cognitive and affective assessment data, along with information about students’ personal circumstances, to make more specific placement decisions regarding both course and support services (Boylan, 2009). A primary advantage of the TIDES model is that it attempts to reduce the number of students taking developmental courses by placing as many students as possible into college-level courses with appropriate support services.

**Problem Statement**

**Statement of the Problem**

Most students entering community colleges must complete a placement test in reading, writing, and mathematics. More than half of incoming students will be placed into developmental reading, writing, or mathematics courses based on their scores, even though there is little evidence this improves student outcomes (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). Research has shown that alternative approaches to assessment have the potential to improve student outcomes. Some evidence suggests that using multiple measures for student assessment, including academic and affective measures, could lead to variations in course placement and interventions that better meet the unique needs of the students (Boylan, 2008).

The College Success Skills course, developed in the 2013-2014 academic year, is required for all students who test into three developmental classes, reading, English, and math. In prior years, students completed the developmental classes, without a skills course to prepare
them for college-level work. Nationally, community colleges are continually experiencing increased scrutiny and requests from state legislators to share data that supports the effectiveness of developmental coursework and other support services for students who test into developmental levels in reading, writing, and mathematics.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if students who tested into three developmental courses, with an additional College Success Skills course, experienced significantly higher grade point averages and persistence rates than students in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

**Research Questions**

The research questions developed for this study include:

**Research question one.** To what extent is there a difference in the overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

**Research question two.** To what extent is there a difference in the overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

**Research question three.** To what extent is there a difference in persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?
**Statement of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses are as follows:

\( H_1 \): The overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

\( H_2 \): The overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

\( H_3 \): Persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

**Overview of the Methodology**

The goal of the study was to determine if students completing the College Success Skills course experience greater academic success and persistence than students enrolled in developmental courses who do not take the College Success Skills course. Information from student records will be used to compare academic success and persistence between students who have completed the College Success Skills course and those who did not complete this course. Permission to access the student records has been received from Registrar of the community college.
The target population includes all students who tested into three developmental courses (i.e., reading, mathematics, and/or English) at the community college. The students in the experimental group were enrolled in a College Success Skills course, which is required if they have tested into all three developmental courses in reading, mathematics, and English. While this class is recommended, it is not required if the students test out of at least one of the developmental courses. The students who did not take the College Success Skills course but had not tested out of all developmental courses will be included in the control group. The goal of the study is to determine if students completing the College Success Skills course experience greater academic success and persistence than students enrolled in developmental courses who do not take the College Success Skills course.

Approximately 500 students currently were enrolled during the fall semester in the College Success Skills course with approximately 55% male and 45% female with an average age of 28. Additionally, about 75% of participants are African American, 15% Latino, and 10% Caucasian. Nearly 80% of students report that they are first generation college students. The study takes place at a large Midwestern community college with over 20,000 students. Students enrolled in courses at the community college work on average 20 or more hours per week and register for approximately six credits per semester. As with the majority of community colleges throughout the United States, approximately 45% of all incoming students test into one or more developmental course(s). Purposive sampling procedures were used to obtain information from student records as the students who were included in the experimental or control group had to have specific characteristics. The experimental group had to be enrolled in the College Success Skills course because they failed to meet the entrance test requirements in reading, mathematics,
and English. The students in the study were enrolled in multiple sections, with 20 students in each section, of College Success Skills.

**Definition of Terms**

The researcher has provided the following definitions in order to ensure understanding of the research.

*Andragogy*- Theory of adult learning based primarily on the concept of the different motivating factors that impact learning for adult learners (Knowles, 1973).

*College Success Skills Course*- A course mainly for students testing into three developmental courses that provides vital information such as study skills, note-taking, and student resources available in supporting academic success (*Macomb Community College Student Handbook*, 2014).

*Community College*- Primarily public institutions that grant skill specific certificates and associate’s degrees; also referred to as junior colleges, technical colleges, and two-year colleges. “Most community college missions have basic commitments to serve all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students, provide a comprehensive educational program, serve its community as a community-based institution of higher education, teach, and promote lifelong learning (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015).

*Developmental Coursework*- Courses usually in reading, writing, and mathematics intended to improve college students’ proficiency to college level (Goudas & Boylan, 2012).

*Placement Test*- Assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics mainly administered to beginning community college students to assist in appropriate course placement (Goudas & Boylan, 2012)
**Remedial Education** - Education targeted to assist students to achieve expected competencies in basic skills areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics (Willingham & Price, 2009).
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will review the literature on academic support for students in community college who are underprepared for college. The focus of this study is underprepared students who test into three developmental courses that includes completion of a college success skills course. This chapter begins with the theoretical framework for this study followed by trends in developmental education. Until recently, much of the discussion of developmental education over the past 50 years focused on placement tests, the high percentage of students who tested into developmental coursework, and frustrations associated with high levels of attrition and marginal academic success. “Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), among a sample of students who were in eighth grade in 1988 and were tracked until 2000, fifty-eight percent of those students who attended a community college took at least one developmental or remedial course” (Bailey, 2009, p. 11). In reviewing results for students who have completed at least one developmental education course, fewer than 25% completed a degree within eight years of enrollment. In conjunction with the low success rate for students in developmental courses, another concern is the cost of developmental education in community colleges that is estimated between $1.61 and $2.01 billion per year (Collins, 2010). While many question the amount of money being spent on developmental education, others suggested that the long-standing objective of community colleges is to provide developmental education for students who are academically underprepared for baccalaureate colleges. Proponents of developmental education contended that all students should have access to higher education through the community colleges. They argued that reducing or eliminating developmental coursework would have a disproportionately negative impact on minority students (VanOra, 2012).
One of the complex and challenging aspects of the discussion about developmental education and the success of community college students centers on the results and interpretation of research. Opponents of the developmental education model that has been in place for decades cite research showing that students completing developmental courses do not perform better overall than students who have not taken developmental courses. Recent critics of developmental education suggest that if such coursework is benefiting students, there should be observable results in areas such as persistence, total number of credits, overall GPA, transfer rates, and graduation rates (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). For even the most ardent supporters of the developmental education model, it has been challenging to overcome the lack of data supporting their position.

In addition to the challenge that students in developmental courses face in overcoming academic deficiency, other obstacles have been cited. According to VanOra (2012), the process of learning, including completing assignments and writing assignments, is a daunting task for many students. Some students in developmental courses report being so overwhelmed in their classes that they feel lost. They know that tutoring or other academic support might help them have a better understanding of the material they are studying; however, their bewilderment with the entire learning process seems to almost paralyze them from accessing needed support. Additionally, students report multiple demands on their time which also makes it difficult to access resources. Many students report working 30 or more hours per week, while many other students report working two or more jobs to make ends meet. Students also report that they are raising children in single parent homes or the primary caretaker for other family members (VanOra, 2012).
Most community colleges throughout the United States, have worked diligently and tirelessly to identify and implement interventions that could affect student success. Some of the strategies that have been utilized include tutoring, peer mentoring, intrusive academic advising and counseling, linked coursework, and learning communities. Although each of these academic support strategies have merit, the lack of academic success for students enrolled in developmental courses at community colleges continues to foster dialogue regarding best practices in overcoming this dilemma.

**Theoretical Framework**

In reviewing numerous theorists, the work of John Dewey and Malcolm Knowles seems to hold value in considering and investigating methodology to assist students in achieving success in college. “Dewey’s concept of experience allows a holistic approach to education, in the sense that it is based on the interaction between the human being and the world. It takes all sides of human existence, its’ being in the world, as the methodological point of departure” (Hohr, 2013, p. 25). Dewey continually stated that education and learning are interactive and social processes. For many students in developmental courses, it has likely been difficult in high school and transitioning to college to interact with teachers. Furthermore, since most of these students are testing into developmental reading or English, lower reading comprehension levels may result in impediments to learning. Dewey’s concept of experience would seem to benefit students who are having difficulty with learning. Students testing into developmental courses may have not been successful academically in high school and as they start at the community college may be questioning whether education or college is really for them. Dewey’s concept of experience and social interaction might provide hope for these students and offer additional learning options. As most community colleges accept all students regardless of high school grade
point average or standardized test scores, such as SAT or ACT, students come from very diverse academic backgrounds (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). Many students starting at community colleges have not graduated from high school or earned a Certificate of High School Equivalency, which is given to students who pass General Equivalency Development (GED) tests. With this in mind, there is a strong likelihood that students testing into developmental education courses will need assistance in learning social interaction skills in addition to academic remediation for basic skills. These students may find learning more meaningful if they find common interests with other students in their classes. In line with Dewey’s theory, these students may also find that community involvement, such as volunteering, can help them explore new opportunities with an increased understanding of the value of education. He believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum. Dewey’s theory is integral to understanding the complexities of developmental education, while providing methodology that could provide a more efficient overall learning experience.

Another key component of Dewey’s philosophy involves communication. Dewey believed that communication is a social process involving the interaction between two or more people working towards a common purpose. Dewey believed that communication is an active process that requires that individuals participate physically, psychologically, and socially (Munoz & Munoz, 1998). In a college course, participation, collaboration, and communication among students would seem to deepen the learning and educational experiences for all students in the class.

Dewey believed that having a common purpose shaped human behavior and guided their actions such that members of the community, or in this case the classroom, could contribute to
achieve the common purpose (Munoz & Munoz, 1998; Sparkman, Maulding, & Roberts, 2012). In sharing a common purpose, students become more engaged as they shared ways to solve problems and understand different situations. Although participation and communication would seem to be an easy process for most students, this has not necessarily proven to be the case. In addition to overcoming the habit of passivity, students also need to develop trust in fellow students such that they feel comfortable sharing without fear of embarrassment. For this to occur, the instructor needs to prioritize and build an atmosphere of trust from the first days of class so that students feel comfortable sharing.

Dewey believed that communication was essential for learning to take place; however, he also felt that it had an even deeper meaning for people. Dewey considered communication “the naturalistic link” (Munoz & Munoz, 1998, p. 10) between humans’ experiences and their meanings and values. He believed that people were able to make sense of the environment through the communication process. Additionally, communication is the tool that transfers experiences from one generation to the next. Since students in classrooms represent diversity in culture, race, and ideas, many new ideas can be shared and understanding can be gained through communication. Dewey believed through communication, the educational process would continue to develop and grow providing a rich learning experience. Many students in the College Success Skills course come from different races and a diversity of cultures is represented. In sharing information and ideas that have been influenced by different cultures, students can experience a depth of learning that might not otherwise be possible.

Students attending community colleges are considered adults who have been influenced by their previous experiences. Hardin (2008) reviewed Malcolm Knowles’ adult learning theory to help understand how adults learn and used the term andragogy to describe the art and science
of helping adults learn. Knowles’ basic argument was that adults and children learn in different ways and as such, different teaching methods should be utilized. The theory of adult learning emphasized that adults want to know why they need to learn something before they can attach meaning to the experience. Most adults tend to be career-focused and self-directed, and want to take responsibility for their decisions. Knowles (as cited in Harper & Ross, 2011) listed six assumptions of motivation for adult learning:

1. Adults need to know the reason for learning.
2. Experience (including error) provides the basis for learning activities.
3. Adults need to be responsible for their own education and be involved in the creation of it.
4. Adults are most interested in learning those things having immediate relevance to them.
5. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.
6. Adults respond better to internal versus external motivators. (p. 165)

Many students attending community colleges are non-traditional students and often face challenges and barriers to academic success. Knowles’ andragogy theory would seem to offer hope and optimism for adult learners who test into developmental courses. The key components of this theory are similar to the key curricular concepts of the college success skills course. For example, students are taught that intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivators have a stronger and more lasting impact on academic and personal goals. A key tenet of the college success skills course is encouraging students to try new things, as errors and failures can provide excellent learning opportunities. Harper and Ross (2011) argued that “And students respond. They express to us that they feel they have control over their educational process. They say their love of
learning is revived” (p. 166), This type of attitude and optimism should be the goal for all students, perhaps even more so students who test into developmental courses and require additional academic support.

At most community colleges, the majority of students are enrolled as less than full-time students, and balance school with work, family, and other responsibilities. Students who test into developmental courses often have left high school with deficient academic skills in reading, English, and/or mathematics (DiTommaso, 2010). Additionally, they may not have established consistent and effective study habits that could provide academic success in college. Finally, students who are underprepared or have not achieved academic success may find it easier to quit doing work or at least they stop attempting any new learning activity, as this probably feels better than failing at something.

Students are required to register for the College Success Skills course if they test into three developmental courses in reading, writing, and mathematics. Attendance at all classes is mandatory and students must complete assignments consistently and on a timely basis. In speaking with several faculty who teach the course, many students in their classes experience high absentee rates which can limit the benefit of this course. Since the College Success Skills course relies heavily on experiential learning, the impact of the course for students with a high rate of absence is severely limited. Campus explorations include visits and presentations from key departments at the college, such as the tutoring center, the career center, and student activities, so absent students miss the opportunity to gain a better understanding of ways to access college resources as well as interact with key personnel. Knowles’ (1973) andragogy theory assumed that students move from being totally dependent on the teacher to increasing self-directedness in learning. As part of this, students develop a deep psychological need to be
perceived as being self-directed. When students find themselves in a situation where they are not allowed to be self-directing, they experience stress between self-concept and the situation. If students feel that they are being treated as children, they may become resentful and resistant, which can interfere with learning (Knowles, 1973). To some degree, students may be feeling resentment that they are being required to register for the College Success Skills course. The college may want to consider these feelings of resentment to determine if there is a way for students taking the course to perceive that even though they are required to complete the course, they are making all other choices relative to their majors and the courses they take.

Another important component of andragogy is that adult learners are problem-centered instead of subject-centered learners with one of the primary differences being in time perspective. Starting with elementary school and progressing through college, the goal is often for students to progress to the next grade level. There is no urgency to apply what they have learned as the students, with families and educators accepting the fact that the progression through different grades can take a significant amount of time. In comparison, it is noted that adult learners often enroll in college with a sense of immediacy. They may have enrolled in college due to some sense of inadequacy or pressure to obtain training for a career that will provide a satisfactory standard of living. While the curriculum for subject-centered learners is organized in a logical sequence of content topics, problem-centered learners would likely find more relevance in curriculum that is organized around a sequential set of problems relative to their area of interest. When the graduate program in adult education was organized around problem areas of interest to students, there was a noted difference in spirit between students entering the problem-centered units in comparison to the traditional subject-centered units (Knowles, 1973).
As with Dewey, Knowles’ (1973) understanding of the adult learner can provide insight and information as learning environments that seem to be the most efficient and successful are explored and identified. The purpose of this study is to determine if students enrolled in developmental courses, with the College Success Skills course, experience substantially higher grade point averages and persistence rates when compared to students enrolled in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

**Background**

**History of Community Colleges**

In the early 20th century, community colleges were created to provide greater access to higher education for students from diverse backgrounds, not just sons and daughters of the elite. University leaders developed community colleges in an effort to provide a greater access to postsecondary learning, serving students from racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds (Beach, 2011). The first community colleges were called junior colleges and the majority was located in high schools. The original mission of most community colleges was to provide open access to all students regardless of educational background and based on these figures seems to be continuing today. Increasingly community colleges are being expected to raise graduation and transfer rates while providing training to support a global economy. As public education continued to evolve and more students started attending high school, community colleges developed as the local option for postsecondary education that was mainly focused on vocational training (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; The President’s Commission on Higher Education, 1947).

Community colleges have served a unique role in American higher education in providing pedagogy for transfer, vocational, and continuing education students. With ties to the
labor market, community colleges are important economically to communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Due to their open access policy and the diversity of training, community colleges are important agents of democracy, providing access to higher education for underserved populations (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community colleges have progressed far beyond their initial mission of providing a more accessible educational options for students who lacked financial resources for traditional college educations. While community colleges are still expected to provide educational access to all students, the expectations have expanded to include training in many career fields that community colleges are uniquely able to provide.

Student enrollment has increased over the past decade in all postsecondary institutions, with the majority of non-traditional students enrolling in America’s community colleges (Complete College America, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002; National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey [NPSAS], 2008). A non-traditional student is defined as one that has one or more of the following traits: (a) attends part-time, (b) has dependents, (c) works full-time (at least 35 hours per week), (d) does not have a high school diploma, (e) is financially independent, (f) has delayed enrollment into college, and/or (g) is a single parent. During the past two decades, the number of non-traditional college students has been increasing. In 1986, 65% of all undergraduates were non-traditional students compared with 70% of undergraduates in 2007 (NCES, 2002: NPSAS, 2008). In comparison, the percentage of non-traditional students enrolled at community colleges has continued to increase as in 2007-08, approximately 88% were non-traditional and 69% had two or more non-traditional student characteristics (NPSAS, 2008).

As a point of reference, two-thirds of all college students in California attend community colleges. In California’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, community colleges were given
the primary role of training individuals to fill jobs in many industries. The plan stated that community colleges were to admit any student capable of benefiting from instruction (Kurlaender & Larsen, 2013). As in the majority of states, community colleges today in California are being counted on to solve workforce shortages and contribute to the overall health of the economy. President Obama identified community colleges as key contributors in raising the skills of the American workforce and increasing the number of college graduates. At a recent White House Summit on Community Colleges, President Obama spoke of the need to reform community colleges so that they provide all Americans with a chance to learn the knowledge and skills needed to compete for future jobs (Kurlaender and Larsen, 2013). In summary, approximately 50 years ago, America’s community colleges were considered as trade schools that provided skilled trades training. While they continue to offer skilled trades training, a focus of community colleges in the past 20 to 30 years has been to provide general education including remedial coursework to students. With heightened expectations from President Obama and other policymakers, community colleges are expected to have a major role in shaping the economic future of the United States.

History of Developmental Education

Historically, developmental education often was on the periphery of other college coursework and academic programs. In 1874, Harvard established the first American college freshman remedial English course as faculty complained that too many students lacked proficiency in formal writing (Arendale, 2011). By 1907, academic conditions had not improved at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia as almost half of the students failed to earn the minimum composite score on the entrance examination. In response to the disparity between faculty expectations and the academic level of incoming students, Harvard began to offer a
remedial reading course. While a variety of remedial courses were offered by various institutions, the most commonly offered courses were in the areas of reading and study skills. In 1909 more than 350 colleges offered “How to Study” courses for students underprepared academically (Arendale, 2011). “The U.S. Commissioner for Education reported that in 1913 approximately 80% of postsecondary institutions offered college preparatory programs representing a wide range of tutoring, remedial classes, and other forms of service” (Maxwell as cited by Arendale, 2011, p. 68). Based on college placement assessment scores, Harvard, in 1985, made it mandatory that students with a low test scores in writing skills were required to complete a remedial writing course. Many students did not want to enroll in the initial course “Basic Writing;” however, enrollment increased dramatically when the name was changed to “Introduction to Expository Writing (Armstrong as cited by Arendale, 2011). The strategy of course renaming has continued today with many institutions giving names to developmental courses or higher course numbers to improve students’ perceptions of the courses and increase overall enrollment.

Often, if students were making progress in reading or mathematics, they did not meet with an academic advisor to develop a plan or establish an educational goal for further success. Today, stand-alone type courses, such as study skills taken by students as developmental coursework, are often paired with first-year general education courses such as English Composition or Introduction to Sociology (Arendale, 2011). In paired courses, the instructors collaboratively integrate the curriculum between the two courses so that students can strategically practice the utilization of study skills with academic course material. Currently, research has focused on identifying the specific needs of students, especially in community colleges, enrolled in developmental coursework (Willingham & Price, 2009). Although there is
much research, there are gaps in the literature related to successful models that implement the appropriate academic support services that can be replicated, yielding significant improvements in academic achievement and persistence.

For many students entering community colleges, they first must complete a placement test in reading, writing, and mathematics. More than half of incoming students will be placed into developmental reading, writing, or mathematics courses based on their scores even though little evidence indicates that these courses improve student outcomes (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). Sparkman, Maulding and Roberts (2012) found that there are alternative approaches to assessment that have the potential to improve student outcomes. Some evidence suggests that using multiple measures for student assessment, including academic and affective measures, could lead to variations in course placement and interventions that better meet the unique needs of the students (Boylan, 2008). An increasingly popular trend is to assess students earlier, such as their junior year in high school, providing information on skills deficiencies so that students can work to strengthen these areas before enrolling in college. Dewey’s learning theory emphasized the psychological principle of the “reflex arc.” Relative to the arc, Dewey defined activity as an organic whole in which a person adapted to the environment in a unified way instead of a series of disconnected reactions (Gutek, 2011). Learning takes place based on this unified and purposeful action. Dewey’s philosophy on learning could benefit educators as they seek a more holistic way to assess and place students into more relevant courses that lead to better learning outcomes for students.

Educators are now considering models, such as Targeted Intervention for Developmental Education Students (TIDES; Boylan, 2009) that provides an alternative for assessing, advising, and placing underprepared students in community colleges and universities. TIDES advocates
combining cognitive and affective assessment data, along with information about students’ personal circumstances, to make more specific placement decisions regarding both course and support services (Boylan, 2009). A primary advantage of the TIDES model is that it attempts to reduce the number of students taking developmental courses by placing as many students as possible into college-level courses with appropriate support services.

Focus on Developmental Education Support

Vocabulary Instruction

In reviewing the research on developmental education, one specific area of need is students’ inadequate vocabularies. Advanced communication skills are an integral part of higher education, so students may be at an academic disadvantage if these skills aren’t well developed (Willingham & Price, 2009). College vocabulary development instruction rarely focuses on students’ receptive vocabulary, or the vocabulary needed for comprehension, but rather on students’ productive or expressive vocabulary – the words a student uses for speaking and writing. It is also important to understand the key role that schema, or the reader’s background knowledge, serves as scaffolding to aid in encoding information from text. Vygotsky’s theoretical work on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), describing the distance between students’ actual developmental level and the potential level with direct instruction or peer collaboration, is mentioned as providing a context for potential growth (Willingham & Price, 2009). This theory supports the concept that as students’ experiences with words grow, attainment of new words becomes easier. Mnemonics and morphology are mentioned as two instructional strategies to build vocabulary. In morphology study, the focus is on roots, suffixes, and prefixes and a student has a better opportunity to understand a word’s meaning, especially if context clues are used. Mnemonics, or the key word method, is also an effective way for students
to learn unfamiliar words. Both strategies depend on teacher instruction and interaction (Willingham & Price, 2009).

Developmental students’ weak vocabularies compound the other challenges they face. There is evidence for the need for college faculty receiving information and training on the importance of integrating vocabulary instruction and strategies in the curriculum (Willingham & Price, 2009). Additionally, the authors provide evidence that support the benefit of literature discussion groups, where students are engaged on numerous levels in building vocabulary and literacy. In literature discussion groups, students can read, write, speak, and listen to new words, along with directly learning the definitions, which aids in long-term word acquisition. John Dewey’s learning theory provides understanding as efforts are made to embed vocabulary instruction and learning strategies in all community college curricula. Dewey’s theory valued the importance of active participation by the learner in the learning process and this is certainly needed for adult learners to expand vocabularies and improve overall communication skills.

**Non-Cognitive Variables**

Another study linked to finding a more effective way to provide academic support investigated the meaning and importance of seven non-cognitive variables to a cohort of developmental writing students at an urban community college. The variables studied included finances, study management, college surroundings, views of self, views of education, motivation, and interpersonal relationships. While many researchers agree that non-cognitive variables are influential to student success, they often disagree as to which variables are most important (Di Tommaso, 2010).

Emotional intelligence are the skills that a person needs to function effectively at work or in life and might be referred to as common sense (Sparkman et al., 2012). Whereas emotional
intelligence has been widely utilized for many years in the business world to make employment decisions, there is scarcity of information regarding the use of emotional intelligence to review characteristics of student success in higher education. In a study of noncognitive predictors of student success in college, the two leading predictors were social responsibility and empathy (Sparkman et al., 2010). When individuals become involved in their communities, activities could promote students’ growth in social responsibility and empathy. Colleges could develop courses or seminars for first-year students designed to provide the students with opportunities to participate in group service projects. These projects, which could also be coordinated with the college’s center for student activities, could provide valuable services and support for community members while students improve in the areas of social responsibility and empathy. Emotional intelligence scores can improve through training, colleges could develop curriculum and extracurricular activities to encourage student growth in this area. Schutte, Schuettpelz, and Malouff (2001) completed research showing that emotional intelligence can be taught in university classes and that emotional intelligence training affects student performance and retention in the first two years of enrollment. In this study, predictors of retention and performance were empathy, social responsibility, and impulse control. Students can realize growth in these areas by participating in freshman courses, mentorships, and community service opportunities.

Career Focus

Many students entering community colleges are undecided on a major or course of study. Students who are undecided often select general education courses that they believe will count towards an associate degree or will transfer to a four-year college. If incoming students remain undecided or pursue courses that do not pertain to a specific major, they are in jeopardy of taking
courses that are not necessary for their potential degree or the courses will not transfer to a four-year university. This potential problem is compounded for students in developmental coursework, as the majority of students are undecided on a major or career pathway. This indecisiveness coupled with the additional developmental courses required most likely exacerbates the challenges experienced by these students. For students undecided on a career pathway and required to take a semester or more of developmental courses, their academic future may seem somewhat overwhelming to them which could negatively influence grades and retention. In a study of students at a large community college in the northeastern United States, grades and retention were examined for students in two programs, early childhood education and the paralegal program. Although it is unclear the percentage of developmental students in these programs, it is mentioned that a majority of students had tremendous life challenges and many placed in remedial coursework. Both the early childhood and paralegal programs offered a clear path to credentials, internships, and training that could be used in applying for jobs. While the graduation rate was 12% for students overall at the college, graduation rates for the paralegal program were 32% and 51% for the early childhood program. Students in the study expressed that the relevance of courses to their career goal kept them interested and engaged in their studies (Nitecki, 2011). This study reinforced that career-focused programs can lead to positive academic and retention outcomes for all community college students.

One of the many challenges for community colleges is funding that has been impacted by many states cutting their funding by millions of dollars. This lack of funding influences the decisions of community college administrators regarding the programs and majors that they can offer. Many community colleges throughout the United States are aligning with local businesses to create jobs as President Obama has made workforce development a priority. A community
college in North Carolina also has prioritized job growth as they work with companies who relocate to the area or expand facilities in meeting their hiring needs. The community college has spent the past two years building workforce pipelines that match specially trained students with the job needs of local employers (Violino, 2012). As part of a partnership with networking giant, Siemens, the community college is conducting pre-employment assessments and providing customized training to meet their hiring needs. A career counselor at the community college meets with potential job applicants as part of an initial assessment to determine the individuals’ job skills and the skills that need to be developed for available jobs. The college then provides specific training to develop needed skills. After one year of the program was completed, approximately 500 people who received training from the community college were hired for jobs with Siemens (Violino, 2012).

Another challenge for community colleges related to budget constraints is finding profitable ways to offer hundreds of degree and certificate programs, which has been even more difficult given the budget cutbacks. Another positive component of the job creation effort in North Carolina has been studies by the community college to determine which programs make and lose money. In the past and even today, colleges often eliminate programs if they are not making money; however, the community college in North Carolina uses a different strategy. Since they are working so closely with Siemens and other employers, they are able to dialogue with corporate leaders about investing in their programs so that the community college can continue to provide important training for their employees.

**Peer and Faculty Mentors**

Students in developmental courses, often come from less than successful academic backgrounds. While the lack of role models is discussed in the literature as a possible access
barrier to higher education, the influence of having or being a role model on students’ engagement in learning after enrollment is not often discussed (Di Tommaso, 2010). Results from this study indicate that having a role model or the desire to serve as a role model to others may improve self-efficacy and self-concept, encouraging self-direction and motivation that facilitates educational success. Often students enrolled in developmental courses come from lower socio-economic backgrounds so they may not have exposure to individuals in their communities who are working in their areas of interest. Colleges could help in this area by first connecting students in developmental courses with peer mentors who have successfully completed developmental education courses. As part of peer mentoring relationship, students in developmental courses may learn strategies to overcome challenges in situational and affective areas which could lead to increased motivation and social integration. When students who have been mentored complete developmental courses, they in turn could return to mentor students from their communities, which could lead to increased self-direction (Di Tommaso, 2010).

Di Tommaso (2010) reported that students benefit from meeting with faculty advisors regularly, explaining the rules and regulations of the college and assisting students in making appropriate decisions about courses and employment based on educational, occupational, and personal goals. Another of the key ideas is the ways in which faculty interact with students and the impact of this interaction on self-direction, external locus of control, and learned helplessness. When teachers show frustration with students’ lack of effort, they tend to exacerbate learned helplessness by sending negative messages about the students’ chances of success (Di Tommaso, 2010). The author suggested that teachers should model how to learn by adapting to the circumstances, expect students to succeed, and reinforce students’ efforts until they shift to an internal locus of control.
An additional strategy was that colleges should attempt to connect students with peer mentors who have successfully completed developmental courses in college. Relationships with peers who have overcome challenges in situational and affective areas could lead to increased motivation and persistence rates for the newer students. In conjunction with this, smaller class sizes can help create a psychologically safe classroom environment. This can allow students to more easily establish relationships with peers and instructors encouraging risk taking and modeling of successful peers (Bail, Zhang, & Tachiyama, 2008). Although Di Tommaso’s study provided descriptions of students’ experiences with noncognitive variables, the influence of these variables on educational retention, success, and persistence is not determined. A follow-up study should be considered to determine the educational outcomes of this cohort of students and the degree to which these variables influenced their success.

In another study related to the importance of students’ non-academic needs, adjustment issues of incoming freshmen are discussed. The majority of freshmen adjustment issues are likely to include roommate or peer conflict, difficulties with parents, self-esteem, lack of prioritizing, financial problems, job scheduling conflicts, and the distracting influences of romance and social events (Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefer, 2010). A bridging program may provide a model to consider in assisting students as they transition from high school to college. The staff conducting the bridging process consists of four specialists: a director/academic counselor, an academic/personal counselor, a reading/study skills specialist, and a writing specialist (Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefer, 2010). Individual sessions are 15 to 30 minutes long and provide students with an opportunity for new students to build relationships with college faculty. Students in developmental courses are required to meet with professional tutors in September and October of their first semester in college. Professional tutors in reading and
writing administer pre-semester assessments for each freshman in the program (Nelson-Denny, CUNY writing, etc.) to individualize academic support to student needs. Students also are required to meet with the reading specialist regularly. These students frequently are unprepared for note-taking, lecture, textbook content comprehension, or for managing the volume of text reading required in college courses (Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefer, 2010). Counselors assist student in working through problems and decision-making skills; however, peer mentors also assist students in these and other areas. Peer mentors operate as compassionate listeners, role models, and problem-solvers who are praised by students. The professional counselor works most closely with the mentors on social issues, utilizing small group training sessions in critical thinking, common sense, legal concerns, and confidentiality (Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefer, 2010).

Dewey believed that educators should concentrate on the psychological and sociological uniqueness of students (Hohr, 2013). Dewey felt that if teachers knew more about their students, they could teach them more effectively. Additionally, Dewey believed that schools were more than a place to learn pre-determined skills, as they should also help students learn how to live. He believed that teachers are called to assist students in realizing their full potential and the ability to use their skills for the greater good. Dewey’s philosophy on learning could have a major impact in bringing clarity to the relevance of noncognitive variables on academic success for students enrolled in developmental college courses.

**Innovations to Improve Success**

**High School Connectors**

An area that has recently garnered substantial scrutiny is placement test scores. One of the concerns or questions has been related to the high percentage of students who test into
developmental courses. The two main assessments utilized by most community colleges are Compass and Accuplacer with each of these assessing students’ scores in reading, writing, and mathematics. Based on scores, students are placed into either developmental or college-level reading, writing, or mathematics courses. Concerns related to placement are that an estimated 40 to 60% of community college students test into one or more developmental course while at some community colleges, the number of students testing into developmental courses could be in the 70% or higher range. A study was conducted by El Paso Community College to determine if a comprehensive college readiness protocol for high school students would have an impact on assessment scores. The study included approximately 4,000 students, with students and their parents attending a comprehensive orientation to review important information about the Accuplacer assessment. They learned the purpose of the assessment and how the scores would be used. They also learned the added cost, in time and tuition, for students testing into developmental courses, which often do not count towards degree credit or do the credits normally transfer. Students are then given resources to utilize in studying before completing the assessment. Students then take the test and meet with counselors to review the results. If students test into developmental courses, they are provided with specific study tools and strategies to improve their scores. Results were encouraging as increases in readiness for college courses included mathematics from 3% to 5%, reading 30% to 35%, and writing 51% to 66% (Kerrigan & Slater, 2010). In addition to more students placing into college-level courses, other students also placed into higher level developmental courses.

Although preparation for the Accuplacer yielded significant improvement in assessment scores and college readiness, the community college wanted to determine if another strategy also could trigger improvements. Students who do not pass the Accuplacer by the time they graduate
from high school are eligible for the summer bridge program. The programs offer non-credit courses in reading, writing, and mathematics in a five-week intensive format. The courses are taught by college instructors. After completing the summer bridge program, students again take the Accuplacer. The majority of participants increased their level of developmental placement by at least one course level in both mathematics and writing. In reading, more than 40% of the participants increased their placement level (Kerrigan & Slater, 2010). A summer bridge program seems as if it could provide multiple advantages for first time college students. A majority of students tested into higher-level developmental courses that could save them time and money as they avoid courses that do not transfer or count as degree credit. In addition to improvements in assessments scores, students also have opportunities to complete the summer bridge program with other new students who could benefit their transition to college. For new college students, there is also often a noticeable difference in the instructional methods of college instructors when compared to high school teachers. The fact that community college instructors are teaching in the summer bridge program provides students with opportunities to experience college instruction and increase their level of confidence as they begin college.

Students who complete one level or course in developmental education often do not register for subsequent semesters so the sequence of developmental coursework is not completed (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Since they do not complete the developmental sequence, they are unable to register for other college courses. These students either drop out entirely or switch to another community college, typically starting the process again and retaking some of the same courses completed at the previous community college. In an effort to overcome this cycle of futility, many colleges are now experimenting with summer bridge programs that accelerate students’ progress through developmental courses. In one sample program, a community college
combined levels of developmental reading, writing, and math to provide opportunities for students to accelerate through developmental sequences (Bailey, 2009). Although the sample size was small and research still needs to be completed, initial comparisons with students who completed the developmental sequence during the regular semesters show encouraging results.

**Programs Centered on Student Completion**

Many college administrators are looking for innovative ways to shift the focus from developmental education and under-preparedness to providing specific support for students to achieve success. One such college known for innovative approaches is Valencia College in Florida. The program that they developed was designed to improve the completion rate for students in basic skills classes. Students entering the program are expected to earn a degree or transfer courses in English and mathematics within two years or less. The program offers various support services such as, tutoring, structured pathways, monitoring of individual progress, and specific and timely interventions, to improve student outcomes. The results of the program thus far have been encouraging as 95% of the students remained enrolled in college, 80% passed courses in English and mathematics, and 70% passed at least two English or mathematics courses in a semester (Violino, 2012). On the surface, the program seems to use resources that are available to students at most community colleges; however, the high success rates suggest that something is unique about the program. However, information was unavailable to determine specific aspects of the program that were contributing to the high level of success.

Another program initiated at Valencia College was implemented to improve the outcomes for students testing in developmental courses. The guidelines for the program allow students to complete their lower division transfer requirements in two years or less from the time they start college. This program significantly increased the likelihood of college completion as
the current average for transfer course completion is almost twice as long. There are numerous benefits to students taking less time to complete transfer requirements, including students save time and money. Additionally a somewhat unexpected cost savings was realized by the college as support resources, such as tutoring and targeted interventions, were used in a more effective and efficient manner (Violino, 2012).

Increasingly research has been conducted that correlates students earning credit quickly with degree attainment. Academic momentum is a term associated with earning credits on a full-time basis. Calcagno, Crosta, Bailey, and Jenkins (2007) examined a cohort of all new community college students in Florida, finding that earning 10 or more nonremedial credits during the first year increased students’ likelihood of earning a credential. With this in mind, community colleges in New York implemented an accelerated study program. Students were eligible for the program if they had less than 12 college credits, were not enrolled in any other special support programs, and had completed any required developmental education courses before enrollment in the accelerated program. Upon starting the program, students were required to register for full-time status including a special block schedule in a cohort and commit to accessing any needed academic support. For students experiencing challenges in balancing college, family, and work, attending college on a part-time basis often seems more realistic; however, this schedule can impede academic momentum. This study attempted to overcome the challenge of a full-time schedule by assisting the students with morning, afternoon, or evening block schedules. The results of the study revealed that after two years, 30% of students in the accelerated study program had earned a degree compared to 11% of the control group. Three years after enrollment, 55% of students in the accelerated study program had earned degree compared to 25% of the control group (Kolenovic, Linderman, & Karp, 2013, p. 283). Although
academic momentum is identified as a key factor in the students’ success, another key factor was that academic counseling and advising was mandated for students in the accelerated program. Most community college students can access academic advising on a drop-in and voluntary basis. In this study, students were required to meet with an academic advisor on a frequent and regular basis to access needed academic support to achieve success. In reflecting on this study, requiring students to register for full-time status with a block schedule could be possible for many students at community colleges especially if the resulting academic momentum has a positive effect on retention and graduation. However, in considering mandatory academic advising, additional counselors or academic advisors would need to be added at every community college to accommodate the increased number of students to be seen. In addition to changing the delivery system for academic advising, a significant increase in cost could be incurred, meaning that implementation of such a change could be prohibitive for most community colleges. In considering one of the attributes of the College Success Skills course, students gain trust in their professors and often discuss their academic and career plans with them. Although these discussions do not offer the structure of the student meetings with their academic advisors, it could provide the student with needed academic guidance and mentoring.

Intrusive Academic Advising

Intrusive advising; sometimes called intentional, strategic, or proactive advising; was developed to reduce student attrition resulting from academic failure or adjustment issues (Abelman & Molina, 2001). The premise was that students’ increased frequency of contact with advisors could lead to improved academic performance and higher retention. Although intrusive advising has been utilized for 30 or 40 years, it wasn’t until the early 21st century that empirical research investigated the effect of intrusive advising or advising outreach for students at-risk and
A large study by Abelman and Molina (2001) used a sample of 210 students who were on academic probation with grade point averages below 2.0. Students were randomly assigned to one of three advising groups: nonintrusion, moderate intrusion, or full intrusion. Students on moderate and full intrusion received a 20-minute phone call from an advisor who reviewed a strategic plan of action with the student. Additionally, students experiencing full intrusion also attended a 30 to 40 minute appointment with the advisor and reviewed their strategic plan of action. Results indicated that students who received more intrusive advising experienced higher increases in grade point averages and retention rates (Abelman & Molina, 2001). Interestingly, students at greatest risk, with the lowest grade point average, experienced the greatest change. In a follow-up study, the results of students with learning disabilities were also considered. Findings reinforced that advising outreach could improve student retention and academic performance for students on probation. Additionally, the students with the biggest challenges appeared to benefit the most from advising outreach, with more intrusive advising yielding better results (Abelman & Molina, 2002).

In a study by Schwebel, Walburn, Klyce, & Jerrolds (2012), 500 students were followed for four years to determine the effects of receiving outreach or no outreach. Students in the outreach group received email or phone communication during the third, fourth, and fifth week of the semester from the advisor inviting students to schedule an appointment. Students in the no-outreach group received communication from the department or university reinforcing the importance of advising appointments; however, did not receive the additional outreach communication from the advisors. Students from the two groups were compared in the areas of academic achievement and retention. According to Schwebel et al. (2012), the cumulative grade point averages were the same for both groups and no significant differences were found in
retention ratesSchwebel et al. (2012) suggested that as with previous studies, intrusive advising may benefit at risk students; however, may have little effect on the grade point average or retention for students of the general student body. Secondly, the advising outreach for this study consisted of invitations for students to make appointments to see an advisor. The majority of students, whether at-risk or in the general student body, are not likely to schedule appointments with an advisor unless such appointments are mandated (Schwebel et al., 2012).

Another study discussed the benefits of a multidimensional approach in providing academic support services to students (Fowler & Boylan, 2010). One key area addressed in this research was the differentiation between prescriptive advising and developmental academic advising (Fowler & Boylan, 2010). Prescriptive advising often places the advisor in an authoritative role, while providing information to students based on institutional policy or other requirements (Vander Schee, 2007). Prescriptive advising often does not assist students in developing problem solving skills or strategies that could strengthen academic performance (Vander Schee, 2007). Additionally, since the students may see the advisor as an authority figure, they may not embrace or accept responsibility for suggested changes. In comparison, developmental academic advising is a process-oriented relationship between the student and advisor that focuses on the academic and related goals of the student (Vander Schee, 2007). Unlike prescriptive advising in which the advisor is likely seen as an authority figure, the advisor is seen as a resource in developmental academic advising. Advisors assist students in understanding the connection between education and their future, while helping students establish career and academic goals. Grade point averages and retention were examined for students who received intrusive academic advising (Fowler & Boylan, 2010). Grade point averages ($M = 2.15$ were significantly higher, for students receiving additional support when
compared to students \((M = 1.50)\) who were not receiving intrusive advising. One year retention rates was 52\% for students receiving intrusive advising compared to 29\% for students who were not receiving intrusive advising (Fowler & Boylan, 2010). Results from this study suggested that a more collaborative approach between advisors and students could yield better results than advising that is based primarily on the more traditional prescriptive model.

Ryan (2013) considered the effects of intrusive academic advising on students enrolled in 14 sections of a freshman seminar course. The goal of this study was to improve students’ academic success by focusing on enhanced academic advising during the students’ first semester. Students were assigned to two groups, experimental and control, using intact classrooms. The experimental group of students were advised by their instructors, who also taught their freshman course; while the control group was taught by regular instructors who did not serve as their advisors (Ryan, 2013). The results of the study were that first-time college students who received advising from their instructors had higher grade point averages \((M = 2.61)\) than the group who did not receive such advising \((M = 2.23)\). Additionally, students who received specialized advising were retained for the following semester at a higher rate, 65\% than students who did not receive such advising and were retained at 40\% (Ryan, 2013). Overall, the results indicated that student academic outcomes could be positively influenced by specialized or intrusive advising. An implication of the study was that all instructors of the freshman seminar course should serve as academic advisors for students in their courses (Ryan, 2013).

**Peer Tutoring**

Peer tutoring programs have been used for decades to support student learning at universities and community colleges. Although these programs have been widely used, empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness is lacking (Munley, Garvey, & McConnell, 2010). Peer
tutoring programs offer free tutoring services to students in small group settings led by peers who have completed a course successfully, usually with a grade of 3.0 or above.

In a large study at Lehigh University, data were analyzed for 83 courses, which included over 600 students who received peer-tutoring support (Munley, Garvey, & McConnell, 2010). Peer tutoring was available in the curricular areas, including physics, accounting, chemistry, mathematics, finance, mechanics, and economics. The research focused on determining the effect of participation in peer tutoring on the student’s final grade. According to Munley et al. (2010), results found that participation in peer tutoring for 10 hours during a 14-week semester could yield the equivalent of a plus or minus in the student’s final grade, while greater participation of 20 hours or more in a semester could yield improvements of one letter grade in the student’s final grade.

When reviewing the literature on peer tutoring, considerable evidence supports the effectiveness of one-to-one tutoring. However, because of the difficulty in following larger groups of students who simultaneously receive peer-tutoring support, fewer studies have been published (Cooper, 2010). Since peer tutoring can range from one-to-one, small group, to multi-disciplinary, or can involve regularly scheduled sessions or drop-in sessions; determining results of specific types of peer-tutoring is needed. In Cooper’s (2010) research, students were tracked based on drop-in tutoring in which peer tutoring was administered by mainly junior and senior students who had successfully completed the course(s) they were tutoring. Freshman who participated in drop-in tutoring more than 10 times in a quarter during the first year at Western Washington University had statistically significantly higher rates of persistence (Cooper, 2010). Additionally, freshman who participated in drop-in tutoring 10 or more times during the quarter had significantly higher grade point averages than students who visited less than 10 times
Although drop-in tutoring involved less planning and intentionality on the part of the student, results of this study suggested that it had a positive influence on student academic outcomes.

The effects of tutoring were the focus of a study by Rheinheimer, Grace-Odeleye, Francois, and Kusorgbor (2010) to determine the impact on persistence, retention, and graduation for 129 at-risk students at a public university. ACT 101 programs in Pennsylvania provide tutoring and other academic support to economically and educationally disadvantaged students enrolled in college. One of the challenges is that at-risk students are less likely to seek needed support. Rheinheimer et al. (2010) found that tutoring significantly influenced at-risk students’ persistence, retention, and degree attainment. Specifically, students who participated in tutoring were 13.5 times more likely to graduate than students who did not participate in tutoring (Rheinheimer & al, 2010). If tutoring is to be effective, students need to access this support early in the academic year.

**Student Success Courses**

Another initiative that is being implemented at community colleges with more frequency is offering a student success course. This course, which is usually intended for students without prior college experience, provides students with information about academic and career planning, strategies to improve study skills, and opportunities to interact socially with other students. In a quantitative study conducted at a Virginia community college, students enrolled in a student success course in the first semester completed more credits and had higher levels of persistence to a second year than students not enrolled in the course (Cho & Karp, 2013). Data from this study also showed that students, who were referred to the lowest level of
developmental mathematics, completing a student success course is associated with earning more credits.

In a qualitative study, community college students were interviewed during their second semester of enrollment to determine how institutional support services impact student progress toward their academic goal. Students in the study reported receiving information and guidance regarding course and career planning that was first confusing to them when they met with college academic advisors (O’Gara, Karp, & Hughes, 2009). In comparison to the general college advisors, students felt that the student success professors knew them on a more personal level and were in a better position to recommend courses that fit into their academic and career plans. Based on this study, it would seem that in addition to the knowledge and skills gained from the curriculum of the college success course, students acknowledge that they develop trust in their professor, which provides them with additional opportunities for strategic planning. Another incremental benefit to the college success course was the opportunity to connect with other students in ways that might not otherwise have been available. Due to the myriad of time constraints, such as work and family responsibility, it is often difficult for community college students to participate in clubs or activities, which can lead to higher persistence rates. Students reported that one of the requirements of this course was participation in class activities and discussion. With an emphasis on communication at perhaps a different level than most of their other courses, students developed a level of comfort and gained confidence in creating relationships with peers that could strengthen their overall college experience (O’Gara et al., 2009).

In another study to examine the effects of a student success course, the student record data of approximately 37,000 students, who were first-time students in Florida community
colleges, were tracked for 17 terms. The data was reviewed to determine the percentage of these students who completed a credential (a certificate or an associate degree), transferred to the Florida State University System, or persisted in school into a fifth year. Student data compared students enrolled in a student success course with those who were not and considered students enrolled in at least one developmental course. Based on these data, findings from this study showed that enrollment in a student success course had a positive marginal effect on a student’s chances of earning a credential, persisting, or transferring (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007). The authors also surmised that student success courses could lead to positive outcomes, especially if completed early in the student’s college experience, in developing clearer educational and career goals, as well as gaining an improved understanding of key attributes and skills necessary for academic success. The authors recommend further research is needed to determine which aspects of the student success courses were most closely related to student achievement.

In research related to the influence of academic support courses on the academic achievement for students testing into developmental courses, one study reviewed results of 911 students testing into at least one developmental course. Using a lottery-like process, students were assigned to the experimental group (458 students), who participated in the college success course, or to a control group (453 students), who did not participate in the success course. By comparing the results of the experimental and control group students, the community college was able to determine the influence of the success course on grade point average, persistence, and course completion (Rutschow, Cullinan, & Welbeck, 2012). As with many college success courses, pedagogy and curriculum, the two credit hour course focused on social and emotional skills. As part of this focus, lessons tended to engage students in reflection of their learning styles
and habits. Students also received instruction related to strengthening academic skills through improved note-taking, reading comprehension, and studying for tests. Students experienced changes in attitudes and perspectives; however, gains in these areas did not yield improved academic outcomes for the overall group of students (Rutschow et al., 2012). Student participation in the success course declined during the semester as 61% of students completed the course. A follow-up survey of students found that the student success course had a positive effect on students’ self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and interest in lifelong learning. Results showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group students when comparing grade point averages, course completion rates, or persistence during the semester the course was taken or in three subsequent semesters. The program results suggested that although students experienced positive results in attitudes and perspectives after completing the success course, the course obviously did not have a significant impact on students’ academic achievement. Researchers suggested that in addition to the college success course, a more comprehensive support program for students could have yielded improved academic outcomes.

**Current Study**

Completion of a College Success Skills course can benefit students, results have been mixed. According to Rutschow, Cullinan, and Wellbeck (2012), a correlation exists between completing a College Success Skills course with improved grade point average and persistence. However, the improvements or changes have not been consistent. The researchers found that students’ experienced gains in “self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, interest in lifelong learning, emotional intelligence, and engagement in college among students with low levels of these attributes” (p. iii). Rutschow et al. also asserted that these affective gains were not
associated with successful changes in students’ academic outcomes either during the semester in which they were enrolled in the course or in subsequent semesters.

In the current study, identifying the high school academic history for students taking the College Success Skills Course can be difficult. Because community colleges have open enrollment policies, high school transcripts do not have to be submitted with the application. Since most of the information related to high school academic performance is self-reported by students on their application, the information often lacks specificity and accuracy. As such, many of the students placing into three developmental courses may have even more academic challenges than even their placement scores suggest. In addition to lower than college level reading, writing, and mathematics proficiencies, students may also face the challenges of what it takes to be a successful student. Some students may not have earned a high school diploma or a General Education Diploma (GED).

Compounding the issue of students not having a high school diploma or GED is the fact that many of these students have not attended school for two or more years upon entering the community college. Some students need to be remediated in the basic skills areas of reading, writing, and mathematics; and also need substantial academic support in key areas, such as note taking, study skills, and writing papers. In addition to the diversity of academic backgrounds of students testing into three developmental courses, differences exist in the range of scores for the developmental courses. For reading, the score ranges are 1 to 67; for writing the score ranges are 1 to 23, and for mathematics the score ranges are testing into fundamental mathematics or testing into a second developmental course with score ranges of 1 to 33 in Algebra. In addition to the different levels of high school academic achievement, students testing into the College Success Skills course also often represent much different levels on the placement test scores. For
instance, the test scores for students in one of the classes used for this study had test scores ranging from 33 to 64 that represent differences in reading levels. Students who had higher reading scores and had a high school diploma were expected to realize better outcomes in completing the College Success Skills course than students with lower reading scores who had not earned a high school diploma or GED.

The curriculum for the College Success Skills course for this study encompasses key components for being successful college students. The syllabus for the CSSK course is presented in Appendix A. One of the areas covered is strategies for improving reading comprehension and retention. When reading complex material, the SQ3R method is a popular method to improve comprehension and retention. Five steps that comprise this method: (a) survey, (b) question, (c) read, (d) recite, and (e) review. In sharing this strategy with students, they often gain a better understanding of the importance of reading and learning. Often students entering a community college with low test scores have not learned strategies to become better learners. If family situations proved overwhelming, if their high school teachers were unable to reach them, or the students were unable to connect with their teachers, students may have felt disconnected which further hindered academic progress. In the College Success Skills course, students are provided with strategies to help them learn and gain confidence that they can succeed in college.

Another key component to achieving success in college is having effective listening and note-taking strategies. A study of more than 400 first-year college students who were given a listening test during the beginning of their first semester in college reinforces the importance of effective listening. At the end of their first year in college, 49% of students scoring low on the listening test were on academic probation compared to only 4% of students who scored high on the listening test (Mayernik, 2013). Often students testing into the College Success Skills course
have not learned effective listening and note-taking strategies in high school. As these students enter college, they may experience even greater frustration than in high school, as college professors often lecture during the entire class for an average of two hours. Since students are often tested on information from lectures, it is critical that students develop effective note-taking strategies. As part of the curriculum, students are introduced to the Cornell note-taking system. Although the Cornell system is a basic way to organize notes, students often seem to be experiencing a method to organize notes for the first time. Students are taught that note taking and studying are processes, and that studying for tests can be more productive if students organize their notes into meaningful categories.

In addition to deficiencies in basic academic skills and low placement scores in reading, writing, and mathematics, students also have to overcome other challenges in their lives if they are to achieve academic success in college. As reviewed earlier, students entering community college may be single parents, often are working two or more jobs, and their income level may place them at or near the poverty level. With this in mind, the College Success Skills course is intended to help students as they manage their resources and time as they begin their college experiences. One of the units in the course helps students in identifying strategies for effective goal-setting which includes short, mid, and long range planning. Steps in the goal-setting process are (a) awareness of yourself, (b) awareness of your options, (c) awareness of the options that best fit you, and (d) awareness of the process (Mayernik, 2013). In becoming more self-aware, students can identify where they are now and where they want to be. As part of the effort to become more aware, students can complete interest inventories that will help them identify their interests, abilities, and values. As they identify their interests and possible careers related to these interests, they can then determine the options that best fit their abilities. As the student identifies
possible career choices, they can then determine the major needed and the courses they need to complete as part of the degree requirement. In establishing goals and making career choices, students are likely to become more passionate about the courses they are taking, resulting in higher grade point averages and persistence rates.

Summary

There has been much discussion and debate in recent years regarding academic support offered at community colleges and four-year colleges. Is the available support, such as tutoring, learning labs, developmental courses, etc., yielding acceptable results? Are there combinations of support that provide optimal results? Developmental courses, sometimes called remedial courses, often have been criticized as the curriculum of these courses is material that has been covered in high school. Additionally, questions have been raised regarding the retention and academic success of students who complete developmental courses. Despite years of work, actual student outcomes from developmental coursework in reading, writing, and mathematics have not been successful. Rigorous evaluation of many programs shows that innovations produce only modest improvement in student success and the most successful pedagogies have yet to be identified (Mellow, Woolis, & Laurillard, 2011). Determining the impact of academic support services for students completing developmental courses in college could provide useful information in targeting interventions for future students.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Study

Many students entering community colleges must complete placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. More than half of incoming students will be placed into developmental reading, writing, or mathematics courses based on their scores even though there is little evidence this improves student outcomes (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). Research has shown that there are alternative approaches to assessment that have the potential to improve student outcomes. Using multiple measures for student assessment, including academic and affective measures, that could lead to variations in course placement and interventions that better meet the unique needs of the students (Boylan, 2008). An increasingly popular trend is to assess students earlier, such as their junior year in high school, providing information on skills deficiencies so that students can work to strengthen these areas before enrolling in college. Dewey’s learning theory emphasized the psychological principle of the “reflex arc.” Relative to the arc, Dewey defined activity as an organic whole in which a person adapted to the environment in a unified way instead of a series of disconnected reactions (Gutek, 2011). Learning takes place based on this unified and purposeful action. Dewey’s philosophy on learning could benefit educators as they seek a more holistic way to assess and place students into more relevant courses that lead to better learning outcomes for students.

The purpose of this study was to determine if students enrolled in developmental courses, with an additional College Success Skills course, experience significantly higher grade point averages and persistence rates when compared to student enrolled in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.
The data for this course was obtained from student records. The students were divided into two groups: those who had completed the College Success Skills course and those that had not completed College Success Skills course, although it was recommended based on their entrance test results. No extant data was obtained from current students. The data obtained from student records included personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), prior educational outcomes (e.g., high school attended), and community college information (e.g., remedial courses recommended, current grade point average, persistence to next semester). No students were identifiable in the final report.

**Design for the Study**

A nonexperimental, causal-comparative (ex post facto) research design was used in this study to examine the effectiveness and value of a College Success Skills course for students who placed into three developmental courses at the community college. This type of research design is used when the data have been collected previously. The independent variable was not manipulated and no intervention or treatment was provided to the participants. According to Vogt and Johnson (2011), an ex post facto research design is “any investigation using existing data rather than new, original data gathered specifically for the study. This means causes will be studied after (post) they have had their effect” (p. 135).

The independent variable was enrollment in the College Success Skills course. The dependent variables were the grade point averages, course completion rate, and persistence rates as determined by students’ registering for the following semester. This research design was selected to explore possible causative relationships between an independent and dependent variable when a researcher is unable to control the independent variable (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2009).
Research Questions.

The research questions developed for this study include:

Research question one. To what extent is there a difference in the overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

Research question two. To what extent is there a difference in the overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

Research question three. To what extent is there a difference in persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

Statement of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were as follows:

H₁: The overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

H₂: The overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who
tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

H₃: Persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

**Participants and Setting**

The study took place at a large Midwestern community college with over 20,000 students. Students enrolled in courses at the community college on average work 20 or more hours per week and register for approximately six credits per semester. As with the majority of community colleges throughout the United States, approximately 45% of all incoming students test into one or more developmental course(s).

The target population included all students who tested into three developmental courses. Regular and ongoing academic support services, such as tutoring, peer mentoring, and student success workshops were available to all students, both College Success Skills and non-College Success Skills students. The target population included all students who tested into three of the developmental reading, mathematics, and/or English courses at the community college.

The students in the experimental group were enrolled in a College Success Skills course, which is required if they tested into all three developmental courses in reading, mathematics, and English. While this class is recommended, it is not required if the students tested out of at least one of the developmental courses. The students who did not take the College Success Skills course but had not tested out of all developmental courses were included in the control group. The goal of the study was to determine if students completing the College Success Skills course
experienced greater academic success and persistence than students enrolled in developmental courses who did not take the College Success Skills course.

Approximately 550 students currently were enrolled during the Fall semesters of 2013 and 2014 in the College Success Skills course with approximately 45% male and 55% female with an average age of 28. Additionally, approximately 50% of participants are African American, 3% Latino, 35% Caucasian, and 12% other. Also, approximately 45% of students reported that they are first generation college students. Purposive sampling procedures were used as the students who were included in either the experimental or control group had to have specific characteristics. The experimental group was enrolled in the College Success Skills course because they scored below the cut-off on entrance tests in reading, mathematics, and English. The students in the study were enrolled in multiple sections, with 20 students in each section, of College Success Skills.

**Sample Size**

Using G-Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), the number of student records needed for the study was determined. With an alpha level of .05, effect size of .50, a sample of 210 students, 105 in the experimental and control groups, is needed for a power of .95. Figure 1 presents the graph of sample sizes at power levels ranging from 0.60 to .95. Additional participants can increase the power of the data analysis.
Students who do not pass the three placement courses are required to take the CSSK course during their first semester at the college. This study skills course was developed by Mayernik (2013) based on the book, *Thriving in the Community College and Beyond: Strategies for Academic Success and Personal Development* (Cuseo, Thompson, McLaughlin, & Moono (2013). Adaptations were made from Cuseo et al. (2013) to accommodate the unique demographics of the student population and available services and programs at the college. The purpose of this course is to provide incoming students who have challenges in meeting the rigor of a college curriculum with support and preparation for more advanced courses.

Full-time faculty are responsible for teaching this 16 week course that meets face-to-face twice a week. The faculty follow a syllabus that details the requirements for the course, including assignments and grading (Appendix A). A typical class has 20 students enrolled. The course includes units on study skills, time management and preventing procrastination, goal setting, education and career planning, testing taking skills and strategies, higher level thinking, diversity and the community college experience, and social and emotional intelligence. The course also
provides students with opportunities to become familiar with the college campus, including the library, learning center that houses the tutoring support group, career services center, reading and writing studio, student life and leadership, financial aid, and counseling. The students complete the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) as a pretest on the first day of class and again on the last day of class to allow a comparison of scores as a measure of growth. The students also have technology assignments that allow them to become familiar with computers and their use in a college setting. Students are graded using a predetermined guideline to assure consistency across the classes and within the course.

**Instrumentation**

Student records pertaining to students enrolled in the College Success Skills course and students tested into three developmental courses were investigated and analyzed. The data was obtained from the community college’s Institutional Research department. Student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were obtained at the completion of the first semester for students completing the College Success Skills course in comparison to students testing into three developmental courses who did not enroll in the College Success Skills course. Additionally, in measuring persistence, enrollment data was reviewed after completion of the second semester registration in analyzing enrollment of students who completed the College Success Skills course compared to students in developmental courses who did not complete the College Success Skills course. Table 1 presents the variables that were obtained from the students’ records.
Table 1

*Data from Student Records*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Variable</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variables</td>
<td>Overall grade point average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall course completion rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence to next semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td>Enrollment in College Success Skills course (yes enrolled, no not enrolled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years since completed high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First time in any college status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scores on entrance testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

The researcher submitted a completed IRB packet and upon gaining approval completed the research. The researcher also sought permission and access to community college data needed for this research study from the Director of Institutional Research, which was approved. The study used student academic records that are maintained on the community college database. All student data was anonymous as student names or identification numbers were deleted prior to giving the data to the researcher. Four years of data were used in this study and included all students who tested into three developmental courses, as well as students currently enrolled in the College Success Skills course. This data were obtained from the community college’s administrative center.

**Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the community college were analyzed using IBM-SPSS ver. 22. The data analyses were divided into three sections. The first section was used to describe the personal and educational characteristics of the students, using measures of central tendency,
cross tabulations, and frequency distributions. The two groups of students were compared on the demographic variables to determine if the experimental and control groups were similar. The results of these analyses are presented on tables in Chapter 4. The second section of the survey used descriptive statistics to provide baseline information for the dependent variables. Inferential statistical analyses were used in the third section of the data analysis to address the research questions and test the associated hypotheses. These tests included t-tests for two independent samples and chi square tests for independence. All decisions on the statistical significance of the findings were made using a criterion alpha level of .05.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Chapter Four presents the results of the data analyses that were used to describe the sample and address the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section uses descriptive statistics to provide a profile of the participants in the study. The second section provides baseline data on the continuous variables using descriptive statistics. Inferential statistical analyses are presented in the third section of the chapter to address the research questions and test the hypotheses.

The purpose of this study was to determine if students who tested into three developmental courses, with an additional College Success Skills course, experienced significantly higher grade point averages and persistence rates than students in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

**Research Questions.**

The research questions developed for this study include:

**Research question one.** To what extent is there a difference in the overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

**Research question two.** To what extent is there a difference in the overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

**Research question three.** To what extent is there a difference in persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success
Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before
availability of the College Success Skills course?

**Statement of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were as follows:

H$_1$: The overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the
College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students
who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success
Skills course.

H$_2$: The overall course completion rate for students who complete the College
Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who
tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills
course.

H$_3$: Persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students
completing the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when
compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of
the College Success Skills course

**Descriptive Statistics**

Data from closed records of 1,224 students who had tested into remedial classes at a
community college were used in the study. A total of 548 (44.8%) of the students had completed
the College Success Skills (CSSK) course (Group A). The remaining 676 (55.2%) of the students
had not completed this course (Group B).

The students’ ages were obtained from the student records. Descriptive statistics were
used to summarize these data for presentation in Table 2.
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: Age by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A had a mean age of 22.45 (SD = 6.17) years, with a median of 20 years. The ages for the group that took the class was from 17 to 66 years. The mean age of Group B was 22.26 (SD = 8.51) years, with a median of 22 years. The range of ages for the group that did not take the class was from 16 to 66 years.

The gender and race/ethnicity of the students were obtained from the student records. These data were crosstabulated by group membership. Table 3 presents results of this analysis.
Table 3

*Crosstabulations: Gender and Race/Ethnicity by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Group A (N = 548)</th>
<th>Group B (N = 676)</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,224)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/multiethnic</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants (n = 648, 56.7%) were female. This number included 290 (55.9%) females in Group A and 358 (57.4%) in Group B. A total of 495 (43.3%) males were included in the study, with 229 (44.1%) who took the course and 266 (42.6%) who did not take the course.

The largest group of students (n = 621, 50.6%) were Black. Of this number, 275 (50.2%) were in Group A and 346 (51.1%) were in Group B. The race/ethnicity of the second largest group (n = 434, 35.4%) was White, including 201 (37.7%) in Group A and 233 (34.5%) in Group B. The sample also included American Indian/Alaskan Native (n = 8, 0.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 23, 1.9%), and Hispanic (n = 31, 2.5%). One hundred seven (8.9%) students did not report their ethnicity or were multiethnic.

The data from the students included the years since they had graduated from high school. The years since high school was their self-report at the time they enrolled in the community college. Table 4 presents results of this analysis.
The mean years since high school for the students in Group A was 3.36 (SD = 4.53), with a median of 2 years. The range of years since high school for Group A was from 0 to 32 years. Students in Group B had been out of high school for a mean of 7.29 (SD = 7.37) years, with a median of 4 years. The years since high school for the students in Group B was from 0 to 44 years. Students who had 0 years since high school may have graduated or might be enrolled in the community college courses as part of dual enrollment with their high school.

The status of the students enrolled in the college as either first time college students or students who had been previously enrolled in another college/university was obtained from student records. The crosstabulations of the students’ first time in any college (FTIAC) status by group membership are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Crosstabulations: First Time in Any College (FTIAC) Status by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTIAC Status</th>
<th>Group A (N = 548)</th>
<th>Group B (N = 676)</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,224)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>490 (89.4%)</td>
<td>541 (80.0%)</td>
<td>1,031 (84.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>58 (10.6%)</td>
<td>135 (20.0%)</td>
<td>193 (15.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of students (n = 1,031, 84.2%) had FTIAC status. Included in this number were 490 (89.4%) students in Group A and 541 (80.0%) students in Group B. Fifty-eight (10.6%) students who had taken the course and 135 (20.0%) students who had not taken the course had been enrolled previously in another college/university.

The scores for the placement tests were obtained from student records. The scores were compared using t-tests for independent samples to determine if the students who took the CSSK course differed from those who did not take the course. Table 6 presents results of these analyses.

Table 6

*t-Test for Independent Samples – Placement Test Results by Group Membership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>11.43</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>49.49</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.88</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>50.84</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prealgebra</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>25.72</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>-2.31</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>26.78</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Algebra</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comparison of placement test scores between the students in Group B and those in Group B provided one instance of statistical significance. Students in Group A scored significantly lower on pre-algebra (M = 25.72, SD = 8.05) than students who did not take the
CSSK course (M = 26.78, SD = 7.98), t (1221) = -2.31, p = .021. The remaining placement tests did not differ significantly between the two groups. This finding indicated that the students prior to enrolling in the community college were statistically equivalent in their placement scores for English, reading, and algebra.

**Results**

Three research questions and associated hypotheses were developed for this study. Each of these questions was addressed using inferential statistical analyses. All decisions on the statistical significance of the findings were made using a criterion alpha level of .05.

**Hypothesis One**

To what extent is there a difference in the overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

H1: The overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

H01: The overall grade point average for first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course will not be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

The cumulative grade point average for the first year college students were compared between students in Group A and Group B. A t-test for independent samples was used to compare the cumulative grade point averages. Table 7 presents results of this analysis.
**Table 7**

*t*-Test for Independent Samples – Cumulative Grade Point Average by Group Membership (All Students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the *t*-test for independent samples that compared students’ cumulative grade point average who took the CSSK (M = 1.62, SD = 1.13) and students’ cumulative GPA who did not take the CSSK course (M = 1.14, SD = 1.16) was statistically significant, *t* (1222) = 7.23, *p* < .001. This analysis indicates that students who take the CSSK course were more likely to have significantly higher cumulative grade point averages than those who did not take the course. These findings provide support to reject the null hypothesis of no difference.

**Hypothesis Two**

To what extent is there a difference in the overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

H₂: The overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

H₀₂: The overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course will not be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.
The overall course completion rates were obtained for students in Group A and Group B who tested into three developmental courses before the availability of the CSSK course. A t-test for two independent samples was used to test for differences in completion rates between students in Group A and Group B. An assumption of the t-test for independent samples is that the samples in the two groups have been drawn from populations with equal variances. To test this assumption, Levine’s test was calculated. The results of this test were statistically significant ($F = 5886.34, p < .001$), indicating that the t-test for equal variances not assumed was used for this analysis. Table 8 presents results of this analysis.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>723.87</td>
<td>39.78</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The results of the t-tests for two independent samples were statistically significant, $t (723.87) = 39.78, p < .001$. This analysis indicated that students in Group A ($M = .89, SD = .01$) had a higher completion rate than students in Group B ($M = .77, SD = .08$). This analysis indicated that students in Group A were more likely to have a higher completion rate than students in Group B. As a result, the null hypothesis of no difference was rejected.

**Hypothesis Three**

To what extent is there a difference in persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course compared to
students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

H₃:  Persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course will be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

H₀₃:  Persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course will not be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

The persistence rates as measured by students’ registering for the following semester was crosstabulated by completion of the CSSK course. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

*Crosstabulations: Persistence by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>Group A (N = 548)</th>
<th>Group B (N = 676)</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,224)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square test for independence $\chi^2 (1) = 38.45, p < .001$

The majority of students (n = 768, 62.7%) persisted to the next semester. Of this number, 396 (72.3%) students were in Group A and 372 (55.0%) were in Group B. Of the 456 (37.3%)
students who had not persisted to the next semester, 152 (27.7%) were in Group A and 304 (45.0%) were in Group B. Chi-square test for independence was used to determine if an association existed between students who took the course and those who did not take the course. The results of this analysis were statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 38.45$, $p < .001$, indicating an association between taking the CSSK course and persistence to the next semester. As a result, the null hypothesis of no difference was rejected.

**Summary**

The results of the statistical analyses used to describe the sample and address the research questions have been presented in this chapter. Data from the closed records of two groups of students who had tested into three remedial courses were used in this study. One group of students had taken the CSSK course (Group A) to prepare them for college, while the other group had tested into the remedial courses prior to the availability of the CSSK course (Group B). The research questions and associated hypotheses were tested using t-tests for two independent samples and chi-square test for independence. The results of these analyses led to the rejection of the three null hypotheses, with students in Group A having higher cumulative grade point averages, overall course completion rates, and persistence rates to the next semester than students in Group B. A discussion of these findings is presented in Chapter Five along with implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restatement of the Problem, Purpose, and Research Design

The purpose of this study was to determine if students tested into three developmental courses, with an additional College Success Skills course, experienced significantly higher grade point averages, course completion rates, and persistence rates than students in developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

A nonexperimental, causal-comparative (ex post facto) research design was used to examine the effectiveness of a College Success Skills course for students who tested into three developmental courses at the community college. The design was selected because data used in the study was obtained from closed student records. Three research questions and associated hypotheses were developed for this study. The criterion alpha level of .05 was used to determine statistical significance for all of the statistical procedures.

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter provides a discussion of the results found for the three research questions and associated hypotheses. Additionally, implications for professional practice and recommendations for further research are provided. Each research question and the associated hypothesis that was used to test that question is listed, followed by a discussion of the results.

A total of 1,224 student records were used in the study, including 548 (44.8%) students who had completed the College Success Skills (CSSK) course (Group A) and 676 (55.2%) students who had not completed this course (Group B). The names and identifying information was removed from the data prior to analysis. The students ranged in age from 16 to 66 and a majority was female. Most of the students were African American/Black followed by Caucasian/White. The students had been out of high school for 0 to 44 years. Most of the
students were classified as first time in any college (FTIAC). All students in the study had taken English, reading, pre-algebra and algebra placement tests. When the scores for the students who had taken the CSSK course were compared to scores for students who had not taken the CSSK course, the differences were not statistically significant for English, reading, and algebra, indicating these test scores were statistically equivalent for the two groups. A statistically significant difference was found between the students who had completed the CSSK course and those who had not taken this course on pre-algebra. Students who had not taken the CSSK course had higher scores on the pre-algebra placement test than those who had not taken the course.

Research Question 1. To what extent is there a difference in the overall grade point average for the first year college students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that the grade point averages would be significantly different for first year college students testing into three developmental courses who completed the College Success Skills course and students who did not complete the College Success Skills course.

Hypothesis 01. It was hypothesized that the grade point averages would not be significantly different for first year college students testing into three developmental courses who completed the College Success Skills course and students who did not complete the College Success Skills course.

A t-test for independent samples was used to compare cumulative grade point averages between students in Group A and Group B. A statistically significant difference was found in
cumulative grade point average between students in Group A and students in Group B. Students in Group A had higher cumulative grade point averages than students in Group B.

The finding validated previous research by Rutschow, Cullinan, and Wellbeck (2012) that indicated a correlation between completing a CSSK and cumulative grade point average. The CSSK course was intended to prepare students for college-level work. Students were exposed to ways to take notes in class, were provided with study skills to prepare for tests, and were given time management strategies to keep them on track. In another study, students who completed a freshman year experience course achieved 2.17 grade point averages versus 1.99 for students who did not complete the course (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). Although the difference in grade point averages was small, students with a grade point average above 2.0 are considered in good academic standing. The college has a policy that students with a grade point average below 2.0 are suspended for the next semester. For students already at risk, being suspended adds another challenge that is difficult to navigate. Even though students will need higher grade point averages especially to transfer, the majority of students who completed the freshman year experience course were able to continue taking courses the next semester, while students not completing the freshman experience course were suspended. Findings from previous studies suggest that improvements or changes have been inconsistent.

**Research Question 2.** To what extent is there a difference in overall course completion rate for students who complete the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course. **Hypothesis 2.** It was hypothesized that the overall course completion rate for students who completed the College Success Skills course would be significantly different when
compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

*Hypothesis 02.* It was hypothesized that the overall course completion rate for students who completed the College Success Skills course would not be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

When determining the effect of the CSSK course on course completion, students who completed the CSSK course were compared to those students who did not complete the course using a t-test for independent samples. The results of this analysis were statistically significant, indicating that students who completed the CSSK course had higher overall course completion rates than students who had not completed this course. The finding validated previous research by Rutschow et al. (2012) that indicated a correlation between completing a CSSK and course completion. That study using random assignment methodology examined the effect of a success course on Guilford Technical Community College students. The course had a positive impact on students’ self-management, self-awareness, interdependence, and interest in lifelong learning. The program had a positive effect with students achieving higher grades, more credits earned, and higher persistence rates than students who did not complete the success course (Rutschow et al., 2012).

Shortly after all students apply to the community college, they complete an online orientation process, take the placement tests, and then meet with an academic advisor. At this point, they become aware of academic programs, resources, and academic support available at the community college. These programs and resources include small group tutoring that is available for many first year courses. A writing studio is available for consultation in an effort to
provide additional support to students. Despite the available academic support, some students testing into developmental courses reported being overwhelmed in their classes and experienced feelings of being lost. Making the transition from high school to a college setting may be more difficult than the students expected. Although most students testing into developmental courses are aware of the various support services, many report feelings of paralysis due in part to their bewilderment with the entire learning process. According to VanOra (2012), the process of learning, including completing assignments, in particular writing assignments, can be a daunting task. When students become overwhelmed or frustrated, they may not complete their courses.

One of the key attributes of the College Success Skills course is explorations or visits to various departments on campus. Students in the College Success Skills course visit key departments such as the tutoring center, the writing studio, the student activities center, the career center, as well as other key student support areas. During these visits, students are provided with information about available resources and specific support provided, as well as how to access the support that they need. During the visit, students meet some of the key personnel in the departments and are given opportunities to experience some of the available support “hands-on.” These experiences can help students feel more comfortable as they start college and access academic support services. The higher course completion rate for students completing the College Skills Courses is likely attributable to the explorations and interactions that students are receiving as part of the course. A study found that students enrolled in a freshman year experience course had higher earned credit hour ratios of attempted hours than students with similar characteristics who had not completed the freshman year experience course (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). Course evaluations by students at the completion of the freshman
year reinforced the importance of attributes of the course related to developing intellectual and academic competence.

Another key component of the College Success Skills course was providing students with opportunities to complete interest and aptitude assessments and to assist them in identifying major and career goals. For undecided students who were required to complete a semester or more of developmental courses, frustrations might overwhelm them as they attempted to identify career pathways while being required to complete courses that might not transfer or count as credit towards their degrees. In a study of community college students by Nitecki (2011), results indicated that completion and graduation rates for students who were working on a career goal were at least double those of undecided students. According to students in his study, the relevance of courses to their career goal kept them interested and engaged in their studies. Although student records used in the current research did not identify if they had selected a major or were undecided, research by Nitecki (2011) suggested that having students focus on identification of a major with relevant coursework may have a positive influence on retention through graduation.

*Research Question 3.* To what extent is there a difference in persistence rates, identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course?

*Hypothesis 3.* It was hypothesized that persistence rates, as identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course would be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.
Hypothesis 03. It was hypothesized that persistence rates, as identified as registering for the following semester, for students completing the College Success Skills course would not be significantly different when compared to students who tested into three developmental courses before availability of the College Success Skills course.

A chi-square test for independence was used to determine if an association existed between persistence rates, as measured by enrolling for the next semester, and completing the CSSK course. The results of this analysis were statistically significant, indicating that students who took the CSSK course were more likely to re-enroll in the next semester than students who did not take the CSSK course.

Dewey felt that if professors knew more about their students, they could teach them more effectively (Hohr, 2013). The majority of students in the College Success Skills course were first time in any college (FTIACs) and many were first generation college students. Of 13 million students enrolled in 1,150 community colleges, approximately half are first year college students. Also 42% of all community college students are the first in their families to attend college (Mayernik, 2013). As such, they may feel that they are trail blazers and torch bearers, as they are the first in their family to attend college. Dewey believed that schools were more than a place to learn pre-determined skills, as they should also help students learn how to live (Hohr, 2013). The college success skills course was designed to help students realize that they could be successful in achieving their academic and career goals. In another study, students enrolled in a freshman year experience course persisted to their second year at the university at a significantly higher rate than students who did not enroll in the freshman year experience course (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). The success of the students completing the course may be attributed to the student-centered focus of the course curriculum with active student involvement. Additionally,
students completing the course understand the priorities that the university places on academic success and helping them persist through graduation (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). One unit in the College Success Skills course helps students identify strategies for effective goal-setting which includes short, mid, and long range planning. Steps in the goal-setting process are (a) awareness of yourself, (b) awareness of your options, (c) awareness of the options that best fit you, and (d) awareness of the process (Mayernik, 2013). In becoming more self-aware, students can identify where they are now and where they want to be. Many students in the College Success Skills course did not graduate from high school and although the General Education Development (GED) certification is valuable, students who complete and pass the GED test often have not attended a traditional high school for several years before enrolling in college. The curriculum and experience of the College Success Skills course provides a softer transition to college for these students. This positive experience may be a reason for higher persistence rates for students in the College Success Skills course when compared to students testing into developmental courses without the College Success Skills course.

In addition to the academic skills that are covered in the College Success Skills course, connecting students with opportunities to build social capital could have a positive effect on their academic success. Students in the College Success Skills course were given opportunities to meet with key personnel in the student activities center and sign-up for community service group projects. While data related to how many students participated in community serving opportunities was not available, some students participated and others could do so during a future semester. Although findings seem to be limited, previous research explored the effect that volunteering and participating in group service projects had on students’ academic outcomes. In previous studies of non-cognitive predictors of student success in college, two leading predictors
were social responsibility and empathy (Sparkman et al., 2010). They found that students can experience growth in social responsibility and empathy by becoming more involved in their communities. Schutte, Schuettpelz, and Malouff (2001) completed research, finding that emotional intelligence could be taught in college classes and such learning could influence student performance and persistence in the first two years of enrollment. In the research, Schutte et al. (2001) noted that predictors of retention and performance were empathy, social responsibility, and impulse control.

Students were provided with information leading to a better understanding of key attributes and skills required for academic success. This finding supported previous literature by Zeidenberg, Jenkins, and Calcagno (2007) who conducted a large study in Florida of first-time students in community college. Data were reviewed to determine the percentage of students who completed a credential, transferred to a 4-year college, or persisted to the next semester. Student data compared students enrolled in at least one developmental course with a student success course and students taking one or more developmental courses without the success course. Based on the data from this study, completion of a student success course had a positive effect on students’ outcomes (Zeidenberg et al., 2007). The results indicated the importance of completing a success course early in the student’s college experience. As in the current study, the College Success Skills course assisted students in the Zeidenberg et al. (2007) study to develop achievable educational and career goals that alleviated some of the confusion that first year students experience with course selection.

**Implications**

The following implications are relative to the comparison of college outcomes between students who completed a College Success Skills course and students who did not complete the
College Success Skills course. The College Success Skills course appeared to have a positive impact on students’ cumulative grade point average (GPA). Even though students completing the College Success Skills course had significantly higher grade point averages, their higher grade point averages were still below the minimum GPA of 2.0 needed to avoid academic probation. Another troubling aspect of this finding was that students also must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA to maintain their financial aid in good standing. Since almost 60% of students attending the community college receive financial aid, thousands of students could lose their financial aid and thus be unable to continue in college if their GPAs fall below 2.0. Since students who completed the College Success Skills course had higher grade point averages, the community college needs to encourage all entering freshman students and require students who test into any developmental courses to enroll in the College Success Skills course. The community college should consider mandatory student participation in other types of academic support, such as small group tutoring, mentoring, attendance at academic success seminars, etc., as a 2.0 or higher grade point average is required for satisfactory academic progress.

In reviewing the influence that finishing the College Success Skills course had on persistence, completion of the CSSK course had a positive association with students’ persistence to the next semester. The majority of students who completed the College Success Skills course persisted to the next semester, whereas, most students not enrolled in the College Success Skills course did not persist to the next semester. The Community College achieved a goal of providing students testing into developmental courses with information on being successful college students. In addition to this information, the course offered students opportunities to explore academic departments and resources to support their academic success. Students were able to improve their skills and build confidence culminating in persistence to the next semester.
Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the fact that the community college research department could only supply college course completion data using semester totals instead of individual student. While the data were useful in comparing the results of the College Skills Course for students testing into developmental courses, it was not possible to analyze specific correlations for students in comparing individual grade point averages, course completion rates, and persistence rates.

Students testing into developmental courses often receive or have access to multiple academic support services. Students enrolling in the community college were provided with information regarding the available resources and explorations of the various departments. This information assisted students in knowing how to access such resources better. In a study conducted at a community college, students enrolled in a student success course in the first semester completed more credits and had higher levels of persistence than students not enrolled in the course (Cho & Karp, 2013). Previous research, as well as the present study, supported the findings that a student success course had a positive effect for students academically. However, the researcher did not have access to data on the specific types of resources that students were accessing, such as tutoring support, attending student success workshops, individualized writing support, mentoring, etc. As a result, knowing if students completing the College Success Skills course experienced better academic outcomes due entirely to the College Success Skills course or the course in combination with other support they were receiving cannot be determined.

Although the grade point averages were substantially higher for students completing the College Success Skills course, data were not available on the specific courses that students completed. Hypothetically, students not taking the College Success Skills course could have
been enrolled in a higher level course that could have been more rigorous, resulting in lower grade point averages for those students. Also the overall completion rate and persistence could have been impacted by the rigor and type of courses that the students completed. As an extreme example, some students could have completed pre-nursing courses while other students completed mainly developmental courses. While the College Success Skills course had a beneficial impact, knowing the influence of factors related to different or more rigorous coursework was not available.

The study was limited to closed records at a single community college. This large community college may not have been representative of all community colleges, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other community colleges. In addition, the community college had a unique student population, with many students whose first language was not English, who were economically disadvantaged, and were racially diverse. These students may not be typical of community college students located in other areas of the country.

The study used data from closed student records. These data had been collected as part of the normal recordkeeping by the college to maintain control over course completion and student progress. As in most studies that use previously collected data, the researcher had no control over either the data collection methods or information regarding extraneous variables that may have been affecting student outcomes.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The College Success Skills course had a positive impact on cumulative grade point average and persistence to the next semester. Students who completed the College Success Skills course had almost a 40% higher grade point average than students who did not take the course, yet the higher grade point average was still below the grade point average needed to maintain
satisfactory academic progress and retain financial aid. In addition to the benefit of completing the College Success Skills course, many students are most likely accessing other academic support services. Since students completing the College Success Skills course need even higher grade point averages to remain off academic probation, further research should focus on comparing the difference between students who received supplemental academic support while completing the College Success Skills course and those who only completed the College Success Skills course.

In consideration of the fact that 90% of students testing into developmental courses have FTIAC status, further research should investigate college resources available to support students with making the transition to college. The college offers a wide variety of academic resources to students in supporting their academic success; however, it is unclear whether the college offers other resources to support students in areas such as financial planning, family planning, finding jobs, day care, transportation, etc. With students having FTIAC status, they likely would benefit from additional resources to guide them in making decisions in other areas of their lives that could have a positive impact on academic success. The college is implementing a mentoring program that will focus on FTIAC students. Previous research indicates that having a role model or the desire to serve as a role model to others may improve self-efficacy and self-concept, along with encouraging self-direction and motivation that facilitates educational success. As part of a peer mentoring relationship, students in developmental courses may learn strategies to overcome challenges in situational and affective areas, which could lead to increased motivation and social integration. When students who have been mentored complete developmental courses, they in turn could mentor students from their communities, which could lead to increased self-direction (DiTommaso, 2010). The result of adding the mentoring program will mean that many students
taking the College Success Skills course will also receive mentoring support. Students who completed the College Success Skills course as well as accessed a variety of academic support services along with additional mentoring support should experience higher grade point averages and persistence rates. Research should be designed that measures the influence of completion of the College Success Skills course, using academic support services, and mentoring on the grade point average and persistence rate for students testing into three developmental courses.

One area that seems to be receiving increased scrutiny is placement test scores. Many students entering community colleges must complete placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. More than half of incoming students will be placed into developmental reading, writing, or mathematics courses based on their scores, although a paucity of evidence indicates that these courses improve student outcomes (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). Sparkman, Maulding and Roberts (2012) found that alternative approaches to assessment have the potential to improve student outcomes. Some evidence suggested that using multiple measures for student assessment, including academic and affective measures, could lead to variations in course placement and interventions that better meet students’ unique needs (Boylan, 2008). Despite national efforts to develop strategies to remedy students’ academic deficiencies and improve their chances of completing college, rates of success remain low (Collins, 2010). Placement into developmental courses has been found to reduce students’ chances of completing a degree (Bailey, 2009). Many researchers note the absence of quantitative, experimental design research studies linking specific interventions to improvements in outcomes for students testing into developmental education courses (Collins, 2010). Many FTIAC students face significant challenges in navigating their way to a successful start in college. The majority of non-traditional students enroll in America’s community colleges (Complete College America, 2012; NCES,
A non-traditional student is defined as one who has one or more of the following traits: (a) attends part-time, (b) has dependents, (c) works full-time (at least 35 hours per week), (d) does not have a high school diploma, (e) is financially independent, (f) has delayed enrollment in college, and/or (g) is a single parent. Previous research has shown that requiring new students to complete multiple developmental courses can increase the odds that they will experience seemingly insurmountable challenges. Collins (2010) cited the National Education Longitudinal Data Survey of 1988 (NELS, 1988) that fewer than 25% of community college students who took at least one developmental course completed a degree within eight years of enrollment. In comparison, 40% of students who did not take developmental courses completed a degree in the same period (Bailey, 2009). Students who complete one level or course in developmental education often do not register for subsequent semesters so the developmental course sequence is not completed (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Since they do not complete the developmental sequence, they are unable to register for other courses. These students often drop out or enroll in another community college, starting the process over again while retaking some of the same developmental courses taken at the previous community college. An additional challenge that these students face is the fact that many are undecided on a career pathway and as a result do not tend to have either short or long term goals that could help them plan effectively. This potential problem is compounded for students in developmental coursework, as the majority of students are undecided on a major or career pathway. This indecisiveness coupled with the additional developmental courses required could exacerbate the challenges experienced by these students. For students undecided on a career pathway and required to take a semester or more of developmental courses, their academic future may seem somewhat overwhelming to them, which could negatively influence
grades and retention. In a study of students at a large community college in the northeastern United States, grades and retention were examined for students in two programs, early childhood education and the paralegal program (Nitecki, 2011). Although the percentage of developmental students in these programs is unclear, a majority of students had tremendous life challenges and many were placed in remedial coursework. Both the early childhood and paralegal programs offered a clear path to credentials, internships, and training that could be used in applying for jobs. While the graduation rate was 12% for students overall at the college, graduation rates for the paralegal program were 32% and 51% for the early childhood program. Students in the study expressed that the relevance of courses to their career goal kept them interested and engaged in their studies (Nitecki, 2011). This study reinforced that career-focused programs can lead to positive academic and retention outcomes for all community college students.

Although the College Success Skills course helps students in identifying their career pathway and establishing goals, often this is not enough to overcome hurdles that FTIAC students experience as they enter college. There has been some movement in generating high school connector summer programs. These summer intensive experiences, often three to five weeks in duration, give students the opportunity to complete non-credit courses in reading, writing, and mathematics. In one study, the majority of participants increased their level of developmental placement by at least one course level in each area (Kerrigan & Slater, 2010). In addition to improvements in assessment scores, students also have opportunities to complete the summer bridge program with other new students who could benefit their transition to college. For new college students, there is also often a noticeable difference in the instructional methods of college instructors when compared to high school teachers. Having community college instructors teaching in the summer bridge program provides students with opportunities to
experience college instruction and increase their level of confidence as they begin college. A summer bridge program seems to offer one more piece to the puzzle in helping more students reduce anxiety about starting college and achieving success at the community college level. In testing into a higher level developmental course or testing out of developmental courses altogether, new students who may still be undecided and benefit from other academic support, may feel more secure about starting college. A quasi-experimental study could be conducted to determine the effects of a summer intensive session. Students could be pretested on the placement test scores and complete an anxiety measure. The intervention would be the summer intensive session. At the end of the session, students would complete the pretest measures a second time, with scores compared to determine students’ changes academically and the extent to which the program reduced anxiety regarding starting college.

**Summary**

In regards to the benefit to students of completing the College Success Skills course, students completing the course had significantly higher grade point averages and higher persistence rates. Furthermore, almost 90% of students testing into developmental courses had FTIAC status. Although students completing the College Success Skills course achieved higher grade point averages and persistence rates, they needed even higher achievement and outcomes especially in the area of grade point averages to maintain satisfactory academic status and retain financial aid. With this in mind, it is important for college administrators and counselors to evaluate the key components of the College Success Skills course to determine areas that are having the greatest impact on students’ academic success. As the college evaluates the course, they also could investigate other programs at the college that may already be in place that could provide supplemental academic support. They also can determine which programs already in
place could provide additional support for FTIAC students, as these programs also may provide benefits to the majority of students enrolled in the College Success Skills course.

Based on this study and consistent with previous research, administrators at community colleges, such as the community college in this study, need to evaluate continuously the programs that provide essential support to students testing into developmental courses. Students testing into developmental courses may face complex challenges academically and in other areas of their lives, that make it necessary for community colleges to identify the resources that they can provide to improve the academic outcomes for these students. In addition to a College Success Skills course and other support services available at community colleges, mentoring could be a key resource to consider. Students in developmental courses could benefit from the guidance of a mentor, with the mentor experiencing a greater sense of self-actualization and empowerment in giving back to the community college and the community.

With millions of students embarking on their college careers at community colleges, much is at stake. For example, many job openings in the areas of skilled trades are filled by students completing their training at the community college level. Efforts to increase the academic success of students in community college could have a tremendous influence on the future of their lives as well as job growth and economic development in our country.
References


Schwebel, D. C., Walburn, N. C., Klyce, K., & Jerrolds, K. L. (2012). Efficacy of advising outreach on student retention, academic progress, and achievement and frequency of


APPENDIX A

CSSK SYLLABUS

CSSK 1200
College Success Skills
Fall 2015

Instructor:

Meetings: South Campus – Room LECTURE (9/22-12/17); LAB (9/24,10/6, 12/15)

Voice Mail:

Email: (please put “CSSK 1200” in subject line)

Course Time: Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 pm – 9:55 pm

Note: Because this is a 12-week course, you should be prepared to work at an accelerated rate.

Office Hours: By appointment: Please speak with me after class or email me if you would like an appointment.

Course Description: This course covers essential college skills such as time management, test taking, note taking, thinking and reasoning, managing stress, and work-life balance. In addition, effective ways of accessing information from various campus resources such as the library, learning center, and academic advising as well as identifying personality strengths, weaknesses, and interests to explore possible career paths will be taught. (3 contact hours).

Required Textbook: Title: College Success Skills at Macomb, Author: Customized Edition, Publisher: Kendall Hunt

Required Textbook: Title: What the Best College Students Do, Author: Ken Bain

Additional Material: LASSI Web Version Sleeve
Objectives:  

UPON COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Apply Macomb’s academic policies and procedures and utilize the appropriate resources to make timely and effective educational decisions.
2. Recognize the differences between high school and college and their impact on learning.
3. Investigate how ability, personality, and interest impact career choices.
4. Develop a system and set of strategies for maintaining work/life balance through self-awareness.

Methods of Instruction:  
Lectures, discussions, exercises, group activities, videos, presentations

Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Lessons (8@10 pts; 2@20 pts ea)</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Campus Explorations (10 @ 10 pts ea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBCSD Book Assignment (8 @ 10 pts ea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBCSD Book Discussion</td>
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<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS Chapter Activities (12 @ 10 pts ea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSS Chapter Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster Project (160 board; 50 presentation)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tests (3 @ 65 pts ea)</td>
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<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Events (2 @ 20 pts ea, 1 @ 30 pts)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary on Topic</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<th>CSSK 1200 Point Range</th>
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<td>&gt; 1,012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90 – 91.9</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>88–89.9</td>
<td>968–989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>82–87.9</td>
<td>902–967</td>
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<tr>
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<td>80–81.9</td>
<td>880–901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>78–79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>792–857</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70–71.9</td>
<td>770–791</td>
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<td>68–69.9</td>
<td>748–769</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>62–67.9</td>
<td>682–747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>60–61.9</td>
<td>660–681</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fail – no credit</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>&lt; 660</td>
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</table>

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken each class. If you do not attend class, due dates for assignment will not change. Additionally, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain any materials handout. You are response for assignment instructions distributed even if you are not in class.

Also, out of courtesy to the instructor and your fellow students, please arrive for class on time.

**Classroom Policy:** To make the most of our class time, please note the following:

- **Once class starts, no make ups will be allowed.**
- **Please turn off your cell phone** set them to vibrate or silent mode during class periods. If your phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave class.
- **Please do not text message** or surf the internet during class time (that includes using your cell phone below your desk!). You will be asked to leave class.
- It is assumed the student will read the assigned chapter prior to the class meeting. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss...
assignments and must take responsibility for materials covered in class, even if absent.

- Assignments must be professional, neat, and clear. **Points may be deducted for unprofessional work.**
- Please act appropriately in class by being respectful of others during lectures, discussions and presentations. You may be asked to leave class if you behave in an inappropriate manner.
- **Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.** You must complete your own work.

**Exams:**
There are three exams in this course. You will be given the dates for these exams and must be in class to complete the exam.

**Assignments:**
As you can see from the assignment point distribution, there are several types of assignments associated with this class. Instructions will be provide for all assignments.

**Poster Project:**
There will be a poster project in the course, which will involve a presentation, along with other work that will need to be submitted. More information about the project will be provided later in the course. The presentation is NOT mandatory; however, you will want to attend. It is on Friday, December 4, 2015 in 217 Library from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

**Participation:**
There will be many class assignments to be completed both in class and at home. This will be a very comprehensive course and demands your full attention. It will take a lot of work but it will be invaluable for future college experiences. What you get out of a course depends on what you put into it.

My expectation is that students are fully engaged when in class. Homework for this course or any other course should not be completed during class time. It is important to attend every class session, and to participate by being active. Remember that active learning involves concentration, staying on task, and making sure that you understand the information or directions being given. Ask questions. It also involves doing homework assignments on a regular and timely basis. I will be making grading decisions concerning the effectiveness of your participation in this class. Participation includes cooperative team work, effectiveness of your partner work, individual
contributions to class objectives, participation in discussions, peer reading, information assignments, attendance, and learning attitude.

**Extra Credit:** I reserve the right to add extra credit at my discretion, for attending MMII or library events. I will provide to you the extra credit opportunities. There are no extra credit opportunities beyond attending these events.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Be aware of the guidelines related to academic dishonesty as described in the College Catalog. The same statement is repeated below:

“As a student, I understand that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated the College. I am here to learn. Through learning, I will strive to become a better person and a more valuable contributor to society. I understand that dishonesty in the classroom, through cheating, plagiarism or other dishonest acts defeats the purpose and disgraces the mission and quality of the College. Therefore, I will not engage in dishonesty in any of my academic activities, and I will not tolerate such dishonesty by other students.”

Violations to academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Cheating on tests or other assignments
- Seeking or providing answers to tests or other assignments
- Completing any work on another student's behalf
- Plagiarism - according to Plagiarism.org, plagiarism is:
  - turning in someone else's work as your own
  - copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
  - failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
  - giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
  - changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
  - copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

Any violation of academic integrity is a serious offense for which the student will be subject to grading sanctions up to and including failure in the class involved. The classroom instructor will administer the grading sanctions. In addition, the student may be subject to disciplinary action on the part of the College.
Classroom  **Student Conduct:** A student’s behavior at the College must comply with educational processes,

**Conduct/** should not disrupt teaching, learning, or the orderly conduct of business. Any misconduct that

**Expected** interferes with the educational mission of the College is a serious offense for which the student

**Behavior:** will be subject to disciplinary action by the teacher and/or other College personnel.

- No person shall conduct themselves in such a way as to deprive others of an orderly atmosphere for study.
- Each student is expected to comply with the classroom regulations of an individual teacher as established by the teacher in writing at the beginning of the term.

Student Responsibilities for Refunds/Withdrawals/Waitlist/“I” Grade:

A. It is the responsibility of the student, *not the instructor*, to know the dates related to refunds or withdrawals.

B. It is the responsibility of the student, *not the instructor*, to withdraw from a class. The student should check his/her registration statement for the last date to withdraw.

C. No student shall be permitted to sit in class unless the student is registered in that class.

D. An “I” (incomplete) grade is reserved for situations when a student needs to complete, at most, one-fourth of the work for the term (Fall, Winter, Spring & Summer).

E. If the student is unable to complete the term, an “I” (incomplete) grade may be recorded. The student and instructor will complete a faculty/student contract form outlining the necessary requirements needed to complete the class. Once the student completes the necessary requirements for the class, a Change of Grade form and a copy of the faculty/student contract must be submitted for the student to receive a grade greater than an “E”. For those “I” (incomplete) grades that are not changed by the end of the following term, the “I” (complete) grade will default to an “E”.

**Reservation of Right:**

A student may be held accountable to other College policies not listed in the above sections. Please refer to the College website for those policies.
Student Responsibility for Special Service Needs:

It is the responsibility of the student, not the instructor, to obtain proper documentation for any special service needs the student requires. The instructor must receive this documentation during the first week of the course and/or prior to any tests, quizzes, etc.

You are expected to know these policies and have them handy. I will not deviate from these and will refer you back to this page with any questions.
## Class Schedule/Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>College Success Skills (CSS) - Chapters</th>
<th>What the Best College Students Do (WBCSD) - Chapters</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Introduction to CSSK 1200  
• First Day Handout  
• Exploration 1: Bookstore  
• Technology 1: Create E-mail  
• Technology 3: college website | | | Purchase course materials  
Learn about SL&L  
Email me  
Technology 3 responses |
| • Technology 2: LASSI Pre-test  
• Discuss Chapter 1 (WBCSD)  
• Discuss poster project more thoroughly | | Chapter 1 | Print out last pg of LASSI  
WBCSD chapter 1 assignment |
| • Discuss Chapters 1 & 2 (CSS)  
• Chapter presentations: 1 & 2  
• Discuss Chapter 2 (WBCSD)  
• Exploration 5: Student Life & Leadership | Chapters 1 & 2 | Chapter 2 | Textbook chapter 1 & 2 assignments  
WBCSD chapter 2 assignment |
| • Explain Formal Group Presentations  
• Divide groups & chapters  
• Exploration 4: Reading & Writing Studio | | | Work at your own pace, with your group members, on the formal presentations assignment. We will address this all semester. |
| • Computer Lab- Career Research | | | Take notes for your understanding of the material. |
| • Exploration 2: Learning Center | | | **Begin thinking of a topic to explore for your poster project.**  
**Write down 3-4 discussion points for “V for Vendetta.”** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>College Success Skills (CSS) - Chapters</th>
<th>What the Best College Students Do (WBCSD) - Chapters</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Exploration 7: SOS  
- Discuss Chapters 6 & 7 (CSS)  
- Chapter presentations: 6 & 7  
- Essay requirement for exam 1 | Chapters 6 & 7 | Textbook chapter 6 & 7 assignments  
Find a resource in the Library for exam 1 essay. |
| - Exploration 3: Angel/Canvas  
- Technology 4: Angel/Canvas  
- Essay requirement for exam 1 (continued) | | Technology 4 responses  
Find a resource in the Library for exam 1 essay, if you have not already. |
| - Review for Exam 1 | | Actively participate in discussion. Choose unique “V for Vendetta” topic for poster project (approval). |
| - Discuss Chapter 3 (WBCSD)  
- Exploration 8: Library- (9:00 a.m. – J221)  
- Exam 1 (chs 6 & 7) | Chapters 3 | WBCSD chapter 3 assignment  
Choose unique topic for poster project (approval), if you have not already.  
Bring your essay to the exam! |
| - Discuss Chapter 3 (CSS)  
- Chapter presentation: 3  
- Poster summary & self-reflection in society today.  
- Check in with your group!  
- Exploration 6: Financial Aid | Chapter 3 | Textbook chapter 3 assignment  
Write poster “summary” and “self-reflection” pieces.  
Keep working on formal group presentations: devise a plan and conquer! |
| - Exploration 9: Counseling  
- Discuss Chapters 4 & 5 (WBCSD)  
- Technology 6: Wordle | Chapters 4 & 5 | WBCSD chapters 4 & 5 assignments  
Create a Wordle on your topic. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>College Success Skills (CSS) - Chapters</th>
<th>What the Best College Students Do (WBCSD) - Chapters</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Discuss Chapters 4 & 5 (CSS)  
  • Chapter presentations: 4 & 5  
  • Title & 3-5 Pictures for Poster | Chapters 4 & 5 | | Textbook chapter 4 & 5 assignments  
                                  | | | Find pictures for your poster! Write a clever title. |
| • Discuss Chapter 6 (WBCSD)  
  • Discuss Chapters 8 & 9 (CSS)  
  • Chapter presentations: 8 & 9  
  • 2 Quotes for Poster | Chapters 8 & 9 | Chapter 6 | WBCSD chapter 6 assignments  
                                  | | | Textbook chapter 8 & 9 assignments  
                                  | | | Find quotes for your poster. |
| • Exam 2 Library Questions  
  • Technology 8: Bubbl.us | | | Complete library questions  
                                  | | | & bring to exam 2.  
                                  | | | Create a Concept Map on your topic.  
                                  | | | Be sure you have all components for poster! |
| • Exploration 10: Career Services  
  • Technology 9: Onet | | | Print out Onet summary  
                                  | | | Your poster MUST be approved in every way (content and layout!) |
| • Discuss Chapters 7 & 8 (WBCSD)  
  • Review Exhibit Posters  
  • Review Exam 2 | | Chapters 7 & 8 | WBCSD chapters 7 & 8 assignments  
                                  | | | Bring poster board & pieces to class for approval |
| • **Exam 2** (chs 8 & 9) | | | Bring library questions! |

THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS

THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>College Success Skills (CSS) - Chapters</th>
<th>What the Best College Students Do (WBCSD) - Chapters</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Posters Due</td>
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<td>FINAL POSTER DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology 5: Delicious</td>
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<td>Print out Delicious screenshot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology 7: Animoto</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Email me your Animoto video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Experience Presentation in class, or go to Exhibit Day</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Share your experience and/or respond to peer presentations.</td>
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<td>Chapter presentation: 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT DAY</td>
<td>10am-Noon or 1:30-3:30 pm</td>
<td>Campus Library</td>
<td>Sign in; Look for me!</td>
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<td>Chapters 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Textbook chapter 11 &amp; 12 assignments</td>
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<td>Final Group Reharsals</td>
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<td>Present to the class.</td>
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<td>Technology 10: LASSI (post)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Exam 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LASSI- post (8:00 a.m. J-132)</td>
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<td>Last chance to turn in missing homework for PARTIAL CREDIT!</td>
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<td>GRADES &amp; CLASS EVALUATION/ SIGN FOR FINAL GRADES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I reserve the right to modify this schedule as needed during the semester. However, if I do, I will distribute a revised schedule in class. You will be expected to know the new schedule, even if you are not present in class when it is distributed.

**Extra Credit Opportunities**
Several of the extra credit opportunities are early in the semester. I encourage you to consider these opportunities. The value of each event is significant. You receive the grade you earn according to the grading scale listed in this packet.

I have had many students significantly improve their final grade in this course by attending MMII (diversity) or library events.

ANY MMII or library event counts for extra credit. However, several events count for double points because I consider them to be of great educational and cultural value. Those events are listed below. Please see brochure for description of event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 6</td>
<td>6-9 pm</td>
<td>“AIDS Forum”</td>
<td>Cultural Center</td>
<td>65 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 26</td>
<td>2-4 pm</td>
<td>“Defamation Courtroom”</td>
<td>Lecture Hall</td>
<td>65 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 19</td>
<td>2-3:30 pm</td>
<td>“One Billion Rising”</td>
<td>Center Library C-267</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, November 16</td>
<td>12-2 pm</td>
<td>“History of AIDS”</td>
<td>South Library J-221</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/documentary”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 7</td>
<td>8:30 pm</td>
<td>“100 Foot Journey: Film”</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 16-Nov 22</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>“Mathematics Exhibit:”</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire”</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 30-Dec 10</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>“Culinary Exhibit: Questionnaire”</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CSSK1200

Investigation Poster Project

During the semester we will be in the Library to discuss the book and the film, we will be watching the film in class. There will be many opportunities for you to discuss the plot and characters in order to understand the impetus for this project.

Overall, this project should be fun and allow you the opportunity to explore a theme of interest and allow you to be creative. Remember to have fun with it!

The posters will be part of an exhibit in the Library at the end of the semester. You are strongly encouraged to attend the poster exhibit. Many administrators, faculty members, and fellow students will be in attendance. Every CSSK section may be examining different ideas.

This book is generally liked by college students. You should be able to relate to a number of the themes!

Criteria for earning the points will be determined by the following:

1. Your presentation must be attractive and informational, and on a full-sized tri-fold board 48” x 36”. All information must be typed or in professional lettering.
2. Proper spelling, colorfulness, pictures, and good word choice will increase your score.
3. Your point of view is your own. However, I am expecting everyone to include the following:
   a. A prominent and clear title
   b. A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 pictures of appropriate size and clarity
   c. An expression of your point of view AKA a “Self-Reflection” piece
   d. At least two quotes from the film/graphic novel
   e. A summary of your theme AKA “Summary”
   f. The inclusion of your Wordle and Concept Map
4. Everyone will have a unique theme/topic! Everything for your board needs to be approved before you glue anything down on it.
5. The board counts for a significant portion of your grade. It is the most important part of your coursework. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL ANYONE PASS THIS COURSE WITHOUT TURNING THE PROPER BOARD IN ON TIME.
APPENDIX B

Approval to Conduct Study

August 18, 2015

Mr. Keith Hill
3966 Old Creek Road
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Mr. Hill,

Thank you for contacting us regarding your graduate student research project, *Effects of Enrollment in College Success Skills Course on Academic Outcomes of Community College Students*.

I have reviewed your request for permission to conduct your research involving educational practices at Macomb Community College using student data records. Based on the research description and purpose, I believe it would be classified as normal educational research, which is exempt from IRB oversight under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1). As such, I approve your request.

Please note that any student level data you receive from the college’s student database pursuant to this request will have all student identifying information removed.

Please complete the Research Request form found on the College intranet at: [http://sharepoint.macomb.edu/shared/IR/SitePages/Home.aspx](http://sharepoint.macomb.edu/shared/IR/SitePages/Home.aspx).

I wish you all the best with your study and I can be contacted at [hickmaar@macomb.edu](mailto:hickmaar@macomb.edu) or 586.445.7866 if you require further assistance.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 31, 2015

Keith Hill
IRB Application 2289: Effects of Enrollment in College Success Skills Course on Academic Outcome of Community College Students

Dear Keith,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because it does not involve collecting identifiable, private information.

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in identifying whether possible changes to your protocol would change your application’s status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,