

College Readiness among Students who Attended an Enrichment Program

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

August 2014

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Abstract

Many studies have found that enrichment programs help students to improve academically, socially and personally in terms of college success and matriculation (Bernhardt, 2013; Contreras, 2011; Gullatt & Jan, 2011; Venezia, & Jaeger, 2013). The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of academic, social and personal preparedness and adjustment in college of students who did and did not participate in an enrichment program(s) intended to help them succeed in college. A descriptive survey was completed voluntarily online by the enrichment group, and respondents were asked to select a peer in their program of study whom s/he believed did not attend a college preparatory enrichment program to complete the survey also. However, only participants who received enrichment completed the survey and took part in the follow-up interview. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the findings and the original comparisons intended were not able to be made. All participants rated items using a six point scale to indicate how academically, socially, and personally prepared they felt they were for college, and using a four point scale to indicate how satisfied they were with their college. Participants also had opportunities to state what aspects of their enrichment experience were helpful in college and from those participants a subsample who was interviewed stated that they wanted to remain an active part of the program, suggesting such programs are helpful.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The American school system gives children the message that in order to succeed they must obtain a college degree. However, every school year, freshmen enter college unprepared academically, socially, and personally to benefit from the college experience. Some unfortunate consequences experienced by students who are not prepared are that they do not do well academically, they are unable to balance the academic and social aspects of college, and many drop out (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Swail, Quinn, Landis & Fung, 2012 & Vargas, 2013).

According to Vargas, aspects of the public school system, such as effectively funding to schools with low-income students, decreasing the high school dropout rate, and closing the racial achievement gaps, are in crisis, and enrichment programs may be one of the ways students are helped to succeed beyond high school. Many programs exist which attempt to increase students' overall academic performance, help them navigate through their career paths, and provide students with varied extracurricular experiences. For example, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is designed as an in-school college preparation program so that students take higher level courses and receive mentoring. Given the difficulties which unprepared students experience, the tremendous expense of college, and limited funds for enrichment programs, it is important for researchers and educators to discern which aspects of enrichment programs actually help students benefit from and contribute to their college experiences, as well as graduate. This study was designed to add to this knowledge by assessing the perceptions related to academic, social, and personal adjustment in college of students who participated in enrichment programs intended to help them succeed in college and by comparing those perceptions to those of students who did not receive such enrichment.

This researcher became interested in this issue as many of her peers contemplated dropping out or transferring from their current college/university and the high school group with whom she works expressed that they do not feel as though their current high-school is preparing them adequately for college. She observed that many students did not believe the college/university they were attending was a good fit for them and wished to learn more about how students were prepared for college and how they felt once they entered college so that she could create a college readiness initiative.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to describe the academic, social and personal perception and satisfaction of college students who attended enrichment programs and peers who did not. The study also will describe aspects of the enrichment program perceived as most helpful.

Operational Definitions

Academic Preparedness reflects students' "ability to complete rigorous coursework, ability to exhibit high-level thinking, and problem-solving and personal skills, such as time management and discipline" (McDonald & Farrell, 2012, p. 228).

Social Preparedness reflects students' ability to belong to social groups.

Personal Preparedness reflects a student's ability to develop personally during his/her college experience.

Overall Satisfaction reflects students' general contentment with their overall college experience.

Academic Success is quantified in this study using the students' self-reported grade point

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review will examine issues related to college readiness among students. The first section of the review explains the importance and relevance of promoting college preparation. Section two discusses definitions and components of college readiness. Section three explores students' views of college readiness and factors promoting success. Subsequent sections discuss the Early College High School Model and additional interventions to enhance college readiness. The fifth section describes the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, and the final section explores enrichment programs.

Promoting College Preparation

Examples of promoting college enrollment for even young students abound. In one elementary school, for example, college names are brightly displayed on walls, along with the phrases such as "all things are possible" and "college bound." In each classroom, a board is dedicated to the colleges that the teacher attended, decorated with pictures of college mascots, flags and pompoms. Also, students are encouraged to wear college tee-shirts of family members who have attended college. Such promotion reflects a college culture in which students become immersed in from a young age (Contreras, 2011). However, when it is time for high school seniors to apply for college, many are not prepared for numerous reasons, such as lack of counseling, low SES, and lack of financial aid (Bailey & Karp, 2003; Barnett, Corrin, Nakanishi, Bork, Mitchell & Sepanik, 2012; Contreras, 2011; Moore, Slate, Edmonson, Combs, Bustamante, & Onwuegbuzie, 2010; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Fortunately, many organizations through offering college readiness programs, seek to provide supports to address the needs of students who are at risk of being unprepared due to these factors. Enrichment programs are one intervention designed to help students become college ready.

Definitions of College Readiness

While there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes college readiness, many organizations include in their definitions the components that will help students succeed in college. Importantly, a comprehensive definition of college readiness must be comprised of psychological, social and cognitive aspects to present a holistic view of students' experiences. Some definitions, however, focus on some aspects more than others. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (2013), for example, uses a cognitive lens when defining college readiness as “the combination of skills, knowledge, and habits of mind necessary to fully participate in college-level courses (courses at the 100 level and above) to completion. Barnett et al. (2012) cite Conley, a researcher on college preparation and readiness, as describing college readiness through a socio-environmental and a psychological lens. According to Conley,

“college readiness is comprised of four interdependent skill areas which are *key content knowledge* in reading, writing, and other core academic subject areas; *college knowledge*, i.e., the “privileged information” needed to prepare for and apply to college and the contextual awareness skills needed to be successful there; *academic behaviors*, such as self-awareness and self-monitoring; and *key cognitive strategies*, such as intellectual openness and problem solving” (p. 25).

Conley’s definition uses both a socio-environmental and psychological lens because in addition to college knowledge, it focuses on academic behaviors that reflect students’ independence, thus revealing the socio-environmental influences on a student. With regard to college knowledge, it is important to note that the definition of and variables which influence success vary across students and universities and within academic programs. Moreover, comprehensive definitions of college readiness also must consider influences such as adult guidance, involvement, and

encouragement, as these factors help students to gain a greater sense of college readiness and better prepare them for college (Barnett, 2012; Byrd & MacDonald 2005).

Students' Views of College Readiness and Factors Promoting Success

An important precursor to helping prepare students for college is to understand how they view college readiness. One qualitative study interviewed eight first-generation college students who had attended a community college and transferred into a four year university to determine their perceptions regarding college readiness. This study took a holistic approach of trying “to understand student characteristics and skills within the context of college” by considering three categories. The categories were skills and abilities perceived as important for college readiness, background factors and life experiences that contribute to college readiness, and nontraditional student self-concept” (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005, p. 26). Findings were that time management and self-advocacy were perceived as critical skills that helped students succeed and family factors and career goals motivated them to attend college. Respondents' greatest concern related to college readiness was their lack of knowledge about financial aid and how to access financial assistance.

The Early College High School Model

McDonald and Farrell (2012) conducted a qualitative in which the researchers interviewed 198 high school freshman and sophomore students to learn about how they perceived their college readiness. Focus group interviews were held with 31 disadvantaged students who participated in the Early College High School Model (ECHS). This model was designed to optimize student choice of career-specific pathways through advanced coursework, college coursework, community partnerships, field experiences, and service learning, and was intended to bridge the transitional gap that exists between high school and college for students at

risk of high-school and college failure. The ECHS program is a hybrid program, which allows students to attend high-school on a community college campus and take accelerated high school courses and college courses. The goal of the ECHS program is to increase high school graduation rates, along with student acclimation to college. The study examined the following four categories: readiness, learning community, identity and productivity. Overall, McDonald and Farrell's findings examined participants' views in the areas of readiness, learning communities, identity, and productivity. Participants viewed readiness as their ability to complete rigorous coursework and exhibit high-level thinking. A learning community is the social aspect and meant having accepted behaviors, conventions, diversity, and a communal interdependency for the accomplishment of tasks to support learning. Identity meant acceptance from their support system and provided the foundation for their growing confidence in establishing a college student identity. Lastly, productivity meant values of wanting to contribute to society and make a significant positive impact in their chosen field.

The two studies described above reveal that defining and encouraging college readiness involves more than attempting to help students do well on college placement tests and complete college applications. It also involves taking academic, social, and personal factors into consideration. As noted, the findings of the study reported by McDonald and Farrell (2012) indicate that students are more equipped for successful adjustment and involvement in college because the ECHS model developed a cohesive learning community which enabled students to gain support and confidence in academic, social and personal areas.

Additional Interventions to Enhance College Readiness

The ECHS program is just one model of interventions designed to increase high-school students' college readiness. There are many other types of intervention programs with different approaches which also have been designed to increase college readiness in varied settings. College readiness programs can be found in and administered by schools, non-profit organizations, and through partnerships between and among colleges, universities, non-profit agencies and schools. Each of these programs has a different approach that reflects funding, resources, and type of program (Barnett et al., 2012; Gullatt & Jan, 2011). Some public school systems have developed programs to increase college readiness. For example, "In 2000, Texas launched the *Closing the Gaps by 2015* initiative with the goal of 'closing the higher education gaps Texas and between Texas and other leading states'" (p. 6). The *Closing the Gaps by 2015* initiative allots funds to pre-kindergarten through grade twelve schools to develop college readiness programs. For example, some Texan high schools partner with public higher education institutions to develop college readiness. Barnett, et al. found that most federal, state, and local programs either were academic or college knowledge programs. Further, they found that both academic and college knowledge programs had similar features, although academic programs were more intense, offered academic support in the topics of reading, writing, and math, and enabled students to have first-hand opportunities to experience college through campus visits. In addition, students learned how to improve their academic skills such as time management and test taking strategies. These programs occurred throughout different periods of the year. Some were offered during the summer as a bridge program to prepare students for the upcoming academic year, while others were offered during the school year, or as a stand-alone course. In contrast, college knowledge programs offered college counseling, college readiness sessions, and tended to extend over multiple years. College counseling programs involved having advisors

from local colleges partner with high-schools to help students complete the college application process. Also, college readiness sessions included mini-lectures incorporated into teachers' traditional lesson plans to ensure students completed the college application process. The self-guided sessions were offered during high school class periods and used a computer program entitled MyMentor.

Gullatt and Jan (2011), from the University of California, surveyed literature on four academic outreach programs to learn how the programs prepared disadvantaged students who did not have opportunities for rigorous academic programs in school for college through “instructional outreach, career-based outreach and academic support” (p. iv). The programs included in the survey were Baltimore College Bound, Career Beginnings, Sponsor a Scholar, and Upward Bound. All of the programs held high standards for students, gave them personal attention, provided adult role models, offered timed intervention, and were invested long term. Additionally, programs that collaborated with K-12 schools had a greater impact on increasing students' college preparedness. Career Beginnings was the only program that did not offer financial aid in the form of scholarships. Overall, the researchers found that students who attended one of these pre-collegiate programs had a greater chance of graduating college and tended to have a slightly higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than similar students who had not attended pre-collegiate programs designed to foster college readiness.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a readiness intervention program similar to the Texas partnerships programs with high-schools and colleges. AVID is an “in-school academic support program that targets students in grades 4-12, who likely need encouragement and exposure to the possibilities and doors that college will likely open. AVID

works to place academically average students in grades 4-12 into in advanced classes, building on the premise that youth rise to the expectations placed before them,” (Contreras, 2011, p. 510). In higher education, AVID, known as AVID in Higher Education (AHE) partners with colleges/universities to increased learning, persistence, completion, and success in and beyond college (Bernhardt, 2013).

Enrichment Programs

Enrichment programs are similar to pre-collegiate programs designed specifically to promote college readiness skills, because some aim to increase students’ college readiness as early as fourth grade. Enrichment programs can provide “experiences and activities that are purposefully designed to expose children to topics and disciplines related to specific interests and/or talents, to appropriate academic content and instruction, and to advanced levels of content acquisition and instruction” (Caesar Rodney School District, 2012, p. 6). Enrichment programs can be found in schools, colleges, or non-profit organizations. Since most enrichment programs do not have sufficient funding to track students over time, many do not have data to document their outcomes. Further complicating evaluation of their success is the wide variation in programs and goals. For example, enrichment programs can be created by schools or specific non-profit organizations. Enrichment programs can have different objectives and occur during different times, such as during the school day, after-school, or for an extended period over summer breaks. Enrichment programs can be run by federal or state governments or through private non-profit organizations (Contreras, 2011). Moreover, there is no universal way to measure the success of enrichment programs and studies of their effectiveness yield mixed results (Gullatt & Jan, 2011). Some studies indicate that there is no difference in the success of students who participated in an enrichment program and those who did not, whereas other

studies suggest that enrichment programs increased college readiness, retention and survival among participating students (Contreras, 2011; Gullatt & Jan 2011; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Also, findings suggest that students who attend enrichment programs at a younger age and continue to attend enrichment programs are more college-ready than students who joined an enrichment program at a later age (Swail et al., 2012). Although, there is no universal system for monitoring enrichment programs, in general, participating students stated that the programs had a positive influence on their college readiness, noting importantly that the earlier they started to attend an enrichment program the more likely they were to enroll in and graduate from college. Additionally, it appears that most felt they were more prepared for college as compared to students who did not attend an enrichment program (Gullatt & Jan, 2011; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

Conclusion

Although, the concept of college readiness is difficult to define, it is important to study the ways that organizations have sought to define and promote college readiness, in addition to how students define what they view as being college ready. Completing college has positive outcomes for students, families, and communities. A brief by Jobs for the Future used "a cost-benefit calculator to estimate the savings specifically to state taxpayers of reducing the cost of a student's successful completion of high school and college" (Vargas, 2013, p.1). Vargas found that "closing the income-related gap in college completion would increase the productivity of public education investments by \$1,452 per Associate's degree earned and by \$3,607 per Bachelor's degree earned" (p. 6). Similarly, in Texas in 2010, The American Youth Policy Forum stated that "The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) analyzed its financial aid database and found that between 2003 and 2009, 66 percent of the 159,824 students

who entered college did not graduate, resulting in a loss of \$713.2 million in financial aid and \$397.9 million in local and state revenue foregone" (Barnett et al., 2012, p. 6). Moreover, knowing students' perspective on college readiness is crucial because many students are not ready when they enter college.

Overall, there have been positive results in terms of college preparedness for students participating in college readiness programs compared to students who did not participate in such programs. Most studies found that students who started a college readiness program at a younger age were more likely to be better prepared for and graduate from college than students who did not have this experience. Therefore, there appears to be a positive correlation between the amount of time a student attends a college readiness program and their college success. A crucial type of program is an enrichment program with the goal of college readiness because such programs actively seek to encourage students adopt the mindset that they are college bound and encourage them to apply to, excel in and graduate from college. Given these benefits and the fact that many students still are unprepared and experience failure in college, more needs to be known about students' perceptions about how their involvement in enrichment programs impacted their college experience and if participation in such programs appropriately prepared them for college.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

A descriptive study was conducted to describe perceptions of college students with and without a history of attending enrichment programs designed help prepare them for college. In addition to basic demographic information and grades, ratings from a survey were obtained to assess students' perceptions of their academic, social, and personal preparedness for and overall satisfaction with college. After the survey was administered, a randomly selected subsample of students who received and who did not receive enrichment and who indicated they were willing to take part in a telephone interview did so by telephone in order to provide the researcher deeper insight regarding their feelings about their preparedness for and overall satisfaction with college.

Participants

The enrichment group included students residing in Baltimore, Maryland who participated in a full year enrichment program. Their eligibility began when they entered fourth grade and were still involved in the program at the time the study was conducted. The study was designed to support them through their graduation from their undergraduate studies.

In order to form a comparison group, each participant in the enrichment group was asked to select a peer who was enrolled in his or her major and in the same year of college but whom they believed did not participate in a college preparatory enrichment program and to request that they also complete the survey.

Instrument

In order to assess the students' perceptions of academic, social, and personal preparedness for college, a survey was developed based on the design and findings of two

previous studies (see Appendix A). The first model study was McDonald and Farrell's (2012) "Out of the Mouths of Babes: Early College High School (ECHS) Students' Transformational Learning Experiences" and the second was Byrd & MacDonald's (2005) qualitative study "Defining College Readiness from the Inside Out: First Generation College Student Perspective."

The survey items asked students to provide some basic demographic information, information about any college preparatory enrichment they received, and to respond to items in four sections rating their academic, social, and personal adjustment and overall satisfaction with college. Each section contained 8-18 items and responses were ratings on a Likert scale with which ranged from one (completely agree) to seven (completely disagree). Additionally, cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) was self-reported to indicate how successful students were in college at that time. A few items asked for explanations of responses. For example, one item asked why respondents believed they would graduate, transfer, or withdraw from this institution or college in general, if those replies were indicated.

Procedure

Students who participated in an enrichment program in Baltimore were identified and sent an email which provided an overview of the study, along with a request that they complete the survey online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6Y8QXFW> between Friday, April 11, 2014 through Friday, May, 23, 2014 under conditions of voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were required to sign a consent agreement (See Appendix B). Participants who completed the survey also were asked to select a peer in their major and year of study who had not participated in an enrichment program and request that he or she take the survey as well. In order to enable the researcher to match participants, they were asked to

record the initials of the peer whom they invited to take the survey. Additionally, on the survey, all participants were asked to indicate if they would be willing to participate in a one-on-one telephone interview about their college preparedness. Of those who indicated they would be, five individuals in each group were selected randomly and contacted to do so. Data were compiled for each item and are summarized and compared in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to assess and compare the perceptions of academic, social, and personal adjustment in college of students who participated and did not participate in an enrichment program intended to help them succeed in college. The study was designed to yield a matched sample of students in similar programs of study who did and did not receive enrichment whose responses could be compared. This was to be done by asking respondents who received enrichment and completed the survey to solicit a similar peer who did not participate in an enrichment program to complete the survey. However, no surveys were completed by any peers who did not attend an enrichment program. It is not certain whether this was because they were not asked to do so or because they simply chose not to do so. Descriptive statistics were calculated for those who replied.

Sample Characteristics

Before completing the survey itself, participants provided basic demographic information and data about their standing in college, such as their major and grade. 10 college students (four freshmen, four sophomores and two seniors) who attended enrichment programs completed the survey. Of these participants, eight were not transfer students, one was and one did not say if he or she had transferred. The students reported that they were provided enrichment services for periods ranging from one to 10 years. The majority of students (60% or six of the 10) had participated in enrichment for one to four years and the mean length of enrichment services received was 4.8, s.d.=3.12.

The students' mean reported overall GPA was 3.127 and ranged from 2.5 to 3.8, suggesting they were fairly successful overall in their studies, which they pursued at eight in-

state and two out-of-state colleges. Their mean reported GPA in their majors was 3.171. Majors were diverse and included Athletic Training, Nursing (2), Business (2) Community Service and Civic Engagement, Mechanical Engineering, Animal Science, Information Science, Sports Management, suggesting the students who received enrichment pursued diverse interests and educational options.

When asked what they found helpful about enrichment, the students indicated the following focuses: work ethic, vocabulary words, subject class improvement, FAFSA information, meeting new people, different classes, mentoring, extra assistance, test taking (2), writing essays (2), time management (2), learning about planning financially (2), college visits/tours (2) and SAT preparation (3).

Survey Responses

Academic, Social and Personal Preparedness Ratings

Responses to the survey assessing academic, social and personal preparedness were collected via Likert scale with ratings ranging from 1=completely disagree to 6=completely agree. Items all were worded positively and students were instructed to select ratings reflecting the degree to which they agreed with each statement. The items and descriptive statistics for the ratings on each of the three sections of the survey reflecting one facet of preparedness (academic, social and personal) follow in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Ratings of Academic, Social, and Personal Preparedness

	N	Mean	Range	Std. Deviation
Academic Preparedness	10	5.33	4-6	.62548
<i>1. I am able to self-assess my</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>4-6</i>	<i>.69921</i>

<i>academic standing.</i>				
<i>2. I am aware of my behaviors & habits.</i>	10	5.7	4-6	.67495
<i>3. I am able to adjust my behaviors & habits.</i>	10	5.1	4-6	.87560
<i>4. I have effective time management skills, i.e. the ability to efficiently pace my workload.</i>	10	5.0	4-6	.81650
<i>5. I take responsibility for the completion of my workload.</i>	10	5.5	4-6	.70711
<i>6. I am able to self-advocate.</i>	10	5.5	4-6	.70711
<i>7. I have efficient reading & writing skills.</i>	10	5.4	3-6	.96609
<i>8. I have strong math skills.</i>	10	5.1	3-6	1.10050
<i>9. I have strong technology skills.</i>	10	5.4	4-6	.69921
<i>10. I have strong note taking skills.</i>	10	5.0	4-6	.94281
Social Preparedness	10	5.35	3.83-6	.65945
<i>1. I am able to effectively engage with peers.</i>	10	5.5	3-6	.97183
<i>2. I am able to work in study groups.</i>	10	5.3	4-6	.67495
<i>3. I am able to develop & maintain relationships with peers.</i>	10	5.3	4-6	.67495
<i>4. I am able to develop & maintain relationships with educators & staff.</i>	10	5.2	3-6	1.13529
<i>5. I am able to comfortably fit into the college social atmosphere.</i>	10	5.4	3-6	.96609
<i>6. I am able to join & participate in extracurricular activities & organizations.</i>	10	5.4	4-6	.69921
Personal Preparedness	10	5.4125	4.13-6	.62096
<i>1. I am able to confidently express my</i>	10	5.5	4-6	.70711

<i>beliefs, ideas & opinions.</i>				
<i>2. I am able to effectively adapt to change.</i>	10	5.6	5-6	.51640
<i>3. I am able to mature due to my interactions.</i>	10	5.8	5-6	.42164
<i>4. I am able to balance outside factors, such as family & employment, along with college.</i>	10	5.3	3-6	.94868
<i>5. I am able to completely understand how to navigate the college system (Academics, Financial Aid and Student Life)</i>	10	4.9	3-6	1.10050
<i>6. I am able to set and accomplish short term goals.</i>	10	5.5	4-6	.70711
<i>7. I am able to set and accomplish long term goals.</i>	10	5.4	4-6	.69921
<i>8. I am highly aware of the personal resources available.</i>	10	5.3	4-6	.67495

A one-way analysis of variance was computed to determine if the students' mean ratings in any of the three areas differed significantly from one another other. The results, presented in Table 2, indicated that none of the three mean ratings of preparedness differed statistically significantly from one another ($F=.046$, $p<.955$). Therefore, the perceptions of their preparedness were greatly similar across all areas.

Table 2
Results of One-Way ANOVA Comparing

Mean Ratings of Academic, Social, and Personal Preparedness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.037	2	.019	.046	.955
Within Groups	10.905	27	.404		
Total	10.942	29			

Overall Satisfaction Ratings (OS 1-17)

The survey also contained 17 items which assessed respondents' overall satisfaction with their college experience. These items were rated using a four-point scale ranging from 1= poor to 4=excellent. Participants were also able to rate items with a "0" if they did not use the service. The descriptive statistics for the satisfaction ratings follow in Table 3. (To calculate accurate means, ratings of zero were deleted from the data set for these analyses. These omissions are reflected in the number of responses (Ns).)

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Overall Satisfaction with College Experience

Item	N	Mean	Range	Std. Deviation
1. Academic Departments	10	2.9000	2-4	.56765
2. Academic Advising	9	2.5556	1-4	1.01379
3. Admissions	9	2.6667	2-4	.70711
4. Career Center	9	2.7778	1-4	.97183
5. Commuter Students Office/Center	8	2.6250	2-4	.74402
6. Counseling Center	9	2.7778	1-4	.97183
7. Dean of Student's Office	8	3.0000	2-4	.75593
8. Ethnic Specific Programs/Cultural Centers	9	3.1111	2-4	.60093
9. Extracurricular Centers (for example, Gym, Art Studios, Music studios)	10	3.3000	2-4	.67495
10. Financial Aid Office	10	2.6000	1-4	1.07497
11. Health Center	8	2.7500	1-4	1.03510
12. Minority/Multicultural Affairs	9	3.1111	2-4	.78174
13. Registrar's Office	9	2.7778	2-4	.66667
14. Residential Life	10	2.6000	1-4	.84327
15. Religious/Spiritual Service	9	2.5556	1-3	.72648
16. Tutoring Office/Center	9	2.6667	1-4	.86603
17. Writing Center	8	3.0000	2-4	.53452

Responses to Questions about College Experience and Plans (Q1-4)

Finally, the survey asked each participant to respond to four questions regarding their feelings about their college, including whether they felt it was a good fit for them or not and whether they planned to continue there or in any institution. Ratings for these items used the same scale as those for preparedness above and ranged from 1=completely disagree to 6=completely agree. Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for these ratings for each of the questions. The ratings suggested most planned to continue on to graduate from their current college, although some may have been contemplating transferring. None, however, had a clear plan (rating of 5 or 6) to discontinue higher education altogether.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Responses to Questions about Goodness of Fit with and
Completion of Program at Institution

	N	Mean	Range	Std. Deviation
1. I believe this institution is a good fit for me.	10	4.9	4-6	.8756
2. I believe I will transfer from this institution.	10	3.9	1-6	2.1833
3. I believe I will graduate from this institution.	10	5.7	4-6	.6750
4. I believe I will stop attending higher education institutions.	10	1.4	1-4	.9661

Interviews

The survey also asked respondents to indicate if they would be willing to complete a follow-up interview by phone. Half of the respondents said that they were willing to take part in an interview, and four actually were able to complete the interview. Of the four interviewees, two were freshman, two were seniors, and one of the seniors transferred two times. The interview

sought to determine more accurately if and how their enrichment experiences had affected the respondents' experience in and feelings about college. Tabel 5 summarizes the points which respondents made about these topics.

Table 5
Responses to Interview Questions

Question	Response	Frequency	Response	Frequency	Response	Frequency	Response	Frequency
Main reason you chose to attend your enrichment program	School Invitation	3	Parental Request	1				
Most valuable academic component gained from the enrichment program in terms of preparing you for success in college	Reading Skills	1	Writing Skills	1	College Application Process	1	Feeling a Sense of Belonging	1
Most valuable social component you gained from the enrichment program in terms of preparing you for success in college	Comfort with meeting new people	1	Having racially diverse friends	1	Having regionally diverse friends	1	Articulation of self & relating to others	1

Most valuable personal component you gained from the enrichment program in terms of preparing you for success in college	Awareness of college and its options	1	Possessing a sense of determination	1	Balancing of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	1	Finding the right college	1
Dislike most about college	Grading system	2	Lack of resources	1	Finding Help	1		
Like Most About College	Independence	3	Finding out who you are	1	Creating your own major	1		
Add or change about the enrichment program	Nothing	1	Creation of an online network for the program	2	Alumni becoming mentors to current enrichment students	3		

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study describes perceptions of college students who attended an enrichment program and those who did not attend such programs in regards to college readiness.

Implications of the Results

All respondents reported their overall GPAs, (mean being 3.127, with the range 2.50 to 3.80). This suggested that all respondents were in good academic standing. Moreover, one can imply that respondents chose a major that matched their interests and competence because the mean GPA in their major, 3.1714, was slightly higher than their overall GPA. The mean rating of academic preparedness was 5.33 out of 6.00, indicating that most respondents reported they mostly to completely agreed that they were academically prepared. The items to which most respondents completely agreed were “*I am aware of my behaviors & habits,*” with the mean being 5.70, the range being slightly agree (4) to completely agree (6) and the standard deviation being .67495. These data suggest that perhaps academic awareness is heightened by attending an enrichment program which aids students in their transition to and success in college. The items on which the mean score was the lowest regarding academic preparedness was “*I have effective time management skills, i.e. the ability to efficiently pace my workload,*” and “*I have strong note taking skills,*” because the means were 5.0, ranges of slightly agree (4) to completely agree (6). Although, these items had the lowest mean of 5, participants mostly agreed that they possessed these skills, which is a positive outcome. Respondents’ ratings suggested they felt slightly but not significantly more socially than academically prepared, with the mean rating for social preparedness being 5.35. The item that had the highest mean of 5.5, *range of slightly disagree (3) to completely agree (6)*, with most respondents completely agreeing was “*I am able to effectively engage with peers.*” Thus, most respondents believed that they were highly prepared

to engage with peers, suggesting that social skills were effectively taught, learned, and practiced at least in part, by the enrichment program. Respondents ratings were lowest in terms of social preparedness on the item *“I am able to develop & maintain relationships with educators & staff,”* with the mean being 5.2, and a *range of responses from “slightly disagree” (3) to “completely agree” (6)*, and a standard deviation of 1.13529. However, only one participant slightly disagreed with this item, with the majority completely agreeing, and then two slightly agreeing. Due to the range of responses, other factors should be considered when analyzing this item, such as availability of educators and staff to students, response rate to students, and connections to students.

Personal preparedness received the highest mean rating of 5.4125, (standard deviation of .62096). A question that might be raised relates to whether personal preparedness is as or more important than academic and social preparedness in determining students’ college success. The item that had the lowest personal preparedness rating was *“I am able to completely understand how to navigate the college system (Academics, Financial Aid and Student Life)”* with a mean of 4.9, range of slightly disagree (3) to completely agree (6) and standard deviation of 1.10050. The majority of respondents slightly agreed with being able to successfully navigate the college with one respondent slightly disagreeing; therefore, this may be a factor that should be improved within the context of enrichment if the program is to continue increasing students’ overall college readiness.

Additionally, with regard to overall satisfaction with their college/university the means for each department/services ranged from 2.5556 to 3.111, so although a large portion of respondents believed they were poorly to fairly satisfied, the it appears that responses trended more towards being satisfied. The service and department that received the highest satisfaction

ratings were Minority/Multicultural Affairs and Ethnic specific programs/Cultural Centers. Both had the same mean of 3.111 and range of fair to excellent satisfaction. Therefore, these respondents appeared to feel a cultural sense of belonging in regards to their minority and ethnic statuses. However, the mean rating for academic advising of 2.5556 and range of poor satisfaction to excellent satisfaction, with two respondents receiving poor satisfaction and the majority receiving good satisfaction for it, suggest that academic advising is an issue that can be further discussed within enrichment programs, so students know what constitutes successful advising and they are given suggestions to address unsatisfactory advising.

The last section of survey asked respondents to answer questions regarding the goodness of fit of the college/university for them and their prospects for continuing to pursue higher education. All of the participants said that they would graduate from undergraduate studies and most said that they would continue to receive more education after receiving their Bachelor's degree. Both respondents who indicated a desire to transfer were currently attending a community college.

Finally, the interviewees generally had positive responses regarding the impact of the enrichment program on their college experience. All interviewees stated that the enrichment program enabled them to improve their social skills, which was a very important aspect in dealing with diversity of personalities, race and regionalism within their college experience. One interviewee transferred twice before finding the best fit. This respondent stated that she was looking to holistically experience college and get the best out of her experience. She repeatedly stated that the enrichment program was a tremendous asset in finding the college which was the best fit for her because the director was just a phone call away. Another participant said she was grateful to the director because she frequently received updates regarding careers in her field and

the program greatly assisted her starting her career. Two of the interviewees also had the opportunity to become counselors, which they stated was one of the most rewarding aspects of program participation because they were able to become mentors to younger students who were similar to them. They believed that having the opportunity to give back helped to immediately make their experience more well-rounded. Moreover, all respondents said thought it was important to remain connected to the enrichment program and believed that an alumni network should be created for pre-college students to enable them to connect with current college students. They also felt this would allow the enrichment program to expand on its foundation, and help everyone remain current regarding the changes and advancement of the program.

Theoretical Consequences

Overall, the respondents indicated that they felt academically, socially, and personally prepared for college and that their enrichment experience aided in their preparedness. Moreover, the interviewees reached consensus on the importance of having counselors who were former students, and the need for alumni to remain a visible addition to the program. Some the consequences of this survey and the interviews are that enrichment programs appears to be an institution that participants believe should expand. Since respondents identified a relationship between their participation in the program and success in college, it appears that consideration should be given to offering additional support for students outside of the normal school day receiving enrichment after the academic year/during their summer break. Importantly, the participants' responses suggested that it is important to remain connected to academic communities, as all interviewees said they benefitted from having mentors and peers with the same academic mindset and felt it was important to become mentors to younger students,

Threats to the Validity of the Study

The duration of participation in the enrichment programs was a threat to validity, since respondents entered the enrichment programs at different years and the type of enrichment they received related to college readiness may have differed over the years due to the changing of teachers and services. Therefore, measuring the changes within the enrichment program and its effects on students is a factor that was not surveyed and maybe difficult to measure due to its subjectivity.

Additionally, maturation is a threat to validity because the length of their enrichment program experience may have influenced their level of college preparedness. Students whose enrichment program attendance was of longer duration may have been more prepared than students whose participation was of shorter duration. Thus, the duration of one's enrichment program experience may impact the degree to which one is prepared.

Also, self-reported measures of success may also have threatened the validity of results. Students' reports may have been inflated due to the demand characteristic of the survey.

Connections to Previous Studies/Existing Literature

A major difference between this study and previous research is that the researcher did not find any other study that sought to match and compare an enrichment group with a similar non-enrichment group. All studies found by the researcher only tracked the changes in the enrichment group pre and post enrichment, their retention rates in high school, and their college and overall success.

The results of this survey relate to other studies which suggest enrichment programs have a positive result on overall students' performance and experience. This enrichment program study is similar to a study done by Swail et al. (2012) which analyzed ten pre-college outreach programs in order to compare components that lead to their success and learn about the path that

leads to high student performance. One major similarity between Swail et al.'s case study student and the enrichment program study is that program goals are stated intentionally. Just as the outreach programs clearly state their goals, this enrichment program states that its goal is to prepare underserved Baltimore students to become the leaders of our society. Swail et al. note the importance of intentionality in directors so that the programs have a clear path to follow. This enrichment program has different components such as school year tutoring, the summer institute (which is a five week academic and extracurricular enrichment) and college preparation and internships for high-school participants and each component of the program states its objective and overall results.

Another case study by Public Profit (2012) examined the importance of summer programs for student enrichment. Public Profit's results suggested that students who attended summer programs improved academically and socially and these programs may be a way to combat the summer loss of academic and social skills that normally occurs among students, especially those of lower SES, and those living in rural and urban communities . A large portion of the college preparedness this study's respondents received was provided during the summer in the form of a college course which contains components such as SAT prep, money management, writing a college essay, and reading college-level text. In addition to receiving college preparation courses during the summer, students also visited Maryland colleges and universities.

Implications for Future Research

As enrichment programs expand attempts to help student complete college, some scholarships have been created. In the future, researching the ways in which enrichment programs assist students financially for college is an important aspect to study, since one interviewee stated he wished his high school was not so idealistic when insisting on not worrying

about the cost of college. Another aspect that should be investigated is the summer internship opportunities provided to students during their high school career to determine if there is any correlation between their summer internships and the academic success in college. Moreover, this study can be modified and conducted as a longitudinal study to track students' growth and their responses to services received throughout the year. Having a longitudinal study may be a way to increase connections between the researcher and participants, thus increasing the likelihood of getting participation from a non-enrichment sample group. Another way to get a non-enrichment sample group would be to send the survey to colleges that students are attending, as well as posting the link on the enrichment program webpages. Consequently, more enrichment programs could be asked to participate in similar studies to make comparisons between the outcomes of different enrichment programs and to determine what features of each program are helpful for students.

Conclusion

Although no comparisons between the non-enrichment and enrichment group could be made due to lack of participation by any students who did not participate in an enrichment program, findings were made within the enrichment group. Overall, the results revealed that participants generally agreed that they were mostly personally prepared (mean being 5.4125), socially prepared (mean being 5.35) and then academically prepared (mean being 5.33) for college and the differences between and among these means were not statistically significant. When asked to state the most helpful aspect of their enrichment experience in preparing them for college, most participants gave academically-related responses such as writing essays and tutoring. With regard to anticipated college completion, all students mostly or completely agreed that they would receive their bachelor's degree. All four interviewees also stated that they wished to

remain a part of the program, whether or not it involved receiving or becoming a mentor or both. Moreover, all interviewees acknowledged importance of their enrichment program and its connection to their educational success. Many even noted that enrichment programs are needed, especially within the public school systems because many students lack important guidance.

Therefore, the results of this study establish that attending an enrichment program with one of its goals being college readiness and completion appears to aid in developing students who are personally, socially, and academically prepared to success in college and are able to know whether or not their college/university is a good fit for them and if not, to locate programs which are.

APPENDIX A

College Readiness in College Students Survey

Student initials and year of birth, i.e., JGW1994	
initials of peer you requested to complete survey/Initials of the peer who requested you to complete survey	
College/University Attending	
Year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)	
Major	
Cumulative GPA	
Are you a transfer student?	
GPA in major	
Did you participate in a college preparation/enrichment program?	Yes or No
If yes, please describe below:	
1. Describe college prep/enrichment program: duration, focus, helpful aspects, and any other pertinent information	
2. What year did you start the program?	
3. How many years did you participate?	
4. What was helpful?	
5. Would you be willing to complete a phone interview after completion of this survey (approx. 15 minutes)? If so, please provide a phone number and email.	

Section 1. Academic Preparedness deals with one's ability to complete rigorous coursework, ability to exhibit high-level thinking, and problem-solving and personal skills, such as time management and discipline

ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree
1. I am able to self-assess my academic standing.						
2. I am aware of my behaviors & habits.						
3. I am able to adjust my behaviors & habits.						
4. I have effective time management skills, i.e. the ability to efficiently pace my workload.						
5. I take responsibility for the completion of my workload.						
6. I am able to self-advocate.						

7. I have efficient reading & writing skills.						
8. I have strong math skills.						
9. I have strong technology skills.						
10. I have strong note taking skills.						

Section 2. Social Preparedness deals with one's ability to belong to social groups.

SOCIAL PREPAREDNESS	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree
1. I am able to effectively engage with peers.						
2. I am able to work in study groups.						
3. I am able to develop & maintain relationships with peers.						
4. I am able to develop & maintain relationships with educators & staff.						
5. I am able to comfortably fit into the college social atmosphere.						
6. I am able to join & participate in extracurricular activities & organizations.						

Section 3. Personal Preparedness deals with one's ability to develop during his/her college experience.

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree
1. I am able to confidently express my beliefs, ideas & opinions.						
2. I am able to effectively adapt to change.						
3. I am able to mature due to my interactions.						
4. I am able to balance outside factors, such as family & employment, along with college.						
5. I am able to completely understand how to navigate the college system (Academics, Financial Aid and Student Life)						
6. I am able to set and accomplish short term goals.						

7. I am able to set and accomplish long term goals.						
8. I am highly aware of the personal resources available.						

Section 4: Overall Satisfaction	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Do Not Use
1. Academic Departments					
2. Academic Advising					
3. Admissions					
4. Career Center					
5. Commuter Students Office/Center					
6. Counseling Center					
7. Dean of Student's Office					
8. Ethnic Specific Programs/Cultural Centers					
9. Extracurricular Centers (for example, Gym, Art Studios, Music studios)					
10. Financial Aid Office					
11. Health Center					
12. Minority/Multicultural Affairs					
13. Registrar's Office					
14. Residential Life					
15. Religious/Spiritual Service					
16. Tutoring Office/Center					
17. Writing Center					

QUESTIONS WITH COMMENTS	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree
1. I believe this institution is a good fit for me.						
2. I believe I will transfer from this institution.						
3. I believe I will graduate from this institution.						
4. I believe I will stop attending higher education institutions.						

APPENDIX B

Consent Letter

April 11, 2014

Dear Survey Participant,

My name is Sherella Cupid and I am an alumna of this enrichment program. The director gave me your contact information with the hope that you would assist me on a study I'm conducting regarding college preparation and enrichment programs. Participation will not take much time and will provide information that will help programs such as enrichment programs maximize the support it provides to its college-going students. Enrichment Programs prepare students for college by offering services such as mentoring, SAT prep, assistance completing college applications and FASFA, visiting colleges/universities, and can be found in schools, colleges, or non-profit organizations.

I am a Masters of Education Candidate at Goucher College under the supervision of Dr. Gaye Brown. As part of my coursework, I am completing a study to investigate whether there are differences in the academic, social and personal and overall satisfaction of college students who did and did not attend enrichment programs, and to identify their most helpful aspects.

Participation in the study involves:

- **Survey:** Voluntary and confidential completion of a survey with items assessing academic, social and personal and overall satisfaction with college. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
- **Optional Phone Call:** On the survey, participants will be asked if they are willing to provide contact information for possible selection for a brief and confidential follow-up interview by phone. The interview will provide deeper insight regarding preparedness for and overall satisfaction with college. These optional one-on-one interviews (for those selected) will take approximately 15 minutes at a mutually convenient time.
- **Find a Buddy:** Finally, all participants will be asked to share the link to this consent form and the accompanying survey with a peer in their major whom they believe did not attend a college preparatory enrichment program. The buddy will need to complete the survey (and possibly an interview) as well.

Your participation, as noted, is completely voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential. You are also free to cease completion of the survey at any time. The survey can be accessed by this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6Y8QXFW> and your completion of it will serve as your consent to participate in this study. **To participate, please open and complete the survey between Friday, April 11, 2014 through Friday, May, 23, 2014.**

Your completion and submission of this survey indicates your consent to participate in this study. If you would like further information regarding this study or are interested in learning the final results, please feel free to contact me via email at sherella.cupid@mail.goucher.edu.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Sherella Cupid

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