THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE REVIEW

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDWEST COLLEGE LEARNING CENTER ASSOCIATION

ISSN 1087-0059
Volume 4 Number 1
Spring 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MCLCA Officers

PRESIDENT
Shevawn Eaton
Educational Services and Programs
Northern Illinois University
Williston Hall East
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854
Day: 815/753-0581
Fax: 815/753-4115
seaton1@niu.edu

VICE PRESIDENT
Jacqueline Robertson
Ball State University
North Quad 323, The Learning Center
Muncie, IN 47306
Day: 765/285-8107
Fax: 765/285-2167
jrobe@bsuvc.bsu.edu

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Jacqueline Robertson
Ball State University
North Quad 323, The Learning Center
Muncie, IN 47306
Day: 765/285-8107
Fax: 765/285-2167
jrobe@bsuvc.bsu.edu

TREASURER
Jadwiga Piper
National-Louis University
18 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603
Day: 312/621-9650
Fax: 312/621-1205
jpip@chicago1.nl.edu

COMMUNICATIONS
Kim Folstein
Alverno College
P.O. Box 343922
Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922
Day: 414/382-6257
Fax: 414/382-6354
Kim.Folstein@alverno.edu

PAST PRESIDENT
Luanne Momenee
University of Toledo
Scott Park Campus
Toledo, OH 43606-3390
Day: 419/530-3140
Fax: 419/530-3343
lmomenee@utnet.utoledo.edu

RECORDING SECRETARY
Robin Remich
Oakton Community College
7701 N. Lincoln Avenue
Skokie, IL 60077
Day: 847/635-1434
Fax: 847/635-1449
rremich@oakton.edu

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Heather Newburg
Lake Superior State University
650 W. Easterday Avenue
Sault Sainte Marie, MI 49783-1699
Day: 906/635-2874
Fax: 906/635-2090
hnewburg@gw.lssu.edu

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Charlote M. Short
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
900 Wood Road, Box 2000
Kenosha, WI 53141-2000
Day: 414/595-3334
Fax: 414/694-1306
charlotte.short@uwp.edu

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Kim Folstein
Alverno College
P.O. Box 343922
Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922
Day: 414/382-6257
Fax: 414/382-6354
Kim.Folstein@alverno.edu

To our readers:

Our field is one of mix
in the way of academic
other hand, we seem to
words, we need to be e
Learning Assistance R
you broaden your know

In an article addressin
intervention program
author describes a com
from a sound theoret
demanding course con
break down students'
encouraging, and the a
students.

Exploring a different
a study that explored
success counseling for
The project, involving
Psychology Departm
counseling practicum
academic counseling
clarify the long-term
students. The trainin
provide excellent exa

In an example of "tea
using literary letters,
student, and student
self-confidence of no
enjoyable article, ma
students processed a
The authors report th
traditional course wr
often as before.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

To our readers:

Our field is one of mixed blessings—on the one hand, we get to do and try almost anything in the way of academic assistance, course work, and programs to assist our students; on the other hand, we seem to need to know how to do almost everything instantaneously. In other words, we need to be experimenters and experts at the same time. The current issue of The Learning Assistance Review speaks to your multiple roles and needs; the articles will help you broaden your knowledge base and, perhaps, spark a few curricular and program ideas.

In an article addressing a challenge many of us confront, Holland describes a compulsory intervention program for underprepared, underachieving entering college freshmen. The author describes a comprehensive, highly structured academic support program, developed from a sound theoretical base, whose integrated components challenge students with demanding course content, provide activities that acculturate effective student behaviors, and break down students' self defeating beliefs about themselves. The initial findings are encouraging, and the article provides many insights into successful interventions for at-risk students.

Exploring a different type of intervention model, Redford, Griebling, and Daniel describe a study that explored the training and use of practicum counselors in providing academic success counseling for undergraduate students, about half of whom presented academic risk. The project, involving collaborative work by Learning Support Services and the Educational Psychology Department, provided a college counseling experience for master's level counseling practicum students and tested the effect of a comprehensive approach to academic counseling on GPA, retention, and graduation rates. While further study will clarify the long-term findings, initial results showed GPA improvement for the participating students. The training, counseling, and intervention components described in the article provide excellent examples for any counseling or learning strategies programs.

In an example of "teacher as researcher," Bauer and Sweeney explore the methodology of using literary letters, a non-structured exchange about shared readings between teacher and student, and student and student, to develop and strengthen the reading/writing skills and self-confidence of non-native speakers in a developmental writing course. In a thoroughly enjoyable article, many of the written exchanges are shared and we are allowed to see how students processed and thought about, not only the readings, but American culture as well. The authors report that students gained a fluency in English not usually attained through traditional course writing and have not needed to repeat the developmental ESL course as often as before.

Those of you who attended the fall MCLCA conference will be pleased to see Weinstein's follow-up conversations with Marcia Baxter Magolda, the conference's keynote speaker and author of Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development. Their conversation further explores the stages of student intellectual development, both in and out of the classroom, and the impact teachers have on this. In addition, Magolda discusses the implications for the learning assistance professional who often interacts with the student outside the classroom.

Smith's book review of Parker Palmer's The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life offers an example of another way to consider how we connect to our students. Palmer's book has stimulated discussion across many campuses about the nature of teaching and the teacher and about what it means to truly learn and to be a student. Smith highlights Palmer's key arguments regarding the building of meaningful educational experiences and strongly encourages us to join this conversation.

Finally, in *Join the Conversation*, Eaton speaks to the administrator in each of us. She explores the nature of the learning center as an integral part of the institution and the need for administrators to be active participants in the enrollment management function of our colleges. Further, she outlines key strategies for responding to institutional and student needs and surviving the ups and downs of enrollment.

As always, we encourage your comments regarding this issue's articles and invite submission of manuscripts about your research and teaching.

Martha Casazza
National-Louis University
18 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603
mcas@whe2.nl.edu

Nancy Bornstein
Alverno College
3401 South 39 Street
Milwaukee, WI 53215
nancy.bornstein@alverno.edu

ARTICLES

SUPPORT THROUGH CHALLENGE: AN INITIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK COLLEGE FRESHMAN

By T. S. Holland, Holy Cross College

Abstract

The steadily increasing population of underprepared, underachieving entering college freshmen, with reasonable potential to succeed, but with a history of failure-oriented attitudes and behaviors, motivated Holy Cross College to develop a compulsory initial intervention program for qualified freshmen, the Conditional Acceptance Program (CAP).

Holy Cross College is an independent Catholic two-year Liberal Arts college, founded and operated in the tradition of the Brothers of Holy Cross. CAP supports the College's mission to "combine a demanding and varied academic program with cooperative, supportive and encouraging teaching...[in order to] provide realistic opportunities for students to test their abilities while making progress toward an Associate's Degree and transfer to a senior institution " (Holy Cross College Mission Statement).

Learning assistance professionals understand that effective programs translate accepted theory into sound practice, and that the development of successful approaches to student learning is an ongoing scholarly process. The purpose of this article is to identify key program components while establishing the primary theoretical basis or rationale for each, and to encourage the reader to critically evaluate and reflect upon various and integrated methods of successful intervention for at-risk college freshmen.

Introduction

> *The education of the underprepared college student is the most important educational problem in America today, more important than educational funding, affirmative action, financial aid, curriculum reform, and the rest (Astin, 1998,* p. 12).

Alexander Astin (1998) admits that the above may be a radical statement, but he legitimately supports his position with the notion that we should prepare our students to be competent participants in our society. If we agree that an effective developmental approach to education would "do more to alleviate our most serious social and economic problems than almost any other action we could take" (Astin, 1998, p. 12), then we must acknowledge that, as we work to develop our programs, we are engaged in a scholarly endeavor which merits serious pursuit.

A developmental approach to higher education starts at the competence level of the student when admitted and allows for a variety of ability levels, determination, and goals. At the same time, it commits the institution to assisting students in establishing their own foundations for learning in order to meet higher standards. This is contrasted with the more traditional dependence on established benchmarks, (e.g., SAT/ACT scores, high school GPA, etc.) by which students are treated uniformly and the quality of outcomes is guaranteed by "weeding students out" (Gilman, 1995, p. 6).

In stark contrast to the "weeding out" approach, growing concerns about access, retention, persistence, and accountability have culminated in the rapidly growing interest in college freshmen intervention programs and motivated Holy Cross College to create a compulsory, initial intervention program for at-risk freshmen. Those students whose academic record suggests that additional academic preparation and support are necessary for a successful and rewarding college experience are required to participate in the one year Conditional Acceptance Program (CAP). This is a highly structured, intensely challenging academic support program whose integrated components make it a traumatic socialization to a meaningful academic experience. The program is designed to challenge students academically through rigorous course content, behaviorally through various mandatory components, and attitudinally by directly confronting students' debilitating beliefs about themselves and their education.

CAP provides an opportunity for students to develop their life management and study skills and to gain much needed confidence both in knowledge of course content and application of success strategies. The program consists of three phases, each of which becomes incrementally less intrusive.

Throughout the phases of the program are several carefully studied, selected, and refined components. These components, each with its own rationale and goals, are closely integrated and include the following:

1. Orientation, including admissions and pre-enrollment counseling.
2. Program structure.
3. CAP Seminar.

4. Individu
5. Structure
6. Two-Ye
7. Student

Some of the theoret
Bandura's Social
"scaffolding", and
Additionally, studie
and constructive p
overlaying the prog

While all program
results are not alwa
positive and negati

Orientation

CAP orientation is
integration early in
and pre-enrollment
program expectatio
prospective college
academic support.
program and its de
enroll in the progra
the degree of challe
the institution, the p
1986).

An orientation prog
prior to the start of
have chosen to acce
successfully. Orien
articulates high exp
follows the directo
reassurance.

4. Individual student meetings.

5. Structured study sessions.

6. Two-Year Plan and Portfolio.

7. Student and program assessment.

Some of the theoretical bases upon which CAP components have been developed include Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Skinner's Operant Learning Theory, Vygotsky's "scaffolding", and Perry's and Chickering's theories of college student development. Additionally, studies in self-regulation, achievement motivation, progressive responsibility, and constructive processes in learning have been helpful in developing, integrating, and overlaying the program components.

While all program components must be built on solid theoretical foundations, the practical results are not always likely to be ideal. Therefore, it is important to anticipate both the positive and negative possible outcomes when applying sound theory to practice.

Program Components

Orientation

CAP orientation is designed to communicate the importance of social and academic integration early in the college experience (Tinto, 1993). Orientation, including admissions and pre-enrollment counseling, provides an early opportunity to present both college and program expectations honestly. Admissions and pre-enrollment counseling assure the prospective college students that they will receive appropriate services and much needed academic support. However, students have reported that a candid description of the CAP program and its demands was at first intimidating. Nevertheless, those who do choose to enroll in the program become self-selected, committed participants who are fully aware of the degree of challenge they face. They also begin to establish meaningful connections with the institution, the program, and various student service providers (Noel, Levitz, & Salvri, 1986).

An orientation program for all newly enrolled CAP students is conducted on the afternoon prior to the start of classes. At this time students are reminded of the challenge which they have chosen to accept and of the support available to them in order to meet that challenge successfully. Orientation is a formal, carefully planned session where the CAP director articulates high expectations for the new students. A panel of successful CAP "graduates" follows the director to clarify those expectations further and to provide some welcome reassurance.

The Parent Interview Project which is assigned at orientation provides further reassurance. Diane Von Blerkom (1995) introduced the project as a suggested activity for Freshman Year Experience programs. For their first major assignment, CAP students and their parents are to discuss expectations, goals, and concerns regarding their son's or daughter's college experience. Students are encouraged to establish open avenues of communication with their parents and to agree upon a routine of honest performance assessments. Students then compose a paper and an oral presentation of the results of their conversations. It is important to note that nearly all CAP participants are traditional college age students. The one or two older re-entry students who are not accountable to a parent or some other older adult work with the director to design an alternative project. The purpose remains to motivate students to achieve academically, to remind them that others support their efforts, and to encourage them to be accountable for their performance.

This combination of challenge, support, and accountability is developmentally appropriate, as it targets Chickering's third "vector" in college student development, Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This stage represents the student's first significant step toward emotional independence and involves some level of separation from parents, and increased reliance on peers, authorities, and institutional support systems. At the same time, the student's confidence and self-sufficiency are beginning to flourish, and the student can be described as a "hog on ice," striving to be independent but still significantly awkward and in need of support (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 122).

Orientation also serves as an academic indoctrination where the new CAP participants are immersed in the values and purpose of the institution. In this way, orientation is meant to show students how they fit into the larger mission served by the College, and how they are now part of a "value centered, integrated learning experience that motivates and inspires students to high levels of success and educational attainment" (Schroeder, 1998, p. 11).

After Orientation each student becomes a member of a self-selected cohort having shared expectations of a significant challenge and leaning on the reassurance provided by unambiguous multidimensional support.

Program Structure

Because at-risk students need more structure (Roueche & Roueche, 1993), the CAP program is organized in three meticulously structured, incrementally less intrusive phases. The initial phase is an intensely structured, highly challenging six week summer program, during which all students are enrolled in nine credit-hours of course work plus a non-credit CAP Seminar. Students' summer courses are arranged in a "cluster" which includes a Reading and Study Skills course and an English Composition course, both of which apply directly to their success in a third course in a content area of the student's choice. Faculty provide extra instruction outside of class time, and students are required to attend supervised study

sessions and/or tutorials for three hours, three nights per week. The program director meets individually with each student at least three times during the six week summer session.

The summer course "cluster" borrows its design from Middlesex Community College's award winning Course Clusters Program which has resulted in "improved student retention, better connections among students, more contact and support among students and faculty, and a stronger perceived identity between the students and the college community" (Roueche & Roueche, 1993, p. 225). Results of research on learning communities further support the course "cluster" approach. Learning communities are reported to have a number of academic and social benefits including increased GPAs and retention (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) found that at-risk students in particular "learn best in supportive small groups that serve to provide both skills and social support to those who would otherwise be marginal to the life of the institution" (p. 184). Linking the Reading and Study Skills Course with English Composition and CAP Seminar aims for those same proven benefits.

While the summer structure affords students the opportunities to make meaningful content connections and to establish interpersonal relationships, the students are not restricted to a program limited to prescribed courses only. New college students, according to Perry (1970), are operating at the Dualistic Stage where they continue to seek comfort in simplistic, clearly prescribed answers, and they tend to depend on those in positions of authority to make important decisions for them. On the other hand, new high school graduates do look forward to independent decision making as the benchmark that identifies their entry into adulthood (Scheer & Unger, 1994). Also, the element of choice is a crucial ingredient in any effort to motivate students to achieve (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Therefore, the CAP Summer Session, though highly structured, requires all participants to choose one three-credit course in a content area of their interest to complement their mandatory course "cluster."

The CAP Summer Session is followed by a somewhat less intrusive Phase II. Students who successfully complete the Summer Session enroll in 12 to 15 hours of fall course work, including a 3-credit CAP Seminar. Students continue to meet regularly for individual sessions with the CAP Director and once per week for Structured Study during this phase.

The third and least intrusive phase of CAP is the spring semester during which students are again required to enroll in 12 to 15 hours of course work. There is no CAP Seminar or Structured Study sessions during Phase III, but all students must attend five mandatory group meetings. Regularly scheduled individual sessions with the CAP Director continue throughout the semester.

Much of the rationale for this three-phased structure rests on Vygotsky's (1962) concept of "scaffolding" which underscores the importance of immediate social interaction and closely monitored instruction in the development of learning skills. CAP is in some ways similar to the Gateway Program at Rutgers University which has built its broad framework upon principles of Vygotskian cognitive development. Both programs establish highly structured

learning environments in which students' initial approach to college level material involves significant external assistance and structuring. As CAP students progress through the three phases, they begin to "internalize the externally scaffolded learning strategies," and the degree of structure can be diminished (Gebelt, Perilis, Kramer, & Wilson, 1996, p. 3). Eventually, the students independently begin to practice their own effective learning strategies.

CAP Seminar

The CAP Seminar is a course designed to inform students of opportunities and requirements for their success at Holy Cross College. Students explore and practice strategies for college success while they engage in a dynamic, holistic, and challenging course in human development. This course is designed to help students adjust to the college setting, examine opportunities for personal growth, and embrace those attitudes and beliefs which will ultimately lead to their academic good standing.

CAP Seminar incorporates readings, reflection questions, and group discussions of topics which combine philosophies of higher education, including a study of college student development and the importance of the Liberal Arts, with practical "how-to's" and academic success strategies. It also serves as an orientation and socialization to what it means to be, not only a college student in general, but a Holy Cross student in particular. The purpose is to socialize CAP students to a meaningful educational experience while they identify with the unique Holy Cross College experience.

The developmental educational goal of CAP Seminar is to explicitly teach students to begin to think critically, moving from Perry's (1970) late Dualism Stage to the more risky Multiplistic Stage. College students need to develop enough confidence to stray from the authority of clear-cut, right and wrong answers, while they avoid the bottomless pit of personal opinion, and carefully compose and communicate reasonable arguments to support their ideas.

Throughout the semester, students are required to take positions on readings which address topics relevant to their experience but which are likely to challenge their previously held assumptions. Just a few of the authors they are asked to read include William J. Bennett, Gloria Stienham, George Will, William Raspberry, Steven Covey, Mortimer Adler, William Perry, Arthur Chickering, the American Bishops, and various Holy Cross College officials. Students, with the director, evaluate their own and each others' responses to the readings in terms of clarity and logical validity. Beginning with the Fall 1999 semester, the CAP Seminar will be formally linked with the Introductory Philosophy course, in part, to encourage students to directly apply their critical thinking skills in other content areas and to evaluate their ability to do so.

The CAP Seminar course description, its objectives, and pedagogical strategies were developed from much of the work done by the Center for the Freshman Year Experience,

at the University of South Carolina. The growing body of resources for freshman orientation and college success courses is indispensable to those of us charged with developing and implementing such programs. These resources must, however, be adapted and carefully tailored to meet the needs of a specific student population and to fit the institution's overall campus culture. The CAP Seminar differs from a generic freshman orientation course in that it is specifically designed for an intentionally structured group consisting only of conditionally accepted freshmen who meet the specific criteria for CAP. Though any program director would be legitimately concerned that segregating a group of at-risk students could possibly generate an unintended and unwelcome negative peer group effect, initial survey data indicate that CAP students appreciate being members of a distinct group with shared experiences. Furthermore, Gilman (1995) reminds us that intentionally structured groups establish rules or norms to facilitate and enhance learning. These groups become productive forums where students acquire new information, develop and practice skills, and receive useful feedback in a supportive environment (Winston, Bonney, Miller, & Dagley, 1988). Given such opportunities, students become motivated to increase their degree of involvement in their learning, and they will construct for themselves a meaningful academic experience (Pintrich, 1989).

Individual Student Meetings

"Developmental Instruction Theory holds that success in fostering intellectual growth depends in large part on the degree of personal interaction in the educational environment" (Finster, 1996, p. 43). This "personal interaction" is not limited to student discourse in small classes or seminars, but also includes two-way exchanges between teachers and students. While students clearly gain from their experiences with their peers in the CAP Seminar, individual advisor/teacher intervention is a necessary element of any successful at-risk student program. (It is important to note that the CAP Director teaches the CAP Seminar and serves as the advisor for all program participants.) The nature and frequency of meetings exist in the context of the established three phased, gradually less intrusive structure. With each phase, the program becomes less tightly structured, and the frequency and mandatory nature of the meetings are gradually diminished. As the program becomes less intrusive, the students are expected to exercise more initiative.

The rationale for regular and frequent individual student meetings in the first two phases is Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1994). The advisor provides the examples of success oriented behaviors, and the students are regularly reminded of the means by which they can meet higher standards. In order for the phased approach to be effective, students need frequent opportunities to receive feedback on how successfully they are applying their learning skills and strategies to their studies (Gebalt, Perilis, Kramer, & Wilson, 1996). As students begin to relate the effective use of these strategies to their academic success, they begin to attribute their academic outcomes to an internal locus of control. They may now begin to believe that academic achievement or failure is not controlled by chance or predicated by external factors (Rotter, 1966). When students believe that they have achieved on their own volition, they begin to destroy their negative self-

fulfilling prophecies that had previously paralyzed any academic efforts. In this light, individual student meetings are largely motivated by Bandura's (1986, 1994) concept of self-efficacy, which refers to individuals' beliefs that they can master a situation and produce positive outcomes.

While the Social Learning foundation of the self efficacy concept allows us to effectively address individual differences in students, it places an obviously heavy burden on personnel and time resources. Also, while individual meetings provide valuable opportunities for students to be held accountable for their degree of follow-through, frequent and mandatory meetings could tend to foster dependence, regardless of the intentional designs to wean students from the tight program structure.

Structured Study Sessions

The Structured Study component is based on Skinner's Behaviorism and Operant Learning Theory (Skinner, 1953). Mandatory, structured study sessions are designed to instill in students positive habits simply by practicing them. During Structured Study sessions, students are required to implement specific learning strategies or behaviors in a controlled environment. At the beginning of each structured study session, all students must log in by indicating the task or tasks they are expecting to complete during the session, the principle strategy or strategies they intend to employ, and the amount of time they expect will be necessary for them to complete the task(s). The goal is that the students will actually experience how much time and concentration are necessary to complete a given task, and that they will experience the immediate rewards of a sustained concentrated effort.

The vast majority of students report that the most valuable skill they learned from structured study sessions was time management. However, those students who are already beginning to exercise initiative may resist such extraordinary measures to subject them to supervision. Therefore, structured study sessions, like the individual student meetings, become incrementally less frequent as students progress through the program. Interestingly, during the Spring Semester, Phase III of the program, several groups of CAP students can be found working diligently and voluntarily during the same time and in the same place as the previously conducted mandatory study sessions. Ideally then, this regular experience convinces students that there is value in the positive student behaviors that they have been required to practice, and it motivates them to refine those habits further.

Two-Year Plan and Portfolio

The Two-Year Plan and Portfolio are two projects that comprise the physical evidence component of the CAP Program. The Two-Year Plan is a formal research project and personal reflection paper in which students must carefully articulate a personal two-year vision and demonstrate their devotion to realizing their long-term goals through short-term behaviors.

Holy Cross College is a two year Liberal Arts college whose mission is to prepare students for successful transfer to a senior institution after earning the Associate of Arts Degree. Students are advised to research their possible transfer choices as they clarify their future goals. Additionally, CAP students are required to articulate how their specific day-to-day behaviors are determining the accomplishment of their intermediate and long-term goals. Those day-to-day behaviors are to be documented in the portfolio. Throughout the Summer Session and Fall Semester students document specific study skills or student success strategies that they have applied in their course work or in their daily lives. Students must attach a paragraph to each piece of evidence evaluating the effectiveness of the given strategy (VonBlerkom, 1995). Clearly, this component's primary objective is again Skinnerian in nature, as it is designed to force students to make direct connections between behaviors and goal achievement.

Students also make direct connections between the effectiveness of their study skills and course content. Gebelt and her colleagues (1996) at Rutgers University provide empirical support for the value of this approach which has been advocated by developmental educators for over twenty years. Gebelt notes Robyak and Patton's 1977 study, which supports the assertion that student performance has very little to do with the actual content of a study skills course. What really seems to matter is not what students know about study skills, but the degree to which they actually apply them (Gebelt, Perilis, & Kramer, 1996).

Students need an arena in which to directly, concretely, and immediately apply their learning strategies and study skills, and they must be explicitly instructed to use that arena to practice and perfect their skills. Unfortunately, students tend not to realize that their content courses comprise that very arena. Their responses on course evaluations for a one credit college success course drive home the point. One student shares, "I learned a lot [sic] and I'm sure these skills will come in handy when I get a chance to use them." Another confesses, " Now I know *what* to do. I just wish I could convince myself of *why* I should really bother."

The portfolio's purpose is to bridge the gap between the cognitive "I know *what* to do" and the behavioral "Now I'm *doing* it" by providing the students a reason *why* they must do it. According to constructive learning theorist Paul Pintrich (1989), students will retain and apply more of the content of any course if there is a perceived sense of importance connected to it. A repeated refrain in student feedback regarding the Two-Year Plan and Portfolio projects is, "Hey, this stuff [study skills] actually does relate to the accomplishment of my long term goals."

Student Assessment

The student assessment component of CAP has employed various instruments ranging from student surveys to a battery of tests administered by a licensed psychologist. Regardless of the specific data sought, the goals of the student assessment component are to provide various catalysts for appropriate student intervention.

CAP students previously took the Pre- and Post LASSI, Learning And Study Strategies Inventory (Weinstein, Schultz, & Palmer, 1987). This instrument measures self-reported behaviors and attitudes and is a useful tool for initiating discussions regarding appropriate strategies for improved academic performance. In conjunction with a campus-wide retention plan, all students, including those in CAP, are now administered the College Student Inventory (CSI) as part of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System (USA Group Noel-Levitz, 1993). The rather thorough report of the CSI serves as an early warning system as it identifies those students who appear to be significantly at-risk of not persisting in college. It is another springboard for discussions with individual students. The specific instrument employed is not as important as the fact that such assessment is conducted. Thoughtful discussion of the results encourages students to begin examining their learning behaviors and to start thinking about their thinking. According to Lidner's study (1993) on self-regulated learning, such metacognitive exercises do contribute positively to college student achievement.

It is important that students also regularly assess their performance in classes and that the accuracy of their self-assessments be measured. Therefore, the CAP Director solicits progress reports at four week intervals from the professors of CAP students. The purpose of these progress reports is not just to serve as an early warning of possible failure, but also as a means by which to teach students how to honestly and accurately assess their own performance. This way students have a reason to monitor and adjust their behaviors. Students need to assess their own learning behaviors and evaluate the results of those behaviors so that they can be taught how to make appropriate changes to achieve academic success (Gagne & Glaser, 1987).

The program had previously required students to participate in mandatory psycho-educational assessment. The results of the battery of tests provided useful information regarding students' cognitive abilities, achievement levels, processing strengths and weaknesses, and possible learning disabilities. This service, however, proved expensive and resulted in limiting access to some students who might otherwise have benefitted from the program. Also, student survey results concluded that 93% of those students subject to mandatory psycho-educational testing were uncomfortable with the degree of intrusiveness the testing represented, and 90% felt that the testing was not worth the financial cost. Although Roueche and Snow (1977) and others have argued forcefully for mandatory assessment testing, Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1997) have found mixed results. While mandatory testing was related to student success in developmental courses, the component was found to have little impact on student grades or retention (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997). Given the above considerations, it is clear that mandatory psycho-educational testing was too wide and costly a net to cast for the relative benefits that would be caught.

Mandatory placement testing remains an important aspect of the assessment component. All students at Holy Cross College, including those in CAP, must participate in placement testing prior to enrollment. Though CAP is an at-risk student intervention program, only about one third of any given cohort places into remedial mathematics or English. Boylan,

Bliss, and Bonham (1997) found that students participating in developmental courses were more likely to pass developmental English or mathematics courses in programs where placement was mandatory than in programs where placement was voluntary. Additionally, passing developmental courses has been positively related to success in college as measured by cumulative GPA and retention (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997). Clearly, mandatory placement testing is worth the trouble.

Program Assessment

Program assessment which is ongoing and systematic has been advocated for years as an important component of any at-risk student intervention program, and studies have linked program evaluation to student success and retention (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Maxwell, 1985, 1991; Roueche & Snow, 1977). Program assessment is motivated by a desire to evaluate program performance in order to engage in continuous quality improvement, while being accountable to the institution and its constituents (Astin, 1993). Key program measurements, which are taken at the close of each term and published college-wide annually, include success rates and GPAs.

Assessment of the effectiveness of individual program components is presently limited to the generation of student survey data. Though this degree of component evaluation allows for valuable student input and increased opportunities for student buy-in, it does not meet the "ongoing and systematic" criteria (Boylan, 1997). Though the current assessment of student outcomes is valuable, greater benefits would result by establishing an evaluation plan which uses systematic criteria to investigate each program component on a regular and consistent basis. Currently, the program director is consulting the established college-wide assessment plan as the initial resource for developing a comprehensive and component-specific CAP assessment plan. As Boylan (1997) suggests, we must examine what specific interventions contribute most to student success and who is most likely to benefit from those interventions.

Program Outcomes

Outcomes data, including cumulative GPAs and success rates, comprise only part of a comprehensive evaluation plan. Nevertheless, they provide the necessary information to begin to ask important questions upon which program evaluation and future program development should focus.

An initial view of the outcomes data, summarized in Tables 1 and 2, supports the conclusion that the overall goals of persistence and improved student performance are being met. Because 97% to 100% of all successful CAP students (GPA greater than 2.0) in any given cohort do choose to continue at Holy Cross College until they graduate, persistence rates and success rates for CAP students are nearly equal.

Table 1 indicates that CAP students' average GPAs are competitive with the average GPAs of regularly admitted students. It is important to note that average cumulative high school GPAs for entering CAP groups range from 1.6 to 1.8, while those for regularly admitted students at Holy Cross College range from 2.6 to 2.8. Though the difference in average high school GPAs between regularly admitted and CAP students is one full grade point, at the end of the first year of college there is generally less than three tenths of a point difference.

Table 1. CAP Assessment

	Average GPA				
	I 1993/94	II 1994/95	III 1995/96	IV 1996/97	V 1997/98
Summer	3.06	2.67	2.41	2.69	2.40
Fall	2.32	2.20	2.18	2.08	1.97
Spring	2.16	2.30	2.28	2.21	2.41
Yearly	2.448	2.455	2.428	2.405	2.473
Regular Admits	2.751	2.761	2.588	2.843	2.753

Table 2 indicates, however, that the success or persistence rates for CAP students is significantly and consistently lower than those of regular admits. One explanation may lie in the performance distribution among students. An examination of individual student performance within each cohort indicates that each year the numbers of students performing on the extremes, either above 3.5 or below 1.5, continues to increase, while those performing between 2.0 and 3.0 have dropped from 65% in 1993/94 to 45% in 1997/98. Additionally, as the number of students enrolled in CAP has grown by more than 128% since 1993, the heterogeneity of each group has also increased. So as program access has increased, so too has the diversity and profundity of student needs.

Table 2. CAP Assessment

	Success Rate				
	I 1993/94	II 1994/95	III 1995/96	IV 1996/97	V 1997/98
Summer	100%	89%	76%	94%	77%
Fall	71%	73%	58%	90%	50%
Spring	63%	69%	74%	64%	79%
Yearly	68%	60%	57%	62%	50%
Regular Admits	75%	70%	70%	76%	73%

What is determining t
program work better
Semester. What prog
and performance fro
determining such hig

Future program dev
degree of structure?
prepared to create for
more specifically me
maintaining the valu

Further program eva
new questions will in
When developing a
select, evaluate, and
theoretical foundatio
into practice, an ongo
match for the institut
program component
engineered in a syst
and assess a stude
professionally rewar
underprepared stude
not overstate the cri

***T.S. Holland** is an A*
Program at Holy Cr

Astin, A. (1993
excellence: T
practice of asse
in higher edu
The Orynx Pre
Astin, A. (1998). R
civic respo
Crosstalk, 6(3

What is determining the degree to which program goals are being achieved? How might the program work better? Note in Table 1 the decline in student performance in the Fall Semester. What program adjustments could be made to help sustain the level of motivation and performance from the Summer Session? What is it about the Summer Session that is determining such high student performance?

Future program development must focus on these questions and more. What about the degree of structure? How much structure is too much? At what point are the students prepared to create for themselves the structure they need to succeed? How can the program more specifically meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students, while maintaining the valuable effects of the intentionally structured group?

Program Development

Further program evaluation and development must address such questions. In the process, new questions will inevitably surface, leading to further evaluation and program refinement. When developing a student intervention program in this way, it is important to carefully select, evaluate, and meticulously adjust program components, while ensuring that a solid theoretical foundation and rationale exists for each. It is also crucial that when putting theory into practice, an ongoing evaluation ensures that the program components are an appropriate match for the institution's student population, its mission, and its overall campus culture. All program components must be integrated, regularly and systematically assessed, and carefully engineered in a systems approach to program development. Finally, any effort to develop and assess a student intervention program must be approached as a scholarly and professionally rewarding endeavor. When Astin (1998) asserts that, "The education of the underprepared student is the most important problem in America today..." (p. 12), he does not overstate the critical nature of our work.

T.S. Holland *is an Associate Professor of Mathematics and the Director of the Conditional Acceptance Program at Holy Cross College, Notre Dame, Indiana.*

References

Astin, A. (1993). Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education. Phoenix, AZ: The Orynx Press.

Astin, A. (1998). Remedial education and civic responsibility. National Crosstalk, 6(3), 12-13.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. New York: W. H. Freeman.

Boylan, H., Bliss, L., & Bohnam, B.

(1997). Program components and their relationship to student performance. Journal of Developmental Education, 20(3), 2-8.

Boylan, H. (1997). The case for program research in developmental education. The Learning Assistance Review, 2(2), 20-34.

Casazza, M., & Silverman, S. (1996). Learning assistance and developmental education: A guide for effective practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). Educational identity (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow. New York: Harper Perennial.

Finster, D. C. (1996). Freshmen can be taught to think creatively, not just amass information. In. V. Gordon (Ed.), Foundations, a reader for new college students (pp. 41-43). Belmont: Wadsworth.

Gagne, R. M. & Glaser, R. (1987). Foundations in learning research. In R.M. Gagne (Ed.), Instructional technology: Foundations (pp. 49-83). HIllsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gebelt, J. L., Perilis, G., Kramer, D., & Wilson, P. (1996). Retention at a large university: Combining skills with course content. Journal of Developmental Education, 20(1), 2-10.

Gilman, R. (1995). The case for initial, required, intrusive advising: Quantitative and qualitative arguments (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dayton, 1995).

Lidner, R. W. (1993). Self-regulated learning: Its assessment and instructional implications. Educational Research Quarterly, 16(2), 29-37.

Maxwell, M. (1985). Improving student learning skills. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Maxwell, M. (1991). Evaluating academic support systems. Kensington: M.M. Associates.

Noel, L., Levitz, R., & Salvri, D. (1986). Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Perry, W. G. (1970). Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Pintrich, P. R. (1989). The dynamic interplay of student motivation and cognition in the college classroom. In M. L. Maehr & C. Ames (Eds.), Advances in motivation and achievement: Motivation enhancing environments (pp. 117-155). Greenwich: JAI Press, Inc.

Robyak, J., & Patton, M. (1997). The effectiveness of a study skills course for students of difficult personality types. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 24, 200-207.

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectations for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Abstracts, 80, 609.

Roueche, J., & Roueche, S. (1993). Between a rock and a hard place: The at risk student in the open door college. Washington, D.C.: Community College Press.

Roueche, J., & Snow, J. (1997). Overcoming learning problems. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Scheer, S. D., & Unger, D. G. (1994). Adolescents becoming adults:

Attributes for adulthood. Paper presented at meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, San Diego.

Schroeder, C. C. (1998, September-October). Being all that you can be. About Campus, 4-12.

Skinner, B. F. (1953). Science and human behavior. New York: Macmillan.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving College: Rethinking the causes of student attrition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

USA Group Noel-Levitz. (1993). Retention management system - advisor's guide. Iowa City: National Center for Student Retention.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). Thought and language. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Von Blerkom, D. L. (1995). Orientation to college learning. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Von Blerkom, D. L. (1995, Spring). The role of motivation in college success classes. The Keystone, 1-3 and 7-8.

Weinstein, C. E., Schulte, A. C., & Palmer, D. R. (1987). Learning and study strategies inventory (LASSI): User's manual. Clearwater, FL: H&H Publishing Company, Inc.

Winston, R. B., Bonney, W. C., Miller, T. K., & Dagley, J. C. (1988). Promoting student development through intentionally structured groups. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELING BY MASTER'S LEVEL PRACTICUM COUNSELORS

By Janice L. Redford, Lynn Griebling, and Patrick Daniel,
University of Houston

Abstract

Learning Support Services (LSS), in cooperation with the Educational Psychology Department of the University of Houston, developed and conducted a program of training practicum counselors in their first counseling experience by having them provide academic success counseling for at-risk students. The counselor training program included selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of practicum counselors. The program of academic success counseling included intake, assessment, treatment planning, intervention, and monitoring. Outcome evaluation indicated a mean gain (+.9) in grade point average for those students entering academic success counseling with less than 2.0 average (4.0 scale).

Learning Support Services, in cooperation with the Educational Psychology Department of the University of Houston, developed and conducted a program of academic success counseling. Practicum trainees counseled students, about one-half of whom were at-risk students (under 2.0 GPA), in a learning center effort to improve retention and graduation rates at the university. The following description of goals, activities, and outcomes offers a program overview.

There was scant information available in the literature pertaining to comparable programs. In reviewing the literature concerning the components of learning assistance centers, programs report that academic counseling should be, and usually is, an integral service in their overall efforts to assist students. In an analysis of selected successful developmental reading programs, academic counseling was considered one of the characteristics common to the eight most successful programs (Garza & Gibbs, 1994). Cross (1981) proposed that academic counseling was particularly important for adult learners in the area of individual goal setting. The College Board (1990) lists academic counseling as one of the services provided in successful college programs. Evaluation of retention programs for African-American students in predominantly White universities indicated that participants in projects which included study skills training or academic counseling significantly improved their academic progress (Giles-Gee, 1989; Trippi & Cheatham, 1991). In a study of treatment outcomes for study skills training and career counseling with a sample of students who were at high risk for dropping out of college, results indicated that the study skills treatment had a significant effect on grades and on retention of the students (Polansky, Horan & Hannish, 1993).

On the other hand, significant impact on retention and grades has not been found in some studies of academic counseling with high risk students (Francis, 1987; Romano & Young, 1981). Some critics maintain that such counseling fosters a dependency by the student on the counselor which inhibits the development of independent learning skills (Wangerin, 1989). Williams, Decker, and Libassi (1983) propose that academic counseling must address those cognitive and behavioral skills, such as identifying and responding appropriately to anxiety, which are necessary to the maintenance and improvement of academic performance.

Academic success counseling, as defined and practiced in our center prior to the beginning of the practicum counseling project, incorporates self-management and independent learning skills development into the counseling process. Student self-efficacy is sought through acquiring better learning skills and experiencing therapeutic support. Other than occasional monitoring or follow-up, academic counselors do not plan to work with the student again after completing the brief counseling period. After counseling, students are encouraged to continue using other LSS services such as tutoring, media resources, ongoing workshops, and study groups in order to independently structure and meet their individual academic goals.

The goal of the program consisted of two parts: (1) To provide a developmental training experience for beginning practicum student counselors, and (2) To expand and improve the academic success of student clients through a comprehensive approach to academic counseling.

Description of Learning Support Services

Learning Support Services is a component of Counseling and Testing Services within the division of Student Affairs. A portion of the overall student fee assessment supports the learning center; therefore, all services are free to currently enrolled students. Peer tutoring (primarily on a walk-in basis), supplemental instructional groups, study skills workshops, multi-media learning resources, and individual academic assessment and academic counseling are available to all 30,000 students who attend the university. The purpose of the center is to improve the retention and graduation rates of students by offering support programs and self-development activities to enhance learning and develop new skills necessary for college success. Most students are self-referred; however, some high risk students are referred by other departments or colleges.

There are three professional staff persons on site: (1) The Assistant Director, a Licensed Psychologist, (2) the Academic Counselor, a Licensed Professional Counselor, and, (3) the Academic Coordinator. The center conducts approximately 6,000 tutoring sessions a semester.

Master's Level Practicum Training Program

Selection of Practicum Trainees

Because master's level counseling practicum students had not participated before in an academic success counseling program at Learning Support Services, and because of space and supervision considerations, the program was limited to two practicum counseling students. During the previous semester, we interviewed the six candidates who applied to our practicum site, selecting two. Selection was based on several criteria: (1) Limited personal counseling experience, (2) Interest in pursuing a career in academic settings, and (3) Interest in and empathic understanding of students experiencing academic difficulties. Cultural diversity was considered, given the 12% African-American, 16% Hispanic, and 16% Asian-American population of the university community; one of the practicum students chosen was Asian-American. Educational backgrounds of most candidates included learning theories and educational assessment, although these courses were not a requirement for participation in our program. However, the two selected candidates had this background as well as meeting the selection criteria. Counseling education background included a comprehensive course in counseling theories. Counselor trainees could not participate in a practicum experience until the second year of their program and after they had completed the first counseling laboratory course.

Training Program Activities

The program began three weeks before semester start with an orientation conducted by the Assistant Director. Basic expectations and a general overview of the program were covered, and supervision and training time schedules were set.

Each practicum counselor worked 16 scheduled hours a week. They spent the first three weeks reading learning theory and study skills books in our resource library and browsing through our academic workshop files of content material, handouts, and overheads. They observed both the Tutor Training Course held at the beginning of the semester and the "Early Bird" series of academic workshops during the second week of classes. Through training and observation they learned to administer and interpret the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI). After observing individual academic counseling sessions to the point where each trainee felt comfortable with the process, the practicum counselor, along with an observing staff counselor, began counseling. When the observing staff counselor judged that the practicum counselor was ready, the practicum counselor began academic counseling alone. Practicum counselors also were trained to present the Study Skills Program consisting of two five-session series of workshops, the first series under observation, the second series alone. As a final project, the practicum students developed a new study strategy workshop or a new aspect of a currently presented workshop.

Training Semin

Training seminar
with the trainee'
topics such as co
asked the trainees
of 12 sessions las
staff from outsid
Procedures, (2)
Styles Inventory,
Test Anxiety/Ma
Family of Origin
Disabled Student
by the trainees.

Supervision

The practicum st
consultation and f
Discussion center
counselor's appro
professional coun
also worked close
Business at-risk re
was available at a

Practicum Couns

Ongoing develop
supervisory meeti
skills workshops
prior to the next w
direct service, t
department provid
basis.

The Assistant Dire
of the semester, us
grade for the seme
meet departmental
activities.

Practicum counselo
processes: (1) pro

Training Seminars

Training seminars for the practicum students were an important aspect of the program along with the trainee's opportunity for first-time direct counseling service to clients. Certain topics such as counseling procedures and paperwork were covered in the first seminar. We asked the trainees about their preferences for the other training topics. The training consisted of 12 sessions lasting one and one-half hours each; the sessions were led by LSS staff and staff from outside the center as appropriate. The following topics were presented: (1) Procedures, (2) LASSI - Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, (3) LSI - Learning Styles Inventory, (4) Brief Therapy in Academic Counseling, (5) Crisis Intervention, (6) Test Anxiety/Math Anxiety, (7) Problem Solving Model, (8) Ethics/Boundary Issues, (9) Family of Origin Issues - Impact on Academic Dysfunction, (10) Recognizing Learning Disabled Students, (11) Multi-Cultural Counseling, and, (12) Innovative Study Strategies by the trainees.

Supervision

The practicum students met weekly on an individual basis with the Assistant Director for consultation and feedback. Counseling sessions previously taped were reviewed at this time. Discussion centered around questions concerning individual clients and the practicum counselor's approach to clients. The supervisor and practicum counselor worked toward professional counselor identity and counseling skill development. The practicum students also worked closely with the Academic Counselor who oversaw the 250 student College of Business at-risk retention program. In addition, consultation with one of the staff counselors was available at all times on an as-requested basis.

Practicum Counseling Training Program Evaluation

Ongoing developmental evaluation of the practicum students occurred through the weekly supervisory meetings with the Assistant Director. Professional staff also observed the study skills workshops presented by practicum students and provided feedback to the students prior to the next workshop. Practicum counselors kept weekly records regarding hours of direct service, training, supervision, and paperwork. The Educational Psychology department provided forms for these records and collected the information on a regular basis.

The Assistant Director conducted a formal evaluation of the practicum students at the end of the semester, using a form supplied by the Educational Psychology Department. The final grade for the semester was based on this evaluation. The practicum counselors also had to meet departmental requirements for training hours, supervision, direct service, and on-site activities.

Practicum counselors evaluated the LSS training program on an informal basis through two processes: (1) problems and successes were regularly discussed between LSS staff and

practicum students, and (2) practicum students met monthly with the Educational Psychology professor of field training. Communication between the LSS Assistant Director and the professor led to any necessary programmatic changes during the semester. The practicum counselors also submitted formal evaluations of the LSS training component to the department at the end of the semester. Based on these evaluations, LSS was chosen to be a practicum site for the following year.

Academic Success Counseling

Selection of Academic Counseling Clients

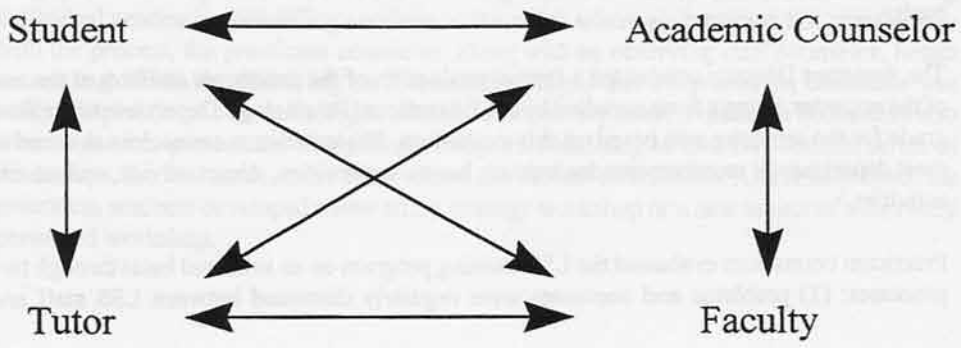
The main source of clients for the two practicum students was the College of Business Administration (CBA) retention program. A few students referred themselves as walk-ins or as a result of attending an academic workshop. A few were referred by professors in departments other than CBA. One practicum counselor counseled a caseload of 22 students for a total of 41 sessions; the other a caseload of 19 for 43 sessions. A total of 41 students were served for 84 sessions. We were able to incorporate academic counseling into many more of the treatment plans because practicum counselors expanded our staff availability.

Treatment

At a point of readiness determined by the trainee and the supervisor, the practicum counselor began seeing clients. With an ongoing client, the Academic Counselor would meet with the trainee and the client to effect a smooth transition. If the client was new, the practicum counselor was instructed to conduct an intake interview and assess the academic counseling needs. The client and the practicum counselor would then complete an individualized plan of services. Services could include tutoring, supplemental instructional group assignment, academic counseling, and career counseling if indicated. Monitoring progress, referrals, and ongoing case management completed the treatment plan.

Treatment incorporated the four-point cross-connection as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Four-point cross-connection treatment intervention.



y with the Educational
e LSS Assistant Director
during the semester. The
SS training component to
tions, LSS was chosen to

the College of Business
d themselves as walk-ins
referred by professors in
a caseload of 22 students
ts. A total of 41 students
ic counseling into many
ted our staff availability.

, the practicum counselor
elor would meet with the
was new, the practicum
the academic counseling
te an individualized plan
tional group assignment,
g progress, referrals, and

in Figure 1.

emic Counselor

Faculty

The ongoing communication and feedback between the academic counselor, student, tutor, and professor seemed to enhance understanding and hasten the growth of academic self-confidence within the student. Toy (1987) reviewed retention studies and found faculty involvement vital to the decision to remain in school. Another proposed reason for the observed rapid improvement under this plan was the care and individual attention demonstrated - an important aspect often neglected in a commuter urban university of 30,000 students. Appropriate to our holistic approach in providing support for students, particularly high-risk students, we considered social support as vital to our service. Both activities, practicum academic counseling and peer tutoring, involved students helping students. These interactions were designed to enrich the skills of all persons in the student/tutor/practicum counselor relationships. They were also designed to make the university seem a more hospitable place - a social factor considered important for helping students who were at risk for dropping out (Jones & Watson, 1990).

Treatment interventions were based, in part, on a conceptual framework we refer to as the "Success Cycle vs. Failure Cycle." Based on Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, the framework incorporates the two factors which influence motivation: (1) personal goals, and (2) expectations. If a student develops self-efficacy and success expectations through the setting and achievement of short term goals, the cycle moves in an upward spiral, with each success moving the student a step higher in academic progress toward graduation.

We also designed our academic counseling interventions for the purpose of developing metacognitive skills. Strategies for memory improvement, reading comprehension and exam preparation were based on Atkinson and Shiffrin's (1968) information processing model. Cognitive/behavioral strategies such as relaxation, systematic desensitization, restructuring beliefs, and self-regulation were used when treating academic anxiety issues (Ellis, 1962; Watson & Tharp, 1993; Wolpe, 1958).

Academic counseling was conducted using a brief therapy model of approximately one to five sessions; one session typically lasted an hour. Trainees practiced forming a therapeutic working alliance with the client and maintaining a focus on solutions while incorporating interventions to address specific academic difficulties.

The practicum counselors developed therapeutic counseling skills throughout the experience; they grew in their ability to listen, reflect, interpret, and confront while keeping a non-judgmental attitude and building trust. They also experienced the issues of terminating counseling, when the student moved from the security and support of the counseling relationship to the role of independent learner, a role which required self-regulation and an internalized support system.

Tutoring, faculty consultation, and supplemental instructional groups were often incorporated into the academic counseling intervention. Also, academic counselors made referrals as necessary for personal counseling or other needs such as financial assistance and

academic advising. The counselor assumed the role of director of these intervention activities.

Nature of Problem: Observations and Interventions

At the end of the semester, an examination was made of the content or problem addressed in each of the total 84 sessions conducted by the two practicum counselors.

Table 1 divides the sessions into 17 categories of issues, ranging from highest to lowest percentage of occurrence.

Table 1. Nature of Problems Addressed in Academic Counseling

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
LASSI Assessment	10	11.9%
Test Anxiety	9	10.7%
Time Management	8	9.5%
Monitor/Follow-up	8	9.5%
General Study Habits	7	8.3%
Math Anxiety	6	7.1%
Memory Strategies	6	7.1%
Post-exam Audit	4	4.8%
Concentration	4	4.8%
LSI Assessment	4	4.8%
Test Taking Skills	3	3.6%
Goal Setting	3	3.6%
Reading/Note-taking	3	3.6%
Intake Interview	3	3.6%
Exam Preparation	2	2.4%
Motivation	2	2.4%
Overload of Courses	2	2.4%
Total	84	100.0%

these intervention

problem addressed
elors.

m highest to lowest

NTAGE OF TOTAL

11.9%

10.7%

9.5%

9.5%

8.3%

7.1%

7.1%

4.8%

4.8%

4.8%

3.6%

3.6%

3.6%

3.6%

2.4%

2.4%

2.4%

100.0%

Brief observations and intervention comments concerning the categories follow:

Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). Students took the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) at the first session of academic counseling. By interpreting the results to the student, the practicum counselor had a natural springboard to addressing revealed deficits in learning strategies or in the emotional arenas of motivation and anxiety. The counselor discussed specific items with the student if it helped elicit additional information concerning the academic difficulty.

Test Anxiety. According to the literature, there are two types of test anxious students: those with poor study skills and those having difficulty in retrieval (Naveh-Benjamin, 1991). Our students most often reported their symptoms as overwhelming negative thoughts which led to a blank mind and the consequent inability to retrieve material.

In treating test anxiety, the usually recommended interventions include relaxation techniques and cognitive/behavioral strategies for positive self-talk (Ellis, 1994, pp. 172-176). Decker & Russell (1981) found positive results for relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and study skills counseling. Treatment for test anxiety by LSS academic counselors encompassed all three approaches: relaxation techniques, cognitive/behavioral strategies for positive self-talk, and general study skill enhancement.

Time Management. Concrete techniques of scheduling were applied. For procrastination issues, "fear of failure" and other psychological blocks were explored. See further comments below in the comments about motivation.

Monitor/Follow-up. These sessions were with students who had been counseled before either by the staff academic counselors or the practicum counselors but whose progress needed to be checked.

General Study Habits. Some students thought they could keep the same habits they had in high school. The practicum counselors assessed the nature of the study problems, presented the accepted strategies for effective study, and then had the students design their own approaches to solving their problems.

Math Anxiety. Interventions included relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and study skills counseling. Cue-controlled relaxation was supported by a research study as the more viable intervention as compared to study skills counseling (Bander et al., 1982). Cognitive restructuring involved helping the student to overcome self-defeating beliefs. Study skills counseling focused on analytical problem solving techniques. The math anxious student often expressed an attitude of hopelessness and a perception (often reality based) of an inadequate math background. Most of the math anxious students were also assigned a tutor who worked in conjunction with the academic counseling.

Memory Strategies. Students requesting memory strategies were usually looking for some magic technique that would lead immediately to a "photographic memory." Simple techniques such as charting, mnemonics, and self-testing had only been minimally used. Intervention included a psycho-educational explanation of how and why certain methods improved memory storage and retrieval. The students then had an opportunity to practice the various methods.

Post-exam Audit. This intervention became one of the most effective tools of academic counseling. The student would bring his/her most recent exam to the counseling session. If the professor did not normally return exams, the academic counselor would arrange for it to be sent directly to LSS or would meet with the student and the professor. The following questions were asked about each exam item:

1. How did the student prepare for the answer through study?
2. At the time of answering the test item, what did the student remember?
3. Did the student misunderstand or misread the question?
4. How well did the student understand the material being covered by the question?
5. Was the wrong answer a result of the student becoming confused or was there a mistake in computation, etc.?
6. What was the student was experiencing as the question was being answered, particularly regarding the role of anxiety in blocking thoughts.

By focusing in on the particular difficulty, the student could more effectively use the exam as feedback. Furthermore, the exam became a tool for improvement instead of a perceived measure of worth.

Concentration. Sometimes, students who described their problem as lack of concentration eventually revealed a personal problem of sufficient magnitude to indicate a referral to University Counseling Services for personal counseling. The practicum students had to learn how to recognize when academic counseling was not going to be effective; i.e., when other personal problems were interfering with focus on academic matters. The practicum counselors understood from the time of application that LSS provided only academic counseling; their second semester experience was personal counseling at the University Counseling Services.

Learning Styles Inventory. The LSI was administered if the student wanted to become more self-aware and to place himself/herself as an active participant in the learning process. Interpretation not only shed light on students' learning styles but also helped them

understand why and in what areas they were having difficulty adjusting to a professor's teaching style.

Test Taking Skills. Intervention included methods for objective and essay tests. Techniques for slowing the reading of the question stem and eliminating choices in multiple choice were helpful.

Goal Setting. Intervention included exploration of long term goals and the establishment of short term goals in order to set the self-efficacy "success cycle" in motion.

Reading/Note-taking. Standard interventions for improvement were used. Most clients were not familiar with SQ3R reading process or the Cornell Method of note-taking.

Intake Interview. There were few intakes due to the time of the semester that the practicum counselors began seeing clients. Usually an intake had already occurred; however, upon further assessment, the practicum counselor adjusted the individual treatment plan if indicated. An intake summary was completed and kept in the student's counseling file; academic background, pertinent family factors, observations, assessment, client goals, and treatment plan were included.

Exam Preparation. Intervention included methods for preparing material in a framework that facilitated storage in long term memory.

Motivation. Motivation, goal setting, and time management were often observed to be interrelated categories. Goal setting and time management were the usual treatment of choice to address motivation problems. If goal setting and time management were the problems to be addressed, the practicum counselors would typically see a confusion of values regarding investment of time. Intervention included helping students to understand that the activity in which they were investing most of their time was the activity they valued the most. If they were investing most of their priority hours in their job, then the job rather than the college course work was the value of higher priority.

Overload of Courses. This problem was reported by students who had an unrealistic idea of how much they could accomplish in a semester. Hours of school work outside of class time often had not been taken into consideration when taking on full time jobs and full time student loads. Intervention included realistic allocation of hours.

Evaluation of Practicum Students' Academic Counseling

Academic counseling is not an unusual activity in itself at university support centers. However, using educational psychology counselors-in-training in the process offered a unique joint opportunity for psychological skill development of practicum students as well as academic skill development of at-risk students. LSS did not have access to university data which might indicate GPA improvement of all undergraduate students or of all those

students beginning the semester with a GPA of less that 2.0. Therefore, without a control group and without university population data, the GPA measurement of project student clients had no comparison group. Also, there were, of course, other factors besides LSS intervention that impacted the grade point average (GPA) of students participating in our program. That being said, statistical comparisons of grade point average before and after intervention can give some indication of the effectiveness of the treatment modality - at least if we were moving in the right direction.

The mean difference between the beginning and concluding grade point average (GPA) of the total group of students being academically counseled by the practicum counselors was +. 3827 ($p<.05$) on a 4.0 high grading scale. Seven of the 41 participants were not included in the analysis because they had not been enrolled prior to the semester of counseling. At the beginning of the semester, the 33 students had a mean GPA of 2.0782 with a range of .93 to 4.0. At the conclusion of the semester, the students had a mean GPA of 2.4609 with a range from .75 to 4.00.

Analysis of those participants who entered the program with less than a 2.0 GPA showed a gain of +.9025 ($p<.01$). These students had been referred to Learning Support Services because their below 2.0 GPA had put them at risk for probation or suspension. At the beginning of the semester, these 16 students had a mean GPA of 1.4219 with a range of .93 to 1.93; at the end of the semester, the students had a mean GPA of 2.3244 with a range of .75 to 4.0.

Of the total number of students who participated in academic success counseling, many of those with a 2.0 or above GPA came voluntarily to our program. One could argue that motivation and resolve could increase students' efforts thereby resulting in higher grades. However, all of the students in this analysis with a GPA below 2.0 were referred for assistance. Students were expected to participate, and their attendance at contracted activities, such as academic counseling and/or tutoring, was reported to the referring department. Therefore, participation could not be considered voluntary. They were perhaps motivated to remove themselves from probationary status, but they often appeared resistant to changing their approach to academics.

General Observations

Learning Support Services is repeating this program based on what appeared to be an effective experience. One should be hesitant, however, to generalize from a program that has only been conducted once. Experience, evaluation, and refinement will be our goals for the further development of this model. However, learning centers may find useful components and ideas to incorporate into their programs.

The program was quite time consuming at the beginning of the semester. The practicum counselors had little previous counseling experience and no experience in creating and

presenting study skills workshops. After the first month, however, they became a valuable addition to both the efficiency and effectiveness of the academic counseling services.

Perhaps the most rewarding quality of the entire program was the opportunity for students (practicum counselors) to learn through helping other students. From the perspective of the administrative staff, it was a win-win situation for all.

Janice L. Redford *is Assistant Director of Learning Support Services at the University of Houston Main Campus.*

Lynn Griebling *is an Academic Counselor at Learning Support Services at the University of Houston Main Campus.*

Patrick Daniel *is Director of Learning and Assessment at the University of Houston Main Campus.*

References

Atkinson, R. C., & Shiffrin, R. M. (1968). Human memory: A proposed system and its control processes. In K. W. Spence & J. T. Spence (Eds.), The psychology of learning and motivation: Advances in research and theory (Vol. 2). New York: Academic Press.

Bander, R. S., Russell, R. K., & Zamostny, K. P. (1982). A comparison of cue-controlled relaxation and study skills counseling in the treatment of mathematics anxiety. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74(1), 96-103.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social-cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Cross, K. P. (1981). Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Decker, T. W., & Russell, R. K. (1981). Comparison of cue-controlled relaxation and cognitive restructuring versus study skills counseling in treatment of test-anxious college underachievers. Psychological Reports, 49(2), 459-469.

Ellis, A. (1962). Reason and emotion in psychotherapy. New York, Lyle Stuart.

Ellis, D. (1994). Becoming a master student (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Francis, K. C., McDaniel, M., & Doyle, R. E. (1987). Training in role communication skills: Effect on interpersonal and academic skills of high-risk freshmen. Journal of College Student Personnel, 28(2), 151-156.

Garza, N. R., & Gibbs, L. (1994, May). A description and analysis of selected successful developmental reading programs in Texas community colleges (and) analysis of developmental mathematics programs in Texas community colleges which

are successful with Black and Hispanic students. Papers presented at the Annual International Conference of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development on Teaching Excellence and Conference of Administrators, Austin, TX.

Giles-Gee, H. F. (1989). Increasing the retention of Black students: A multimethod approach. Journal of College Student Development, 30(3), 196-200.

Jones, D. J., & Watson, B. C. (1990). High-risk students and higher education: Future trends. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3). Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Naveh-Benjamin, M. (1991) A comparison of training programs intended for different types of test-anxious students: Further support for an information-processing model. Journal of Educational Psychology, 83(1), 134-139.

Office of Adult Learning Services. (1990). 100 ways colleges serve adults. New York: The College Board.

Polansky, J., Horan, J. J., & Hanish, C. (1993). Experimental construct validity of the outcomes of study skills training and career counseling as treatments for the retention of at-risk students. Journal of Counseling and Development, 71(5), 488-492.

Romano, J. L., & Young, H. T. (1981). Required group counseling/study skills for academic improvement: How effective are they? Journal of College Student Personnel, 22(6), 492-496.

Toy, T. J. (1987). Increasing faculty involvement in retention efforts. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, & D. Saluri (Eds.), Increasing student retention (pp. 383-401). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Trippi, J., & Cheatham, H. E. (1991). Counseling effects on African American college student graduation. Journal of College Student Development, 32(4) 342-349

Watson, D. L., & Tharp, R. G. (1993). Self-Directed Behavior: Self-modification for personal adjustment. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Wolpe, J. (1958). Psychotherapy by reciprocal inhibition. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wangerin, P. T. (1989). Law school academic support programs. Hastings Law Journal, 40(4), 771-803.

Williams, J. M., Decker, T. W., & Libassi, A. (1983). The impact of stress management training on the academic performance of low-achieving college students. Journal of College Student Personnel, 24(6), 491-494.

TH
POST-

By Laura Bauer a

This study examine
the novels to enhan
level. In addition,
samples from stude

According to trans
process (Rosenblatt
natural ways to ga
fluency (Deen, 199

Of course, such res
As instructors of
approach—intensiv
of the English lang
teacher and student
found a wonderful

The non-native stud
ESOL program of th
Polish, with a mix of
high school graduate
may have taken as
background in gram
decide to continue th
placement exam whi
II, two ten week qu
meant to hone the
Communication De
language, to make i
institution of higher