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Inside out: An evaluation of the College 101 experience

Thomas M. O'Shea
Iowa State University

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**Inside out: An evaluation of the College 101 experience
at Kirkwood Community College from the student and faculty perspective**

by

Thomas M. O'Shea

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

Program of Study Committee
Larry Ebbers, Major Professor
Marisa Rivera
Carol Heaverlo
Sharon Drake
Jan Friedel

Iowa State University

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The dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
John and Marilyn O'Shea,
for their constant support and belief in me to succeed in life and on my educational journey.

And to my entire family
Tim, Cari, Alexa and Jacob O'Shea,
Robert, Kristi, Madeline and Jensen O'Shea,
Brian, Heather, Ashli, Taylor, Chloe, Natalie and Xavier O'Shea,

Christopher O'Shea

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and I wouldn't be where I am today without each of you.

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ABSTRACT

Campus orientation and first year experience programs are becoming an everyday part of campus life at institutions across the country. One such program at Kirkwood Community College is College 101. College 101 is a semester long course designed to aid in the students' successful transition to Kirkwood academically, socially and personally. My research focuses on learning why students are enrolling in the course, influences on their decision to enroll in the course, what expectations they have for the course and to gain feedback from them on what aspects of the curriculum are beneficial to their success, and what aspects are not beneficial to their success in college.

Data for the research were gathered in three specific formats. First, focus groups with three College 101 courses were randomly selected from the 22 sections being offered in the 2012 fall term. The focus groups were conducted within the last 3 weeks of the 2012 fall semester. A total of 32 students, 23 female and nine males participated in the focus groups. From the focus groups, six students, four females and two males, agreed to continue with the research project and went through two semi-structured interviews concentrating on the individual units of the College 101 curriculum. After the interviews were concluded, a faculty focus group was done with several faculty members who have taught the College 101 course. The focus group was designed to get feedback on the College 101 curriculum from the faculty perspective.

Upon completion of data collection, several themes emerged related to why students were taking College 101, what motivations students had for taking College 101, whether students' expectations were being met in College 101 and students' and faculty feedback on each unit of the College 101 curriculum. The data helped provide several key

recommendations for Kirkwood Community College as they continue to evaluate the future of the College 101 course.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of campus orientation and first-year experience programs for college students has been debated between academic affairs and student affairs professionals for many years. Student transition to college continues to be an area of investigation and an ongoing challenge to various audiences on college campuses (Mayhew, Vanderlinden, & Kim, 2010). Many questions related to campus orientation and first-year experience programs are being debated on college campuses on a daily basis. Some of these questions, from professional experiences, are: (a) should campus orientation and first-year experience programs contain more academic activities to help students become better prepared for the academic rigor of college, (b) should campus orientation and first-year experience programs contain more student development activities to help students become better acclimated to college life, (c) should orientation and first-year experience programs be required for all students before they are able to enroll in college courses, and (d) are students who participated in campus orientation and first-year experience programs more successful academically than students who do not participate in these programs? Most academic professionals would agree that, in an ideal world, the content areas within campus orientation and first-year experience programs would contain both academic and social types of activities and be required for all students so they can receive a comprehensive view of life as a college student. The creation of new programs must be a campus-wide collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs professionals (Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001). This comprehensive introduction to college life and presentation of resources available can alleviate some anxiety often experienced by first-year students and ultimately be a major influence on the student's academic success, retention, and graduation from college.

Problem

The influence of campus orientation and first-year experience programs on academic success of students attending college has been a focus for many higher educational professionals and policymakers. The issue of mandatory orientation and first-year experience programs for all students has budget, staffing, and timing issues for student affairs professionals. Over the years, there has been an increased focus on college campuses to modify the content of campus orientation and first-year experience programs to include more academic-related activities for students. Likewise, another trend on college campuses has been to take a traditional campus orientation program and extend them into a first-year experience program for students.

In all, just fewer than 87.3% of American colleges and universities now offer some sort of extended orientation or other support services, according to the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience, which is based at the University of South Carolina (Marcus, 2010). According to Marcus (2010), “some 29% of freshmen at four-year institutions fail to return for a second year, according to the center” (para. 4). The introduction of these programs has a positive effect on the academic success of all students campus wide. According to Reason, Terenzini and Domingo (2006) the first college year is critical not only for how much students learn but also for laying the foundation on which their subsequent academic success and persistence rest. The role of campus orientation and first-year experience programs can be to serve as a way for institutions to provide the foundation for their students to begin the quest to achieve academic success, return for their next semester in college, and eventually graduate. As colleges turn to the creation of first-year experience programs to help with student success and overall retention, it is important

that they continue to have evaluation and assessment techniques in place to ensure that the courses are beneficial for the students who enroll.

Individuals involved in the creation of the curriculum for these courses must seek input from administrators, faculty who teach the course, and most importantly, the students who take the course. Often it is the students' voices that go unheard when curriculum is created for first-year experience courses. Data must be collected, more in depth than traditional course surveys, and in a more strategic and deliberate way from students, to gain an insight as to what they believe works best to help them transition into college and what leads to academic, social, and personal success during their first semester on campus. The most productive way to find out what course content will benefit the students the most and what works is to go directly to the source—the college students taking the course.

Student Success as it Relates to Community College Student Populations

Many students arrive on college campuses daily unprepared for the academic rigor that awaits them. This especially is the case on community college campuses across the country, with an “open door” mission of serving all students, regardless of their prior education. Community colleges often struggle with ways to improve on student success. Whether this is to increase retention rates, graduation rates, or overall student satisfaction, community college personnel need to do a better job of listening to the students that attend their institutions. Kay McClenney, Director of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, part of the Community College Leadership Program (CCLP) at the University of Texas at Austin, and Arleen Arnsperger, Project Manager of the Initiative on Student Success at the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, are key researchers in the area of community college student success.

McClenney and Arnsparger (2012) argued that this reality persists, in part, because colleges have not developed the habit of listening to their students—and therefore have not taken student voices seriously into consideration as they plan programs and services intended to serve those very people (p. 3). Community college student populations differ from those of traditional universities and, therefore, face distinctly different challenges related to academic success. It is important to focus on what community colleges are doing in terms of the development of first-year experience programs aimed at students' academic, social, and personal success.

Community colleges often struggle with ways to help their students succeed inside and outside of the classroom. This is due to an abundant amount of time, energy, and financial resources dedicated to programs and services on community college campuses focused on student success. However, according to research conducted by McClenney and Arnsparger (2012), college completion rates for community college graduates have increased only slightly, if at all, over the past 20 years (p. 3). They have argued that this is because community college administrators “have not developed the habit of truly listening to their students—and therefore have not taken student voices seriously into consideration as they plan program and services intended to serve those very people” (McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012, p. 2, preface). As these programs continue to be evaluated and modified to ensure student success, individuals faced with this task must continue to ask themselves: “Who can best describe the experiences of selecting to enroll at a community college or choosing to enroll in the first-year experience course? Who can best describe the anxiety and excitement of being a new student on a community college campus? Who can best describe expectations about a first-year experience course and whether these expectations are ultimately fulfilled

through participation in the course?” That’s right; it’s the community colleges student, themselves. So, who are community college students?

The 2011 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE; CCCSE, n.d.a) cohort data include responses from 96,000 students who represent more than 1.8 million students from 217 community colleges in 39 states, plus the District of Columbia, Nova Scotia, and the Northern Marianas. According to the 2011 SENSE cohort, 48% of all undergraduate students enrolled in U.S. public higher education institutions attend community colleges and are recent high school graduates, workers returning to college to learn new skills, students transferring to and from baccalaureate institutions, and first-generation college students (p. 6). The 2011 SENSE cohort reflected the following community college demographic statistics overall:

- 57% of community college students were women, and 43% were men;
- 51% of community college students were 23 years of age or younger, 19% were 24–29 years of age, 15% were 30–39 years of age and 15% were 40 years of age or older;
- 60% of community college students were Caucasian/White, 15% were Hispanic, 14% were African American/Black, 7% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% were classified as other/two or more races;
- 80% of community college students work while attending school (more classified as full time rather than part time);
- 59% of community college students attend part time;

- At least 60% of community college students report that their academic placement tests indicated they need developmental coursework in at least one area (reading, writing, and/or math);
- 45% of community college students report that neither of their parents attended college;
- 33% of community college students have incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level; and
- 67% of community college students receive some form of financial aid (grants and/or loans).

Looking at these statistics, first-year experience programs on community college campuses are an integral part of the programmatic efforts to help ensure student success. The need for first-year experience programs, especially on community college campuses, is essential to the successful transition into college for these students. Therefore, allowing the community college students a voice in the development of the curriculum for these programs is equally important to ensure academic, social, and personal success for what matters most to the students.

Curriculum Development Theory as a Guiding Principle

The focus of my research was to provide students' a voice in the curriculum development process for the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College. Whether this feedback ends up helping the College 101 coordinator update materials for the current curriculum, add new content, or delete current content, it is important to have the students who take the course play an integral role in this process.

Curriculum development, or curriculum theory, means something different to many people. The concept of curriculum development is key in the creation of the content for the College 101 course. Curriculum theory in its basic form can be viewed as an academic discipline that examines and shapes how educational learning occurs. Curriculum theory blends a historical view of curriculum with current trends in educational delivery that produces a desired outcome based on expectations that have been established (Walker, 2012). The body of literature that focuses on curriculum development theory is endless. Curriculum development theory has been influencing the role of formal education in the United States for years. Early influences on curriculum development theory created a solid foundation for the creation of and implementation of best practices that ultimately provide information to the students. However, there are a few key individuals that are associated and credited with scholarly input into the concept of curriculum development theory.

Pioneers in Curriculum Development Theory

Throughout history, several individuals have been credited with adding knowledge to the concept of curriculum theory. The first formal definition of curriculum theory emerged in the works of two American writers, Franklin Bobbitt (1928) and Ralph W. Tyler (1949). Bobbitt (1876–1956) was an American author, educator, and university professor at the University of Chicago from 1904–1941. Tyler (1902–1994) was an American author, educator, and university professor at the University of North Carolina and The Ohio State University. According to Bobbitt (1928), and later cited in a work by Tyler (1949), the central theory of curriculum consists of the performance of specific activities. These activities show the abilities, attitudes, habits, appreciations, and forms of knowledge that people need. These are the objectives of the curriculum and are numerous, definite, and

particularized. The curriculum then comprises that series of experiences that children and youth must have by way of obtaining those objectives (Tyler, 1949, p. 49). The early development of curriculum was rationalized through four specific questions one must ask when creating said curriculum:

- What purpose should the school seek to attain?
- How can learning experiences be selected to help attain these?
- How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?
- How can learning experiences be evaluated?

Education is seen as technical exercises that are implemented through a set of objectives, drawn up to apply these objectives, which will produce outcomes that can be measured.

A third pioneer in the scholarly work on curriculum development theory was William F. Pinar. Pinar (1947–) is an American author, educator, and current Canada Research Chair at the University of British Columbia. Prior to his current position, Pinar held professor positions at the University of Virginia, Colgate University, Teachers College Columbia University, The Ohio State University, and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the University of Alberta. According to Pinar (2012), curriculum theory is the interdisciplinary study of educational experiences. It is a distinctive field, with a unique history, a complex present, and an uncertain future. It is influenced by disciplines in the arts and humanities, by social theory (including psychoanalytic theory), and to a lesser extent, by the social sciences (p. 2). The major focus for curriculum development is to understand, not just implement or evaluate, the curriculum using all the social constructs that affect the experience.

Four Types of Curriculum Theories

Through the analysis of the three theorists mentioned earlier, and from many others who have contributed to the scholarly research on curriculum development theory, four major types of theory can be organized to illustrate the importance of the concept. The four types were best illustrated in an article by D. Walker (1982) entitled “Curriculum Theory is Many Things to Many People.” In his article, Walker conceptualized four major types of curriculum based on the research of Bobbitt, Tyler, and Pinar, as follows:

- Theory that rationalizes curriculum *programs*—it proposes curriculum, creates a program;
- Theory that rationalizes *procedures* for curriculum construction or curriculum determination, rather than rationalizing the program itself—it proposes curriculum that is created by step-by-step procedures;
- Theory *conceptualizes* curricular phenomena—it suggests curriculum is developed from thinking about matters that are important in its creation; and
- Theory *explains* curricular phenomena—it suggests curriculum development go beyond improvement and move towards understanding why things occur.

Curriculum Theory and Its Relation to Formal Education

Curriculum development, when applied to formal education, is hardly a new topic of conversation. Educators across the country have used curriculum development theories every day when looking at creating, changing, or eliminating curriculum in K–12 and postsecondary education. An article published by M. K. Smith (1996, 2000) explored how curriculum development theory influences what is done in formal education across the country. The organization of schooling has long been influenced by and associated with the

concept of curriculum. However, what Smith (1996, 2000) sought to understand is “what actually is curriculum, and how might it be conceptualized as it relates to formal education?” (para, 1). When considering curriculum and its relation to education, Vic Kelly (1990) defined curriculum (as it relates to formal education) as “all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school” (p. 10). Based on this definition, Smith (1996; 2000) suggested four ways that curriculum theory can be used in educational practice in the formal school setting today, as follows.

- Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be *transmitted*—the goal of curriculum is that a concept is disseminated to the students;
- Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students, a *product*—the goal of the curriculum is that a concept is mastered by the students;
- Curriculum as a *process*—the goal of the curriculum is that the concept is an interaction between the teacher and the students; and
- Curriculum as *praxis*—the goal of the curriculum is that the concept is to serve as a developmental process model that informs, confirms, commits, and evaluates the learning by the students.

Background of the Study

Research Site: Kirkwood Community College

The main campus of Kirkwood Community College, home of the Eagles, is located in the southwest quadrant of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Currently, Kirkwood enrolls students from a seven-county area with campus locations in 10 unique areas in addition to the main campus and online course offerings. According to data collected from Kirkwood Community

College Institutional Research, enrollment in the fall of 2012 was 16,661 unique students. Currently, Kirkwood offers the Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees for transfer students and the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees for career and technical students. Career/technical programs at Kirkwood consist of Agriculture Sciences, Allied Health and Dental, Business and Information Technology, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, Industrial Technologies and Nursing. Overall, Kirkwood has 125 different academic areas of concentration. Kirkwood Community College is one of the founding colleges of the League for Innovation in the Community College and remains one of the community colleges in Iowa to hold this designation.

Student Engagement at Kirkwood Community College

Another powerful source of data came from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Because Kirkwood is a community college, it is important to look at the data that are focused on community colleges across the country. A primary focus of community college missions has been to emphasize the teaching and learning that takes place on campus and provide resources for students to be successful academically, socially, and personally. The CCSSE is a survey that is administered at community colleges across the country and focuses on what institutions are doing to provide resources for student success and how the behaviors of students are correlated with these resources. According to the CCSSE (n.d.) website, student learning, persistence, and attainment in college are strongly associated with student engagement. The more actively engaged students are, the more likely they are to persist in their college studies to achieve higher levels (Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE, n.d.b). Kirkwood Community College administered the CCSSE to its students during the 2011–2012 academic year, and the results

have helped administrators focus on resources that are beneficial for student success on campus.

Another useful survey administered through CCCSE is the SENSE. The SENSE (CCCSE, n.d.a) is a service provided by CCCSE to help community colleges discover why some entering students persist and succeed and others do not. The survey is traditionally administered during the first half of the students' first semester on campus and asks students to share their experiences related to the transition to their college life. According to the SENSE, students' reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college (CCCSE, n.d.a). Data gathered from this survey provide college administrators valuable insights into what their institutions can do to facilitate this connection with students that will result in student persistence on their campuses. Kirkwood Community College administered the SENSE for the first time during the 2012–13 academic year. At the time of research data collection, the SENSE data for Kirkwood Community College were not available for review.

Through the results of the 2011–12 CCSSE, Kirkwood Community College introduced the Learner Success Agenda (LSA) as an initiative for everyone on campus to use to provide resources for all constituents of Kirkwood Community College. According to Kirkwood Community College's LSA website, the goal of the LSA is to increase first-time, full-time, degree seeking graduation and certificate completion rate, within the 150% time frame, from 29% to 38% (Kirkwood Community College, n.d.). Areas that scored relatively low on the CCSSE from the Kirkwood students' perspective included academic advising, career planning, peer tutoring financial aid advising, and student organization involvement. Students were asked how satisfied they were with those services mentioned at this college.

Based on the 2011 CCSSE survey, students rated each of these areas on a scale of rarely/never (1), sometimes (2), often (3) as follows: (a) Academic advising/planning at 2.18, (b) career counseling at 2.01, (c) Student organization information at 2.08, and (d) transfer credit assistance at 2.12 (CCSSE, 2013).

Due to the findings mentioned above, one of the of the LSA is to create and maintain campus orientation and first-year experience programs targeted at helping first-time students find the resources they need to be successful at Kirkwood academically, socially, and personally. The campus orientation and first-year experience course at Kirkwood Community College focuses on providing academic advising, career counseling, student organization information dissemination, and transfer credit assistance and is aimed at improving students' perceptions of these areas. All areas from the student perspective that were lacking are addressed through the curriculum of the College 101 course.

History of Kirkwood's College 101 Course

In the fall of 2005, under the direction of Dr. Wendy Lingo, Kirkwood Community College embarked on its inaugural first-year experience course called College 101. The course was designed to replace the existing 2-day orientation program with the ultimate goal of providing a means for students' successful transition to Kirkwood academically, socially, and personally. There were 22 sections of College 101 offered Fall semester of 2012; the course is a transfer elective that is not required of first-year student. The faculty members who teach the course consist of Kirkwood professionals from the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs areas. Adjunct faculty for College 101 must have a master's degree completed to teach the course. Based on the research conducted by Lingo (2009), the content

of the College 101 course was heavily influenced by Tinto's (1987) model of institutional departure and Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory of identity development.

Tinto (1987) identified that the first year of college as a critical year in the success of the student and that students would face many challenges during this time of transition. Tinto (1987) stated, "The incidence of withdrawal is the highest during this early stage of college" (p. 163). Tinto's (1993) later research suggested that students' social and academic integration are influenced by their abilities to maintain and/or possess a value system that is congruent with that of the institution in which they are enrolled. The major premise of the College 101 course at Kirkwood is to provide a support system for students transitioning to college through the introduction of campus resources available for all students. These resources and the relationships students make on campus help with their social and academic integration.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory of identity development has had the most influence on the content of the College 101 course at Kirkwood. This theory of identity development puts forth that "emotional, interpersonal and ethical development of the student deserves equal billing with intellectual development" (p. 39) and is organized under seven different vectors. Chickering and Reisser identified these vectors as: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy towards interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Lingo used these seven vectors as a guide for creating the content of the College 101 course as it stands today at Kirkwood Community College. According to Lingo (2009), when faced with finding a model to use for the overall course objectives for College 101, "our inclination was to use Chickering and Reisser's vectors as the framework

for establishing the overall goals of the course” (p. 12). Lingo’s creation of the course served as a framework for student success. Over the past several years, Kirkwood Community College has been dedicated to continually evaluating the course to make sure it meets the needs of the students and ensures academic, social, and personal success for all students.

Individual Units of the Current College 101 Curriculum

Based on the feedback from Lingo’s creation of the College 101 curriculum, there currently are nine main units in the College 101 course. These individual units of the course are delivered during a 15- or 16-week semester, and each faculty member is expected to cover these topics. Although the curriculum of the course is established, each instructor has the liberty to present the material how he/she sees fit. Likewise, each instructor is encouraged to create activities and infuse their own personality into each unit of the course. Each unit is created to provide specific outcomes that are congruent with Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors. A copy of the Fall 2012 College 101 Course Syllabus is shown in Appendix A, and a copy of the suggested organization of units for the academic year beginning in fall 2012 is shown in Appendix B. A brief overview of each unit of the curriculum based on my interpretation of its content given my three years teaching the course is presented next.

The *Campus Connections* unit provides information regarding resources available at Kirkwood to ensure academic, social, and personal success. Students participate in activities such as “Places to Go,” a scavenger hunt around campus requiring them to work in teams to find important offices and information across campus; general overviews of the main Kirkwood website, the EagleNet student portal website, and Angel, the student academic portal website. Some instructors bring in guest speakers from various offices the first week

as a general introduction to campus resources. An important outcome of this unit is to begin providing the resources students can use to be successful academically, socially, and personally on campus. It also serves as the first place students can make the connection to someone on campus that can be beneficial to their success as well.

The *Academic Success* unit was designed to provide resources for students to learn how to better prepare themselves for academic success inside the classroom. Topics that are covered in this unit include test preparation and test anxiety, effective note taking skills, effective listening skills, effective critical thinking skills, and how to use technology for academic success. The outcomes for these units are to help students understand what they need to do and how to establish healthy habits to ensure academic success during their first semester in college.

The *Self-Awareness* unit was designed to have students take assessments that gauge who they are as a person and how their values, morals, beliefs, and personal characteristics factor into this process, how they behave, how they interact with others, and how others perceive them. Topics covered in this unit are “Who Am I and Who Am I Now”; “Social Identity”; “Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator”; “the VARK Learning Style Assessments”; and topics on values, morals, and beliefs. An important outcome of this unit is to help students begin to think about self-assessment and self-reflection and illustrate its importance in life. Another outcome is to help students understand that some of their values, morals, and beliefs might begin to change now that they are in college and how to deal with these changes.

The *Time Management and Goal Setting* unit was designed to illustrate to students the importance of setting goals and managing their time to achieve these goals. Assignments

during this unit include setting academic and personal goals for the first semester, assessing how students predict they will spend their time during the 5- to 7-day period, for example in class, studying, work, personal hygiene, socialization, etc., and asking them to reflect on their experience. Once they have done this they are asked to monitor their actual time spent over a 5- to 7-day period (writing down everything they do during this time frame). Also, topics such as budgeting, credit card debt, scholarships and financial aid options, and college loan repayments are covered in this unit. Upon completion of this assignment students are asked to write a reflection of how they feel they managed their time. One of the outcomes of this course is to help students understand the concepts of setting goals, establishing priorities for how they spend their time, and asking them to come up with ways to better use their time to ensure academic, social, and personal success.

The *Money Management* unit was designed to illustrate the importance of setting goals and managing their money to achieve these goals. Assignments during this unit include assessing how students predict they will spend their money during the 5- to 7-day period on items such as food, gas, work, class, personal expenses, etc. Once they have done this they are asked to monitor their actual money spent over a 5- to 7-day period (writing down everything they spend their money on during this time frame). Upon completion of this assignment students are asked to write a reflection of how they feel they managed their money. One of the outcomes of this course is to help students understand the concepts of setting goals, establishing priorities with how they spend time, how to create a realistic budget for themselves during college to understand how debt can start to build up during college, and asking them to come up with ways to better use their money to ensure academic, social, and personal success.

The *Career Exploration* unit was designed to help students do research on possible careers that might be of interest to them. Students are introduced to several resources at Kirkwood and online that are available to assist in this process. They are asked to use the resources from I Have a Plan Iowa™, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, InsideJobs.com, and the whatcanidowiththismajor.com website to begin exploring careers. One outcome of this unit is to have students begin to find careers that they might be interested in and how these are related to classes and majors they can work on during their time at Kirkwood Community College and beyond if needed.

The *Health Living* unit was designed to illustrate to students the importance of living their lives as healthy as possible. Topics in this unit include health and wellness, the dangers of alcohol and drugs, the importance of safe sexual practices, and stress management. An important outcome of this unit is to help students understand how each of these areas encompass their life as a college student and how poor decisions now can have implications on their health in the future.

The *Relationships and Boundaries* unit was designed to assist students in defining healthy relationships and as a means to provide tools they can use to enforce personal boundaries they may have. An outcome of this unit is to show students how relationships with their parents, siblings, significant others, high school friends, teachers, and people they meet in college will change and how to handle these changes maturely.

The *Diversity and Civility* unit was designed to reinforce, and sometimes introduce students to, cultural differences that exist in the world today. An outcome of this unit is to educate students on cultural differences in the world and how they can use resources to ensure that everyone is successful at Kirkwood academically, socially, and personally.

In the fall of 2012, a new textbook was introduced in the course for all students to use as a resource for success at Kirkwood. The book selected was John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot's (2011) *Step by Step to College and Career Services*. Students purchase the book and a daily planner from the Kirkwood Bookstore. The book is designed with 14 chapters that follow the same unit concept as the curriculum for the course.

Students are asked four times during the semester to participate in assessment activities directly related to their experiences in the course. With the creation of the new survey for the College 101 course, students are asked to complete a preliminary course survey at the beginning of the semester providing information on the College 101 course prior to its start (Appendix C). Then, as part of the final analysis of the course, students are asked to take a final course survey, providing feedback on the course and their experiences (Appendix D). Data from these assessments were not available for my review prior to conducting this study but will serve as a tool for evaluation in the future of the course.

At or around midterm, students are asked to meet with their instructors one-on-one to touch base on their progress in the course. Students are asked to bring a copy of their midterm grades for all courses so the instructor can review with them how they are doing in all classes at Kirkwood. Finally, at the end of the semester, students are asked to create a portfolio of their time spent in the College 101 course. The portfolio is designed to give each student an opportunity to gather all information from the course in one location and to reflect on how much each has grown as a person over the 15 weeks of the semester. An example of the grading rubric for the portfolio assignment may be found in Appendix E.

Purpose of the Study

For the purpose of this research, background and demographic variables of students enrolled in a College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College were examined. My

research focused on how students successfully transition to college from a high school setting. Students can use programs such as College 101 as a foundation to be successful in college. In addition to the demographic variables collected, my research examined the various reasons why students enrolled in the College 101 course, what factors influenced their decision to enroll in the College 101 course, what expectations students enrolled in College 101 had for the course, and the students' feedback on each specific unit of the College 101 course. As an instructor of a College 101 course, I used students enrolled in other College 101 courses as participants to illustrate how first-year experience courses are instrumental in helping students in the transition to college life. By teaching this course myself, I have seen firsthand the benefits College 101 has provided for students' successful transition to college academically, socially, and personally. After collecting students' feedback, faculty who teach the course provided their feedback on the course as well. Data collected were useful in providing suggestions to the coordinators of College 101 as they look at changes in the curriculum of the course for the future.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it gave students a voice in the evaluation and development of the College 101 course curriculum at Kirkwood Community College. Also, with the addition of the faculty focus group, the data for each group (students and faculty) could be compared to see how well the perceptions of the students taking the course and the perceptions of the faculty teaching the course were aligned. As the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College continues to use research as a guiding principle to redesign curriculum for the course, the results of the study provide valuable information on the students' experiences in the course, having specifically examined each individual unit of the

course. In addition, this study provides qualitative data in the evaluation of the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College to couple with the increased quantitative data in the evaluation of the College 101 course. The use of mixed methods evaluation provides a well-rounded assessment of the course as the Dean of Students Office continues to redesign its curriculum.

Research Questions

Several research questions served as a guide for the overall research related to the students' and faculty experience in the College 101 course. Some of these questions were (a) what reasons did you have for enrolling in College 101 course, (b) what expectations did you have for the College 101 course, (c) do you believe that your experience in the College 101 course has had a positive effect on your transition to college and why and (5) would you recommend other students take College 101 and why? Likewise, specific questions related to the usefulness of each unit in the College 101 course were examined. Ultimately, the research focused on whether the content of the College 101 course was useful in the transition to college from both the student and faculty perspective.

Responses to these questions were gathered toward the end of the students' journey in the College 101 course in the fall of 2012. Conducting the research toward the end of the semester allowed students the opportunity to experience the entire course. These experiences helped the students provide more insight into their experiences in College 101 and provided rich data for the analysis portion of the research process. Likewise, data were collected from the faculty during the end of the 2013 fall semester. Ultimately, the data collected from each of the units of the curriculum are useful as decisions are made on how to make the course

more beneficial for student transition to college and students' academic, social, and personal success at Kirkwood.

Theoretical Framework

Using constructionism as an epistemological foundation, the research study allowed the students to examine their experiences with each of the units of the curriculum in the College 101 course. Crotty (1998) described constructionism as “a process in which truth and meaning comes into existence in and out of engagement with the realities of the world” (p. 9). Students were allowed to make sense or meaning of these experiences as they determined the usefulness of each of the specific units of the College 101 course.

A basic interpretivist approach was used in this study. According to Merriam (2002), a basic interpretive study is appropriate when a researcher is “interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation, experience or phenomenon” (p. 8). As a researcher, my role was to understand and interpret students' sense or meaning of each experience they had with the individual units of the College 101 curriculum and share its usefulness in their successful transition to Kirkwood. Likewise, my role as the researcher was to gather data from the faculty perspective on each unit of the curriculum as well.

Delimitations

Students enrolled in the College 101 course during the fall of 2012 semester at Kirkwood Community College served as participants for the study. Likewise, faculty who taught the College 101 course at Kirkwood were participants for data collected on the usefulness of the curriculum in the College 101 course.

The study was limited by the small number of students and faculty from which data for the research study was collected. Likewise, due to the small number of students selected

for the research project, the diversity of the participant pool was limited. There was no preconceived knowledge of the students' academic performance prior to enrolling before the study was conducted. However, during the course of the study it was determined through feedback from a Kirkwood survey that all students had received a high school diploma and had earned average to above average grades in high school. The findings of the study took into consideration these variables of the research participants.

Summary

This study provided insight into the usefulness of each unit of the College 101 curriculum, from both the student and faculty perspective, as it stood in the fall of 2012. The findings of the study are useful for the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College as it continues to look at ways to enhance the students' experiences in the College 101 course. The study was designed to help students make sense or meaning of their experiences in the course and ultimately decide if the topics of each unit were of high quality and helpful with their transition to Kirkwood. It is important to note that the results of the research should not to be generalized across the entire student population but present what the students in this study believed were important to their success at Kirkwood.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review emphasizing first-year experience programming on college campuses. It was designed to give the readers knowledge of the definition of first-year experience programming, current statistics on first-year experience courses across the country, and comments about themes/elements of a first-year experience course as it relates to desired outcomes.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A review of the literature showed that campus orientation and first-year programs are increasing in popularity on college campus across the country. First-year interventions have grown dramatically in the last two decades with approximately 95% of U.S. 4-year institutions having some type of program (Jamelske, 2010). The literature illustrated that these programs provide information to students that allow them to transition effectively into their role as a college student and become successful students. Unfortunately, research also indicated that some students currently enrolled in colleges and universities are not prepared to meet the academic and social challenges of postsecondary education (Schrader & Brown, 2008). Therefore, the very existence and nature of campus orientation and first-year experience programs are becoming increasingly more important to provide students resources to make the transition from high school to college a success in all facets. However, in 2004, one in four college freshmen at 4-year universities did not return for their sophomore year and nearly half of students in community colleges did not return to complete their degrees (Schrader & Brown, 2008). So, to what degree can these programs influence students' level of academic success and how can implementation of campus orientation and first-year experience programs influence the students' success?

As much as it is eagerly anticipated, freshman year often is a time of confusion, disorientation, and even alienation for many students, and one in four college freshmen will drop out before completing sophomore year (Raths, 2009). Many reasons for students' high level of anxiety exist, but Raths's (2009) report suggested that new students feel overwhelmed and underprepared with the academic and social changes in college. Educators

across the country are trying to determine ways to help these students reduce their level of anxiety through resources and services such as campus orientation and first-year experience programs. Students engaged in an academic experience without a first-year experience program did not exhibit such gains. Researchers have asserted the importance of resource awareness (Crismore, 1984; Reason et al., 2006) and have argued that students acclimation to the facilities, support services, and other resources is a principal goal of the first-year experience program (Barefoot & Gardner, 1993). Students become familiar with their surroundings through participation in these programs, and it helps them feel more at home during a vulnerable time in their lives.

Academic success as it relates to retention of students in college has long been a concern for educators across the world. Published work on student retention has focused on several themes. One such theme was examined in a study at Oregon State University that focused on predicting the retention of university students from 1991–1999. One of the findings of the study suggests that students taking the freshman orientation course appeared to be less likely to drop out (Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999). Through participation in these campus orientation and first-year experience programs, students can learn necessary information to help reduce the level of stress they may experience if their first day on campus was the first day of class. The resources and information that students receive during the orientation program can be a catalyst for success in the academic and social transition to college, ultimately increasing students' likelihood of returning for their second year.

Activities such as student ice-breakers, campus tours, student panels, academic round-tables, and faculty/staff introductions can provide students with a foundation to establish relationships with others on campus. It is these relationships that can prove to be

the difference between academic success and academic failure for students on campus (Hirt, 2005). Likewise, Rath's (2009) research illustrated that institutions are focusing financial and human support by creating departments with titles such as Office of Retention and First-Year Programs.

One expert on resources that provide support for students to be successful on college campuses is John N. Gardner. Gardner is currently President of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Executive Director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. In study conducted by the Policy Center and published by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (2009), 821 respondents listed the following three items as the most important aspect to their orientation program: (a) develop academic skills (64.2%), (b) provide an orientation to campus services and resources (52.9%), and (c) self-exploration and identity development (36.9%). These three elements can reduce anxiety levels of students attending college for the first time and allow them to focus more on the academic challenges of college. College administrators are continually looking at content to add to campus orientation and first-year seminar programs to achieve this goal. It is imperative that administrators continue to provide budgetary support to campus orientation and first-year experience programs, which in turn will improve the bottom line of the institution with fewer students dropping out (Barefoot et al., 2005).

As administrators on college campuses continue to evaluate these programs, it is important for them to redesign the services, practices, and policies that affect college students during their first year of college because this is the critical year for students to be successful. In response to these challenges many institutions have begun to allocate significant resources

to the first-year experience in an effort to improve student outcomes. Jamelske (2009) suggested that students involved in some type of organized first-year intervention program report higher levels of satisfaction and involvement in campus activities, achieve higher grades, and are more likely to be retained and graduate. As every institution would attest, student satisfaction is one objective everyone wants to achieve. So, what are the critical elements all campus orientation and first-year experience programs should encompass in order to reach the goals of student satisfaction and academic success?

Definition of First-Year Experience

An expert in the area of first-year experience programs, John Gardner also is one of the pioneers in first-year experience research and has provided insight into this concept. As with most other concepts within higher education, first-year experience has many different definitions and is sometimes difficult to define. Many scholars have created definitions to help shed some light on exactly what first-year experience means on college campus across the country. Hankin and Gardner (1996) defined the first-year experience as a philosophy that guides higher educational institutions programs and services to “assimilate new students into the college environment” (p. 3). Throughout the enormous body of literature, first-year orientation, first-year experiences, and first-year seminars are all terms used on college campuses to describe programs and services focused on the successful transition of students into higher education. For the purposes of my research, I will refer to these programs as “campus orientation and first-year experiences programs.”

As mentioned earlier, another expert on the topic of first-year experience programs, specifically related to the community college population, is Dr. Kay McClenney. With over three decades of professional work in the area of community college student success,

McClenney's research has provided data that is relevant to what community colleges need to do to be successful in providing quality resources and services to students attending school on their campuses to ensure student persistence and success. In McClenney's recent book, *Students Speak: Are We Listening* (McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012), she and colleague Arleen Arnsparger, Project Manager for the CCCSE's Initiative for Success, brought forth students' voices to help community colleges better understand student goals and expectations, students' sense of their own readiness for college, their concerns as they begin college, and how their college experiences shape either their success or the lack of it. McClenney and Arnsparger (2012) stated in their book that 85% of students responding to the 2011 SENSE survey believed they were academically prepared for college and 75% of those students realized they were not prepared for college-level courses that required skills in reading, writing, and/or math. Further, McClenney (2004) stated that "community colleges are recognizing this reality: If they're going to engage students, it's going to happen through how they intentionally structure the learning experience of their students" (p. 21). It is up to community college administrators to understand the need for providing these resources to their students to help them be successful on campus, and campus orientation and first-year experience courses allow them to achieve this task.

First-Year Experience Programs Today

The National Survey of First Year Seminars, conducted through the National Resource for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition has been evaluating first-year experience programs being delivered on college campuses across the country. The latest report (2009) provided some useful statistics for evaluating the need for first-year experience programming:

- 87.3% of American colleges and universities offered some type of first-year seminar.
- Seminars were required for all students at 51.4% of institutions, both 2- and 4-year.
- Seminars were more likely to be required for all students at 4-year institutions than at 2-year institutions.
- Seminars were more likely to be required at private than at public institutions.
- The most common types of seminars on college campuses were:
 - Extended orientation seminars (61.7%),
 - Academic seminars with uniform content (25.8%),
 - Academic seminars with section-specific content (23.4%),
 - Professional/discipline-aligned seminars (14.4),
 - Basic study skills seminars (22.4%),
 - Hybrid seminars (22.4%), and
 - Other (2.5%).
- Four-year institutions were more likely to offer special seminar sections for:
 - Honors students,
 - Undecided students,
 - Students with specific majors, and
 - Student-athletes
- Two-year institutions were more likely to offer special seminars sections for:
 - Academically underprepared students,
 - Students participating in dual-enrollment programs, and
 - Learning community participants

- Most commonly reported seminar topics at 4-year institutions were:
 - Critical thinking,
 - Specific disciplinary topics,
 - Writing skills,
 - Diversity issues,
 - Relationship issues, and
 - Health and wellness.
- Most commonly reported seminar topics at 2-year institutions were:
 - Study skills,
 - Campus resources,
 - College policies and procedures,
 - Academic planning/advising,
 - Time management, and
 - Career exploration/preparation.
- More than two-thirds (67.8%) of seminars were one semester in length; only 3.8% were two semesters in length.
- Just over 80% of seminars were letter graded, and 91.3% carried academic credit; more than 50% of institutions applied credit toward general education requirements.
- 54% of seminars were taught by either tenure-track or full-time, non-tenure track faculty; just under than 50% of seminars were taught by student affairs professionals.
- 46% of seminars were taught by adjunct faculty.

- Widely reported outcomes resulted from these seminars:
 - Retention figures (73.7%),
 - Satisfaction with faculty (70.9%),
 - Satisfaction with the institution (65.3%),
 - Improved grade point averages (58.0%),
 - Use of campus services/resources (51.0%),
 - Connections with peers (49.3%),
 - Participation in campus activities (49.0%), and
 - Out-of-class student/faculty interaction (47.1%).

Common Elements of Campus Orientation and First-Year Experience Programs

Scholarly debate over what should be part of campus orientation and first-year experience programs have been going on for many years. One side of the argument, traditionally the faculty, has put forth that these programs should be filled with rich activities that introduce students to the academic nature of college. These activities would shed light on what students should expect when they are introduced to and navigate through the academic rigor of college. The other side of the argument, traditionally the student affairs professionals, has offered that these programs should be filled with rich activities that help students learn about resources on campus to be successful and begin to build relationships with other students, staff, and faculty who can serve as mentors and support during the college transition period. However, research has suggested that campus orientation and first-year experience programs should be a blend of both these types of activities. Jamelske (2009) suggested the more basic campus orientation and first-year experience courses generally have a regular class meeting time with specific instructors and are credit bearing

and graded. They usually include activities and resources designed to introduce new students to university life, to assist with time management and study skills, and to introduce them to academic rigors of college. The ultimate goal of these programs should be to infuse both academic and extracurricular activities into the existing framework to help students become familiar with the academic and social culture of the institution.

Another key aspect to the phenomena of campus orientation and first-year experience programs is the critical need for visible space and a dedicated office on campus to highlight the services provided through these programs. Transitioning to college for the first time, overwhelmed new first-year students may not remember all the names, faces, titles, and departments of the many administrators encountered over the course of these programs; however, students may expect that these people can be easily found by going to the orientation and first-year experience office or searching for the orientation and first-year experience office on-line (Mayhew et al., 2010). Some stakeholders may question the value of providing dedicated resources to an orientation and first-year experience program. The research conducted by Mayhew et al. (2010) has provided empirical support for allocating space for a dedicated office for programming rather than dispersing responsibilities across functional areas. Knowing that they have a place to turn to whenever they have concerns can help students' feel connected to their institution and start to feel at home. This sense of belonging can help students make lifelong connections with peers, faculty, and staff. Through the development of relationships with individuals who can help students stay focused, find resources that can be helpful during their transition, and ultimately create a bond that can last a lifetime, students will know that someone is always there to help. Knowing this, they can concentrate on what they need to do in order to be successful.

Themes Common in First-Year Experience Courses

Introduction to Campus Life

A common fear that students have about going to college for the first time is getting lost in their new surroundings. At first, they often find their new “home away from home” to be scary and intimidating. White, Goetz, Hunter, and Barefoot (1995) suggested that the first-year experience should afford students opportunities to interact socially (with peers and faculty) as well as introduce students to academic facilities, counseling staff, and other faculty during advising/planning sessions. The benefits of attending campus orientation and first-year experience programs is that students arrive on campus earlier than returning students and have a opportunity to become familiar with their new surroundings without the pressure of other students being around.

Through the campus orientation and first-year experience program students participate in activities, such as campus tours, resources fairs, and scavenger hunts, to help familiarize themselves with programs and services on campus. Research by Reason et al. (2006) suggested that students’ learning and cognitive development is shaped not only by what happens in the classroom or other instructional settings but also by the extent to which students take advantage of the range of learning opportunities their institutions provide outside the classroom. Getting students connected to people and places on campus can strengthen their allegiance to the institution and lead to higher retention and graduation rates. First, it allows students the opportunity to learn about the physical layout of campus, where buildings are, and how to get from point A to point B successfully. Second, it allows them to learn about things to do on campus to get more involved. Ultimately, students have indicated that, by enrolling in the College 101 course, they had the opportunity to engage in activities

that helped them learn more about the physical layout of the campus and what there is to do as a college student at Kirkwood Community College.

Making Connections in College

Another common fear that students have about going to college for the first time is not finding anyone campus who is going to want to be friends with them. Most students have been surrounded by the same circle of friends through elementary, middle, and high school and often are venturing out into a new world for the first time when going away to college. They don't have the same security blanket they are used to having and sometimes find it scary to initially meet new people. One benefit from campus orientation and first-year experience programs is that it naturally allows college students the opportunity to become connected with other students who are in the same situation as they are and facilitates the process of meeting new people. Sometimes meeting new people and learning about themselves and things outside of the classroom is more beneficial for student success than learning inside the classroom. Sometimes who you know is better than what you know.

Another benefit of attending campus orientation and first-year experience programs for college students is that they get the opportunity to meet faculty and staff on campus who can serve as mentors in the transition for high school. Interaction with these individuals through programs, panels, advising sessions, and other activities allow students to see who on campus can be helpful to them as they learn about campus services available to be successful. According to the Foundational Dimensions® from Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991, 2005) research, few college experiences are more strongly linked to student learning and persistence than are students' interactions with faculty members. Whom a student meets and creates relationships with during the campus orientation and first-year experience programs

plays a critical role in the student's success. Reason et al.'s (2006) research indicated that students who reported feeling that the faculty and staff at their institution provided the academic and nonacademic support they needed, and who felt they had good relationships with faculty members and administrative staff, were more likely than were similar students at other institutions to report greater gains in academic competencies. Developing these specific mentor activities as part of the campus orientation and first-year experience programs allows students to find that one person who they can seek out when they need help.

Overall, a campus orientation and first-year experience programs provide a way for students to meet other classmates and interact with faculty and staff through planned activities over the course of their first semester. These lasting connections can help a student successfully transition to Kirkwood.

Academic Success in College

Another common fear students have about going to college is what the academic rigor will be like and if they are going to be successful academically. Administrators who develop content for campus orientation and first-year experience programs need to decide how to define what academic success means and realize it differs among students. For some students, passing a class with a C grade is considered successful, whereas others might consider themselves successful only if they receive an A grade in a course. Likewise, to some students receiving an associate's degree as opposed to a bachelor's degree is considered successful. College campuses across the country use many measures to illustrate academic success. Is it a student's grade point average (GPA); is it retention figures from class to class or year to year? No matter what the measure is, it is important to clearly

identify and define these measures of academic success when conducting research and to be as comprehensive as possible in determining the multiple variables that can affect success.

Students who attend campus orientation and participate in first-year experience programs have found that participation in these programs provide several benefits to help them be successful academically. First, students who participate in these programs are introduced to resources on campus that can help them achieve academic success. Kuh (1995) found that students attribute involvement in certain activities (i.e., leadership, peer, academic, faculty, work, travel, or ethos-related activities) as positive developmental factors in college. These resources can mean learning about the academic advising services, taking a tour of tutoring service areas, or completing activities that allow students to learn more about tips to be successful in the classroom.

Second, students who participate in these programs can be introduced to the academic rigors of college through academic activities undertaken as part of the orientation or first-year experience program. Using information reported by Osterlind (1996, 1997) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), of the first-to-senior-year gains students made in English, science, and social science, between 80% and 95% occurred in students' first 2 years of college. The same pattern appears in mathematics learning. Similarly, Facione (1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1997) reported that nearly two-thirds (63%), and perhaps as much as 90%, of the gains students make in critical thinking skills occur in the first 2 years of college. Participation in campus orientation and first-year experience programs has positive effects on student academic success.

Finally, students who participate in these programs can learn things about their own learning styles and how to focus on what works best for them regarding academic preparation leading

to student success. One goal of these programs is to provide activities that give students the opportunity to learn about who they are; their learning styles; and what careers might be a good fit for them based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they as students possess.

Mayhew et al. (2010) believed that orientation and first-year experience specialists must use these learning outcomes to help students learn academic skills, social lessons, and appropriate learning strategies that are needed to succeed in their new college environment. Once a student is able to identify these different learning strategies and when to apply them to their everyday academic environment, they can be successful with academics in college.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design used in this study on student experiences in the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College. The goal of the study was to use both student and faculty feedback on reasons for taking the College 101 course, expectations they had on the College 101 course, and evaluation of each unit of the College 101 course to provide an overview, based on the participants' experiences, of the usefulness of each unit of the course for the students' successful transition to Kirkwood Community College.

This chapter first provides insight into the decision to use a qualitative approach to the research; then examines the epistemological perspective, the theoretical framework, and the methodology of the research, and finally, describes the methods used to collect the data in the research. The last part of the chapter looks at the role the researcher played in conducting the research, including the importance of reflexivity, the data collection methods, the data analysis procedures, and the strategies used for validating the findings.

Epistemology

Epistemology was defined by Crotty (1998) as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the research, theoretical perspective and in the methodology” (p. 3). Basically, epistemology is the attempt to explain what we know and how we know it. As a relative novice researcher, it was hard for me to identify exactly what my own epistemological framework influences tended to shape my research. However, when examining my research investigation, I determine that my epistemology was constructionism. Crotty (1998) described constructionism as the belief that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality, is contingent upon human practices (p. 6). Through my research I relied on the shared experiences of students who had taken College 101 and faculty who had taught the course

shape an opinion on the value of the course curriculum for themselves. The students and faculty shared personal experiences; thoughts and beliefs that helped shape their definition, or meaning, of quality course content; and whether they would recommend it to other students. All of these experiences were possible because of the students' decision to enroll in the College 101 course.

Theoretical Perspective

Theoretical perspective was defined by Crotty (1998) as the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria. When evaluating my research investigation, I determined that the theoretical perspective was basic interpretivism and postmodernism. The basic interpretivism perspective allowed me as the researcher the opportunity to use various methods to gain insight into what constitutes the student experience in the College 101 course and how these students viewed the course as assisting in their transition to Kirkwood. As the researcher, I gathered the data and analyzed and interpreted the results based on the information provided by the students and faculty during the focus groups and semistructured interview processes. The ability to interpret what was shared was the key element in this theoretical perspective.

I used data-rich narratives of the College 101 students and faculty, from the focus groups, and from the semistructured interviews, to reinforce or question prior research on first-year experience programs and their success in helping college students' transition from high school. Likewise, I relied on the rich data from these narratives to help co-construct meaning and help define the phenomena of what constitutes the College 101 experience for the students at Kirkwood Community College. Ultimately, the students provided a different

lens of the College 101 course and what aspects of the curriculum they believed were beneficial in their successful transition to Kirkwood and what aspects were not beneficial. It was this lens, which often has been left out of the curriculum development process, and this information that would be useful for the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College.

Methodology: Basic Interpretivist and Case Study

Methodology has been defined as the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes (Merriam, 2020, p. 7). The process of basic interpretivist methodology described by Merriam (2002) was implemented, wherein “the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive” (p. 6).

A qualitative approach was utilized for my research study. Through the analysis of qualitative research approaches, an initial approach used was case study. A case study can inform professional practice or evidence-informed decision making both in clinical and policy realms and is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Yin, 2003). More specifically, this research study used the multiple case-study design. According to Yin (2003), multiple case studies enable the researcher to explore similarities and differences within and between cases. The goal is to replicate findings across cases. The multiple case-study analysis for this research looked at the various points of evaluation conducted on the College 101 course. First, the study examined the historical evaluation of the College 101 course. The next

aspect was the examination of the current evaluation of the College 101 course through quantitative data collected for the Fall 2012 semester. The last aspect was the examination of the evaluation of the College 101 course through the quantitative data collection methods used specifically for this study through student and faculty focus groups and student interviews.

Historical Evaluation of College 101

A historical evaluation of the College 101 course used was the topic of the dissertation completed by Lingo (2009), former coordinator of College 101 at Kirkwood Community College. Lingo's research drew from a narrative inquiry methodology, using interviews and documents as the source for her analysis. Her research questions were:

- Did the completion of the College 101 course in their first semester at Kirkwood influence students' academic success? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Did the completion of the College 101 course in their first semester at Kirkwood influence students' sense of Kirkwood being the right fit for them? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Overall, did the students think and feel that completion of the College 101 course benefited them?
- How did second-year Kirkwood Community College students describe their first academic year at Kirkwood?
- What did the completion of their first year of college mean to the students?

These questions were used as the guiding principle for an initial evaluation of the College 101 course shortly after its creation on the Kirkwood campus. Lingo's research participants were students who had successfully completed the College 101 course and who were

enrolled in their second year of coursework at Kirkwood Community College. Based on Lingo's research, the following findings were made:

- The completion of the College 101 course appeared to influence the participants' academic success. Things such as time management, study skills, and organization were cited as reasons for strong academic marks during the students' first semester at Kirkwood.
- The participants all expressed the feeling that Kirkwood Community College was the right fit for them.
- The participants all expressed positive responses to the benefits received from the College 101 course, specifically, developing solid footings and foundations required for academic success.
- The participants all expressed that the completion of their first year of college gave them a huge sense of accomplishment and increased their desire to continue on with their education.

Overall, the College 101 course had positive impacts on the students who participated in Lingo's study and reinforced the need for the course at Kirkwood to her and the Dean of Students Office.

Current Evaluation of College 101: Quantitative Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), the intent of a research problem in qualitative research is to provide a rationale or need for studying a particular issue or "problem." Two problem areas that served as motivation for my research were the evaluation process for the College 101 course and the curriculum development of the course. First, since the course was first offered in the fall of 2005, limited evaluation of the course from the students' perspectives

had been conducted. The students had filled out a paper–pencil evaluation of the course each semester it was offered. Information from the survey traditionally had been collected and reviewed by the coordinator of College 101. After the coordinator of College 101 reviewed the information, results were shared with faculty teaching the course. Seeing my evaluations first hand, I knew that the surveys were provided to each instructor and could give some genuine feedback on the courses. However, how useful was the data? Second, how did the evaluation process influence the curriculum development of the course? It was my experience that, when students evaluate curriculum, their voices sometimes fall on deaf ears.

Under the direction of a new dean of students and new coordinator of College 101, initiatives were established to attempt to gain insight into the student experience in College 101. From the start of my research project, data collected from my research at various stages were shared with the Dean of Students and coordinator of College 101. With my initial data and these new directives, in the spring of 2012 the Department of Institutional Research at Kirkwood Community College teamed with the Dean of Students Office to facilitate a pilot study focused on students taking the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College and outcomes that they experienced. As a result of this study, a quantitative preliminary course survey (Appendix C) and final course survey (Appendix D) were created to gain insight into the students' perceptions of the College 101 course. The results of the pilot study provided basic demographic information on students who had participated in the College 101 course during the Fall 2012 semester. In addition, the report included information pertaining to the outcomes of students who had participated in the course (Hanson, 2013). The initial results of the pilot study suggested that students who participated in College 101, on average, earned more college credit and achieved a higher GPA than did students who did not

participate in College 101 (Hanson, 2013). The Department of Institutional Effectiveness reviewed the pilot study and was planning to use a refined version to continue to gather data on the College 101 course during the Fall 2013 term. The pilot study conducted by the Department of Institutional Research at Kirkwood Community College provided some statistics on the students taking College 101 during the Fall 2012 term. According to the executive summary (Hanson, 2013), the following demographic information was obtained from the pilot study:

- 839 students were enrolled in 22 sections of College 101 during the Fall 2012 term.
 - 453 students were female and 384 students were male.
 - The majority of the students were White, non-Hispanic.
 - The majority of these students indicated that they planned to transfer to another college or university.
 - The majority of the students were full-time and first-time students.
 - Most students indicated their program of study as liberal arts and/or science.
 - Of these, 70.7% successfully completed the course with a grade of C– or better
- 474 students completed the end of the semester survey.
 - These students were generally satisfied with the topics covered in the course, course expectations, course activities, course instructors, course readings, and the organization of the course.
 - The majority of students felt College 101 helped improve their understanding of college and campus resources.
 - Students reported increased understanding of key topics by the end of the College 101 course.

As mentioned earlier, one aspect of this research study focused on the evaluation of the course based on the students' thoughts and feelings and feedback from the faculty who taught the course. The data from my research, coupled with the quantitative data from the pre- and posttests, provide valuable information for the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College and can be useful when enhancing the curriculum of the course in the future. My research study was comprehensive and focused specifically on the students' motivations for taking the course, expectations of the course, recommendations for the future offering of the course, and specific feedback on each individual unit taught in the course from the students who took the course. Similarly, I gathered data from faculty who taught the course to see what their thoughts and feelings were regarding each unit of the curriculum. By seeking input from the end user of the product itself, the College 101 course, a better understanding of what was effective was a welcomed outcome.

Current Evaluation of College 101: Qualitative Data Analysis

The goal of this research study was to gather qualitative data from students enrolled in the course and faculty who taught the course to specifically look at the usefulness of the content of each individual unit of the curriculum. The data that were gathered provided a clear, concise, well-rounded, but not comprehensive view, of the benefits of the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College from the students' and faculty perspective.

Methods

Methods are the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyze data related to the research question or hypothesis (Crotty, 1998). Data for this research study were collected in three specific manners: (a) focus groups with purposefully selected students from College 101 sections from the Fall 2012 semester, (b) semistructured interviews with

students selected from the focus groups, and (c) a focus group with faculty who taught the College 101 course. According to Esterberg (2002), social scientists use focus groups to evaluate programs and, when they work well, focus groups can be a rich source of data. In focus groups, “the goal is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 87). In a more structured focus group, the topics tend to be more specific and the individual conducting the focus group controls the topics being discussed. The decision to use focus groups was made due to the large number of sections of College 101 sections being offered.

Participant Selection and Data Collection

Prior to conducting the study, approval was sought and obtained from the Institutional Review Boards of both Iowa State University (Appendix F) and Kirkwood Community College (Appendix G).

Student Focus Groups

As stated earlier, participants in this research study were students enrolled in the College 101 course and faculty who taught the College 101 course. The decision to use both students and faculty allowed me to gather useful information from both perspectives of the course and provide a comprehensive analysis of the each unit of the curriculum. The selection of participants for the research study followed a specific protocol.

The first step to gather participants for the study involved drafting an e-mail to faculty who taught the College 101 course introducing myself and the purpose of the research study (Appendix H). The e-mail asked for permission from the faculty to allow me the opportunity to come into their class and conduct a 50-minute focus group centered on learning why the students were taking the course, motivations for taking the course, expectations they had for

the course, and whether they would recommend the course to future students. Overall, the response was quite good, and 10 instructors were willing to participate. Due to time and scheduling constraints, only three focus groups were able to be completed. I conducted interviews with students from the following sections: (a) a section taught Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the afternoon; (b) a section taught Tuesday and Thursday in the morning; and (c) a section taught Tuesday evenings. It was best to focus on a small number of these sections, taught at various times throughout the week, and at different times of the day to gather useful data for my research. The focus groups were conducted toward the end of the College 101 course, in November, shortly after midterm of the Fall 2012 semester. Because I decided to have student data collected toward the end of the students' journeys in the College 101 course in the fall 2012, the most useful method for data collection was the use of focus groups. Prior to conducting these focus groups, I sent out an e-mail to all students enrolled in the course introducing my research topic (Appendix I).

On the actual day of the focus groups, I distributed and went through the Informed Consent Form (Appendix J). Each student had the opportunity to ask questions prior to starting the research focus groups and make the decision to participate or not participate in the focus group. All students who participated filled out the Informed Consent Form and returned the signed copy to me for my records. At the beginning of the focus group, each student spent 5–10 minutes filling out the demographic questionnaire, which served as a guide for the focus group (Appendix K), and these were collected at the end of the class session. During last 40–45 minutes of the class, the focus group was conducted based on the questions created for the session (Appendix L). All focus group conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. All participants were informed that if

they wanted a copy of the transcripts they could contact me at anytime and the information would be e-mailed to them.

Through conducting the focus groups, I had the opportunity to talk with 32 students enrolled in a College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College. Although this was not designed as such, the participants from these focus groups were representative of the students who were enrolled in the College 101 course. When looking at the demographic characteristics of the participants, there were three characteristics that were critical in finding a strong representation of the students enrolled in College 101 courses overall. The first characteristic was gender; there were a total of 23 females and 9 males in the three focus groups. The second characteristic was ethnicity; of the 32 students in the focus groups, six were international students and 26 were native U.S. citizens. The last characteristic was age; of the participants, 26 students were traditional-age college students and six were not traditional-age college students. The sample of students used helped with the richness of the data collected and was a valid representation of the College 101 student population.

Student Semistructured Interviews

The second step in the process was to recruit students who participated in the focus group to continue with the second phase of the research study. The second phase was designed to have six to eight students from the focus groups continue with semistructured interviews focusing specifically on each unit of the College 101 curriculum. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight from the students' perspectives on how each unit of the College 101 curriculum was beneficial in their transition to Kirkwood; whether they personally believed it was a good unit to keep in the College 101 course; and whether they would add, delete, or change any of the activities and assignments that were associated with

that specific unit. Two semistructured interviews with each student were conducted during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 academic semesters at Kirkwood Community College. According to Esterberg (2002), semistructured interviews (sometimes called in-depth interviews) are much less rigid than are structured interviews. In semistructured interviews, the goal is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (p. 87). The use of semistructured interviews was a more appropriate choice than was structured interviews given the fact the participants were traditional-age college students. The setting was less intimidating and allowed them to relax and speak freely when discussing the curriculum of the College 101 course.

Individual letters and e-mails were sent out to each student from the three focus groups, introducing the second phase of the research project and asking for their participation (Appendix M). As a result of the recruitment efforts, six students agreed to participate in the semistructured interviews over the course of the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters at Kirkwood Community College. However, one student ended up not enrolling in the Spring 2013 semester at Kirkwood and dropped out of the research study prior to transferring to another school. The students participating in the semistructured interviews did not need to complete another informed consent form because all data collection methods were outlined in the initial Informed Consent Form (Appendix J). Similar to the focus groups, a questionnaire protocol was followed when conducting the interviews (Appendix L). All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. All participants were informed that if they wanted a copy of the transcripts they could contact me at any time and the information would be e-mailed to them.

Through conducting the semi-structured interviews, I had the opportunity to talk, in a private one-on-one setting, with five students enrolled in a College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College. The participants, purposefully selected from the focus groups, were representative of the students from the focus groups and ultimately those who enrolled in the College 101 course. As mentioned earlier, when looking at the participants demographic characteristics, there were three characteristics that were critical in finding a strong representation of the students enrolled in College 101 courses overall. The first characteristic was gender; there were a total of three females and two males who participated in the semistructured interviews. The second characteristic was ethnicity; of the five students in the focus groups, one was an international student and four were native U.S. citizens. The last characteristic was age; of the participants, five students were traditional-age and none was a nontraditional-age college student. This sample of students helped with the richness of the data collected and was a valid representation of the College 101 student population.

Faculty Focus Groups

The final step in the data collection process was the faculty focus group. The addition of the faculty focus group to my research methodology was suggested to provide insight on the curriculum from the perspective of the faculty who were teaching the course. It was designed to provide feedback from their perspective to learn if they were in agreement with the student participants who were taking the course. Because I also was teaching the College 101 course, I decided that it would be best if a colleague of mine conducted the focus group with the faculty. Similar to the recruitment process for students, an e-mail was drafted by my colleague who had agreed to conduct the interview (Appendix I). As a result of the e-mail, a total of six faculty members (including the moderator) participated in the faculty focus

groups. At the beginning of the focus group, each faculty member reviewed the Informed Consent Form and had the opportunity to ask questions about the focus group prior to participating (Appendix J). The protocol used in the faculty focus group (Appendix O) was modified slightly from that used for the student focus groups. The focus group interview was tape recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. All participants were informed that if they wanted a copy of the transcripts they could contact me at anytime and the information would be e-mailed to them.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2009), a specific series of steps must be conducted during the data analysis stage. These steps are: collection of the raw data, organizing and preparing the raw data for analysis, reading through the data, coding the data, identifying themes in the data, and interpreting the meaning of the themes within the data. As it related to my research, validation of the data was accomplished through triangulation, transcript document analysis, and member checking through follow-up e-mails or interviews to clarify questions that came up.

Triangulation

Qualitative researchers employ several different methods in the data collection phase of any research project. Each method of data collection has its own strengths and weaknesses. According to Esterberg (2002), for these reason researchers often use two or more research strategies; this is known as triangulation. For the student focus groups, I collected data from the student questionnaire and responses from the focus group as two different methods of collecting data. I asked the students to write their responses to the research questions and then asked them the same questions during the structured focus

groups. For the semistructured interviews with the students, I conducted two separate interviews with each student. Prior to the second interview I used e-mail communication to review information from the first interview and get some of my questions cleared up. For the faculty focus group, I used the interview protocol as a written questionnaire that each faculty member was asked to fill out. The written reflections and the focus group itself served as two methods of data analysis for this process.

Transcript Document Analysis

Each student focus group, student semistructured interview, and faculty focus group conducted was audio recorded, and the data files were sent to a professional transcription company for the creation of transcripts. Once the transcripts were completed, I compared the transcripts with the audio recording to ensure accuracy in the transcriptions. Comparing the transcribed documents with the audio recordings gave me an overall picture of what the findings might look like as they related to the research questions asked. Through this analysis, it was clear that nine strong students were vocal during the student focus groups, and their responses naturally stood out and helped in the data analysis process.

Member Checking

Creswell (2003) described member checking as a way to provide participants with the reports, themes, and findings and to allow the participants to check for accuracy of these findings. Upon completion of the transcript analysis process, the transcripts were shared with each student and faculty participating in the research, allowing them to contact me via e-mail with any changes to the interpretation of their thoughts during the process. This opportunity for the students to read the transcripts served as my only member check during the student focus group and faculty focus group process for the research, and this was the

best way to conduct member checking. For the semistructured interviews, I used e-mail communication between the two interviews to get questions answered and clarification for some items from each interview. Likewise, I spent the first 5 minutes of the second interview with each student to review the first interview. This was a good way to conduct member checking to ensure that my understanding of their perceptions were accurate.

Trustworthy and Goodness

Many elements are involved in making qualitative research useful in the field. According to Crotty (1998), the four elements commonly used in evaluating the trustworthiness and goodness of a qualitative research study are: (a) analysis of the problem, (b) analysis of the methods used, (c) analysis of the findings, and (d) analysis of the discussion provided. In evaluating the research investigation, the standards used to classify a study as trustworthy and good were met. The research questions were clearly defined as trying to make meaning of what constitutes a good College 101 experience and whether the students interviewed would recommend the course to other students, more specifically, looking at the usefulness of each unit of the College 101 curriculum. In evaluating the study, it clearly stated who the participants were, what methods were used to gather data, and how the results of the data collection methods were to be used in the investigation. The use of focus groups for students and faculty and semistructured interviews for students provided rich data used to make meaning of the benefits of each unit of the College 101 experience and the usefulness of each unit of the curriculum.

During the focus group interviewing process, I transcribed the conversations that occurred to ensure accuracy to help solidify the research process. After the process was complete, I provided a copy of the transcripts to participants for them to review and had an

opportunity to ask questions and clarify any statements they felt needed further clarification. Upon review of the semistructured interview transcripts for each student, I used e-mail communication with each student participating in the focus group to ask additional questions or clarification as member checks with each participant, based on the results of my analysis of the transcripts. This provided for member checking as part of the research process. According to Jones, Torres, and Armino (2006), a member check, also known as informant feedback or respondent validation, is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability (also known as applicability, external validity, or fittingness) of a study. Each member check or triangulation method was used as part of the focus group and semistructured interview process, and transcripts were provided to the participants at each stage of the research. The value in member checking was that it allowed me as the researcher to verify and solidify information being presented to ensure accuracy and genuineness.

Researcher's Role: Positionality

Jones et al. (2006) described positionality as “a researcher understanding his or her position and power within societal structures in order to attend to his or her potential biases” (p. 103). How a researcher becomes involved with and identifies with the research being conducted is important in eliminating any research biases that exist. As I reflected on my involvement in the research process there were three key elements that may have affected my positionality. First, as a student affairs professional, many of my professional roles on college campuses have involved coordination of campus orientation programs or teaching first-year experience programs/courses. As the years went by I quickly began to realize how important campus orientation and first-year experience programs are to the smooth transition

to college for most college students. I firmly believe that these programs should be a part of every first-year student experience on campus and is a critical element to their success. The passion I have for campus orientation and first-year experience programs led to my desire to research this topic.

Second, the role I had as the instructor in a College 101 course, from where the participants came, was considered during the research project. My initial intent was to find students enrolled in other College 101 courses on campus at Kirkwood. During the focus group process, I was able to establish rapport with the participants and help put their fears about being interviewed at ease. Esterberg (2002) suggested that “the research should develop enough rapport to get people to talk to you, but not so much that you actually develop friendships” (p. 92). However, it is important to know that, as the instructor of the course, I realized that the participants may feel intimidated during the focus group process. I assured students that participation in this research project would in no way affect their grade in the course and asked them to speak freely during each of the focus groups.

Finally, participants in the research project may have ended up being students enrolled in programs in the Allied Health Department at Kirkwood Community College. As the Director for the Allied Health Department, it was my role to work with students during the orientation and registration process. One course that I always suggested to students was College 101. During the registration process, I encouraged students to enroll in the course and realized that this advice may have influenced them during the research process. However, I told all of my students that they would get out of the course what they put into the course and to never to use my advice as the final word—each student had to decide for him- or herself if the course would be valuable.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Student Focus Groups Themes and Analysis

The focus groups conducted were each approximately 50 minutes in length with three of the 22 sections of College 101 offered in the Fall 2012 semester. To better diversify the participant pool, I selected one section that met Monday–Wednesday–Friday in the mornings, one section that met Tuesday–Thursday in the afternoon, and one section that met once a week in the evening. Each focus group began with a review of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix J), which provided students with the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the research study. Each participant voluntarily signed the Informed Consent Form and continued with the research focus group. During the next 5–10 minutes participants had the opportunity to read through the questions that would be discussed and write down their answers to each section. These forms were collected by me at the end of the focus group for the purpose of member checking with the tape recorded interviews (Appendix K). Once this process was completed, the last 25–30 minutes were spent conducting the actual focus group. Upon completion of each session I listened to the audio recordings, forwarded the audio recordings to my transcription company for transcription, and read through each student’s response to the research questions. Data from all three methods were used in the analysis process.

Through analysis of the written documents, listening to the audio recordings of the focus groups, and reading through the transcriptions of the focus groups, several themes emerged from interpreting the data. Interpretation of the data involved making sense of the data and the “lessons learned” and then abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 187). Through the interpretation of the data, I

coded each of the transcripts to look for universal themes. According to Creswell (2013), coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into smaller categories of information, seeking evidence for the code, and then assigning a label to the code. As stated earlier, the areas of interest for the focus groups were students' reasons for taking the course, students' influences for taking the course, students' perception and expectations of the course, and whether students would recommend the course to future students. The data were coded to see if they were relevant to any of these major themes. As with most focus groups, several students were outspoken and provided a lot of feedback on the topics discussed and several students hardly said anything. For the purposes of the focus group analysis, I randomly selected three individuals from each focus group to highlight in the discussion of the results. The demographic breakdown of the students was as follows: (a) six females and three males, (b) seven White students and two students of color, and (c) eight traditional-age college students and one non-traditional-age college student. The sample was representative of the focus group student population as well as of the entire student population enrolled in College 101. During the data interpretation stage, all students were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes. The pseudonyms were used to identify the students throughout the sharing of their feedback from the focus groups.

Upon analysis of the data, it was evident that several major themes emerged from the focus groups with the students in the three College 101 sections. Based on the data analysis, the following themes were formulated: (a) students' excitement and fears about going to college, (b) students' motivations for taking the College 101 course, (c) students' expectations of the College 101 course, and (d) students' recommendations for taking the

College 101 course for future students. Students' feedback from the focus groups was categorized into the themes that are mentioned above.

Excitement and Fear about Going to College

One major theme that was evident from the focus groups was students' excitement and fears about coming to Kirkwood. As stated earlier, one goal of a campus orientation and first-year experience course is to introduce students to the institution and all the resources it has to offer students to be successful in college. This introduction helped put students' fears at ease throughout the transition process. Likewise, this process can help students understand that the things they are excited about related to coming to Kirkwood are natural and should be used as a catalyst for success during their first semester. After listening to the audio recordings of the focus groups, it was clear that students had a lot to say about their experiences in the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College.

Excitement. Students had several things that they were excited about related to starting their college journey. For the majority of the students in the focus group their excitement centered around moving away from home and starting over, gaining a new sense of freedom and making their own decisions. When asked what they were excited about here were some of the responses.

Focus group #1. Alexa said,

Freedom mostly. I don't know. As you get older you get to do more stuff and a lot of people move away from home and into apartments or something. They get to make their own decisions whether it is smart or stupid; they get to live their lives. To me, this starts with going to college and that is something I am really excited about.

Alexa wrote, “I am excited about new experiences and new opportunities that come along with going to college. Things like living away from home. It will be a challenge but I am looking forward to being successful.”

Xavier stated he was excited

that I am going to be surrounded by people that want to be here. That you are with a group of students who are not forced to be in the seats, that you have a more mature audience, more can get done in the classroom, better discussion, more discussion happens, more learning happens, that sort of thing.

Xavier also wrote that “college means a class environment that had students who want to learn. More freedoms with choices and more mature students everywhere.”

Maddie said,

Being able to meet new people: like where I’m from half the people I would run with were with me from first grade. We got a mixture from another high school as well but I knew half of my graduating class, probably more like 75%. It was nice to be able to get away from them because I wanted to crash out of my bad habits, perceptions everyone has, etc. That was nice.

Maddie also wrote that “being on my own, away from my small town where everyone knows everyone else’s business. It’s something different and is going to help me find out who I am.

Focus group #2. Jensen said, “Well I just started thinking about my future and stuff like that. I knew that college would help me get a great future and that excited me about starting school.” She wrote, “College was a way to meet new people and finally be on my own to make decisions that I felt were best for me.”

Jacob said, “I couldn’t wait to learn more by getting my college degree. I wanted to be an example for my own children and show them that school is cool.” And Ashli wrote, “College was a way to start over. It would be a needed change from the way things were before. I was going to be able to start all over.”

Focus group #3. Chloe said “College is more independence. Like from living at home full time to living here most of the times I have been more responsible for myself. That is really neat to see.” She wrote, “I was excited about getting away from high school, becoming more mature, continuing my education and meeting new people.”

Natalie stated, “Getting out of high school, getting away from the people in my past and the people I went to high school with for years. It’s a new start.” She wrote, “I’m excited about meeting new friends and getting my future on track to be successful in all I do.”

Dylan commented, “Making new friends. Well, I got excited when I got to meet new people when I took my first week of classes because I was not going to be able to make new friends easily.” He wrote, “I was excited about the brand new experiences I was going to have and going out on my own.”

Students had several things that they were also scared about related to starting their college journey. For the majority of the students in the focus group their fears centered around moving away from home and starting over, the ability to make friends, or fitting in and being successful academically. When asked what they were fearful they responded as shown below.

Fear

Focus group #1. Alexa said “Being alone. Like my family starts with that and having to figure things out on my own. So, having to take out money and pay for everything scares me, I realized how dependent I truly was on my parents.” She also wrote that “I was scared of being by myself and not knowing if I was going to be able to do good financially in school on my own.”

Xavier revealed,

I was scared about the difference in life styles and different social types that what I am used to being from a small town. Yes, probably the farms, coming out to the big city, like not being around farm land or anything else I am used to.

He wrote, “I wasn’t really scared about anything because I can accomplish anything I put my mind too.”

Maddie said, “Okay. Living with someone else. Sharing things with someone else. Common fears by everybody I am sure.” She wrote, “I was scared of all the homework and not succeeding academically.”

Focus group #2. Jensen wrote, “I was scared about not knowing the campus and where to go. Also, I was not sure if financially I was going to be able to make it on my own.”

Jacob wrote, “I was scared I would do well academically given I have been out of school for quite some time.” And Ashli wrote, “I was scared that I would get lost on campus. The campus tour was a great addition to the class.”

Focus group #3. Chloe said “It is big. Kirkwood is big. I was scared it was big.” She wrote, “I was nervous about getting to class on time since the place seemed so big. I was also stressed about math and the academic workload.”

Natalie commented, “Yep, definitely getting to know people. I also thought that classes were going to be hard.” She wrote, “I was scared about not making friends and failing.”

Dylan said, “I was really nervous about meeting people who are new and not from here.” Dylan wrote, “I was nervous about not making any friends and not enjoying college.”

Motivations for Taking the College 101 Course

Another theme that was evident during the interpretation of the focus group data was why students had decided to take the College 101 course. As mentioned several times throughout the research, the College 101 course is not a required course at Kirkwood Community College. So, why do students take the course? What do students think about when deciding to register for the course? Some of the reasons that students signed up for the course were because they heard it was an easy A, other friends and or family members had taken the course and encouraged it, students needed to fill up their schedule so they could be full time, it would help them be successful academically in college, and it was encouraged at the Summer Orientation Program. What students said during the focus groups is presented below.

Focus group #1. Alexa said, “At the orientation program, they kept talking about it, that taking it was a good idea. They said that it’s a good class for liberal arts students and a good social experience.” In addition, she wrote, “I heard it would make me a better college student and help with studying, or anything else I would face in college.”

Xavier explained,

I just wanted to better myself, hopefully gain some study skills, and learn how to manage my time better. I liked how you can categorize your teachers and how I can learn better. Maybe apply these skills so that I can manage my time a little better so I can do more things successfully.

He wrote, “I wanted to gain better study skills and learn how to manage my time. I wanted to build personal responsibility as well.”

Maddie said,

I did show up for orientation and I really didn’t have anyone else’s opinion around me and I just decided to take it because I thought I would better myself. So, I didn’t hear anything negative or bad about the course, I just took it.

In addition, Maddie wrote, “I really took it because I heard it was an easy class. An easy A.”

Focus group #2. Jensen said, “I think when I went to orientation, one of the people there recommended it and if you did know what you wanted to do it would help.” She wrote, “I had to take it to get a full schedule and qualify for financial aid. But it ended up being an awesome class.”

Jacob admitted, “I heard it was easy. I heard it was not like an actual course, but I found out quickly it is.”

Ashli said, “Because they were just recommending it so I just took it. Like when I went to like register for courses, I went through orientation.” She wrote, “I took the course because it was talked about by everyone at orientation.”

Focus group #3. Chloe stated, “The person I met . . . at orientation told me to take it. Also, my husband took it and says the course was great and you know about everything in

the college. I chose this course.” She wrote, “I also wanted to take the course to help me gain skills needed to be successful in college.”

Natalie said,

What I hear about it when I started asking people about this class they were like I was not going to get anything from this class it was not necessary and that trying.

Students that took the class before me, I heard it was helpful but that was from other instructors.

Natalie wrote, “The students at orientation said I would make a lot of friends.”

Dylan said, “When I was at an orientation they said I was learning about school and time management and learning all the stuff that they don’t teach from an instructor so I think it is okay to take. He wrote, “I decided to see what I could do to improve my college experience.”

Expectations of the Course

The third theme that resonated from the focus groups was the expectations students had for the course prior to enrolling. As with any experience students have with things during college, each had some expectations prior to starting the course. Some of these expectations were that they hoped the course would help introduce them to college resources to ensure success, help with academic success strategies, and would not be a lot of work compared to other courses. What students said during the focus groups is presented below.

Focus group #1. Alexa said, “I wanted the course to help with a lot of stuff. I was hoping it would be helpful because I wanted to learn how to be successful academically.”

In addition, Alexa wrote, “I took the course and was hoping to be a better college student.”

Xavier stated: “I wanted to learn more about how students can get involved and what we can do to be successful as well.” He also wrote, “I took the course to learn better study skills and learn how to manage my time and build personal responsibility.”

Maddie commented, “I took the course because I will earn an easy A. It wasn’t going to be like most classes, it was not . . . you have more freedom, it was like an easier, it was like a fun way to learn about college and how to be successful.” She wrote, “I took it because I wanted to learn how to deal with college.”

Focus group #2. Jensen wrote, “I took the course hoping that it would help with career exploration. I also wanted to learn more about time and money management.” Ashli wrote, “I took the course because it would help me decide my career path.”

Focus Group #3. Chloe said,

I took the course just to learn about school and time management and learning all the stuff that I didn’t learn in high school. Just ways to better my college experience from the start this and just see what they do.

Chloe wrote, “I took the course with two expectations. I wanted to learn time management skills and test taking skills.”

Natalie stated, “I took the course to learn a little bit of everything, everything we have covered will be helpful in my college success.” She wrote, “I hoped to gain better study skills, how to balance academic and social time, make new friends, and get good grades.”

Dylan commented, “Personally I think I took the course to understand myself and the way that I can study to be successful, how I get things out of the books, how I will manage my time.” He wrote, “I was just hoping to gain a few ways to make my college experience better and to make it fun.”

Recommendations for the Course

The final theme developed through the data analysis was the current students' recommendations for future students on taking the course. One thing to do to ensure the future of a course is to use past students' experiences to illustrate why the course is beneficial in the successful transition to college. The following data provide the students' responses as to whether they would recommend the course to future Kirkwood Community College students.

Focus group #1. Alexa said,

I would recommend the course because for the amount of time that we were here, we really learned a lot. So, I would put it on a scale, my time versus what I learned in College 101 my time would always win but I did learn some things.

Xavier stated, "I would recommend it to students who aren't good at managing time and balancing between academic and social things."

Focus group #2. Jensen said,

I would recommend it to students if I knew how they were in high school. Some of my friends are slacker and would benefit from the course. I would recommend it for these students. I would never make it a required course.

Jacob said, "I would recommend it because even though I got a little out of the course at least I did get something out of it. You never know what someone else might think, so I would recommend it to all students." Ashli wrote,

I would recommend it if somebody did not know what they wanted to do or when they are doing or if they were just scared of what college would be like in general. I don't think I would base it on grades; it is just how sure you so if someone knows

what they want to do and what they want to major in and everything then I would tell them to take it. No, don't require the course.

Focus group #3. Chloe said, "I would recommend the course for people like me that have not had the experience of great high school activities to help with success." Natalie said, "I would recommend the course because it can really help students get back in the swing of things after being out for some time. You can figure out what you need, what you need to do to be successful." Dylan said "Personally I think I took the course to understand myself and the way that I can study to be successful, how I get things out of the books, how I will manage my time."

All of the information gathered from the focus groups provided rich data for student affairs professionals in the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood to analyze as they continue to enhance the College 101 course to ensure student success. The next step in the research process was to recruit students to continue with the research study. The goal was to have a total of six to eight students willing to continue on with the research for the rest of the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters at Kirkwood.

Student Semistructured Interviews Themes and Analysis

As stated earlier, a total of six students from the focus groups volunteered to continue with the research and go through two semistructured interviews focusing specifically on the usefulness of each unit of the College 101 course. Through the data analysis process several themes emerged from reviewing the content of the College 101 curriculum. After the process was complete, there were five major "topic cluster" themes that the College 101 Curriculum data could be divided into: (a) connections to and resources available at Kirkwood Community College, (b) personal success and life skills, (c) academic success,

(4d) career assessment, and (e) course assessment. Next is a review of each of these units based on the new organization and how the students viewed the usefulness of each unit of the College 101 Curriculum.

Connections to and Resources Available at College to Kirkwood

The literature review and results from the focus groups illustrated the importance for students to make connections early in the semester. Whether these connections are with other students, with faculty that they have in class, or with other faculty or staff on campus, these connections are important in the successful transition to campus. These individuals can serve as a powerful resource to help new students navigate the campus, the academic life, and the social life at Kirkwood Community College.

The Campus Connections unit provides information regarding resources available at Kirkwood to ensure academic, social, and personal success. Students participate in activities such as “Places to Go,” a scavenger hunt around campus requiring them to work in teams to find important offices and information across campus; and general overviews of the main Kirkwood website, the EagleNet student portal website and Angel, the student academic portal website. In addition, during the first week some instructors bring in guest speakers from various offices as a general introduction to campus. An important outcome of this unit is to begin providing the resources students can use to be successful academically, socially, and personally on campus. Likewise, it serves as the first place students can make the connection to someone on campus that can be beneficial to their success as well.

Students who participated in the semistructured interviews all agreed that some of the best aspects of the course were all the connections they made with fellow classmates and other people across campus, the introduction to campus activities at the beginning of the

semester, and the notification of campus resources available to assist in the smooth transition to Kirkwood. All of these activities were designed to allow students to find a connection with someone or something on campus to help make their transition smooth. Some of the feedback from the students who participated in the semi-structured interviews is presented next.

For Ashli, the guest speakers were great:

I appreciated all the guest speakers that came in at the beginning or throughout the semester. I utilized the information they talked about a couple of times. One was security. I had to get a hold of them a few times and probably wouldn't know how to if they had not come in during the first few weeks.

For Jensen, it was the group activity Places to Go that really hit home. Her comments included:

I really enjoyed the Places to Go for a couple of reasons. It gave us a chance to find out about things on campus that really can help us become better students. Also, we did it in groups. It was nice because we got to meet other students in our class and go around and hang out for a while.

Jacob also liked the Places to Go activity and thought it was helpful in his transition to campus life as well. He stated,

We did a scavenger hunt at the beginning and it allowed us to go and basically go around Kirkwood and see what offices were where. It also had some questions that we had to answer that gave us information on the resources at the office. So like, where the resources are. It also allowed us to connect with classmates because we kind of worked as a team to find places and how things work.

For Xavier, it was this activity and some other resources that helped him start to make some connections on campus. He stated,

We did it in groups, and I liked that because I kind of got the feel for where things were and then, later on, I know we were given a booklet at some point to have all the clubs on it and I became a student ambassador as a result; so figuring out where things were, helping with that because I had to give tours and know where everything was.

For Alexa, it was an eye-opening experience to see all that the Kirkwood campus had to offer:

I like how it got me to know like where things were in Kirkwood and it kind of opened my eyes to all the resources we actually had like we had orientation and TGIF, but other than that really like you knew about them but didn't know where they were. When you actually had to go to these places and talk to someone it really helped see that they are there to help me become better.

Overall, students indicated the activities in this unit helped them learn about resources on campus at Kirkwood and where these resources were located and provided a good start at getting to know some of the other students in their class.

Personal Success and Life Skills

This category encompasses to all the units of the College 101 curriculum that help students establish good habits related to personal success and life skills that will benefit them, not only while they are a student on campus at Kirkwood, but later in life as well.

The Self-Awareness units are designed to have students take assessments that gauge how they are as a person and how their values, morals, beliefs, and personal characteristics

define who they, how they behave, how they interact with others, and how others perceive them. Topics covered in these units are Who Am I and Who Am I Now; Social Identity; Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator; the VARK Learning Style Assessments; and topics on values, morals, and beliefs. An important outcome of this unit is to help students begin to think about self-assessment and self-reflection and illustrate its importance in life. Another outcome is to help students understand that some of their values, morals, and beliefs might begin to change now that they are in college and how to deal with these changes.

For most students in the research study, this was one topic that was most difficult for the students to do as part of the College 101 course. The concept of self-assessment is something that not many of these students had done in the past, and it was a something new to think about. However, after reflecting on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator Assessment and the Who Am I assignments, the students expressed that these activities were some of their favorites.

Jacob indicated that these assignments were great, saying,

I liked the Who Am I papers. It was a pretty short assignment, but it was fun because it was about something that I already knew about. However, the Who Am I Now paper was a bit more time consuming. It was kind of hard to do some assessments, but I truly enjoyed learning how I grew over the course of the semester.

The sentiments expressed by Jacob were exactly the same for Ashli. Her comments were,

I liked the papers we wrote about ourselves. It was just a paper about like who I am and it had to be in front of our portfolios. It was a nice reflection on me, my life, and what I am looking for in the future. It was fun to write.

Some of the other students zeroed in on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator Assessment as one of their favorite assignments in the class. According to Jensen,

The MBTI assessment was awesome. It was a different way to see myself and helped explain a lot about what I do and how I do it. All the assignments we did with Myers-Briggs were fun, interactive, and I wouldn't change a thing.

Similarly, for Alexa, the MBTI was

my favorite part of the course. I use the MBTI a lot. I sort of fell in love with it. The assessment was great, the results were spot on, and the presentations and all the activities we did in class really helped make it clear and easy to understand and apply.

As Jensen reflected on her time with the MBTI and the Who Am I Papers she commented,

Sometimes it was hard to view myself like it is hard to reflect on me because I sometimes completely forget and I know we forget who we are. But the assessments helped give me some things to talk about and a fun way to look at who I am and how I behave.

One of the major strengths of the College 101 course is the fact that it gets students to start thinking about who they are and why they behave the ways they do. Based on students' feedback, it is clear that these two activities are ones that allow students to do so in a fun, educational, and meaningful way. The students all agreed that these topics definitely need to remain a part of the curriculum and that they are important and help students with the successful transition to Kirkwood on academic, social, and personal levels.

The Time Management and Goal Setting unit was designed to illustrate to students the importance of setting goals and managing their time to achieve these goals. Assignments during this unit include setting academic and personal goals for the first semester; assessing

how students predict they will spend their time during a 5- to 7-day period on activities such as class, studying, work, personal hygiene, socialization, etc.; and asking them to reflect on their experience. Once they have done this they are asked to monitor their actual time spent over a 5- to 7-day period (writing down everything they do during this time frame). Upon completion of this assignment students are asked to write a reflection on how they feel they managed their time. One of the outcomes of this course is to help students understand the concepts of setting goals; establishing priorities with how they spend their time; and asking them to come up with ways to better use their time to ensure academic, social, and personal success.

For most students, this activity was one that they would never forget. It truly was a good activity for them to do and it helped them see some issues they were having for the course. According to Jacob,

time management helped you focus on what you are here for. We were given a log or we had to keep a log of what we did pretty much every minute of every day for a week. It really helped me see where a lot of my time was going and how I could change it but maybe how horrible of a procrastinator I am. I never really did anything about it before but it showed me I have horrible time management skills.”

For Ashli, the Time Management and Goal Setting unit was an eye opening experience as well and it showed her

how managing your time is really like intense in college as compared to as in high school and how you have a lot more time to procrastinate. In high school you have school every day but in college I have class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and nothing on Tuesday and Thursday. So definitely, like don't put things off to the last

minute and use my time wisely. We [the class] talked a lot about how you can still have fun but you can be serious and like going to other events can hinder your academic studying.

Xavier simply stated, “Time management showed me I am a horrible procrastinator. It helped me sort of visualize or kind of understand that there are some things that you could do to better manage your time.”

For some students, though, the concept of time management was recalled but just vaguely. Jensen said, “We discussed that like went around the class and everybody kind of I think we did a thing where we looked at where we spent most of our time and how we could change to manage better I guess.”

Based on the student feedback, the visual impact and class discussions related to time management were beneficial for their college success. Although they may not have understood it at the time of the assignment, they all agreed that time management was important to learn and needs to be a part of the College 101 curriculum.

The Money Management unit was designed to illustrate to students the importance of setting goals and managing their money to achieve these goals. Assignments during this unit include assessing how students predict they will spend their money during a 5- to 7-day period on items such as food, gas, work, class, personal expenses, etc. Once they have done this, they are asked to monitor their actual money spent over a 5- to 7-day period (writing down everything they spend their money on during this time frame). Upon completion of this assignment students are asked to write a reflection on how they feel they managed their money. One of the outcomes of this course is to help students understand the concepts of setting goals and establishing priorities with how they spend money; how to create a realistic

budget for themselves during college; and asking them to come up with ways to better use their money to ensure academic, social, and personal success.

Just as valuable as time management, money management was an activity that allowed students to see how they truly spend their money. Similar to time management, the assignment had a real impact on some of the students who participated in the research study. Alexa said that she remembered

writing on the board all the finances I guess for like you and when we went to school. They we did like about what tuition costs and all the books, rent, utilities, and others and how money management and spending add up.

Ashli said that she

came into college and just started to spend money. Then we kind of started to talk about it and monitor it and I was like, oh my gosh, I have been spending way too much money and it needs to stop.

For a few of the students there were certain aspects of the assignment or activities that stood out. The one thing that Xavier noted he would never forget was “how much skipping class figuratively costs. The whole activity of the cost of tuition, how many credits, how many classes and what each one costs was scary.” Similarly, Jacob said, “I would definitely say it was a good idea because coming here at first I didn’t have good budgeting skills and it was a sorry wake-up call for me.”

Students get a great visual as to where their money, or in some instances someone else’s money, truly goes when they track it for a 5-day period. All students agreed it should be part of the curriculum.

The Healthy Living unit was designed to illustrate to students the importance of living their lives as healthy as possible. Topics in this unit include health and wellness, the dangers of alcohol and drugs, the importance of safe sexual practices, and stress management. An important outcome of this unit is to help students understand how each of these areas encompass their life as a college student and how poor decisions now can have implications on their health in the future.

Of all the units discussed as part of the interviews, this was the one area that students had the most difficulty remembering the most about. They remembered talking about the topics but weren't quite sure what they did or learned. Jensen remembered talking about the topics in class but wasn't sure what she did. She stated,

We had more of the verbal stuff and lecture with alcohol consumption. I do remember having to keep track of everything I ate for a while and plug it into an online source that gave us and broke things down pretty well. I liked that activity because then you can learn about nutrition and your own specific needs for food because it is different for everybody.

Jacob remembered doing "healthy eating, yeah, we did healthy eating. We like have done a plan a type of meal. I had to look at the good parts of the food and the bad parts of the food." For Alexa, it was the exercise aspect she remembered best. She stated, "Exercise. I remember talking about exercise. And sleep. Gosh, I sleep a lot. What else did we talk about, oh yeah, eating right and how exercise is important so we don't get fat"?

The students had difficulty recalling specific aspects of this unit but this doesn't take away from the importance of the topic. The students agreed it was important to have in the course but maybe they should change up the assignments and make them more memorable.

The Relationships and Boundaries unit was designed to assist students in defining healthy relationships and a means to provide tools they can use to enforce personal boundaries they may have. An outcome of this unit is to show students how relationships with their parents, siblings, significant others, high school friends, teachers, and people they meet in college will change and how to handle these changes maturely.

For some students, this was one unit that truly hit home and some emotions were part of the process during class. Ashli remembered that during this section she

had to make a list of 10 different people in her life. It was just the first 10 people that came to my mind. We had to assess if we thought it was a good relationship or a bad relationship. It was hard because sometimes it was good and sometimes it was bad.

Alexa realized that some people in her life weren't necessary good:

I have some people that I consider to be close friends that after I did this really thought about it we didn't have that great of a relationship because it was more one was the alpha dog and the other was not.

Xavier liked more the personal reflection part of the assignment. He said,

I remember we had a like little black line in the center of the room and like the good people that influence like positive on one side and on the other were the more negative people. We never really discussed, we had to think about it ourselves which was powerful. Then we moved right into boundaries. We had people standing in the front of the class and we had people walk closer and closer to the people until the people felt uncomfortable and then we talked about boundaries. It was powerful without discussion.

As a result of this unit, students started to see how relationships in college change, how they affect overall success, and what can be done to improve these on a daily basis. Upon completion of the semistructured interviews, it wasn't clear if the students wanted this unit to remain in the curriculum. However, they all agreed that the topics were important to cover.

The Diversity and Civility unit was designed to reinforce, and sometimes introduce, students to cultural differences that exist in the world today. An outcome of this unit is to educate students on cultural differences in the world and how they can use resources to ensure that everyone is successful at Kirkwood academically, socially, and personally. For most students who participated in the interviews this topic was one that probably was divided down the middle on its importance in the course. A couple of the students indicated their belief that it didn't need to be addressed by itself. Xavier mentioned that

this topic is something I have experienced since day one. I come from a large city and a large high school and diversity was all around me. I have Black friends, I have Asian friends, and I have gay friends. Today it isn't something that bothers me because I am friends with everyone.

Likewise, Alexa agreed because of her personal experiences with the topic. She commented, I have a gay uncle that is loved by everyone. Everyone in our family, everyone in his life and at work, love him. I have been taught at an early age to be accepting of all. I just can imagine spending time in class doing activities that specifically relate to this topic.

Ashli remarked that

it is something you can touch base on but I don't you can spend a lot of time talking about it. I mean for me personally. I did graduate with some diversity in my school and it was an everyday part of life. But for some it might be totally new.

However, some students felt that the concept of diversity is something that they are not introduced to at an early age, and the topic was eye opening for them. According to Jensen,

We did like cultural things I remember. I remember, we were like talking and I remember telling the class I can't wait to go to school with like the first Black [African American] girl that graduated in my class came to our school junior year. I remember the class thinking I was crazy and I was like I mean it was just where I came from.

For Jacob, the concept of diversity was interesting to think about. He made the observation that

it was kind of fascinating to see like what everybody's different taste and experiences on the topic. It was a good topic to cover in class and fun to see how others reacted to some of the activities we did.

Whether the topic remains a specific part of the College 101 curriculum or not, the students agreed that the topic of diversity is important to address in class. It should be a part of their everyday discussions and a topic that might help open up students' awareness of issues they may face outside of the academic setting in college.

Academic Success

This category includes activities that allow students to be successful academically at Kirkwood. Obviously, some of the topics in the first two categories have an impact on the academic success of the student, but this unit specifically addresses skills or activities that are related to the academic aspects of being a student.

The Academic Success unit was designed to provide resources for students to learn how to better prepare themselves for academic success inside the classroom. Topics that are covered in this unit include the VARK Learning Styles Assessment, test preparation and test anxiety, effective note taking skills, effective listening skills, effective critical thinking skills, and how to use technology for academic success. The outcomes for this unit are to help students understand what they need to do and how to establish healthy habits to ensure academic success during their first semester in college.

All the students involved with the research project agreed the topics covered in this unit are essential to the course and should always be a part of the course. They believed that one of the biggest adjustments to college life is academic in nature. They indicated that the topics covered during these units allowed them to assess how they learn, how others learn, and how to implement strategies to be successful in the area of academic success.

The students differed slightly on what areas of the academic units they believed were important, which supports the fact that all of these areas are important parts of the College 101 Curriculum. Xavier stated,

Yeah I remember talking about the VARK and that I am a visual learner. I don't really remember the others because I am a visual learner. It has helped me review my

notes, look through books you know when I am preparing to study for an exam. Keep it, it was fun.

Likewise, Jensen said,

I really liked the note taking and test taking topics. I always like get nervous for my tests so it was nice to learn I wasn't alone. It was like fun to learn about techniques or things I can do to better prepare for the exams. I think these are like really important to have as part of the course.

For Alexa, it was interesting to learn about how she prefers to learn:

I found out that I am both visual and audio [aural]; at first I thought I was just visual and then I found out that it has to be accompanied by audio for my brain to make the connection. The activity was great.

The one thing that Ashli took away from this unit was to think about how the instructors of her courses taught and how this played into her strengths:

I have one course where the instructor just lectures all the time. I struggle with this because I was a kinesthetic learner. So, I like to use a lot of my senses. So, I learned I have to focus in this class more than others.

For Jacob, it was all about note taking and effective reading strategies.

I really suck at taking notes and reading the chapters of my textbooks. I learned a lot about these topics, and I am going to try really hard to use the things I learned in the course to help in my other classes. I think it will be beneficial for me in the long run and I would never have thought about it had I not taken this class.

Career Assessment

The Career Exploration unit was designed to help students do research on possible careers that might be of interest to them. Students are introduced to several resources at Kirkwood and online that are there to assist in this process. They are asked to use the resources from I Have a Plan Iowa™, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, InsideJobs.com, and the *whatcanidowiththismajor.com* website to begin exploring careers. One outcome of this unit is to have students begin to see careers that they might be interested in and how these are related to classes and majors they can work on during their time at Kirkwood Community College and beyond if needed.

This was another unit of the curriculum that got mixed reviews from the students. From the data analysis, there clearly were two very distinct camps of thought on the topic. One group of students believed that this was an important part of the course and needs to stay in the course, especially for students who have no idea what they want to do for a possible career in the future. It is important to provide students with the resources they can use to help in the search and selection of possible careers. Alexa stated,

Yeah, I like the career part of it like when I kind of gave me a list of careers so I think all of us college students are always coming in here and not knowing what we want to do. This activity certainly helped.

Similarly, Jacob stated,

This activity gave me a bunch of different things to look over so I definitely liked it. I knew I wanted to go into the health field but not sure what area. The assignment opened my eyes to a lot of different areas of health, some of which I never would have thought of but now want to do more research on because of the assignment.

Jensen indicated another aspect of the assignment was beneficial to her:

We had the career services person come in. I don't remember her name at the moment but she gave us a lot of useful information like resume writing, interviewing, job shadowing, application tips, and information on the Career Fair. I remember her saying don't wait until 2 days before graduation to use the Career Services services . . . use them now.

On the other hand, a few of the students indicated that, because they knew what they wanted to do, some of the activities were a waste of time. They suggested that maybe the assignments in the course be altered based on where students are with their career decision. According to Xavier,

This unit was kind of pointless. I know that I am going to be a lawyer and am very focused on this career. Yeah, my plans might change in the future but right now this is what I want to do. So, I am going to transfer to the University of Iowa and major in Political Science when I am done at Kirkwood. My plans are all figured out.

Course Assessments

As mentioned earlier, students are asked four times during the semester to participate in assessment activities directly related to their experiences in the course. At or around midterm, students are asked to meet with their instructors one-on-one to touch base on their progress in the course. Students are asked to bring a copy of their midterm grades for all courses so the instructor can review with them how they are doing across the board.

Unfortunately, this specific aspect of the curriculum was left out of the research study and was one that I didn't touch base with the students on through the member-checking process.

Finally, at the end of the semester, students are asked to create a portfolio of their time spent in the College 101 course. The portfolio project was designed to give students an opportunity to gather all information from the course in one location and reflect on how much they have grown as a person over the 15 weeks of the semester. Unanimously, all the students who were interviewed indicated that this was the best way to assess how meaningful the class was for each of them. One student, Jacob, stated that he

was so excited when I learned there were no tests in the class. I wasn't too excited about the portfolio at the end, but learned that if I kept up with my assignments throughout the semester I pretty much had it 95% done.

For Ashli, toward the end of the semester it was a pleasant surprise not to have a comprehensive final like some of her other classes. She said, "I was so excited when I remembered there was not a final exam in my College 101 class. The portfolio was a fun way to review what I learned in the course and how I grew as a student." For Jensen, the portfolio was

a unique and different way for me to assess my time in the class. I really thought it was powerful to see where I was at the beginning of the semester and where I was at the end, especially when we had to do the Who Am I Now as the introduction for the portfolio.

Overall, the students indicated that the portfolio was the best way to comprehensively look at how they benefited from the course and grew as a person in the class and during their first semester on campus at Kirkwood.

The last topic covered in the semistructured interviews was the usefulness of the book. This, hands down, from a student perspective was a resounding NO. All of the

students who participated in the research study indicated that the book was a waste of money and they hardly ever used it. Ashli said, “The book was a waste of money.” Jensen said, “I never opened the book once during the entire semester and the instructor didn’t even know. The stuff we talk about is common sense and a book is not needed.” Xavier said, “What book? Just kidding; I opened it a few times.” Alexa said, “I did go through the book often but I know that most of my classmates didn’t read it at all. The instructor should have used it more in class.” Finally, Jacob said, “Students shouldn’t have to spend money on a book they can’t sell back and one that was hardly used in class.” Clearly, from the student perspective, the book should not be part of the course. If the instructors want to use it as a resource that would be beneficial, but the students clearly didn’t see the value in using it as a tool for success in the course.

Faculty Focus Group Themes and Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the faculty focus group was an addition to the data collection methodology late in the research project. The decision was made to meet with a group of faculty who teach the College 101 course to determine how they responded to the same questions asked of the students through the semistructured interviews. One faculty focus group was conducted to gain insight from them regarding the curriculum of the course, the assessments used in the course to gauge student learning, and the effectiveness of the textbook for the course. The following is an overview of the findings from faculty focus groups and where their perspectives align with that of the students and where their perspectives might differ.

College 101 Curriculum

One of the most important things learned from the faculty focus group as it related to the curriculum of the course was the concept of making sure that students had a way of making connections on campus to ensure success in their transition to Kirkwood. Whether this was through guest speakers, activities, or reflections, it was important from a faculty perspective to provide the students with these opportunities. Comments from faculty regarding the topic of creating connections for their students are included below.

One faculty member stated,

Well just today I had Ken from study abroad program come in to talk about the importance of study abroad and things that you can do. The group that I have is a small group but they ask a lot of questions and I think that is one way that we can connect with them. I have also had a financial aid person at Kirkwood come in and talk about finance. It just gets them to really understand some of the things they have to do as college students. So, those are two things I do. I have also taken them on tours to different places like the computer lab or other places around campus just to show them where everything is and how they make the connection”.

Similarly, another faculty member expressed

We have speakers come in as well. They have been able to take them to places, and I have someone speak there or explain something there, so it establishes that connection type of thing where you actually have been there and can go back in the future if need be.

A third faculty member commented:

I think it is important to note that it is a combination of different things that we do. I think the reflections are really good. It gives them an opportunity not only to go someplace on campus . . . but it has them reflect on what they did. The reflections are important because it illustrates they are trying and how important that trying is. If a student does not understand what the point is or what they are attempting to do, they won't buy into it. So, I think it is important to constantly give them reminders in different ways through different activities in class and out of class also.

Finally, one faculty member remarked,

Well I think more preliminary than connecting the students to the college is the concept of connecting the students to each other in the class. So the information about ice breakers and team-building exercises are important. Sometimes it's the way that students perceive that those little connections that they make that early in the semester [that] really cement their opportunities to get to know each other in the classroom and to get to know the instructor. So that if on Monday they all come in, and there was a big football game the day before, those little connections to each other in the classroom really make the class a much more cohesive unit throughout the semester. Another thing I know that is important is the in-class activities.

However, we can show them all the outside class activities they can get involved in

As for the specific units of the course, the faculty believed strongly that all aspects of the College 101 curriculum is necessary to ensure student success. Every topic of the curriculum was covered in the focus group, and not a single faculty member thought

anything should be eliminated. Next, a few comments from the faculty are provided on the specific units of the College 101 curriculum and its level of importance.

Personal and Life Skills

The following text reflects excerpts from the faculty focus group related to the Personal and Life Skills units of the College 101 curriculum. One faculty member said,

Well to start we cover the time management and monitoring concept very early in the term. I think everybody is still using, but it is one where the students groan because we ask them to look at what they do and how many hours they spent doing various things. When they take this assignment seriously, a lot of the students come back saying, “Wow! It is more than just an assignment I had to. It is something that I really had to do,” and it does affect their life. They found it useful and that they can make some changes. What a concept and how much fun is that when you see student make that connection!

A faculty member stated:

I had some students say that maybe they should study more. When they did the predictor rank they had all the answers. However, when they did the actual rank they saw that some things were not where they thought they were. For example, studying was predicted high but, when they did it, it was actually low. So the light bulb tends to go off and they realize maybe they played video games too much.

A faculty member added,

And I know even just for myself, as far as that time monitor, I think that it is the first real assignment where, like you said, that light bulb comes on when they think, “Oh my gosh, maybe I need to make some changes. I mean this is really making me

accountable for what I have been doing.” I like to do that time monitor the beginning of the semester for just 3 days and then after midterm, once they have reached midterm, they have had some additional experience right with juggling all their courses.

A faculty member commented,

In the beginning of the semester I don't know if everybody is quite as tense with all the courses they have. They may not really have much for exam or papers or expectations. So with the time monitors, some things can be a little eye opening for them. However, then I get the reflection about what they need to do less, like playing video games. They see that they need to spend more with family or whatever. Then I have my students do the monitoring again after midterm, so we have it for another 3 days, and then I talked to them about okay what was it that you did differently or why did you notice it continued with the same pattern.

Another faculty member expressed,

I think one thing that I know is that the finance reflection paper is bad and a lot of them don't have their time management and logs and reflection. They are at the age where the locus of control is no longer their parents. So they don't have someone else to monitor their time and behavior. So it is really about shifting that to, you got to do internal monitoring as well as be in charge of yourself and in charge of how you spend your time. It is a 360 degree shift. They are becoming an adult, and it is time to make good choices. So I think a lot are starting to pick up on that fact. I have this pot of money or I have this pot of time, and it is up to me how I want to spend it.

A faculty member remarked,

Yeah I don't sometimes think about this when I think about this unit or this category on personal and health related issues. I think about Maslow's theory and how they focus on their needs before their wants. So when you look at things, like the financial literacy component, I think is so important in this course because I think our students think they really look at what they do with their money and then they need to have some of those harsh conversations.

Another faculty member noted,

Well I haven't got to the health unit or anything like that, but I feel these classes are really about instilling in them those really good behaviors. It is about starting fresh. They are starting brand new in college. It is important to make sure they are keeping track of accomplishment of their time and how they spend their money and eventually give it to them. The healthy relationships show how to treat other people and how you set boundaries. Then they learn how to take care of themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. If you can have them think about their behaviors and how they affect their college experience, it is a lot more positive than if they did not have that sort of introduction into the activity.

One faculty member observed,

Well part of it is all about telling the truth. When you talk about that healthy lifestyle at the very beginning of the semester, I do a little ice breaker. One of the questions I ask when they introduce each other is, "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" Most of the time, the answer is, "Nothing." When you start off the semester with those questions, it is like we are going to talk about this now because most of them said no and that is not healthy.

Another faculty member mentioned,

The value shuffle propels the students into knowing each other and allows them to express themselves in terms of those value statements. The most interesting part of that, I think, is they got to know each other and formed their own perceptions of what each other might think. Those kind of topics and those kind of interactions among the students are important to all students involved in the activity. Open conversation about values within that assignment is valuable but it seems to work once they know each other pretty late in a semester.

Based on the feedback from the faculty, clearly this is a unit that is important in the College 101 course and needs to be a part of the curriculum. The faculty and students were in total agreement on the importance of Personal and Life Skills units as part of the College 101 curriculum.

Academic Success Skills

The following text represents excerpts from the faculty focus group on units related to the Academic Success Skills units of the College 101 curriculum. One faculty member stated,

I'm actually covering testing this Friday, and during that I already have students who have come to talk to me about having some test anxiety. This is about the time that we probably started taking some tests. At the very beginning of this semester, all that we are going to have is take notes in class and how you will study for the test by using some of the stuff in the book. We have the students practice and then show them how to perfect the process. We cover the anxiety concept and how to cope with it in the future.

Another faculty member from the focus group commented,

You know how to use this stuff because one of things is, even as a 30-something-year-old who has taken lots and lots of test, who has been in college for 10 years, I still get anxious when someone gives me a test. I argue within myself that it is always internal conflict, no matter how well I know the material, it is one of those things that you deal with, and you may struggle when you are taking the test.

A faculty member commented,

And sometimes it is not even what you read; maybe the stuff is on the lecture more than what you read. So it is also about reading the instructions, too. Students need to place emphasis on what the instructors say, so that note taking already occurs early in the semester. For my class or any other classes, it is a conversation about how you pick out the most important material when you are given all this to share. It is sort of guiding them, look for bold-faced words, etc.

Another faculty member remarked,

I said if an instructor writes on the board it is important, it is really important and you should probably write it down. I have my sort of personal rules; I never give students PowerPoint because they are not useful. The way I do my PowerPoint is to bullet and it has only a couple of words per slide. So when you are in class you are not going to get anything out of those PowerPoints, so it is like now you have to take notes. If you are getting PowerPoint slides or not, it is ultimately how you take notes.

A faculty member noted,

Then we went to the note taking and listening part and actually I had a YouTube video that I found on note taking. So, instead of me lecturing about this, I want them

to take notes on what they are about to see in 4 minutes and then I gave them the questions over the passage. Then we spent 20 minutes talking about note taking and the bullet points and different things that are important when looking at how to take effective notes

Based on the feedback from the faculty, clearly this is a unit that is important in the College 101 course and needs to be a part of the curriculum. The faculty and students were in total agreement with the importance of Academic Success Skills units as part of the College 101 curriculum.

Career Assessment Skills

Due to time constraints during the faculty focus group, the Career Assessment unit wasn't discussed at great length. However, the following text shows excerpts from the faculty focus group on units related to the Career Assessment units of the College 101 curriculum. One faculty member noted,

I have mixed feelings about this topic. Last year, College 101 was all about the 2-year plan. I felt that when someone came into cover the presentation on how to do it, there was too much information and it was difficult for students to follow along. For the students that actually took the extra effort and went through and did the assignment, it was extremely eye opening. They now have a 2-year plan or sort of an idea, if they would have transferred what they need to do.

Another faculty member mentioned,

The challenge, I think, the students face with that academic advising or career assessment assignment is that there are so many options and so many steps without enough knowledgeable people in the room to help facilitate the assignment for them.

I think all of us see it once a year, and so we can't pretend to be experts. So we are trying to help and not necessarily helping. The concept of providing some kind of career planning information to them is important, but I don't know how to do it; I need to figure out a better way.

Based on the feedback from the faculty, clearly this is a unit that is important in the College 101 course and needs to be a part of the curriculum. The faculty and students were in total agreement on the importance of Career Assessment units as part of the College 101 curriculum.

Course Outcome Assessments and Portfolio Assignment

Due to time constraints during the faculty focus group, the Course Outcome Assessments and Portfolio units also weren't discussed at great length. However, the following text reflects excerpts from the faculty focus group on units related to the Course Outcomes Assessments and Portfolio units of the College 101 curriculum. One faculty member commented,

Okay, I think that midterm touch bases are the best thing since sliced bread. When midterm grades come out, I still have international students that still don't know how to check their grades online. They still don't know how to do some of the most basic things on the computer. No matter how many times I have explained things and ask what questions they have for me, they don't comprehend the assignment. The midterm touch bases allow for me to help with these issues

Another faculty stated,

To be honest I have mixed feelings about it. I do it because part of me says I wish it's a book I guess. I wish you would keep it and refer back to it and see where you have

grown and stuff. However, the impression I get from students sometimes is that this is just busy work. Especially using Angel so much you don't have a lot of printed stuff. I really am torn about how important that is. I know how important it is for them but to get that point across to them so. I am moving to an e-portfolio this year.

Based on the feedback from the faculty, the use of the portfolio is important in the College 101 course and needs to be a part of the curriculum. However, the faculty were less optimistic than the students on the usefulness and importance of the Portfolio assignment as part of the College 101 course.

College 101 Textbook

The last topic briefly discussed at the end of the faculty focus group was the use of a textbook in the College 101 course. The following text is excerpts from the faculty focus group related to the use of a textbook for the College 101 curriculum. One faculty member stated,

I think with the class the textbook is more of a supplement to the class. You know the textbook we have now is kind of like a magazine, and it is what it is supposed to look like. Hopefully, it is more of a tool for them to help them with the activities they are dealing with. You should never rely too heavily on the textbook, it is more talking about where they are and what their needs and wants are and here is a research that can help us with what is going on.

Another faculty member remarked,

I also think we also have to be cautious of not going to the extreme of over using the textbook. As I have said, I have had them read some of the material. I like the text book compared to the older one because it is a little shorter, more exact. It is not an

easy read but easier type of read, but I always think it is my responsibility to teach them how to be students not only in College 101 but in the other classes they have as well, and reading is a part of that.

A faculty member noted,

Now, are they going to read every single chapter? The answer is no. I like the textbook in the sense it does not take long for them to read the information and it can be used in a classroom discussion. If we have them buy it, I say we have to make them use it.

Another faculty member shared the observation:

I know that I went through just chapter 1 with my students at the beginning. We just talked about what is in the chapter, how to look at subject headline, how to notice little things in boxes and the graphics. It was getting them to look at the book. Then I did my little presentation on chapter 1. I feel like if we are going to make them buy the book we need to use the book.

Based on the feedback from the faculty, clearly the book is an important tool in the College 101 course and needs to be a part of the curriculum. The faculty saw the benefits and suggested that it still be used in the course. However, they sympathized with the students and could understand if the book was eliminated. However, the students wanted the book to be eliminated from the College 101 course altogether. This ended up being the only major disagreement between the students' and faculty's views regarding the content of the College 101 course.

Upon reviewing the student and faculty feedback on the curriculum of the College 101 course, the two groups were in agreement on the majority of items related to the College

101 curriculum with the exception of the use of a textbook. Coupling this evaluation with the quantitative methods that are now being used as part of the evaluation for the course, it appears as though College 101 is doing a great job of providing an environment for students to successfully transition to college academically, socially, and personally.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary and Implications

Data provided by students in the focus group, students in the semistructured interviews, and faculty in the focus group gave great insight into the value of the College 101 course from their viewpoint as the end users. The findings from the students' and faculty perspective allow me to offer some suggestions for how the College 101 course can be enhanced to better suit the students' needs and provide ways for them to be successful academically, socially, and personally at Kirkwood Community College. By providing students a stronger voice in the process and hearing from faculty, the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood can benefit by providing top-notch resources and services to their students through the College 101 course focused on student success at Kirkwood. The research has implications for future practice, future policy, and future research.

Recommendations for Practice

Course Content Implications

As stated earlier, overall, the students and faculty suggested that the general content of the College 101 course provides relevant information and activities that can lead to success in all aspects of their daily lives as a college student. The students and faculty indicated that content in activities such as the Kirkwood Resources Unit, Time Management Unit, Financial Literacy Unit, Self-Assessment Unit (Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator and Who Am I), Career Selection Unit, Academic Success Unit, and Diversity Unit are important for the course. However, they also expressed that students should be engaged in more meaningful activities that can better illustrate each of these content areas. During the process, Xavier said that "students learn personal responsibilities through the activities the

best. We can take what we learned and apply them in our own way. We just need more useful activities.” Therefore, I recommend that a database of activities be started where all faculty teaching the course can upload their activities to a central location where everyone has access. This is something that has been started with the new KIN system at Kirkwood, but it should be something that is further expanded. These activities can be beneficial for new instructors and veteran instructors as they continue to provide quality content in the College 101 course.

Academic Implications

One area on which students really focused was related to the academic aspect of the course. The students indicated that this aspect really helped them succeed in all classes across the board. However, some students expressed that the course has a lot of busy work. Ashli said, “Some of the things we cover here, we just cover. I will be honest, I feel really bored, and I am kind of wasting my time.” Jacob said, “Sometimes I try and figure out why we are talking about the topics we are talking about. And we never used the book. The course might need more structure at times.” Several students also suggested that the course should not be the entire semester. Jacob shared, “I am not sure if the course should be 3 credits.” Given the feedback from the students through the focus group, there are two implications for the College 101 course.

It would be beneficial if the course could integrate some activities or assignments into other first semester courses the students take. For example, many units in the College 101 course have a written reflection. If a student were taking Basic Writing, Elements of Writing or Composition I, maybe one of the reflection assignments for College 101 could serve as an assignment for one of these courses as well. Similarly, if a student were taking a math course

maybe the unit on budgeting could be used as an assignment in the math class. This would allow the students to see the academic relevance of the College 101 course and how it helps them be successful in all aspects of academic development. This would increase the academic rigor of the course and continue to illustrate the academic relevance of the course to others on campus at Kirkwood Community College.

Network of Support

Another topic that was prevalent throughout the research was why the students decided to take the College 101 course. Currently, the course is not required for students, so they self-select to take the course. As stated in the research, one of the most influential aspects of this selection for the students was attending the Campus Orientation program at Kirkwood. Almost every student involved in the focus group had attended the orientation, where taking the course was discussed. Some of the students had a friend or another student, a high school counselor, or parent who suggested taking the course, but the vast majority took it because it was suggested at orientation. There is an opportunity for some creative marketing from the Dean of Students Office on the value of the course and how it helps with student success at Kirkwood.

First, the Dean of Students Office needs to use more student testimonials when advertising the College 101 course. They could recruit a group of students to participate in traditional marketing techniques to spread the word about the course. They could create mini video vignettes and post them on the Dean of Students Office website so that visitors can learn more about the course and how students have benefited from the course. These vignettes could be accessible by the admissions counselors traveling across the state and could be used as promotional materials illustrating Kirkwood Community College's

commitment to student success through this course. It could be shown to high school guidance counselors, prospective students, and their parents during campus visits, high school visits, college fairs, and college nights across the state. The best use of marketing is through the use of the students themselves.

Second, all members of Kirkwood Community College should be trained about the benefits of the course. Individuals in advising roles should know firsthand about the course and how it can help students achieve academic, personal, and social success while at Kirkwood. Spreading the word internally would drum up interest from individuals across campus who may be eligible to teach the course and constantly remind those working with students about the importance of the course. Presentations from the Dean of Students Office could be made at the Kirkwood Faculty Association and Kirkwood Staff Association meetings to introduce the course and how it helps students be successful. This presentation and a question-and-answer session could help show all members of the Kirkwood community exactly what the College 101 course is all about. Everyone in the profession is there to ensure students success, and College 101 is one way that students will benefit the most and has a direct impact on the academic, social, and personal development and success of the students during their time at Kirkwood and beyond.

Finally, it is important to continue to recruit more full-time faculty to teach the College 101 course. As enrollments begin to decline and college budgets become smaller, many classes are being eliminated from full-time faculty workloads. Often, these faculty are looking for other courses to teach to remain full time in their roles at Kirkwood Community College. Because the popularity of the College 101 course continues to grow, it could be in the best interests of the college to look at staffing these sections with more full-time faculty.

It would also benefit the faculty because they would be able to meet their workload. I am not saying that adjunct appointees should be eliminated from teaching the College 101 course altogether. However, it would also benefit in the perception of the course from the student perspective if they see full-time faculty teaching the course as opposed to adjunct faculty.

Recommendations for Policy

Content of the College 101 Curriculum

As stated earlier, all students who participated in the semistructured interviews expressed that each aspect of the College 101 curriculum was beneficial in some way during their transition to college at Kirkwood. However, some students were quick to point out that they might not always have realized it at the time. Alexa stated, “When we were doing the Time Management unit, the concept just never really sunk in. It wasn’t until we visited it again at the end of the semester that it truly hit home.” Jensen shared,

The one thing I remember my professor saying at the beginning of class was that every assignment we do in class is important and that it will be part of the portfolio at the end of the semester. If you don’t do the assignment the first time you will lose points again in the portfolio. That happened to me with the Money Management assignment. The content was useful; I just didn’t do the assignment and lost 20 points for the assignment and another 6 points for the portfolio. That was 26 points total. If I had those back I would have got an A in the course and not a B+.

Through the analysis specifically related to the curriculum, there were several suggestions that could be provided to the Dean of Students Office related to the College 101 course.

First, the content of the curriculum appears to be spot on with what the students need to learn. Each aspect is beneficial to their transition and, based on the feedback from the

students and faculty, nothing should be changed regarding the topics covered in the curriculum. The only suggestion would be to try and constantly introduce new ways from year to year to illustrate each topic.

Second, all students expressed that the amount of work in the course was adequate. It was not too much and it was not too little—it appears to be just right. The only suggestion would be to switch the ways students are providing assessment on the learning that takes place. Each assignment has a written reflection to help the students show what they have learned about themselves or the specific topic. It might be beneficial to use PowerPoint presentations, outside class activities, or more creative ways to have each student self-assess for some of the activities.

Third, all students and faculty believed that the portfolio is a great way to sum up the students' experience in the course. Ashli stated that she liked the portfolio assignment because it

was an awesome way to reflect on my time in the course. If you stay on top of the assignments over the course of the semester it is easy to put the portfolio together at the end of the semester. The only addition was the minor reflections from each section. It was fun to see what I learned.

Likewise, one of the faculty members from the focus group stated,

I absolutely love the portfolio assignment. It is so fun to see how each student chooses to organize their work and the different ways they present it to me. It is so rewarding to see how each of them has grown through the semester and the portfolio assessment is the perfect way to do it.

Fourth, it was unanimous from the student perspective and somewhat agreed upon from the faculty perspective that the textbook needs to be reconsidered for the course. The students understand the importance of the topic, but an overarching theme from their perspective was that the course was all about “common sense and real-life topics that a textbook can’t teach you.” It was a complete “waste of money” from their perspective, and it needs to be eliminated from the course. As for the faculty, most agreed that it needs to be reworked into the curriculum. One faculty member stated, “If the book stays it needs to deliberately be infused in the syllabus more than just listed each week. We all need to do a better job of holding students accountable for reading the textbook.” Some, however, believed that the faculty book and activities were good and could be used to better enhance the course without making students purchase the book. One faculty member stated, “students don’t need it. Faculty do. We can use it to our advantage when disseminating information to the students for each chapter.”

Finally, it was suggested by a few of the students that it might be wise to look at the order in which the topics of the course are presented. Many students involved in the research project believed that the academic content should be placed at the beginning. The schedule of events of the Fall 2013 term are given in Appendix B. Some of the academic content, such as note taking, test taking, study skills, etc., are in the middle of the semester. Jensen, Alexa, and Jacob all believed that the “academic aspects are the most important and should be covered first.” By bringing these topics to the forefront early, students will be more successful academically and all other things will fall into place. Overall, if students establish academic success first, their social and personal success will be stronger in the end.

Variable Credits

I recommend that the Dean of Students Office look at offering the course with varying credit options. The course maybe can be offered for 1, 2, or 3 credits that can vary from 8–16 weeks over the course of the semester. This would allow students the option of taking the course at the level they deem appropriate for their time and money. This would present a new challenge in designing the curriculum but would provide a great resource for students looking for ways to be successful at Kirkwood. With the curriculum development process there are implications for the addition or deletion of materials from the course. By further examining each aspect of the curriculum in the future, data collected might assist the coordinator of the College 101 course in looking into areas that are good to keep and what areas may be eliminated from the course based on the students' feedback.

Required for Kirkwood Students

Based on the feedback from the student and faculty on the usefulness of the College 101 curriculum, it is my recommendation that the College 101 course be required for all new students to Kirkwood. Although the students in the research did not specifically say they would require it for all students, the benefits from their perspective made a strong case for this policy. As Kirkwood Community College continues to do qualitative and quantitative research on the course, it will continue to see the benefits for students who complete the course. The administration at Kirkwood will need to make sure that they work with both the transfer side and the career/technical side of the college to ensure that the course can be worked into the plans of study for each program. This is important, particularly for the career and technical programs, because credits for each program are influenced heavily by outside policies from accreditation agencies and the State Department of Education.

Similarly, as college and universities on a national level focus on the college completion agenda, courses like College 101 will become instrumental in providing students with the resources they need to be successful in college. Providing students with these resources and an avenue to make connections on campus with faculty, staff and other students can help them succeed academically, socially, and personally and students will stay focused and graduate from Kirkwood Community College.

Recommendations for Future Research

Qualitative Research for College 101

Based on the findings of this research study, I recommend that the Dean of Students Office and Coordinator of College 101 continue to take an in-depth look at the curriculum of the College 101 course. More specifically, the Coordinator of College 101 should conduct semistructured interviews every semester with a group of students who have completed the course. The data collected from these interviews, coupled with the quantitative data that is currently being collected, can provide a comprehensive, clear, and concise view of the effects that the College 101 course has on student success at Kirkwood Community College.

Similarly, the Coordinator of College 101, in conjunction with the Kirkwood Community College retention specialist, should attempt to conduct exit interviews with students who are dropping the course after the official 10-day count and with those who fail the course. Qualitative data collection from these students would provide useful information as to how the course and its content can help these types of students in the future. It is important that these students make a strong connection at the beginning of the semester, and the College 101 course provides many opportunities to do so. However, for some students, the connection is just not being made. By conducting these exit interviews, useful data can

be gleaned from these students' experiences and can be used to adjust the curriculum to better address these needs in the future. This information will be valuable for the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College as it continues to redesign the curriculum of the College 101 course and align it with the Learner Success Agenda the college has as a whole. Embarking on changing in the course to align with the college mission will help solidify the future of College 101 and continue to ensure student success academically, socially, and personally.

Traditional and Nontraditional Students

As previously mentioned, the majority of the students who enroll in the College 101 course are traditional-age college students. These students typically come directly from high school and choose to enroll in college right away. Based on the research, the College 101 course has several benefits for this group of students. However, do nontraditional students get the same benefits? These students enroll in college for a variety of reasons. Whether these students enroll because of a new career choice or possible changes after a life experience, is the content of the course beneficial for them? Future research projects could segment the sample population of the College 101 courses and study this aspect of the benefits for these students.

Conclusion

Community colleges across the nation continue to deal with the challenges of underprepared students due to their "open door" missions. Many of the students who enroll have deficiencies in academic skills, and many community colleges provide developmental courses that help address these deficiencies. However, the larger issue is that many of these same students, and others, arrive on campus with other deficiencies, including poorly formed

goals for education and/or career, a lack of good study habits, and little awareness of how to ultimately succeed in their new academic and social environment (McClenney & Arnsperger, 2012, p. 6). To complicate matters, entering a new environment creates stressors that these students often have never encountered before, and they often have no idea where to turn to find resources that can help them be successful academically, socially, and personally.

By attending campus orientation and enrolling in first-year experience programs, students gain access to knowledge that will make them better prepared to begin college on the right track. These programs can help students get acclimated to the college campus and its culture; build relationships with other students, faculty, and staff; and learn strategies to be successful academically in college. However, for college administrators, an ongoing discussion on college campuses needs to focus on what content should be present in campus orientation and first-year experience programs. Research has suggested that, if offered, students not only attended these programs but also credit them with strongly influencing their expectations of the college experience (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005) and in improving adjustment, rates of performance, retention, and graduation (Fidler, 1991). Based on the literature review, it is clear that important aspects of these programs should include campus acclimation, introduction to key faculty and staff, introduction to academic climate on campus, and social activities that allow students to meet others going through the process with them. A comprehensive campus orientation and first-year experience program will facilitate students becoming strongly connected to their institutions, leading to higher satisfaction, increased retention, and eventually, graduation. Based on the research conducted, Kirkwood Community College is doing a great job with the creation, implementation, and modification of the College 101 course.

Students are benefiting from taking the course, and it should continue as a course option for students who might want to enroll in it. The content, delivery of the content, and overall assessment methods used appear to have a positive effect on the students who successfully complete the course. It does not appear, based on the research conducted, that any major changes to the course need to be made at this time. It has, it does, and it will continue to provide a fun, safe, and educational way to help students transition to Kirkwood Community College and will continue to ensure academic, social, and personal success for the students who enroll in the course.

Reflections

I decided to focus on first-year experience programs as the topic of my research study for several reasons. First, from my own personal journey in education, my first selection for a college was not necessarily the best fit for me. After spending one semester at Iowa State University (ISU) in the fall of 1994 working toward a degree in Chemical Engineering, I quickly realized that the major choice and ultimately the college choice was not a good fit. Little did I know at the time that my educational journey would come full circle by me completing my Ph.D. from ISU. Additionally, I think that, because the fact that the first major decision I made in my life—the selection of a college and a degree—didn't go so well, I always thought in the back of my mind what could I have done differently. The idea that I ultimately “failed” in this first decision prompted me to look at resources available for me at my transfer institution, the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), to make sure I didn't make the same mistake twice. This led me to become involved in activities and get an on-campus job in the Undergraduate Admissions Office at UNI.

Second, through my involvement with on-campus activities and jobs in the Undergraduate Admissions Office, I truly fell in love with the Student Affairs profession. I was heavily involved with giving campus tours, hosting students during campus visit programs, working with students on the college search and selection process through our Student Teleconference Admissions Representatives (STARs) and the Student Alumni Ambassadors, and as a member of the student orientation team. All of these activities ignited my passion for the field, and every professional position I had was in this arena. Whether it was working in the Undergraduate Admissions Office at Creighton University, in the Dean of Students Office at Cornell College, in the Undergraduate Admissions Office professionally at UNI or with the Iowa College Access Network, I always have been helping students find ways to succeed in their college search, selection, and transition to campus life.

Finally, I have had the great fortune to be an adjunct faculty member for the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College for the last 3 years. I have seen firsthand the benefits the course has on students' academic, social, and personal success at Kirkwood. I get a great sense of accomplishment as I watch my students grow everyday and see how different they are on the last day of class compared to the first day of class. All of these factors have pushed me to focus on the first-year experience area for my research and conduct a research study that would provide a wealth of knowledge to Kirkwood as the administration looked at how to improve the College 101 course.

As I reflect on the journey for the past 3 years, I often am amazed at how I have grown professionally and personally as a result of my time in the program. When I first started the process, I was really only concerned with how the Ph.D. would help me advance in my career in student affairs. Sure, I was going to learn something, but I really was focused

on getting the degree and not so much on the process of getting there. However, I remember something that Dr. Heaverlo told us in her Introduction to Qualitative Methods class during the spring of 2011. She said to choose a topic that you are going to be passionate about and one that you can stand to work with for a large majority of your time in the program. This passion will help get you through. At that point, I realized that it wasn't about the degree—it was about the process and how my passion for the topic would help me get through the process. I reflected on my roles working with college students prior to starting the program and realized that it truly was and always will be what I am passionate about. My views changed that day and I took a renewed interest in the “process” of the journey.

One of the most rewarding parts of the journey was watching how my students talked about their experiences in the College 101 course. Hearing their stories and learning how enrollment in the College 101 course helped them be successful academically, socially, and personally was motivation throughout the entire process. I was able to see, in addition to watching my own students in my College 101 classes, how students were taking the information they learned in the course and applying to their everyday lives. It gave me such a thrill to see these students “get it” and listen to how they credited some of their success specifically to the College 101 course.

However, the process wasn't always easy. I can't help but inform everyone that some of the steps in the process made me doubt and sometimes question whether the journey was even worth it. Setting up interviews, adjusting schedules, listening to audio recordings, reading transcripts, coding transcripts, bracketing transcripts, looking for themes, formulating conclusions, offering recommendations, editing, editing, and more editing had me wanting to pull my hair out. I'm not sure how I would look as a bald man, but often I thought I would

get there sooner than later. Throw in a major life-changing event heading into my last year of the program and I truly thought the journey was over and I was once again going to fail. However, with the support of an amazing family, a rock solid friend base, and compassionate professional staff, failure was not an option. I made a mistake at the beginning of my educational journey; therefore, I wasn't going to make another one at the end. Ultimately, as I was getting ready to wrap up this research study and defend the outcomes, I had a huge sense of accomplishment and cannot be more proud of myself than I am today. As I look back today, there isn't anything that I would change about the journey. It has been challenging, yet rewarding, everyday. I am confident that what I learned and what I am sharing with the world will provide quality information to the Dean of Students Office at Kirkwood Community College—all of this for one purpose, and one purpose only: to make sure that students who take the College 101 course at Kirkwood Community College have the resources to be successful academically, socially, and personally here at Kirkwood and wherever their lives will take them after they graduate.

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APPENDIX A. FALL 2012 COLLEGE 101 COURSE SYLLABUS

Kirkwood Community College Syllabus and Course Schedule for College 101 SDV-109-XXX## (#####) Fall 2012

Instructor:**Course Meeting Information****Other Instructor Information:****Office Hours:****Preferred Communication**

I welcome any form of communication; however, my preferred method of communication is via email. I will set up a listserv with your preferred email to send all updates.

Please put COLLEGE 101 in the Subject Line

Section Number: SDV-109-XXX## (#####)

Credit hours: 3 credit hours

Course description:

College 101 directs students' attentions to the college academic culture and connects them to resources that will aid in their success. The course is designed to facilitate each student's development of academic success skills. Activities include study and classroom performance strategies, personal development, academic and career planning, and participation in a college culture.

Prerequisites: NONE

Course Materials Needed:**Required Textbook:**

- Gardner, J. N. and Barefoot, B. O. (2011). *Step by step to college and career services*. Boston, MA: Bedford St. Martins, Inc.
- Hassan, Lois. (2011). *The Bedford/St. Martin's Planner*. Boston, MA: Bedford St. Martins, Inc.

Needed Materials:

- 1" three-ring binder for portfolio assignment
- 1 set of 5 Index Divider Tabs

Student Handbook:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

General Course Goals

Arthur Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development serve as a foundation for College 101. The course assignments and activities are all designed to encourage student growth both in both academic and personal realms. The Vectors are as follows:

Vector 1 Developing Competence intellectually, socially physically while in college.

Vector 2 Managing emotions while in college.

Vector 3 Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence while in college.

Vector 4 Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships while in college

Vector 5 Establishing Identity while in college

Vector 6 Developing Purpose while in college

Vector 7 Developing Integrity while in college

Learning Outcomes, Objectives, and Course Competencies:**Course Learning Objectives:**

The student will:

- Develop intellectual, social, and affective competence.
- Develop the ability to recognize and accept emotions as well as to appropriately express and control them.
- View self as able to make decisions independent of others' views.
- Develop a tolerance (embrace/honor/welcome/appreciate/value) and appreciation for others.
- Develop a positive sense of which one is.
- Develop a sense of purpose--vocational and personal goals.
- Develop a humanized value system in which the interests of others are balanced with one's own interests.

Assessment of Student Learning:

The avenues for achieving these goals and objectives will be through **your reading, your attendance and your participation in exercises and discussion, review of research, small group work and debate, and completion of short assignments and projects.**

Course Expectations

- Attend class and participate in the activities, discussions, etc.
 - Students will receive 1 pt for every class period they attend. Total points will be a factor in the participation points at the end of the semester.

- Read the assignments and be ready to discuss them.
- Complete the written assignments.
- Turn in the assignments on time.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Absences will in no way lessen student responsibility for meeting the requirements of any class. Students are expected to know the attendance policy of this course. Failure to abide by the attendance policy may result in failure of the course.

Students are expected to be active learners through class participation, small group discussions, and in-class presentations. Students are expected to be thoughtful and civil in their interactions with others.

Personal issues discussed in this class DO NOT leave the classroom. The only exceptions to this policy will be:

- If a student indicates they will harm themselves or others. In such case the instructor will notify the Dean of Students and/or law enforcement officials.
- If the instructor feels they need clarification from another professional regarding strategy to assist each of you at Kirkwood.

Student behavior that is disruptive or prevents other students from learning is inappropriate in a college classroom and instructors reserve the right to ask the offending students to control their behavior or leave for the day. Once the class is in session, the focus should be on thinking, discussion, and learning.

In the interest of preserving an effective learning environment, as free of as many disruptions as possible, all cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off or placed in a non-audible mode while in the classroom.

Kirkwood Community College endeavors to reinforce the value of independent, honest work on the part of the students. Students are expected to conduct themselves with scholarly integrity. Cheating and plagiarism are serious acts of misconduct and shall be subject to disciplinary action, including possible expulsion from the college.

A Productive Learning Environment

- I believe that the best learning takes place in an environment where faculty and students exhibit trust and mutual respect.
- Faculty and students work cooperatively, recognize and respect differences, model the values of character and citizenship, and become lifelong learners.

Learning Environment Expectations

- Students promote trust by preparing honest and thoughtful work and by expecting evaluation based on performance. Faculty promotes trust by setting clear guidelines for assignments and evaluations, honest feedback, and by assigning bias-free grades.
- Students show respect by being prepared and attending class on time, by paying attention (no cell phones or texting), contributing to classroom discussion, listening respectfully to others' points of view, meeting deadlines of assignments, and by striving for their best performance. Faculty show respect by their timeliness and preparedness, by taking students seriously, by valuing their goals and aspirations, and by providing honest feedback.
- Once the class is in session, the focus should be on thinking, discussion, and learning.
- Students are expected to be active learners through class participation, small group discussion, in-class presentations, or study questions which require library research.
- Participation includes asking questions, answering questions, and listening. If you are carrying on a conversation while someone else is speaking, you are not participating and will not receive any participation points for that day. Student behavior that is disruptive or prevents other students from learning is inappropriate in a college classroom and instructors reserve the right to ask the offending students to control their behavior or leave for the day. If an instructor dismisses a student from class, the instructor will notify the dean in writing of the problem, the action taken by the instructor and the instructor's recommendation.
- In the interest of preserving an effective learning environment, as free of as many disruptions as possible, all cell phones and pagers must be turned off or placed in a non-audible mode while in the classroom.
- **If a student violates this expectation, disciplinary action may be taken according to the Kirkwood Community College policies:**
 - The following will **NOT** be allowed in the classroom:
 - Firearms, weapons, or tools (even if you have a permit)
 - Animals (unless it is an animal for assistance)
- Dangerous or illegal substances
- Drug paraphernalia
- Students are accountable for the learning outcomes for each session, including any sessions that have been missed.

- If you have a planned absence, notify me as soon as possible *before* the absence. Call and leave a message or e-mail to inform of the reason for an absence.
- Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Absences will in no way lessen student responsibility for meeting the requirements of any class.

Late Work/Make-up Test Policy:

Class assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus, unless otherwise stated. Late assignments will be docked 10% off the total points allowed. Exceptions will be approved by the instructor as needed.

Class Attendance Policy and College Sponsored Activities:

As stated in the Student handbook: In compliance with Public Law 105-244, Kirkwood Community College makes a wide variety of general institutional information available to students.

Attendance is expected in order to be successful in the course. I randomly select 25 days over the course of the semester to assign points. If you are present on that day you receive 2 pts. If you contact me about your absence ahead of time you receive 1 pt and if you are gone with no explanation you receive 0 pts. The percentage of points is calculated into your Attendance and Participation pts at the end of the semester.

You are all in college for a reason and I expect you to make your own decisions regarding your attendance. I certainly realize things come up and as long as open lines of communication exist we will both be happy.

Classroom Learning Environment:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

Plagiarism Policy:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

Campus Closings:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

Americans with Disabilities Act:

Students with disabilities who need accommodations to achieve course objectives should file an accommodation application with Learning Services, Cedar Hall 2063 and provide a written plan of accommodation to your instructor prior to the accommodation being provided.

How final grades are determined:

The avenues for achieving these goals and objectives will be through **your reading, your attendance and your participation in exercises and discussion, review of research, small group work and debate, and completion of short assignments and projects.**

Grading Scale:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|--------------|----|--------------|----|--------------|---|-----------------------|
| A+ | 100%+ | B+ | 87- 89.9% | C+ | 77- 79.9% | D+ | 67- 69.9% | F | 59.9% and below |
| A | 93- 100% | B | 83- 86.9% | C | 73- 76.9% | D | 63- 66.9% | | |
| A- | 90- 92.9% | B- | 80- 82.9% | C- | 70- 72.9% | D- | 60- 62.9% | | |

Course Grading Information

Midterm Grades: A midterm grade will be calculated for this course and posted on EagleNet. The grade will be posted as “A” through “F.” The midterm grade is a grade-in-progress, and will not affect your official grade point average (GPA), nor will it impact financial aid. The midterm grade has three purposes: first, to communicate your academic performance; second, to provide opportunities for you to discuss progress with your instructor; and third, to allow Kirkwood to design college-wide intervention programs which will improve student success.

Final Exam: Final Exam: Final exams are scheduled during the last week of the term from DATE TO DATE. **The final exam for this class is scheduled on DATE AND TIME.**

End-of-Semester Course Grades: To comply with federal guidelines, final grades will no longer be posted or mailed. You can obtain your final grade in this course by accessing your grade through EagleNet on www.kirkwood.edu

Appeal Process:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

Drop Date:

Students dropping a class during the first two weeks of a term may receive a full or partial tuition refund for 16 week terms, for shorter courses check with Enrollment Services for total withdraw information. Details of the refund schedule are available from Enrollment Services in 216 Kirkwood Hall. For detailed discussion of drop dates and policies, please read the student handbook.

The last date to drop this class for this term is DATE.

Emergency Info:

See the Student Handbook <http://www.kirkwood.edu/handbook>

Campus Closing:

At various times throughout the semester we may experience weather-related closing or delays. The college policy is that students should report to whatever class would normally be in session when the campus opens. You can sign up for text alerts at www.kirkwood.edu/alerts


APPENDIX B. FALL 2012 COLLEGE 101 UNIT SCHEDULE

| WEEK | TOPICS/UNIT | TEXTBOOK CHAPTER | ACTIVITIES | HOMEWORK |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|--|--|
| #1 | Connecting with your Course Reflecting on your Purpose | 1 | Welcome Week activities. Introduce EagleNet access, Angel, and student e-mail. | Read Ch. 1 <u>Syllabus Quiz</u> <u>Email Quiz</u> |
| #2 | Connecting with KCC and your classmates. Reading Textbooks | 7 | Connections Video Campus Tour Campus Resources | Read Ch. 7 <u>Places to Go</u> |
| #3 | Part One: Goal Setting & Time Management | 2 | Steven Covey Video. 7 Habits to Highly Effective Students. | Read Ch. 2 <u>Time Management</u> |
| #4 | Financial Literacy | 10 | Financial Aid Presentation | Read Ch. 10 <u>Budget Management</u> |
| #5 | Who are you? MBTI personality inventory | ---- | KCC Counselor to Interpret MBTI 9/19 Counseling: Alcohol Screenings | Lifeline activity <u>Who Am I? Paper</u> |
| #6 | Part One: Careers/Advising | 12 | Trombone Player Wanted Video Applied Science field trip. | Read Ch. 12 <u>Career portion of Career Advising Assign.</u> |
| #7 | Part Two: Advising/Careers | 12 | Advisor Visit Liberal Arts Visit 10/5 Family Day | <u>Complete Career Advising Assign.</u> |
| #8 | Learning Styles | 4 | 10/10 Counseling: Depression Screens French Fries are Not Vegetables Video | Read Ch. 4 <u>Vark/MBTI Learning Styles Reflection</u> |
| #9 | Mid Term Meetings Communication | 7 | 10/15 Midterm grades due French Fries are Not Vegetables Video | Read Ch. 7 <u>Instructor Interview</u> |
| #10 | Healthy Lifestyles | 13 | Health Expo 10/21 Wasted Youth Video Planned Parenthood STD testing (campus health) | Read Ch. 13 <u>Food Diary and Reflection</u> |
| #11 | Note Taking | 6 | 10/30 Transfer Fair | Read Ch. 6 |

| WEEK | TOPICS/UNIT | TEXTBOOK CHAPTER | ACTIVITIES | HOMEWORK |
|------|---|----------------------|---|--|
| #12 | Taking Exams | 9 | Career Fair 11/7 Randy Pausch Video | Read Ch. 9 |
| #13 | Part Two: Goal Setting & Time Management | 2 | 11/15 Priority Registration Begins | <u>Two Year Coursework Plan</u> |
| #14 | Critical Thinking Technology | 5 3 | French Fries are Not Vegetables Video | Read Ch. 5 Read Ch. 3 |
| | Thanksgiving Break | | | |
| #15 | Relationships (Boundaries, Civility, Diversity) | 11 | Civility Video Clips Boundaries Video Clip | Read Ch. 11 |
| #16 | Finals Week | | | <u>Portfolio Who Am I Now?</u> |

APPENDIX C. FALL 2012 COLLEGE 101 PRELIMINARY SURVEY

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)

Kirkwood Community College

Welcome to the College 101 survey
We invite you to participate in a research study being conducted by investigators from Kirkwood Community College. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are a student in College 101. The purpose of the study is to better understand the experiences of college students in a college transition course. In addition, your responses will help improve future transition courses, like College 101.

This survey is not being conducted by your instructor and will not impact your grade in College 101.

You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Aggregated results may be used for research reports, publications, and presentations. This means that your responses will be combined with all the survey responses and no identifiable information will be reported.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. By completing the survey, you are giving your consent, as a participant, to use the results for research. If you do not wish to participate in this study, simply exit the survey by closing your internet browser.

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact Kirkwood's Institutional Research Director Cort Iverson (cort.iverson@kirkwood.edu).

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Jana Hanson (jana.hanson@kirkwood.edu).

Thank you very much for your consideration of this research study.

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)

Please enter your K number (example: 0123456)

Please enter the College 101 course section

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I have a plan for what I want to do after college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. I know how to set goals for my academic success | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I have a strong understanding of why I am in college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I know where to find information related to the campus policies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I use a planner or make to-do lists to balance school and other obligations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Managing my time will help me succeed in college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements | | | | | | |
| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 7. I understand how my personality affects personal and professional relationships. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I am aware of careers that fit well with my personality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I know how I best learn course material | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I consider multiple points of views on an Issue | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I use evidence to support my conclusions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I know a note taking method that works best for me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I think studying will help me do well on an exam | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I start reviewing materials a week or more in advance of an exam | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 15. I edit and revise a paper before I turn it in | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. I know best practices on how to communicate with faculty | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. I am comfortable finding information on the Internet | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I know how much I spend each month on living expenses | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I know the difference between scholarships and loans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. I enjoy getting to know people who are from a different racial or ethnic background than me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. There are many kinds of diversity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 22. I have made new friends since coming to campus | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. I know how to set boundaries with friends and family members. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. I know what classes I need in order to graduate in two years | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. I know where to go on campus for information/resources on a particular career | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. Exercising is an important part of my life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. I know what kind of foods are healthy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. I know what classes will transfer to a 4-year college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Prelim Survey)**Identify 2-3 things you want to learn in College 101****What do you plan to do after you graduate from Kirkwood?**

APPENDIX D. FALL 2012 COLLEGE 101 FINAL SURVEY**College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)**

Welcome to the College 101 survey!

We invite you to participate in a research study being conducted by investigators from Kirkwood Community College. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are a student in College 101. The purpose of the study is to better understand the experiences of college students in a college transition course. In addition, your responses will help improve future transition courses, like College 101.

This survey is not being conducted by your instructor and will not impact your grade in College 101.

You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Aggregated results may be used for research reports, publications, and presentations. This means that your responses will be combined with all the survey responses and no identifiable information will be reported.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. By completing the survey, you are giving your consent, as a participant, to use the results for research. If you do not wish to participate in this study, simply exit the survey by closing your internet browser.

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact Kirkwood's Institutional Research Director Cort Iverson (cort.iverson@kirkwood.edu).

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Jana Hanson (jana.hanson@kirkwood.edu).

Thank you very much for your consideration of this research study.

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

1. Please enter your K number (example: 0123456)

2. Please enter the College 101 course section

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I have a plan for what I want to do after college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. I know how to set goals for my academic success | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I have a strong understanding of why I am in college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I know where to find information related to the campus policies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I use a planner or make to-do lists to balance school and other obligations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Managing my time will help me succeed in college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 7. I understand how my personality affects personal and professional relationships. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I am aware of careers that fit well with my personality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I know how I best learn course material | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I consider multiple points of views on an issue | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I use evidence to support my conclusions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I know a note taking method that works best for me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I think studying will help me do well on an exam | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I start reviewing materials a week or more in advance of an exam | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 15. I edit and revise a paper before I turn it in | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. I know best practices on how to communicate with faculty | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. I am comfortable finding information on the Internet | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I know how much I spend each month on living expenses | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I know the difference between scholarships and loans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. I enjoy getting to know people who are from a different racial or ethnic background than me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. There are many kinds of diversity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 22. I have made new friends since coming to campus | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. I know how to set boundaries with friends and family members | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. I know what classes I need in order to graduate in two years | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. I know where to go on campus for information/resources on a particular career | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. Exercising is an important part of my life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. I know what kind of foods are healthy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. I know what classes will transfer to a 4-year college | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

7. Thinking about College 101, please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Topics covered in course | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Course expectations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Course activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Course instructor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Course readings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Organization of course | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

Directions: For the following questions, please check 'yes' if you agree with the statement, 'no' if you do not agree, or 'maybe' if you are not sure. In addition, explain why you chose that option.

8. Do you feel you know how to access student support services (e.g. advising, Campus Health, Counseling services, etc) as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

9. Are you more comfortable approaching your instructors at Kirkwood as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

10. Do you have a better understanding of differences between high school and college as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

11. Do you think you will be more successful in college as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

12. Have you developed more connection to people at Kirkwood (faculty, staff, and students) by taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

13. Do you have a better understanding of the career possibilities for you as a result of this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

Directions: For the following questions, please check 'yes' if you agree with the statement, 'no' if you do not agree, or 'maybe' if you are not sure. In addition, explain why you chose that option.

14. Has your understanding of your personal values and the values of others increased as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

15. With the assistance of an advisor, do you feel comfortable planning your schedule and academic plans as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

16. Do you have a better understanding of the academic demands of college as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)

17. Are you better equipped to understand and develop strategies to ensure your academic (pertaining to coursework and your studies) success as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

18. Are you better equipped to understand and develop strategies to ensure your personal success (pertaining to relationships and life choices) as a result of taking this course?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

19. Would you recommend this course to new first-year Kirkwood students?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Please explain

College 101 Fall 2012 (Final Survey)**Additional Feedback**

The following questions ask for additional feedback on your experience in College 101

20. What did you like best about College 101?**21. Please indicate ways that we can improve College 101. Is there anything you think we should add or change? Please explain.****22. What do you plan to do after you graduate from Kirkwood?****23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with College 101?**

APPENDIX E: FALL 2012 COLLEGE 101 PORTFOLIO GRADING RUBRIC

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION and CHECKLIST FORM

Complete this evaluation form by **checking off in the box** each of the artifacts you've included *before* the portfolio conference. Have it in your portfolio for the instructor to read. The points are awarded by the instructor.

INTRODUCTION

____/12 possible pts. Reflect on your academic and personal development in reference to your portfolio artifacts. Explain why you think a portfolio is required. The introduction must be a minimum of one full typewritten page.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ____/6 possible pts. Time Monitor. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic development.

- ____/6 possible pts VARK Reflection. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic development.

- ____/6 possible pts Instructor Interview. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic development.

- ____/6 possible pts. Your choice. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic development. (Can be from this class or another class)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- ____/6 possible pts. MBTI Reflection. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact supports your sense of social development.

- ____/6 possible pts. Your choice. (Can be something from outside of class). Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact supports your sense of social development.

ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLANNING

Items that contribute to your sense of vocational and personal purpose...

- ____/6 possible pts. Academic plan of study. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic and career planning.
- ____/6 possible pts. Career Checklist. Introduce your artifacts with a paragraph describing how and why these artifacts illustrate your career and academic planning. Include printouts for at least two possible careers researched in the OOH
- ____/6 possible pts. Your choice. (Can be something from outside of class) Introduce your artifact with a paragraph describing how and/or why this artifact illustrates your academic and career planning.

CELEBRATE YOUR GROWTH AS A PERSON AND A STUDENT

- ____/6 possible pts. An artifact from this class that celebrates your ability to be a successful student. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph reflecting how and/or why this artifact illustrates your sense of growth.
- ____/6 possible pts. An artifact from your life experiences this semester that celebrates your ability to be a successful student. This can include artifacts from work, family, friends or activities you have been involved in. Introduce your artifact with a paragraph reflecting how and/or why this artifact illustrates your sense of growth.
- ____/6 possible pts. Who Am I and the Who Am I Now assignments. Introduce your artifacts with three paragraphs reflecting on how you have changed over the semester, how you have remained the same, and how who you are today illustrates your sense of success.

Final Instructor Checklist:

- ____/4 possible pts. Student on time for scheduled conference.
- ____/4 possible pts. Used a 3-ring binder?
- ____/4 possible pts. Used labeled tabs?
- ____/4 possible pts. This evaluation form completed and included in portfolio

Total Pts. Awarded _____/100 possible points

APPENDIX F. IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4566
FAX 515 294-4267

Date: 11/1/2012

To: Thomas M O'Shea
3605 6th St
Marion, IA 52302

CC: Dr. Larry Ebbers
N256 Lagomarcino Hall
Dr. Carol Heaverlo
218 Carver Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Inside Out: Reflection of College 101 from the Student's Perspective

IRB ID: 12-446

Study Review Date: 11/1/2012

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted education settings involving normal education practices, such as:
 - Research on regular and special education instructional strategies; or
 - Research on the effectiveness of, or the comparison among, instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
 - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
 - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make**

APPENDIX G. KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE IRB APPROVAL



6301 Kirkwood Blvd. S.W.
P.O. Box 2068
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
www.kirkwood.edu

September 6, 2012

Tom O'Shea
6301 Kirkwood Blvd. S.W.
P.O. Box 2068
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Dear Mr. O'Shea,

Kirkwood Community College's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your research project entitled "Inside out: Reflection of College 101 from the student's perspective" for implementation at Kirkwood Community College. This approval is based on an expedited review of your proposed research by me as the chairperson of Kirkwood's IRB. Through my review, I concur with your assertion that the research falls under the exemption of 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2):

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

- (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

This approval is given with the following conditions:

1. Adherence to the protocol as presented in documentation provided to me prior to the issuance of this letter, including your e-mail of 09/06/2012 at 10:34 A.M.
2. Prior approval by Kirkwood's IRB of any protocol changes.
3. Immediate reporting of any unanticipated consequences of the research project to Kirkwood's IRB.
4. Prior written approval by the Vice President of Academic Affairs to conduct the research at Kirkwood.
5. Prior approval by the President if Kirkwood's name or likeness will be related to study findings.

Please provide me with a final copy of your findings when your research is complete. I also would appreciate hearing about any dissemination of your research findings, as well as examples of practical applications. I look forward to learning about your findings and the use thereof.

Please let me know if you need any additional guidance or information.

Sincerely,

Cort Iverson
Director of Institutional Research

**APPENDIX H. RECRUITMENT LETTER SENT TO FACULTY
FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS**

Dear Fellow College 101 Instructors:

As most of you recall from our College 101 trainings in August, I am on a journey to conduct a Qualitative Research study focusing on the College 101 course here at Kirkwood Community College for my Ph.D. program at Iowa State University. Often times during the curriculum development or revision process on college campuses, students' voices are not taken into consideration when creating curriculum for courses.

My study will focus on College 101 students' perspective on the curriculum and its benefits for transition into academic and social life on campus. My study will begin with research into what student perceptions of College 101 were prior to starting the course and what motivations they had for registering for the course. My study will specifically look at what aspects of the curriculum students view as beneficial for their transition and what aspects students view as not beneficial for their transition to Kirkwood.

After completing the Institutional Review Board process at Iowa State University and Kirkwood Community College, I have been officially approved to begin my research. The first step in the research process is to recruit students to participate in the study. My goal is to have a group of 6-8 students willing to participate in the study planning to take place from mid October through the end of the semester. My study will involve focus groups and semi-structured interviews with each student involved in the research study.

At this point, I would like to ask if I could take 10 minutes of one of your upcoming College 101 courses to talk about my research and ask for student's participation in the project. If you are willing to assist me in the recruitment of students please contact me soon so I can set up a time to come into your class.

Thanks for your willingness to help me in the recruitment of students for my research study. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. O'Shea, M. Ed.
Allied Health Department Coordinator
Kirkwood Community College
(319) 398-7191
tom.oshea@kirkwood.edu

APPENDIX I. STUDENT FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear College 101 Students:

Often times during the curriculum development or revision process on college campuses, students' voices are not taken into consideration when creating curriculum for courses.

My study will focus on College 101 students' perspective on the curriculum and its benefits for transition into academic and social life on campus. My study will begin with research into what student perceptions of College 101 were prior to starting the course and what motivations they had for registering for the course. My study will specifically look at what aspects of the curriculum students view as beneficial for their transition and what aspects students view as not beneficial for their transition to Kirkwood.

After completing the Institutional Review Board process at Iowa State University and Kirkwood Community College, I have been officially approved to begin my research. The first step is to come into your College 101 course to conduct a Focus Group on your initial experiences in College 101. The final step in the research process is to recruit students to participate in the study. My goal is to have a group of 6-8 students willing to participate in the study planning to take place from mid October through the end of the semester. My study will involve focus groups and semi-structured interviews with each student involved in the research study.

At this point, I would like to inform you that your faculty member has granted me permission to come speak with your class and conduct a focus group. As with any research process, your participation is voluntary. However, as part of my process I wanted to inform you all through this communication that I will be attending your class very soon.

Thanks for your willingness to help me in my research study. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. O'Shea, M. Ed.
Allied Health Department Coordinator
Kirkwood Community College
(319) 398-7191
tom.oshea@kirkwood.edu

APPENDIX J. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Inside Out: Reflection of the College 101 Experience from the Students' and Faculty Perspective

Investigator: Thomas M. O'Shea, M. Ed.
Ph.D. Student at Iowa State University (tom.oshea@kirkwood.edu)

This is a qualitative research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

This is a research study as part of my dissertation for my Ph.D. at Iowa State University. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into students' experiences with College 101 at Kirkwood Community College. Through the first year experience course I am interested in learning how the College 101 course has helped students transition to college life here at Kirkwood Community College. More specifically, I would like to know what aspects of the curriculum were most beneficial in helping you transition to Kirkwood and what aspects of the curriculum were not beneficial. Information from the dissertation will be shared with the Dean of Students and College 101 Coordinator at Kirkwood Community College upon its completion.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are currently a freshman at Kirkwood Community College and are enrolled in a College 101 course. The research study will use pseudonyms for you as participants and will not identify you in any way during the research process. Please understand that you will be participating in several activities with other students participating in this research. It is asked that all information discussed during the focus groups be kept confidential.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a variety of activities that will allow me to gather information about your experiences with College 101. The length of the study is from mid July through the end of the fall semester at Kirkwood. You may be asked to participate in at least one or more of the following activities as follows:

1. You will be asked to participate in a no more than two 30-45 minute interview with me to discuss your experiences in College 101. Questions that will be asked will include experiences and involvement in high school activities, experiences in your College 101 class and perceptions of how College 101 has helped you transition to college life at Kirkwood Community College.
2. You will be asked to participate in a no more than two 1 to 1 and ½ hour focus groups with me and other participants in the study to discuss your experiences in College 101. Questions that will be asked will include experiences and involvement in high school activities, experiences in your College 101 class and perceptions of how College 101 has helped you transition to college life at Kirkwood Community College. All information discussed in the focus groups is asked to remain confidential.
3. You will be asked to participate in a faculty focus group that will be no more than 1 hour. The faculty focus group will ask faculty who have taught the course to share their experiences with the curriculum. The facilitator of the focus group will ask about perceptions, likes, dislikes, etc on all areas of the curriculum.

All focus groups and semi-structured interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and recorded for analysis as part of the research process. You as participants will be provide copies of all aspects you were involved in and a final copy of the dissertation.

RISKS

While participating in this study there are no known risks and no foreseeable risks at this time.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit Kirkwood Community College by using the information from the study to enhance the materials in the College 101 course.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study.

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

There will be food and drink provided at each focus group conducted.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will not be kept by the researcher during the study.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken:

1. Each student will be coded using pseudonyms. No participants’ real names will be used.
2. All references made in the study and in the analysis will be done so with these pseudonyms.
3. Information in the research project will be reviewed by the following people:
 - a. Myself, as the researcher.
 - b. The five members of my Ph.D. Dissertation Committee:
 - i. Dr. Larry Ebbers
 - ii. Dr. Marisa Rivera
 - iii. Dr. Carol Heaverlo
 - iv. Dr. Sharon Drake
 - v. Dr. Jan Friedel
 - c. You as the participants
4. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact:

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thomas M. O’Shea, M. Ed. Primary Investigator Iowa State University Ph. D. Student toshea@mchsi.com | Dr. Larry Ebbers, Ph.D. Professor Dissertation Committee Chair lebbbers@iastate.edu |
|---|--|
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant’s Name (printed) _____

(Participant’s Signature)

(Date)



APPENDIX K. STUDENT FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED:

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION YEAR:

MAJOR/DEGREE INTENT FOR COLLEGE:

Demographic Information:

- Describe to me where you are from?
- Describe your high school for me?
- Share with me activities in high school you were involved in?
- Describe to me your time in high school, academically? Socially? Personally?
- Share with me things you did to prepare for college while in high school?
- Share with me your plans for your time here at Kirkwood?
- Share with me the things you were excited about going to college?
- Describe to me any fears you had about going to college?

- **Share with me why you decided to take College 101?**
- **Share with me things you heard about College 101 prior to enrolling?**
- **Share with me what you hope to gain from taking College 101?**
- **Would you recommend this course to future students? Why or why not?**

APPENDIX L. RESEARCH PROTOCOL FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

PROTOCOL FOR COLLEGE 101 CURRICULUM RESEARCH PROJECT

- **Protocol for the Focus Groups**
 - Focus groups will be conducted in a classroom on campus at Kirkwood Community College.
 - Focus group meetings will be held when convenient for students in the study.
 - Focus groups will include food and drink.
 - Focus groups will be conducted at least once during the study and the questions are listed below.
 - Focus group members will receive a transcript of the event.
 - Focus groups will be video recorded.

- **Protocol for the Semi-structured Interviews**
 - Semi-structured interviews will be conducted in an office or classroom on campus at Kirkwood Community College.
 - Semi-structured interviews will be held when convenient for students in the study.
 - Semi-structured interviews will be conducted twice during the study and the questions are listed below.
 - Semi-structured interviews members will receive a transcript of the event.
 - Semi-structured interviews will be video recorded.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (FOCUS GROUP #1)

- Describe to me where you are from?
- Describe your high school for me?
- Share with me activities in high school were you involved in?
- Describe to me your time in high school?
- Share with me anything you did to prepare for college while in high school?
- Share with me your plans for your time here at Kirkwood Community College?
- Share with me your hopes and dreams after Kirkwood Community College?

COLLEGE 101 INTENTIONS (FOCUS GROUP #1)

- Share with me the things you were excited about going to college?
- Describe for me any fears did you have about going to college?
- Share with me why you decided to take in College 101?
- Share with me, positive or negative, what you hear about College 101 prior to enrolling?
- Share with me what you hope to gain from taking College 101?

COLLEGE 101 CURRICULUM REFLECTIONS (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW #1 and #2)

- The following areas of the College 101 Curriculum will be part of the research:
 - Getting to Know Your College and Resources
 - Who Am I-Self Discovery
 - Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator
 - Academic Success Topics
 - Career Decision Making
 - Health and Wellness
 - Alcohol and Drugs
- The following questions will be asked in relations to each aspect of the College 101 Curriculum:
 - What did you learn from the XXX curriculum topic?
 - What activities did you do when discussing the XXX curriculum topic?
 - How did the XXX curriculum topic help you in your transition to Kirkwood?
 - Would you make any changes in how the XXX curriculum topic was discussed in your College 101 course?
 - Should the XXX curriculum topic be a part of the College 101 curriculum? Please explain why or why not?

COLLEGE 101 OUTCOMES (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW #2)

- Describe for me what you enjoy most about your College 101 class?
- Describe for me what you enjoy least about your College 101 class?
- Share with me how has College 101 met your expectations?
- Share with me how has College 101 not met your expectations?
- Describe ways College 101 made your transition to Kirkwood easy?

APPENDIX M. STUDENT INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Kirkwood College 101 Students:

My name is Thomas M. O'Shea and I am the Department Coordinator of Allied Health and a College 101 Adjunct Faculty member here at Kirkwood Community College. Some of you may have recently seen my presentation in your College 101 course focusing on the research I am conducting on the College 101 course here at Kirkwood for my Ph.D. program at Iowa State University.

My study will focus on your perspective on the curriculum in your College 101 course and the benefits for you in your transition into the academic and social life on campus. My study will specifically look at what aspects of the curriculum you view as beneficial for your transition and what aspects you view as not beneficial for your transition to Kirkwood.

The purpose of this email is to recruit you to participate in my research project for the remainder of the 2012 fall semester focusing on your experiences in your College 101 course. I know that all of you are busy with academics and extracurricular activities, but would be so grateful for your participation in the study. The outcomes of my research will provide priceless information to the Dean of Students and the College 101 Coordinator here at Kirkwood as they continue to look at how to make the College 101 course more valuable for students who come to Kirkwood. The research study will involve up to 2 focus groups lasting about 1 and ½ hours in length and up to 3 semi-structured interviews lasting anywhere from 30-45 minutes each.

Thanks for your willingness to help me in the recruitment of students for my research study. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. O'Shea, M. Ed.
Allied Health Department Coordinator
Kirkwood Community College
(319) 398-7191
tom.oshea@kirkwood.edu

APPENDIX N. FACULTY FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT LETTER

Greetings colleagues,

Happy Wednesday!

I hope this email finds you doing great. As many of you know, Tom O'Shea is working on his PhD through Iowa State University. His research has focused on College 101. He's nearing completion....with an expected date of completion in early 2014!

Tom has collected data on the student perspective of the course. His advisor has asked him to now collect data/feedback from the faculty who are or were teaching the course over the past couple of years. Tom's advisor has recommended he not lead such a discussion. Tom has asked me to lead a faculty forum to collect the feedback/input he'll need to complete his research.

I'm excited to help him with this portion of his research and my hope is that you'll want to join me in this work! I'll be facilitating a discussion about the course, curriculum and textbook next Tuesday, September 17th during activity hour (11:15 – 12:10 PM).

Here are the details:

College 101 Faculty Forum
 Date: Tuesday, September 17
 Time: 11:15 AM – 12:10 PM
 Location: 1152 Linn Hall
 RSVP by noon on Monday, Sept. 16
 To Lauri Hughes (lhughes@kirkwood.edu)

We'd be delighted to have each of you attended the forum. Your experience and insights will play a key role in his research efforts. Whether you are teaching the course for the first time this semester or last taught it a year ago.....you are encouraged to attend! If you are located in Iowa City and would like to participate let me know....I can set up a conference call and have you participate via phone.

On behalf of Tom and myself, thanks so much for considering the opportunity. I look forward to hearing back from each of you.

Warmest regards,

Lauri Hughes
 Department of Nursing
 319-398-5613

APPENDIX O. RESEARCH PROTOCOL FOR FACULTY FOCUS GROUP

PROTOCOL FOR COLLEGE 101 CURRICULUM RESEARCH PROJECT

- **Protocol for the Focus Groups**
 - Focus groups will be conducted in a classroom on campus at Kirkwood Community College.
 - Focus group meetings will be held when convenient for faculty in the study.
 - Focus groups will include food and drink.
 - Focus groups will be conducted once during the study and the questions are listed below.
 - Focus group members will receive a transcript of the event.
 - Focus groups will be video recorded.

COLLEGE 101 CURRICULUM REFLECTIONS (FOCUS GROUP #1)

- The following areas of the College 101 Curriculum will be part of the research:
 - Getting to Know Your College and Resources
 - Who Am I-Self Discovery
 - Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator
 - Academic Success Topics
 - Career Decision Making
 - Health and Wellness
 - Alcohol and Drugs
- The following questions will be asked in relations to each aspect of the College 101 Curriculum:
 - Why do you think the XXX curriculum topic is part of the College 101 course?
 - What activities did you do when discussing the XXX curriculum topic?
 - How did the XXX curriculum topic help you in making connections to Kirkwood for your students?
 - Would you make any changes in how the XXX curriculum topic was discussed in your College 101 course?
 - Should the XXX curriculum topic be a part of the College 101 curriculum? Please explain why or why not?