Spring 1-2013

Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban School Setting

Wanda Davis
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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

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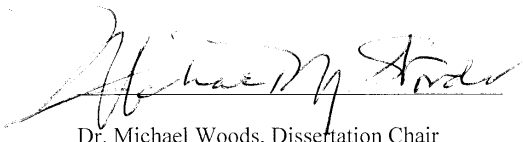
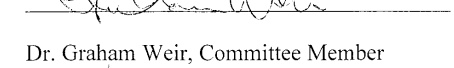


Dr. Michael Woods, Dissertation Chair — Date 1/25/2013



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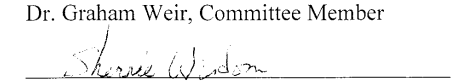
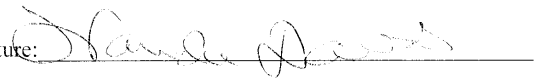
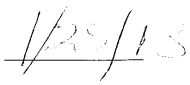


Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Committee Member — Date 1-25-2013

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Wanda Renee Davis

Signature:  Date: 

Acknowledgements

My greatest acknowledgement goes to the ultimate one who allowed me to complete the research for this dissertation.

For anecdotes, guidance, and encouragement, special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Michael Woods, adjunct Professor at Lindenwood University, for the ongoing meetings, editing of my drafts, and offering essential recommendations through this entire dissertation writing process. I owe much to Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, professor at Lindenwood University, committee member, and mentor extraordinaire, for her expertise in statistics. I am grateful for her patience and support as she continued and convincingly conveyed professional guidance offering significant recommendations. To my advisor, Dr. Graham Weir, professor and advisor at Lindenwood University, unlimited thanks to you for your recommendations, patience, and remarkable guidance as I progressed through the doctoral program. Dr. Beth Kania-Gosche and Dr. Yvonne Gibbs, I am grateful for the infinite writing and mentoring processes and support you have provided.

I give unlimited thanks to the participating students, educational leaders, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents who allowed me to perform this research. To the editors, Joye Hengst, Kelli Williams, Kevin Williams, and Wendy, I am always obliged for your time-consuming efforts in editing my dissertation writing.

Most of all, to my daughter, Brittney Renee Sims, who has been my cheerleader, voice of reason, and life raft. My mother, Laviena Bernice Davis, my sisters, Irma Katherine Jones and Kimberly Michelle Marion and my cousin, Jessica Hampton, your encouraging words and push-forth efforts have inspired me to complete this journey.

Abstract

The inclusion of college preparation programs promote and forecast academic success in postsecondary studies among individual at-risk, African American urban high school students. Past research has shown ongoing, college acceptance, performance, and graduation gaps between at-risk, African American urban high school students when compared to affluent, Caucasian suburban high school students. The College Summit program is designed to help close this gap.

The study compared two models of the College Summit Program in one urban school setting. The study evaluated the effect that pre-college preparation activities had on these dependent variables: completion of postsecondary planning activities, end-of-year GPA, awards of individual scholarships, and acceptance at their initial top-three choice colleges. The evaluation focused on two groups of students, College Summit Program students who received academic credit for the program through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade was determined as either a pass or fail. In addition, the study focused on a third group of students who were not enrolled in the College Summit Program known as the Non-Program Students (NPS).

This study analyzed the relationship between the independent variables, College Summit Program Graded Model, College Summit Advisory Pass/Fail Model, and the Non-Program Students (NPS) Model and the dependent variables mentioned previously. *Z*-tests determined if any of the independent variables predicted college-readiness outcomes of at-risk, African American students. *Z*-tests for difference in means and proportions determined if any differences in measurement of dependent variables were

significant. *Z*-Tests for difference in means determined significant difference when comparing the CSP model to the CSA model for the dependent variables progression towards completion of postsecondary planning milestones, cumulative grade point averages, individual scholarship awards, and acknowledgements of initial top-three top choice colleges. *Z*-tests for difference in proportions determined significant difference when comparing the CSP model to the CSA model for the dependent variables full completion of postsecondary milestones and acceptance at the student's initial top-three choice colleges when testing the difference in proportions.

The study found that the graded College Summit Program is more effective when preparing at-risk, African American urban high school students for college.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

African American secondary and postsecondary graduation rates remain lower than the college graduation rates of Caucasian students. Roderick, Nagaoka, and Coca (2009), claimed, that in 2005, "17.8 percent of African Americans graduated from college earning a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 34.3 percent Caucasian earning a bachelor's degree or higher" (p. 188). While many African American youths are lagging behind Caucasians, acceptance into college is still at disappointing rates for low-income, at-risk students of all ethnicities. Adult and adolescent African Americans and Hispanics continue to have lower completion rates in high school and college. Implementing efficient college-going programs in high schools serving at-risk, African American students could be one of the influences to help reduce dropout rates and raise college enrollment rates among this population. Donnelly (1987) defined at-risk students as students who have low performance rates, drop out of school prior to graduation, and have low expectations of their abilities (p. 1).

Radcliffe and Bos (2011) conducted a seven-year longitudinal study that revealed the achievement and preparation for college, which was alarmingly low for, African Americans and Hispanic students (p. 86). Present findings of completion rates implied, approximately 71% of the nation's population of all students compared to 50% of African American and Hispanic students graduated with a high school degree with their peers (Radcliffe & Bos, 2011, p. 86). Similarly, Conklin (2005) affirmed, nationwide only 71% of students complete high school, and only 18% of high school freshmen receive a college degree on time (p. 1). Perhaps this setback is relative to the low performance on college placement exams resulting in high school graduates taking remedial courses,

costing colleges, businesses, and underprepared high school graduates more than $16 billion annually in remedial cost and lost productivity (Conklin, 2005, p. 1).

Chapman, Laird, Ifill, and KewalRamani (2011) found the following:

> The completion rates by gender and ethnicity, Caucasians and African Americans rates are dissimilar by sex. As reported in 2009, Caucasian and African American females graduation rates were higher in high school, 95.1 percent Caucasian females and 88.9 percent of African American females completed high school in 2009, compared to 92.4 percent of Caucasian males and 85.0 percent of African American males. No measurable differences by sex were detected between the status completion rates of Hispanics, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and persons of two or more races (p. 11).

President Barack Obama's political team assigned funds from the stimulus package with the hopes of making higher education possible for all students (Hefling, 2012, p. 2). Although the appropriation of stimulus resources took place, higher educational issues still exist for minority students who do not successfully transition into college studies (Rodriguez & Wan, 2010, p. 3). Comparably, as Hefling, (2012) has stated, about 40% of four-year college students drop out of college prior to earning a college degree (p. 2). Furthermore, 40% of the two-year program students, graduate or transferred to another college. About a fifth of the two-year college students dropped out prior to completing their second year of college. This regression in literacy over the last years among college students, posing a high cost to taxpayers in millions of dollars (Hefling, 2012, p. 2).

Students entering and continuing their studies beyond high school is a critical component to surviving in the 21st century's real world of work. However, the efforts designed to acquire a college degree challenge some at-risk students who attend urban high schools. On-going research continues to indicate disparity between at-risk high school students preparing for college, enrolling in college, successfully completing the first year in college, and graduating from college compared to affluent high school students (Kline & Williams, 2007, p. 3). "For instance, while 65% of white high school graduates entered college immediately upon graduation in 2001, only 56% and 53% of African-American and Latino graduates did the same" (Kline & Williams, 2007, p. 3).

An estimation of two million or more college students in the United States took corrective coursework during the first year of their postsecondary education (Laskey & Hetzel, 2011, pp. 31). Many students are required to take remedial courses because outside influences constrain them from succeeding in their coursework the first year of college. "Students who enter college under prepared are often considered at-risk students" (Laskey & Hetzel, 2011, p. 31). The responsibility of early parenting can force students to seek employment on a part-time or full-time basis, causing them to work long hours to manage the financial obligations of the family, leaving them little time to focus on their academic studies. Alternatively, students have experienced that some high school curriculums are so rigorous that there is little time to gain an understanding of the concept to complete the required classwork. This unfortunate occurrence can cause them to be unprepared to take upcoming college entrance assessments, resulting in scores that are inadequate for them to succeed in the regular college coursework. Donnelly, (1987, p. 1) noted the definition of "at-risk students are students who are not experiencing

success in school and are potential dropouts, usually low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem" (p. 1). McDonald (2002), indicated a similar finding, at-risk students are reluctant to partake in high school college prep programs to acquire the knowledge and transitional skills needed to achieve through a college curriculum. This perhaps is due to unachievable academic results and the absence of social skills that promote a general disconnection within the school culture (McDonald, 2002, p. 1). As at-risk students move into higher-level studies, transferrable skills can help them advance through the first year of college. This study turns its focus on the College Summit Program, which is a program that offers academic and non-academic transferrable skills that direct at-risk students to pursue a college degree.

The framework of the College Summit Program, the topic of this dissertation study, follows a pre-college planning curriculum designed to promote an efficient move from secondary to postsecondary education. This non-profit organization collaborates with districts and secondary schools nationwide, building college-like environments and expanding college enrollment among students who aspire to go to college (CollegeSummit, 2011, p. V). The goal of this program is to prepare students for college while increasing college enrollment among at-risk students, so all high school graduating seniors are prepared for college (College Summit, 2011, p. V). A detailed discussion of the College Summit Program and other research on similar practices that promote college preparation is presented in a later chapter.

The author of this dissertation compared two models of the College Summit Program for at-risk, African American, low-income students in one urban high school setting. While this dissertation notes college enrollment and graduation rates between

Caucasians and Hispanics, henceforth, the significant approach in the study was to analyze which model provided the best strategies for at-risk students as they prepare for college. The evaluation of the two-modeled programs leads to student progression through postsecondary planning milestones, high school grade point averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges. Although these urban high school students may not be academically achieving at a rate that suburban high school students do, they do aspire to continue their education at a community or public or private institution of higher learning. Despite disappointing differences continuing to exist between diverse groups of people receiving a college degree, some African American students endure hopes in achieving that goal, although statistically they may have fewer role models to follow since fewer students from this ethnic group enroll in and graduate from college. Various ethnic groups of students reveal differences in obtaining a college degree as shown in Figure 1.

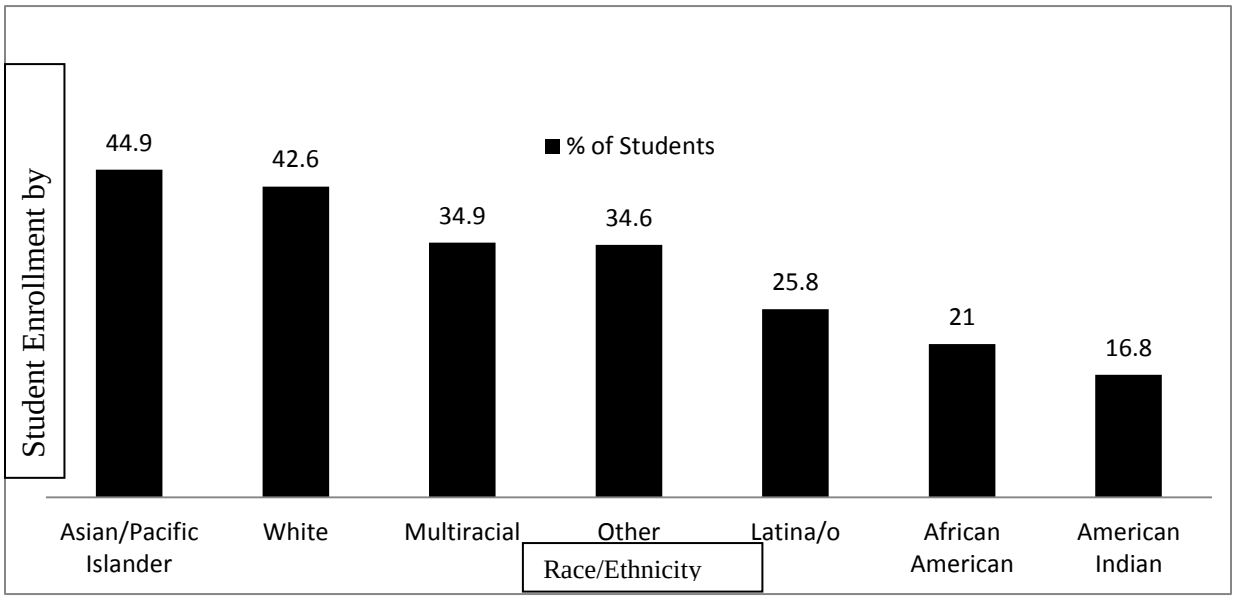


Figure 1. Weighted Four-Year Degree Attainment Rates by Race and Ethnicity.
Weighted Four-Year Degree Attainment Rates by Race and Ethnicity. Adapted from "Completing College: Assessing Graduation Rates At Four-Year Institutions", by L. DeAngelo, R. Franke, S. Hurtado, J. Pryor, & S. Tran, *2011,* Higher Education Research Institute.

The study's context, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, method of the study, the purpose of the study, research question, independent and dependent variables, and the hypotheses presents the overview of Chapter 1. The conclusion of Chapter 1 confirms the definition of terms relating to the study, limitations, and the summary.

Background of College Preparation in Urban High Schools

Some at-risk urban high school students aspire to attend college; however, apathy in preparing for college is a deterrent. Apathetic students become disengaged about their college experience. They drop out of high school prematurely and may experience low morale among their peers and family (Martin, 2012, para. 4). Urban high schools throughout the United States have included college preparation programs in addition to the traditional core curriculums leading the way for understanding and studying career paths for all students in the United States. A brief history highlights three federally funded college preparation programs similar in character to the College Summit Program are presented in this chapter; Chapter 2 provides a thorough representation of those programs in addition to historically presenting the College Summit Program. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), and Upward Bound are somewhat similar college preparation programs to the College Summit Program. The two interventions that these programs offer similar to the College Summit Program are motivating disadvantaged high school students who are marginally educated and providing academic and non-academic support systems that help African American and Latino students transition from high school to a postsecondary institution.

AVID opened its doors to the public in 1980 assisting low-income students who transitioned to suburban schools. This program assisted students in rigorous advance placement coursework (Watt, Huerta, & Lozano, 2007, p. 186). Nearly 95% of high school participants in the AVID program not only apply to college, but also enroll in college (Watt, Huerta, & Lozano, 2007, p. 191). College enrollment is continuous once AVID students enroll, 89% of the students who pursue a college education remain enrolled after two years (AVID, 2011, p. 2). In 1998 the federal program GEAR UP provided services to disadvantage students by assisting them with transitioning skills that provided opportunities to higher education. A few services offered by GEAR UP to those students are preliminary college activities for students and parents, one-on-one academic support and tutoring to students, as well as social support for students, and parent contribution to their child's education (U. S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 4). GEAR UP has laid the foundation for many students who have the vision of attending a college or university. In 2006, 17 high schools in the United States graduated 7,184 cohort students; the overall population consisted of 98% Hispanic and 88% low-income students (Watt, Huerta, & Lozano, 2007, p.186).

The U. S. Department of Education introduced the Upward Bound Program in 1965. This program provides support systems that help prepare disadvantaged secondary school students for college (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003, p. 5). "According to the Department of Education (1998), approximately 600 Upward Bound programs in operation throughout the United States, reaching almost 50,000 high school students annually" (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003, p. 5).

The three programs demonstrate efforts to increase college enrollment among high school students who are at-risk of not seeking an education beyond high school or supportable employment. College Summit, the subject of this quantitative study, is another example. Each program follows its own delivery model; some are embedded in the school day, others are after school and during the summer, and still others are a combination. College Summit is a program offered during the school day under two different models at Making a Difference High School. To conceal the identity of the high school, the fictitious name Making a Difference High School was used. The first model, the College Summit Program (CSP), uses the program as a course curriculum, where students receive a grade for their efforts. The second model, the College Summit Advisory (CSA), offers the program during an advisory period, where students receive only a pass or fail. In addition, a group of students was evaluated for comparison of the dependent variables between the CSP and CSA groups, which consists of senior students who either chose not to volunteer for the College Summit program or did not make the deadline to sign up for the program. This group of students will be referred to as the Non Program Students (NPS) in this study. This study quantitatively compares the outcomes of these two models to see which is most effective for Making a Difference High School. These results could inform other schools with similar demographics about best practices for establishing a program to increase college enrollment and retention for all students.

Chapter 1 outlines a general description of the College Summit Program with a more comprehensive discussion of the program presented in later chapters. Nationwide, the College Summit Program connects with high schools, school districts, and colleges by proposing college prep programs to high school seniors. These programs offer services

that help them apply, receive acceptance and enroll in college. College Summit Program provides support to 11 geographic regional offices throughout the United States. College Summit Program schools and school staff receive support and training on teaching and management procedures from the assigned regions (College Summit, 2012c, p. 1).

College Summit Program and the Research Site

The College Summit Program offers students the opportunity to gain skills in communication, leadership, organization, planning and prioritizing, financial literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, and social responsibility. Best practices, continuity, and consistency from educators in the program took place in College Summit Program classrooms in the hopes that high school students would graduate with talents transforming their abilities and character to levels of sustainability. To promote an increase in college enrollment and college retention rates among the at-risk, low-income student population, the College Summit Program became part of the high school's curriculum in the fall of 2007 at Making a Difference High School.

During the 2011-2012 school year, over 90% of the students in the senior class participated in the College Summit Program. The school district paid $200.00 to College Summit for each student enrolled in the program. Two models were offered to assure a placement for all seniors who wish to volunteer to participate in the program: the CSP model where students received academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and CSA model where students received only a pass or fail grade. Through participation in the College Summit Program, the volunteered high school students engaged in 17 pre-college activities, which included 12 postsecondary milestones displaying students' progress towards completion of the senior portfolio. The

completion of these activities and milestones directed students' focus on various senior projects that help them become college prepared. Both groups of students received the same curriculum, textbook, had access to the same College Summit management system, and completed the same activities. Enrollment of program participants was on a voluntary basis.

Several thematic units lay the road map for the College Summit Navigator curriculum: Plan, Reflect, Apply, Finance, Adapt, Commit, and Take Action. The seven units mapped throughout the school year culminated into one or more completed Senior Portfolio Milestones. Although students complete daily assignments from the Navigator handbook which provided the framework of a 33-week curriculum, each student is provided with an online individual College Summit Program student account enabling them to access college planning activities through the College Summit Navigator (CSNav), an online management curriculum student center (College Summit, 2011, p. VI). The Postsecondary Planning Milestones covers 17 transferrable skills activities displaying students' completion marks in their individual College Summit Program curriculum account (College Summit, 2011, p. V). This online curriculum motivates students to complete pre-college activities and store them digitally for quick access (College Summit, 2011, p.VI).

Transitional skills relative to nonacademic factors, e.g., motivation, self-discipline, commitment to school, parental involvement towards education, and career planning, can influence students' abilities to progress through required college coursework. The College Summit Program is a transitional program that provided students with the academic and non-academic support needed in transitioning from high

school to college. Classroom teaching strategies required students to progress by taking ownership of college planning responsibilities as they migrated through the required monthly activities. Throughout the school year, students were provided with academic and non-academic strategies that assisted them with reading, writing, critical thinking, problem solving, and college admission skills that help them enroll in college and complete scholarship applications.

Furthermore, students prepared a comprehensive Writing Portfolio in the College Summit Program. Some research participants completed all activities of the writing process in class and at home. The Writing Portfolio included the following items: personal statement, persuasive essay, research paper with APA citations, PowerPoint presentation, letter to the editor/representative, free write activity, short story (fictional), and newspaper article (College Summit, 2011, p. V). The intent is for the College Summit Program students to understand that acquiring appropriate writing skills is essential to communicating effectively to an audience of people.

The 12 Postsecondary Planning Milestones anticipated for completion of the Senior Portfolio included Interest Profiler, Saved Careers, Senior Year Plan, College List, Resume, Personal Statement, Practice Application, Saved Programs and Majors, Take the ACT or SAT, Apply to College, Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and Saved Scholarships for the first semester. After the completion of the 12 milestone activities, each College Summit Program student must include the final four activities in their senior portfolio project, i.e., postsecondary budget, transition research project, commitment statement and a transition plan (College Summit, 2011, pp. XII-XIII). Chapter 3 illustrates data results of the 12 milestones in charts and tables.

Comprehending and succeeding in higher academic studies is an asset to the work force throughout the nation. Colleges, universities, organizations, and businesses request that students from diverse backgrounds can handle the college-level coursework, academically and socially, therefore can graduate with a degree that awards them a satisfactory career. These numbers indicated trickling effects of at-risk, African American students in the educational pipeline. These groups of students continue to fall behind Caucasian and Asian students.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study focused on Professor Super's theory on students developing their careers under the notion of self-concept. "Professor Donald E. Super was a member of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA). Professor Super has made extensive conceptual and empirical contributions to vocational psychology and career intervention" (The Letter, 1995, para. 3). Super's Career Development Theory concludes that if individuals are to develop successfully in life they must progress through five phases of career development: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006, p. 4). As at-risk students enroll in college preparation programs on the high school level, the framework spotlights on the exploration phase of Super's Theory. Super's Model of Career Development supposed that people began to understand characteristics about themselves by pulling together personal pieces of information that reflect on them, as well as, gathering vital information about establishing a career in the real world of work. People in this category then responded to personal interests and abilities about careers and occupations from their own ideas (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006, p. 6).

The College Summit Program practices ties into the exploration stage of Super's theory because it allowed students to discover different areas of self-development, educational paths, and career choices. The program students could have applied their knowledge to a variety of postsecondary planning options. "Virtually all high school students are in the exploratory stage of career development" (Kosine & Lewis, 2008, p. 227). As high school students begin to gather and analyze information relative to individual career options, they must improve upon personal abilities by managing their own career processes.

Early in life, at-risk students experience academic and non-academic obstacles causing them limited opportunities to participate in high school career development programs. Professor Super upheld that steps in developing a career are distinct to each individual. An individual's development of his or her career path stems from influences relevant to sexual origin, cultural background, family characteristics, competencies, and socioeconomic status (Kosine & Lewis, 2008, p. 229). In addition, Kosine and Lewis (2008) argued, "The progression of the development of personal careers or vocational training starts once a variety of occupations are introduced to children and adolescents" (p. 227). The average high school offers programs of study from which students can select a career path of interest. These programs activities provide students with the skills to move forward into a two-year or four-year educational institution or join the labor force (Kosine & Lewis, 2008, p. 227).

College Summit Advisors at Making a Difference High School implemented the College Preparation Improvement Model (Figure 2) as a plan to help participating students become college-ready.

Problems Identified

- Lack of support for entry level college coursework
- Too many students start in remediation classes during their freshmen year of college
- A large percentage of graduating high school students enrolling in college taking high school courses instead of college courses

Intervention

- Develop postsecondary activities and provide trained stakeholders to support students with entry level college coursework
- Provide gateway activities that prepare students from high school diplomas to freshmen college coursework
- Utilize college-ready tracking assessments and management systems in high school curriculum starting in ninth grade alleviating academic inadequacies before college

Solution

- Adopt, implement, and strengthen new or existing college prep programs that prepares students for entry level college coursework
- Assess, start, track, and support students in course requirements and postsecondary activities for high school diplomas aligning them to freshmen college coursework in two- and four-year colleges
- Create a college prep program embedding academic and non-academic activities with tutoring increasing additional instruction time that prepares students for entry-level college coursework

Figure 2. College Preparation Improvement Model at Making a Difference High School. Adapted from "Using Data for Program Improvement: How Do We Encourage Schools To Do It," by Levesque, Bradby, Rossi, & Inc., 1996, National Center for Research in Vocational Education: http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/centerfocus/CF12.html.

High schools, two- and four-year colleges, and parents are responsible for transforming students' skills to college-ready levels as they take ownership of graduating high school requirements, raising their academic scores to proficient levels of succeeding in freshmen college coursework so that the problem of educational shortcomings will begin to diminish.

Statement of Problem

Available research has shown evidence of low performance on college academic preparation among some minority students. President Barack Obama's administration

has committed to appropriating resources from the stimulus package making education beyond high school attainable for all students (Rodriguez & Wan, 2010, p. 3). The ACT organization documented that only 23% of the high school graduating class of 2009 met four-subject benchmarks for the ACT readiness assessment (Rodriguez & Wan, 2010, p. 3). According to Rodriguez and Wan (2010), only 4% of African American students and 10% of Latino students met these benchmarks in Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies (p. 3). At-risk, African American students must not only make above average grades but also be able to master rigorous academic high school curriculums in an effort to pass pre-entrance college tests to characteristically demonstrate college preparedness and to avoid recommendations to take remedial courses.

Remedial coursework in college can be a deterrent to pursing a college degree. "Previous research has shown how academic underachievement or failure can lead to detrimental effects on subsequent development, perhaps highlighting the importance of early identification and prevention in hopes of redirection down a better path" (Lucio, Hunt, & Bornovalova, 2012, p. 426). The Press reported that, College Boards of America, and state boards of education, each year, approximately 1.7 million U. S. college students have to take remedial coursework to accelerate them to the level of succeeding in regular college level courses, although students are paying full tuition for these courses, not receiving credit, and very seldom graduate from college (Giarrusso, 2012, p. 1).

High school academic curriculums must be strengthened so that all students are prepared for college with evidence of not having to take college freshmen remedial

coursework. There is evidence of alarming statistics on college freshmen needing remediation.

Giarrusso (2012) surmised that,

> 51.7% of those entering a 2-year college enrolled in remediation and 19.9% of those entering a four year college enrolled in remediation. African American, Hispanic, or a low-income student, is more likely to be headed down the road to remediation. Statistics indicate 67.7% African American, 58.3% Hispanics, and 48.9% of others compared to 58.3% of Caucasian students are headed for remediation in a two-year college. Additionally, 39.1%, 20.6%, and 16.9% of other races compared to 13.5% of Caucasian students are headed for remediation in a four-year college. Of those attending two-year colleges, 64.7% are low-income students and those attending four year colleges, 31.9% are low-income students. (p. 1)

Seconday schools seek to provide a clear path to graduation day by offering and strengthening its curriculums by embedding college prep initiatives and extra academic support so that students are prepared for college at the same rates as their college-ready peers.

In 2005 and 2006, in the state of Missouri's the senior class of 2010 graduation requirements increased from 22 to 24 credits. Four units of communication arts and three credits of math, science, and social studies were the required graduating requirements along with a half-credit requirement in health education and personal finance. The application of these changes stemmed from the concern of stakeholders in the community and higher educational institutions about deficiencies of Missouri is graduating seniors

for entry college-level coursework or the workforce. To ensure that students will make a successful transition from high school to college, the implementation of a college prep program offering both academic and non-academic postsecondary activities was adopted to support students in developing rigorous and relevant skills that prepared them for freshmen-level two or four-year college coursework (Graduation Requirements for Students in Missouri Public Schools, 2007, p. 2).

The College Summit, AVID, Early College Initiative, and GEAR UP curriculums provides an educational path that forces students to prepare for college, apply for financial aid, gain knowledge about financial literacy, adapt to research and writing strategies, and engage and learn a range of interviewing techniques for both applying to college and seeking employment. Although educational disparities among different groups of students continue to exist, the responsibility of all stakeholders could lend a helping hand to help close the gap of educational inequality among at-risk, African American students.

Gaps continue to exist among this group of students because of preliminary factors that prohibit them from graduating from college. Those factors range from lack of preparedness for higher-level studies, procrastination on attending college immediately following high school graduation, taking less than nine credit hours in college, experiencing early parenting alone, proclamation of financial independence, ranks employment first before education, and the first to attend college (Kuh , Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006, p. 27).

As school districts try to offer more college preparation programs to all students, some high schools continue to show disparity in students attaining higher education.

Since a number of these students have faced outside influences that have prevented them from this collegiate experience, the administrators at Making a Difference High School thought it would benefit each student to turn their focus on postsecondary learning. Postsecondary learning exposed the research participants to the College Summit Program during their senior year. Students remained supervised under the guidance of seven teachers who received professional development to guide them through the College Summit Program. Counselors assisted students with additional support such as financial aid and scholarship workshops outside of the program.

Overview of the Methodology

The goal of this quantitative study is to compare the effectiveness of two models of the College Summit Program in an urban school setting. The researcher analyzed data collected from postsecondary planning milestones completed, students' grade point averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts awarded to each student, and initial top-three choice colleges to determine the effectiveness of two models of the College Summit Program in preparing at-risk students for college.

The type of data used was quantitative and collected from the research participants' postsecondary planning milestones, students' grade point averages, maximum scholarship amounts awarded to each student, and top-three colleges accepted by each student. The comparison of this data took place between two models of the College Summit Program: CSP students who received academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and CSA students whose grade was determined as either a pass or fail.

The College Summit Program modeled class involved students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage attending class four times per week. Three days per week students were in a 50-minute block class and one day per week students attended a 90-minute block class. Students received one credit for completing all required coursework at year-end. The CSA modeled class involved students attending a 90-minute block class one day per week and student's grades were determined as either a pass or fail. If students received a passing mark, they received 0.025 of academic credit at year-end.

The researcher's method was to quantitatively, compare participating students' progression of postsecondary planning milestones, grade point averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three top choice colleges. The performance of *z*-tests along with charts indicated relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables. Comparative figures for the 2011-2012 school year summarized students' ACT scores and attendance rates based on graduating seniors. A discussion of data results follows in later chapters.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine which College Summit Program was most effective in preparing at-risk, African American students for postsecondary studies. This study evaluated four dependent variables: the progression of postsecondary planning milestone activities; Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; and initial top-three choice colleges between two groups of students, College Summit Program (CSP) students who received academic credit through calculating a student's

grade based on percentage, and College Summit Advisory (CSA) students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail.

According to Bailey and Karp (2003, para. 1), public concerns continued to surface about strategies that high schools implemented while preparing students for college, from counseling to selecting and applying for college, along with providing students with the necessary skills needed to sustain themselves through college (Bailey & Karp, 2003, para. 1). A relationship exists between a college preparation program and student achievement at the high school level. School leaders and instructors can then begin to create an innovative college preparation program that validates academic achievement and college readiness so that African American students can achieve proficient marks on pre-entrance college assessments and freshmen-level college courses. This high school effort can begin to close the achievement gap for African American students entering two or four-year colleges so students can begin to experience the push-forward motivational support from educators and communities by training them efficiently from high school to college.

Significance of the Study

Over the last year, past research concludes there is very little research on the specific topic of effective practices in the College Summit Program, however, other programs documented in the literature review, e.g., AVID, ECHSI, and GEAR UP are programs that prepare not only at-risk, African American students for college but other minority students, as well. Research demonstrates the effect of salaries when dropout rates decreased and college enrollment increased when school administrators set goals on postsecondary preparation and enrollment over high school graduation (Jobe , Joffe,

McCord, & Frome, 2012, p. 171). In July 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported statistical data on salaries of workers: a worker 25 or older who dropped out of high school earned a gross salary of $440 per week; a weekly salary of $629 per week was earned by those who graduated from high school; approximately $737 per week was earned by workers who acquired some college credits or earned an associate's degree; college graduates earned an average gross salary of $1,138 per week, earning 80% more than high school graduates (Jobe, Joffe, McCord, & Frome, 2012, p. 171). Perhaps, high schools that implement a college-going culture increased college awareness, which allow students to comprehend the importance of completing high school to their future ventures (Jobe, Joffe, McCord, & Frome, 2012, p. 171). This study will affect the way instructional school leaders and teachers create, implement, and strategize practices in college preparatory curriculum in high schools. This study includes results of prior research having similar topics relative to this study along with rationalizing the decision to perform the study. The study revealed whether the completion of postsecondary planning milestones attributed to the students' increased enrollment rates in college.

Research Question

Is there a difference between progressions of postsecondary planning milestones of CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage points to CSA students whose grade is either determined as a pass or fail?

Independent Variables

CSP Graded Mode: The CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage.

CSA Pass or Fail Model: The College Summit Advisory students' grade is determined as either a pass or fail grade.

NPS Mode: The Non-Program Model was specifically for those students who attended tech school (off-campus due to registering for school late or transferred from another school after first semester).

Dependent Variables

Completion of Postsecondary Planning Milestones: The difference between two groups of students completing the Interest Profiler, Saved Careers, Senior Year Plan, College List, Resume, Personal Statement, Practice Application, Saved Programs and Majors, Take the ACT or SAT, Apply to College, Complete the FAFSA, and Saved Scholarships milestones of College Summit was evaluated.

Cumulative Grade Point Average: Evaluation of the difference between cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the end of the 2011 and 2012 school years.

Individual Maximum Scholarship Amounts: The evaluation of the difference between Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model students' individual maximum scholarship amounts.

Acknowledgement of First Top-Three Choice Colleges: Evaluation of the difference between the Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model students' first top-three choice colleges.

Research Hypotheses

Alternative Hypothesis. Alternative Hypothesis # 1: The CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage will demonstrate greater progression in completing postsecondary planning milestones than

CSA students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail, measured by percentage of completion of 12 postsecondary milestones: Interest Profiler, Saved Careers, Senior Year Plan, College List, Resume, Personal Statement, Practice Application, Saved Programs and Majors, Take the ACT/SAT, Apply to College, Complete the FAFSA, and Saved Scholarships.

Alternative Hypothesis # 2: There will be a difference in cumulative Grade Point Average when comparing students in the CSP Model, CSA Model, and NPS Model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 3: There will be a difference in average ACT score when comparing students in the CSP Model, CSA Model, and NPS Model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 4: There will be a difference in percentage of students with full completion of the Postsecondary Planning Milestones when comparing students in the CSP Model to those in the CSA Model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 5: There will be a difference in the average number of Postsecondary milestones completed when comparing students in the CSP Model to those in the CSA Model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 6: There will be a difference in average monetary scholarship awards when comparing students in the CSP Model, CSA Model, and NPS Model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 7: There will be a difference in percentage of acceptance of first top-three choice colleges when comparing students in the CSP Model, CSA Model, and NPS Model.

Rationale for the Study

Richard (2011), editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* argued, "The census estimates that in 2009, 28 percent of Americans 25 and older had at least four-year degrees. But the rate for African Americans was just 17 percent, and for Hispanic Americans only 13 percent" p. 1). Today's economy demands that acquiring a college degree promotes many opportunities to students than those who only obtained a general education degree. Occupational forecast predict for the next 10 years, 2004 to 2014, 80% of America's occupations require at least a two-year degree and 36% will require a four-year degree (College Readiness, 2010a, p. 9). Therefore, America must enforce strategies that promote higher education among all students. The National Student Clearinghouse indicated that according to attendance results from the ACT-tested 2007 high school graduates who enrolled in college immediately after high school, students' attendance in college continues to show gaps among races. African American students accounted for 95,400, which was only 16% of the Caucasian students, 582,200 (Mind the Gaps How College Readiness Narrows Achievement Gaps in College Success, 2010, p. 50). Additional races continued with higher education in their second year of college, 7,200 American Indian students, 31,500 Asian American students, and 55,300 Hispanic students ACT, 2010a, p. 50). According to 2007 U.S. Census Bureau population statistics in 2007, the racial gap in college attendance was still present with 68.5% of Caucasian high school completers attending, while the rates were 55.5% and 57.9% for African American and Hispanic students. Coupled with a nine-point high school completion rate difference between African American and Caucasian students, and a 32-point difference between Caucasian and Hispanic students, differences widen the gap

even further (Walsh, 2008, p. 6). If America is to continue to produce innovative products, everyone must play a role in educating the workers of tomorrow (Walsh, 2008, p. 6).

Miller, Kalet, VanWoerkom, Zorko, and Halsey (2009) stated that traditional grades motivate students more than pass or fail grades. Students feel a sense of gratitude because of the sense of accomplishments towards a specific program of study. Similarly, there is a positive correlation between students achieving high marks under the conventional grading system compared to students acquiring good grades in the pass or fail system (Burke, 2006, p. 1). The purpose for implementing the two models of the College Summit Program at Making a Difference High School was to increase the motivation for higher learning for at-risk students and conclude which program offered the best practices that motivated students to continue with their educational endeavors in college.

Ibe (2012), Managing Director of Operational Systems and Reporting Analyst at College Summit confirmed that, the College Summit organization works in partnership with 12 regions throughout the United States and according to past analysis reports, the researcher is the first in the country to conduct a study on a two-modeled College Summit Program, graded versus pass or fail in an urban school setting (Ibe, O., personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Limitations of the Study

Bias. Since the researcher works in the school and instructs the credit-based model College Summit Program, the possibility of bias existed. To alleviate the probability effect of bias, all data were of a secondary nature, collected and assembled by

second parties, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, College Summit staff, guidance counselors, or by the registrar specialist as a normal course of their job responsibilities. All data collected and evaluated took place in a neutral place within the high school.

Instructional Delivery. There were seven different class sections total of students between the CSP and CSA models. Each group of students had multiple settings along with instructors delivering the curriculum and assessing daily tasks of each individual. The College Summit Program students were enrolled in class four days per week for a total of 240 minutes of class time with access to computers and the CSA students were enrolled in class one day per week for a total of 90 minutes with access to computers.

Sample Size. The sample for the present study included random sampling of the progression of postsecondary milestones, average Grade Point Average, maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three colleges of the CSP and CSA participants and NPS (non-program students). Because this study was limited to 120 participants at one high school, generalization of the results of this study to a larger population of College Summit Program students nationwide having different demographics may not be applicable, thus limiting the external validity of this study.

Surveys. The survey was subjective; participants may not have answered truthfully and accurately. Since the survey was designed to measure the students' experience in the program, the intentions were to provide information about the impacts of college preparatory practices. This survey was not statistically evaluated for reliability.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions provide simplicity throughout this research.

Achievement Gap. The achievement gap refers to the disparity of scores based on the performance on standardized tests between different cultural groups of students (Edwards, Thornton, & Holiday-Driver, 2010, p. 35).

American College Test (ACT). The ACT is an assessment that measures high school students on the abilities to complete the four skilled areas at proficient or advanced levels qualifying them to complete coursework at the college level (ACT, 2011, p. 1).

At-Risk Students. Students demonstrating lack of confidence, low academic performance scores, and possibly dropping out of high school describe the characteristics of at-risk students (Donnelly, 1987, p. 1).

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). The AVID program offers a curriculum that prepares students in grades four through 12 for four-year college admission by practice of in-school rigorous coursework (Bangser, 2008, p. 7).

Cognitive Gap. The cognitive gap indicates a lack of reasoning skills experienced by some first year college students although those students' intellectual skills were successful in high school (Dzubak, 2010, p.1).

College Culture. An environment that promotes learning practices that reflect on students' personal lives, collegiate resources, and one-on-one social support to high school students so that they may begin to plan, to have a successful first year in college, and graduate from college is known as a college culture (Holland & Farmer-Hinton, 2009, p. 26).

College Summit. College Summit is a nationwide not-for-profit organization, that help students residing in low-income communities to enroll in college by engaging high school teachers, counselors, and students to build a college-going culture in high school to increase the enrollment rates in college (College Summit, 2011, p. II).

Early-College High School. Early-College High School is a group of small schools serving a selected group of underprepared students who can acquire an associate's degree or two years of college credit toward a four-year degree while in high school (Hoffman & Webb, 2009, p. 1).

First-Generation Students. First-generation students are students who come from families whose parents never attended a two or four-year college or they are students who emerge from families with low, middle, or higher-income without a family history of college graduates (Jaschik, 2005, p. 1).

Postsecondary Planning Milestone. A list of the 12 College Summit Navigator (CSNav) milestones displaying student progress toward completion of the Senior Portfolio (College Summit, 2011, p. VI).

Tech Prep Program. A tech-prep program is a high school program of study offering two-years of structured coursework in an occupational or technical preparation chosen career field or trade combined with a two-year postsecondary education program resulting with a two or four year degree or certificate in a specific career field (D'Amico, 2002, p.1).

Underserved Student. Underserved students are low-income, first-generation students who do not receive sufficient academic tools to help them achieve successfully

in high school compared to affluent students whose parents have acquired a college degree (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Services [APASS], 2006, p. 2).

Summary

Closing the achievement gap continues to be the problem among low-income students as their suburban counterparts move along the upward spiral of educational demands of both secondary and postsecondary institutions. Low-income, African American students continue to fall behind academically in comparison to Caucasian and Asian students. "For every group of 100 ninth graders, 68 students graduated from high school, 40 enrolled in college, 27 students began their sophomore year of college, and 18 students completed some type of postsecondary degree" (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006a, p. 1).

This study provided a platform for further review of research regarding college preparation programs in Missouri urban high schools serving at-risk students. Chapter 1 presented an overview about the effectiveness of two structures of the College Summit Program serving at-risk students at Making a Difference High School. As the high school proceeds to transform the senior curriculum into one that is conducive to preparing students for college, the overall goal of this research was to find out which of the two programs offered the best practices that prepared at-risk, African American students for college. One of the main issues spotlighted for years is that many urban high schools do not offer a pre-college curriculum that equip students with skills to proficiently progress through entry-level courses in postsecondary studies. Reports have shown that black Missouri students who enrolled in two-year postsecondary programs, studying social sciences or humanities had parents who did graduate from high school or

barely finished high school, showed an overall increased rates on the traditional core courses compared to white students who enrolled in bachelor's degree programs, whose parents graduated from college with careers in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), field showed overall increased rates of participation on all four of the remedial measures (Radford, Pearson, Ho, Chambers, & Ferlazzo, 2012, p. 6).

The next section of this study is the review of literature. Past literature presents contrasting opinions of the success of various college preparation programs, effective practices used in college preparation programs, and college enrollment rates of at-risk students not only enrolling in college but also successfully making it through the first year of college. The literature review documented a discussion of views, as well as a discussion of pre-college planning strategies that have been developed and implemented in high schools across the nation.

Evidence of the research question reflects throughout the literature review, "Is there a difference between the progression of postsecondary planning milestones of CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage points to CSA students whose grade is either determined as a pass or fail?" The direction of the study is a starting point for a more specific review of research regarding the effects of the College Summit Program at Making a Difference High School. Next, Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to answer the research question, as well as, a discussion of the methodology of the study by analyzing data contributing to the comparison of the effectiveness of two models of the College Summit Program from the collection of data. Chapter 4 provides collective data results of the study. Finally, a summarization of results and recommendations are evident in Chapter 5.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Closing the gap in college admission rates for at-risk, African American urban high school students is critical for improving college admissions, college graduation rates, and student's potential earnings after college. The argument presented in this dissertation is that the grading method and program delivery of the college preparatory program is a crucial consideration for closing the gap. While the gateway to a college education may have risen over the past 40 years, student achievement, as evaluated by determination and completion of a college degree, has not increased (Brock, 2010, p. 109). Many urban school districts nationwide began to integrate college prepartory programs designed to assist at-risk, African American high school students with college preparation. This dissertation will address this gap in the literature.

The literature on college prepatory programs and their associated assessment matrices slices through seven sections, each of which will be addressed in turn. The first section examines the historical background on college preparatory programs' influence on low-income minority students. The second section discuss the causes and consequences of the gap while examining how college preparatory programs became part of the solution to decreasing the college gap for African American students. The litearture discusses that programs were enacted at the federal level were failing to substantially improve entrance rates. This was due in part, as section two suggests, to the importance of ending the college gap. Students with inadquate academic skills are unable to succeed in the job market and in college. The third section focuses on four primary challenges that may have prevented some at-risk, African American high students from going to college. The Evidence of Program Impact is the fourth section of dialog,

examining how college preparatory programs target students who are least likely to apply to college and are not academically ready for college. The next section is the Graded versus Pass or Fail Program Models. The author investigated research on the difference in motivation and other factors between courses where students receive a traditional grade and those where students receive a pass/fail. The last three sections of the literature review examine programs similar to the proposed program highlighted in this study, the curriculum of the College Summit Program, and the outcome of the College Summit Program's practices.

The foundation of education has transformed because the levels of accountability in urban high schools who serve at-risk students continue to change. "Every school day, more than 7,200 students fall through the cracks of America's public high schools. Three out of every 10 members of this year's graduating class, 1.3 million students in all, will fail to graduate with a diploma" (Swanson, 2012). One contributing factor is students who do graduate take on too many outside responsibilities (jobs, extracurricular activities, etc.,) during the time their career decisions are still forming (Bangser, 2008, p. 4).

Therefore, the overarching organization of the literature review points to seven specific sections of discussion that leads to the investigation of this research. Those eight themes are: (1) Historical Research on College Prep Programs; (2) The Causes and Consequences of the Gap; (3) Primary Challenges to College; (4) Evidence of Program Impact; (5) Graded versus Pass or Fail Program Models; (6) Associate Programs of Study; (7) The College Summit Program Curriculum; and (8) The Effect of the College Summit Program—Graded vs. Pass or Fail.

Historical Background

The advent of college preparatory programs came about as demographics of college-bound students changed during the mid-1960s. Federal policy-makers enacted legislation to help lower-income students who were neither white nor male to enter college (Brock, 2010b). The Higher Education Act of 1965 provided need-based financial assistance, which intended to make college more accessible for many more students (Brock, 2010c, p.111). Indeed, enrollment between 1963 and 2003 increased significantly as a result.

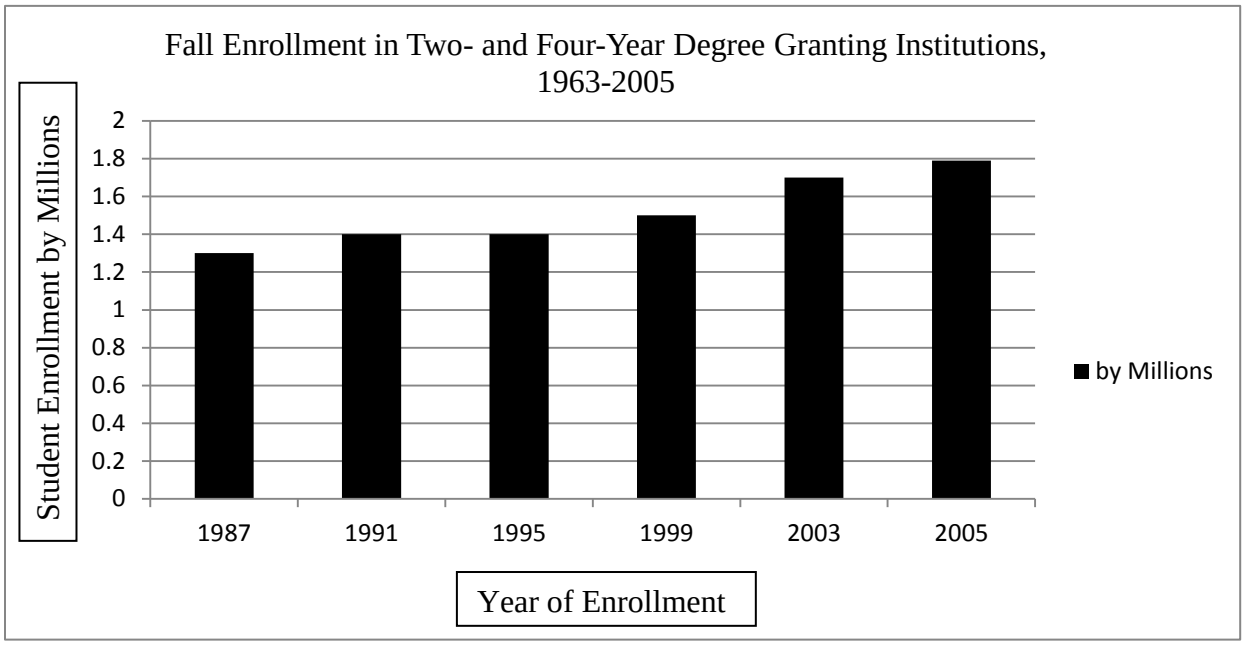


Figure 3. Fall Enrollment in Two-and Four-Year Degree Granting Institutions.
Adapted from Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success, by T. Brock, 2010b, *Future of Children*, 20, p. 1.

Yet, some African American and Latino students did not benefit from this new act. Thus debates over educational equity continued, centering on how to motivate minority students. Legal and scholarly disagreements continued over how best to desegregate America's public schools, in light of the Supreme Court's 1954 argument in

Brown v. Brown of Education to desegregate schools. The Supreme Court's finding, as scholars and educators learned in the ensuing years, was that considerable psychological problems arose for African American students in racially segregated school systems in the United States (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003, p. 2). Thus, educators and policy-makers attempted to overcome the perceived deficits of segregated school systems by offering programs to, African American and Latino college students (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003, p. 2).

Since the 1970s, educators have continued to assist with the improvement in high school graduation rates (Martin, 2008, p. 1). As of 2006, 73.4% of entering freshmen, public high school students graduated from high school (Lee & Rawls, 2010, p. 41), as well as, documents that from 1999 to 2009, the nation's graduation rate increased by 7.3% points on average (Matthews, 2012). In the early 1970s the federal government began subsidizing lower-income students' tuition and school-related costs to increase college enrollment for this demographic (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005, p. 1). Again, the numbers of low-income minority students entering college continued to flounder. As well intentioned as many businesses, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and policy-makers where high school curriculums and qualifications of teachers in many urban schools remained substandard. This likely explains why urban students continued to fail to reach the minimum academic standards to enter college, and once there, to graduate.

By the 1990s, new programs, for example, the AVID, ECHSI, GEAR UP, and College Summit, came on-stream with new approaches. The College Summit Program developed in 1993 was in line with new theories on how individuals learn and develop.

The goal of this program was to improve graduation rates for at-risk students, and to increase college enrollment for all students. Like other college prep programs, the College Summit Program reflected David Super's theory, focused on what he called the development of one's self-concept. This process of career development is unique to each individual, because culture, skills, character, and family background contribute to the development of an individual's career path (Kosine & Lewis, 2008, para.6). Whatever career path a student chooses to take, those required skills necessary for postsecondary success are the same skills necessary for employment.

Importantly, most students want to attend a four-year college and earn their diploma. By the end of the seventh grade more than 80% of students surveyed hoped to graduate with their degree, while 50% anticipated earning a Master's degree or higher as cited in (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005, p.1). Even if considerable contributing factors prevent students from going to college, socioeconomic status of students, first-generation students, and dropouts, each child deserves the opportunity to receive an equitable education. Yet, for low-income minority students, their hopes diminish in part because of inadequate high school college prep programs. What is the basis of this disparity between students' hopes of attending college and the reality?

The Causes and Consequences of the Gap

The gap between low-income minority students and other groups is significant and severe. Only 68 out of every 100 ninth graders will complete high school; of those 68, only 40 enroll in college, of those 40, only 27 complete their freshman year and enrolled in their sophomore year; only 18 will complete their college education in six years (Kuh et al., 2006, para.3).

Many at-risk, low-income students lack the self-esteem and enthusiasm to prepare for college and the academic abilities to compete in college entry courses with resilient students, those suburban students who graduate and go on to college (Dzubak, 2010, para. 1). Their socio-economic status is one contributing factor. As Horn and Chen (1998) demonstrated, 88% of students from affluent families enroll in college (p. 1), but the rate is much lower for at-risk, low- income students. Across many college campuses, faculty voice their concerns about the inability of high school graduates, regardless of socioeconomic status, to complete college level coursework (Dzubak, 2010, p. 1).

Radcliffe and Bos (2011a) noted that approximately 1.2 million students, 50% or more of which are minorities, drop out of high school (para. 2). Scholars hold that increasing college admission rates and college readiness among disadvantage groups of students attending urban high schools is the answer (Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009, para.1). Research evaluating current college preparation programs aimed at increasing college rates for at-risk African American students is mixed.

The literature establishes that there is a disparity between the high school core standards necessary for graduation and the skill set needed to be admitted to college. For example, first-generation youths from communities that are economically and socially underserved enroll and graduate from college with much lower rates than youths from affluent backgrounds (College Preparation Programs, 2009, para. 4). Tomko (2011) argued that the dual-standards have caused graduating seniors to be underprepared for college success (p. 3). Thus, in 2010, states sought to fix the problem by collaborating to align high school graduating benchmarks to those at the college level. The new Common Core Standards were the result. The goal of these standards is that all children, regardless

of their socioeconomic background, will graduate from high school with efficient knowledge and skills that will equip them to be effective in college and on the job (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010a).

Some students will unfortunately fail to progress to the college level even with common standards in place. Students who lack cognitive abilities, concentration skills, and the ability to summarize information may still encounter difficulties adapting to postsecondary teaching styles and learning environments. In some cases, their high school experience did not foster the development of these skills (Hirsch & Savitz-Romer, 2007). The initiative of the college preparatory programs mentioned in this study is to prepare students for college acceptance and successful progression through college coursework. However, the College Summit Program strategy tools not only prepare students for the general two-year or four-year college programs but also prepares students who chose not to go to college in order to pursue career goals outside of the college path. Those students who choose not to go to college can still graduate with occupational, transferrable, skills that will help at-risk, African American students accomplish their goals in other forms of education like vocational training or the military.

A number of minority students do participate in pre-college programs during their high school years. Three pre-college programs similar to the College Summit Program underline comparable practices in this study. Over 1,500 schools nationwide report an enrollment of roughly 120,000 students in the Department of Defense's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. Of the 95% of the student population of AVID high school graduates who gained enrollment in college, nearly 60% enrolled in four-year colleges, and 89% of the program's students continue to remain in college

(AVID, 2012). In 2002, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Early College High School Initiative (ECHSI) focused on two main objectives: improving students' high school and college experiences by establishing articulated partnerships between high schools and colleges. The development of the ECHSI improved program experiences between high school and college students. Additionally, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is another program that helps prepare high school students for college. This program provides services to low-performing middle and high schools in high poverty areas with low assessment scores. Since 1999, universities, businesses, and community agencies have joined GEAP UP to provide students with educational curriculum, experiences, and activities that will guide them through higher-level studies. Thus far, over 700,000 students throughout this nation are participants of the GEAR UP program (Gullatt & Jan, 2003).

Educational institutions continue to work to close the gap because closing the college gap is crucial if at-risk, African American students' career opportunities are to improve. Even for entry-level jobs, a higher education skill set is required. Without literacy, problem solving, team-building skills and a basic understanding of how the world operates uneducated students will be at a huge disadvantage in the job market. According to Mason, Williams, and Cranmer (2009), when hired, new employees should have a clear understanding about the organization, the structure, and ways of acquiring knowledge of management style, and how employees complete their daily tasks, all of which require a high level of literacy (para. 6).

Moreover, 85% of jobs required higher education skills. Some of today's college graduates do not have the necessary employability skills to meet businesses' expectations

of high productivity. Only 20% of today's workforce has the knowledge and skills to perform the job, which positions businesses and organizations to invest in the necessary training that is required for 60% of future jobs (ACT, 2005, p. III).

A college degree or some type of technical or trade certificate is required for 70% of the 30 fastest-growing jobs in America. At some point, workers can expect that 40% of future jobs will require a two-year degree (ACT, 2005, p. III). In a recent survey, 40% of high school graduates felt their preparation for college or work demonstrated inadequate proficiencies in math, science, and English levels of expectancies (Michigan Department of Education, 2006, para. 10).

Dealing with disparities in high school is even more necessary if one considers how underprepared students fare in college. Bettinger and Long (2009) asserted that in 2001, the California State University system dropped over 2,200 students, 7% of the freshmen class, from their program due to performance deficiencies in beginning English and math skills.

Some high schools assist students by offering the necessary pre-college planning tools along with guidance on completing college and financial aid applications that affords them the window to college enrollment (Farmer-Hinton, 2006, para. 2). Unfortunately, college planning resources available to public schools are limited to funding new programs of study, supplying appropriate professional development for teachers, and providing counseling staff necessary to serve the student population (Farmer-Hinton, 2006, para. 3).

Walking through the doors and then graduating from a college or university is the dream of many at-risk students who choose to establish a foundation that will provide

them with educational stability during college and financial security after college. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) was designed to insure that all children have equal access to a college degree and meet the standard of proficiency on state assessments (Martin, C. L., 2008, p. 1). Statistics forecast that every nine seconds, a student drops out of high school. For survival in the 21st century, society recommends that students pursue their education because of the need to transition into postsecondary studies, vocational or trade school, and/or seek employment (Martin, 2008, para. 1).

Unfortunately, many at-risk, low-income urban high school students cannot obtain adequate college scores on pre-college tests. Their academic deficiencies result in low-test scores and remedial courses. Indeed, Laskey and Hetzel (2011) argued that "Forty-one percent of entering community college students, and twenty-nine percent of all entering college students are under prepared in at least one of the basic disciplines (reading, writing, mathematics" (p. 31). These two million first-year college or university students take remedial courses because they are ill prepared. Add to that, lack of motivation and their potential for success reduce considerably (Laskey & Hetzel, 2011, p. 31).

One reason why colleges and universities, private and public, outreach to high schools is to provide an academic path that includes postsecondary course work, which prepares students for college. For this reason, college prep coursework and career guidance in high school encourages students to pursue rigorous academic courses resulting in positive outcomes in college (Hoffman & Webb, 2010). High schools continue to introduce pre-college programs offering transitional plans for students' admittance to college.

Over the last 15 years throughout the United States, many high school administrators started to blend college prep, tech prep, and or career programs into their existing curricula much like the College Summit Program. Theoretical and empirical studies of several programs provide evidence of effective college preparation models in this study: Early College high School Initiative (ECHSI); Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); and GEAR UP Programs. A key factor of these college prep programs is that many of these programs provide students with strategies to prepare for college application and admittance.

College planning programs encourage students to focus more on personal career interests prior to graduating from high school. Holland and Farmer-Hinton (2009) defined a college culture as a learning environment that is available to all students and open to engaging conversations with resources to assist students with the necessary tools to prepare and graduate from postsecondary institutions.

Carnevale (2010) suggested further that,

> The failure of a strictly academic curriculum to work for less advantaged students has encouraged a multiple-pathways approach to high school curriculum, usually with the proviso that all pathways should lead on to or at least not preclude postsecondary education or training. (p. 13)

As such, Holland and Farmer-Hinton (2009) demonstrated that implementing college prep classes into K-12 public schools allowed students to acquire skills that prepare them for postsecondary coursework and career endeavors. Moreover, more schools are offering career programs of study and similar programs so that students receive a pre-college experience in a college-going learning environment. These

programs should address the primary challenges to college for at-risk students, which are outlined in the next section of this literature review.

Primary Challenges to College

Although many influences affect at-risk, low-income high school students from going to college, this study focuses on the following: at-risk, African American high school students; first-generation college students; impact of college entrance test scores (ACT/SAT); and the impact of socioeconomic status.

At-Risk, High School Students. Research indicates that some minority students are overwhelmed by the academic rigor of high school courses and student aid (De La Rosa & Tierney, 2006, p. 1). Nationwide seven out of 10 ninth graders today graduate from high school, while approximately 55% of blacks and Hispanics compared to 80% of white and Asian students graduate from high school (Levin & Rouse, 2012, para. 3). Research continues to stress the importance of preparing high school students for the business world after college. Under prepared graduating high school students transitioning in to college normally reflect characteristics of as at-risk students, who demonstrate struggles in the traditional academic skills, and have no desire to aim for a postsecondary degree (Laskey & Hetzel, 2011, pp. 31-32). These at-risk students seem to be deficient in the non-academic skills necessary to be productive citizens (i.e., maintaining above average attendance in class, remaining focused, acquiring appropriate scholastic strategies for learning and gaining sufficient communication and social skills to ask questions) (Laskey & Hetzel, 2011, p. 32).

Scholars suggest several key factors to determine when a child is at risk. McDonald (2002) argued that children born into economically disadvantaged homes

experience a greater risk of deprivation in a good education (p. 1). McDonald (2002) also contended that a student facing inadequate academic school curricula results in limited social skills resulting to students disengaging from school culture (p. 1). This scenario is particularly characteristic of first-generation college students.

First Generation College Students. "First-generation college students are those students whose parents did not attend college nor earn a degree" (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007, p. 6; Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 2). Past studies confirmed that first-generation college students often lack abilities to perform at complex academic levels in college, and they are less likely to complete a college assessment test, such as the SAT and ACT (Murphy & Hicks, 2006, p. 2; Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 2). They are more likely to produce grades lower than expected during the year of college (Murphy & Hicks, 2006, p. 2). The encounters of first-generation college students continue to expand between researchers and college educators (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007, p. 6; Pike & Kuh, 2005b, p. 2; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004, p. 2).

On the other hand, first-generation students enrolled in higher-level coursework in high school scored in the top percentiles of their class similar to scores of their peers (Murphy & Hicks, 2006, para.4). First-generation college students' retention numbers have increased due to the assistance of effective practices that encourage student engagement and promoting learning among peer groups (Jehangir, 2009). In particular, differentiated work groups can sometimes improve learning abilities in students. Moreover, cohort student groups demonstrate effective learning practices, which can increase students' ACT/SAT scores.

College Readiness Based on ACT Scores. ACT score is one indicator of college-readiness among students planning to go to college. National standards for college entrance assessments suggest a minimum score for positive transition through the benchmark subjects during the first year of college. The minimum ACT scores for English, Social Science, College Algebra, and Biology respectively are 18, 21, 22, and 24 (ACT, 2010a, p. 1). If students achieve these benchmark skills, they are statistically likely to be successful in their first year of college (ACT, 2010b, p. 1). Students who meet the benchmark on their ACT have a 50% chance to make a B or above and a 75% chance to make a C in the subject during their first year of college (Zagier, 2009).

In 2012, the total U. S. populations of senior graduates who took the ACT, met the following benchmarks: 67% met benchmarks in English, 52% met benchmarks in Reading, and 46% met benchmarks in Mathematics, though 25% successfully met the benchmarks in all core subjects (ACT, 2012a, p. 1). Only 1 in 3 (31%) succeeded the benchmarks in Science (ACT, 2012, p. 1).

Zagier, (2009) noted the following:

> Scores for minority students in Missouri continue to fall behind the overall averages. Black students averaged a composite score of 17.2 statewide, compared to 22.4 for whites. Hispanic students averaged a composite score of 20.2. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders scored an average of 23.8.
>
> Only 4 percent of black students met the college-readiness benchmark on all four subjects, compared to 28 percent for whites, 16 percent for Hispanics, and 38 percent for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (p. 2).

As whites continue to succeed on college entrance test above average scores, more than 4 in 10 (41%) of Asian graduates met all four Benchmarks in 2012, which is more than other ethnic groups. Although 5% of African Americans met all four benchmarks, they are the least likely to do so (ACT, 2012, p. 5).

As shown in Figure 4, in 2012, 5% of African American high school graduates succeeded all College Readiness Benchmarks, while 32% Caucasian high school graduates met all benchmarks.

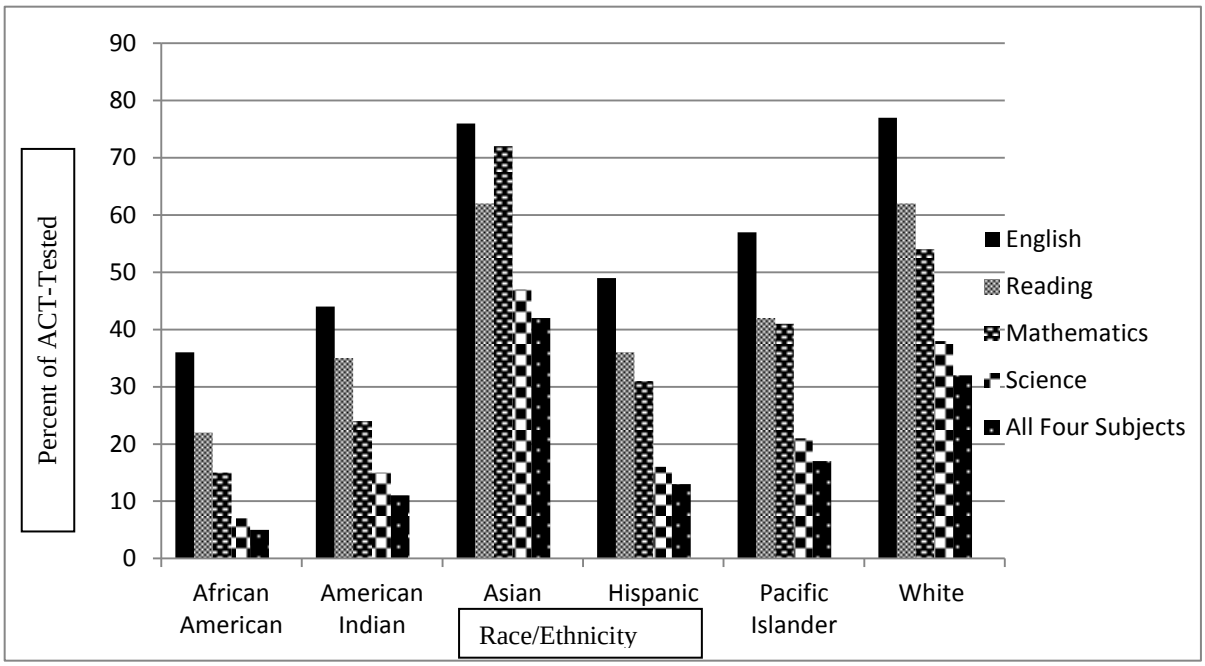


Figure 4. ACT Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race and Ethnicity.
ACT (2012). The Condition of College & Career Readiness. Adapted from "The Condition of College &Career Readiness 2012", ACT, Inc. Retrieved from The ACT: http://media.act.org/documents/CCCR12-NationalReadinessRpt.pdf

Although 32% of Caucasian students met the four subject area benchmarks, 16% of Hispanics, and 42% of Asian students met benchmarks in the four core areas to qualify for college enrollment, only 5% of African American students reached benchmark levels in all four subjects (Zagier, 2009).

Overall, studies conducted over the past 14 years show a steady decline in African American's academic preparedness for college. The statistics are discouraging. Even more high school students enrolled in rigorous coursework recently, but since 1992, their comprehension skills are falling. Important gains occurred, however, with a 21% increase in coursework relative to college planning and 51% of high school students were engaged in college prep activities in 2005 compared to 31% in 1990. Further, in 1990, 10% of high school students were earning college credit, a 5% rise in those earning college credits (Toppo, 2007, para. 6, 9).

Further, Dillon (2009) confirmed that recognizable ethnic gaps revealed critical reading average scores: the average non-Hispanic Caucasian students scored 528 compared with a 516 score for Asian students, 455 score for Hispanic students and a 429 score for African-American students. The average math scores reflected ethnic gaps as, 587 for the average Asian student, 536 for non-Hispanic students, 461 for Hispanics students, and 426 for African American students. Average writing scores disclosed an average of 520 for Asians, compared with 517 for non-Hispanic, 448 for Hispanics, and 421 for African Americans.

College prep programs are set up to provide students with strategies to gain entry into college. Some of those strategies include ACT or SAT study sessions so students could practice sample test at school or on the weekend. Students enrolled in college planning coursework earn better ACT results than those who are not (Hacker, 1999). Unfortunately, the socioeconomic status of students can hinder their performance on college entrance exams.

Impact of Socioeconomic Status. Socioeconomic status of underrepresented students affects negatively their college-going rates when compared to high-income neighborhood students and this gap shows no sign of decreasing (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2006). Family income has a great impact on student achievement (Desimone, 1999, para. 12). But cultural capital, defined here as traditional cultural appearances of high status groups of people expressing certain attitudes, expertise, possessions, preferences, actions, and levels of qualifications used for social and cultural acceptances, is equally important (Condron, 2009, p. 687). Kim and Kim (2009) linked the term to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's research on class and education determined differences between cultural capital and economic capital. Economic capital relates to monetary value, similar to property rights of personal inheritance, while cultural capital is non-materialistic items that are difficult to accrue and transfer. Student academic achievement can result in advantages or disadvantages if the cultural capital is high or low, for example educational resources not in the home or knowledge of the college application processes (Condron, 2009, para. 15).

Evidence of Program Impact

The U. S. Department of Education (2010) proposed that all students will participate in a curriculum program system that builds on postsecondary and career educational standards, provides incentives for growth and accomplishment, and requires rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools (p. 5). Since 2005, only 51% of high school graduates who took the ACT were ready for college-level reading (ACT, 2006, p. 1). Comparatively, 47% of first-generation college students enrolled in college

one year after their high school graduation compared to 85% of students whose parents had college degrees (Engle, Bermeo, & O'Brien, 2006, p. 13).

The purpose of college preparatory programs is to target students least likely to apply to college and help them to be academically ready for college, help them prepare college applications, or simply provide financial aid. Varieties of programs intervene in children's education at different points in life: some at kindergarten, others in high school. Moreover, the focus of several of the programs aims towards the students, family, community engagement, and extracurricular activities (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012a, p. 1-2).

Four types of college preparation programs exist throughout the United States: federal, state, university, and community (nonprofit). One well-known federal program is the TRIO, which parents three programs that serve disabled students, low-income students, and first-generation low-income students. Upward Bound, Talent Search, and The Student Support Services Program (SSS) are the three programs that fall under the TRIO umbrella (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012, p. 1).

States, universities, community, and nonprofit groups all promote college prep programs. New York, California, and New Jersey provide low-income, underserved students with financial aid to support their educational goals in high school college preparatory programs. These state programs work in tandem with and are supplemented by TRIO. One example of a university program is the University of California Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) and The University of Colorado's Pre-Collegiate Program. Examples of community and nonprofit programs include AVID, "I Have a Dream", and ENLACE.

The size and funding for these programs also vary. The largest and best-funded are usually federally funded, while community-based programs are the smallest. What these programs all have in common is their commitment to improving each student's physical survival by preparing them for postsecondary education and employment (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012, p. 1).

Graded versus Pass and Fail Program Models

Graded (Academic Credit). Students enrolled in a school structure that celebrates honor rolls and other forms of competitive comparison tend to accept and strive harder to excel to the top of the grading scale. A competitive edge seems to exist between students and their peers comparing their final grade results. Many times this could be the drive for their learning (Michaelides & Kirshner, 2005, p. 2).

There could be a positive effect on students' motivation to learn in the K-12 grading system by receiving traditional credit based on a letter grade or no credit based on pass or fail. Educators should strive to grade classwork that students complete. This teaching strategy promotes positive outcomes of assignments completed in both quantity and quality. Academic achievement is higher when students receive grades based on percentage points rather than a pass or fail system (Burke, 2006, p. 1).

Michaelides and Kirshner's (2005), argument is related to this study, because participating research students enrolled in one of the two models of the College Summit Program were inclined to completing the required postsecondary milestones and sustained above average grade point averages, because they received a grade based on percentage points as opposed to receiving a pass or fail (p. 2).

College prep programs that offer credit (e.g., Advanced Placement [AP], International Baccalaureate [IB], Tech Prep, and Middle College High Schools), require students to be college ready by taking college assessment test or scoring above average on the SAT or ACT. Also, college prep programs require students to obtain approval for admittance from the college before the start of enrollment; or acknowledgement of academic approval by program staff (Bailey & Karp, 2003, para. 8).

Although programs prerequisites select students with high academic marks, various reasons exist why different groups of students can participate. Providing teaching practices so students can handle rigorous coursework in college and providing real-world examples indicating skills needed to succeed in postsecondary institutions are the main prerequisites. Secondly, assisting staff members and students with college prep coursework, offering all students interested in going to college with the necessary skills to enroll in college, providing financial aid for students, and establishing tech prep relationships between high schools and colleges are all influences that place students on track to higher education (Bailey & Karp, 2003).

Pass or Fail (Non-Academic Credit). A pass or fail grading system earmarks students who do not receive precise ranking of success. Some of the benefits resulting from this type of grading system are very little worry, eagerness to compete among students, and willingness to take more rigorous coursework.

Best practices in college preparation programs assist at-risk, low-income students in overcoming obstacles to reduce academic inequality by creating environments that foster student success in college. Effective college prep programs had the following elements in common: a college advisor to direct the student through the school year;

quality instruction that supports the needs of the student; a focus on long-term interventions; empathy for student's socioeconomic background; implementation of collaborative peer group support; and financial assistance (Hanover Research Council, 2009). Disappointingly, these at-risk students do not seem to transition into college at successful rates. "The percentage of public high school graduates going to community college decreased from 37.4% to 29.6%" (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2006, p. 1).

The final assessment of this study evaluated which College Summit Program at Making a Difference High School is more effective for postsecondary planning, the CSP, which students receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage, or the CSA program where student's grade is determined as either a pass or fail. The academic credit program offers students postsecondary classroom instruction four times per week on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday in 50-minute block classes and on Wednesday or Thursday in 90-minute block classes. The pass or fail program offers students postsecondary classroom instruction, on Wednesdays, one time per week, during the advisory period in a 90-minute block class. Quantitative comparisons evaluated postsecondary planning milestones, students' Grade Point Averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges per student between the groups of students enrolled in the two models of the College Summit Program.

College prep programs can vary immensely in structure, goals, and professional development. In the fall of 2007, the introduction of a college preparation program, known as the College Summit Program, evolved at Making a Difference High School. Administrators, educators, students, and parents marked this first-time initiative as a pre-

college program that would benefit students who are interested in going to college. The program began with a preliminary group of 25 senior students. Each year thereafter, an additional group of 25 senior students joined the program. During the 2011-2012 school year, seven groups of senior high school students participated in the College Summit Program. The school district provided $200.00 for each participating student enrolled in the program.

College Summit (2011) asserted,

> The organization of the College Summit Navigator Curriculum is broken down into seven separate thematic units. Each unit maps to a specific month or months during the senior year and culminates in the completion of one or more Senior Portfolio products. The units and lessons design is flexible. You can mix and match lessons and lesson components within the units to create the best, most meaningful experience for the students (p. V).

The program curriculum, postsecondary planning workbook for each educator and student, and related materials provide an annual landscape of pre-college lessons and activities. The provision of access to the College Summit's Navigation system and College Summit's teacher's and student's edition, equip all participating students and educators with pre-college activities necessary to complete the 33-week agenda (College Summit, 2011). All educators selected for the College Summit Program must attend the Educators Academy workshop annually. The high school's administrator along with the College Summit coordinator met with the College Summit representative on a monthly during the school year to monitor the implementation of the program, and observed student performance goals. Each academic year in January, 10% of the future College

Summit participants become Peer Leaders to train on leadership skills in the College Summit summer workshops. The location of the summer workshops organized in the state of Missouri, on the college campus, i.e., University Missouri St. Louis, St. Louis Community College, or Washington University. Participants reside on campus for four days gaining an understanding of the program, learning research strategies, and writing techniques.

Beginning the following school year, Peer Leaders arrive back in the classroom, and assist College Summit Advisors with classroom activities throughout the year. The CSAs ensure that each student and educator creates a CSNav logon within two days of the start of the College Summit class. Within two days of the new school year, placement of all participating students in a CSP and CSA class was essential to staying on track to complete all postsecondary milestones for the year. The college summit advisor's main responsibility of the day is to ensure that all program students' postsecondary milestones receive a check mark indicating completion of an activity. Integrating the appropriate stakeholders as support groups makes a difference with students' progression to college.

Educators, students, parents, community stakeholders, businesses, organizations, and politicians, have now come to realize that education beyond high school is a requirement for those who would like to earn a high salary in the United States (Bailey & Karp, 2003, para. 1). Secondly, Bailey and Karp (2003) articulate, thus, a small number of young adults obtain a college degree, the majority of graduating high school seniors certainly anticipate on graduating from college (para. 2). The motive for this is the educational breakdown between the traditional and postsecondary school systems; students leave high school ranking near the top of their class yet find themselves

repeating some of the coursework during their first year of college. Many high school students are not aware of the effect their decisions have when seeking opportunities in the future, therefore they remain disconnected from the learning processes in high school (Bailey & Karp, 2003, para. 2).

"In the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, 62 percent of African Americans and 63 percent of Latinos who enrolled in college were placed into a developmental (remedial) college course, compared with 36 percent of Caucasian" (Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009, p. 189). Consequently, many students who live in urban school districts struggle to learn collegiate strategies that help them gain admittance to higher learning institutions. Past literature has proven documentation of best practices in various college prep programs: Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); Early College; GEAR UP; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); Career and Technical Programs (CTE); TRIO Programs; and Urban Prep Academy.

Educators should view students as their number one customer; therefore, effectively designing the programs' coursework and ongoing evaluations could heavily influence student achievement (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 13). At-risk students, who graduated from urban high schools with college prep curriculum skills, greatly benefit businesses, organizations, and institutions by demonstrating their acquired skills from secondary and postsecondary schools (Rhodes, Noonan, & Rosqueta, 2008, p. 48). The widespread problem of high dropout rates in American high schools is a serious concern.

This wave of dropouts in the United States affects adolescents attending urban high schools and residing in urban communities with low incomes and low levels of

education. In 2003, 3.5 million people between the ages of 16 to 25 did not graduate from high school, nor did they even register for school. The results of massive groups of students dropping out of high results in a negative influence on neighborhoods because of the lack of efficient employees, reduction in sufficient earnings, higher cost to taxpayers for increased number of incarcerations, loss of health care, and higher numbers of recipients of social service benefits (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006, pp. 1-2).

Rimer (2008), a Boston University chief science and health media relations officer, and a former New York Times reporter, noticed that many students on the *East Coast* wanted to attend college but were not on track for college. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, one program was discontinued because the program's practices aimed at only one small group of students toward postsecondary education. Presently, all students are now participants in this college preparation program. Furthermore, educators have directed their energy to coaching at-risk, low-income students to not only complete high school, but also to go on to college or technical trade schools and graduate with skills to succeed in the future (Rimer, 2008, p. 1).

Associated Programs of Study

Advance Via Individual Determination (AVID). One major problem that continues to resurface is the college retention rates among first-generation college students. The purpose of the AVID program is to meet this challenge. Reaching back to middle school to engage students in college preparation programs, the AVID program aims to increase college attendance rates among the underserved population of fifth through 12th grade students. AVID, a college preparatory program founded by Mary Catherine Swanson an English department director and English teacher at San Diego's

Clairemont High School in 1980 begin its program's goal by transferring large groups of urban low-income students to suburban area high schools (Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, & Alkan, 2008, p. 18). AVID selects minority students from low-income families with parents who have never attended college, 19% of which are African American and 49% Hispanic, and who had no desire to go to college. These students enrolled in coursework that challenged and positioned them on the track for college (Watt et al., 2008; Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002).

This program delivers rigid, pedagogic classes that prepare students who would not normally enroll in this type of program, as well as guidance and support for the accomplishment of their abilities in higher-level studies. AVID student candidates are those who are in the mid-range of the grading scale, 2.00-3.50 GPA. AVID educators receive training at the summer institute in Atlanta, GA (Ensor, 2009a, p. 2). Overall, the AVID core curriculum focuses on writing and critical reading. Ninth and 10th grade students simultaneously take an honors English class rotating with an AVID tutorial class throughout the year. As juniors, they start an Advanced Placement English 11 class along with the AVID tutorial class. AVID students meet for one block class two days out of the week to learn best practices on note taking, test-taking and organizational skills two days out of the week (Ensor, 2009, p. 3). AVID has produced data and results from the 2010-2011 school year.

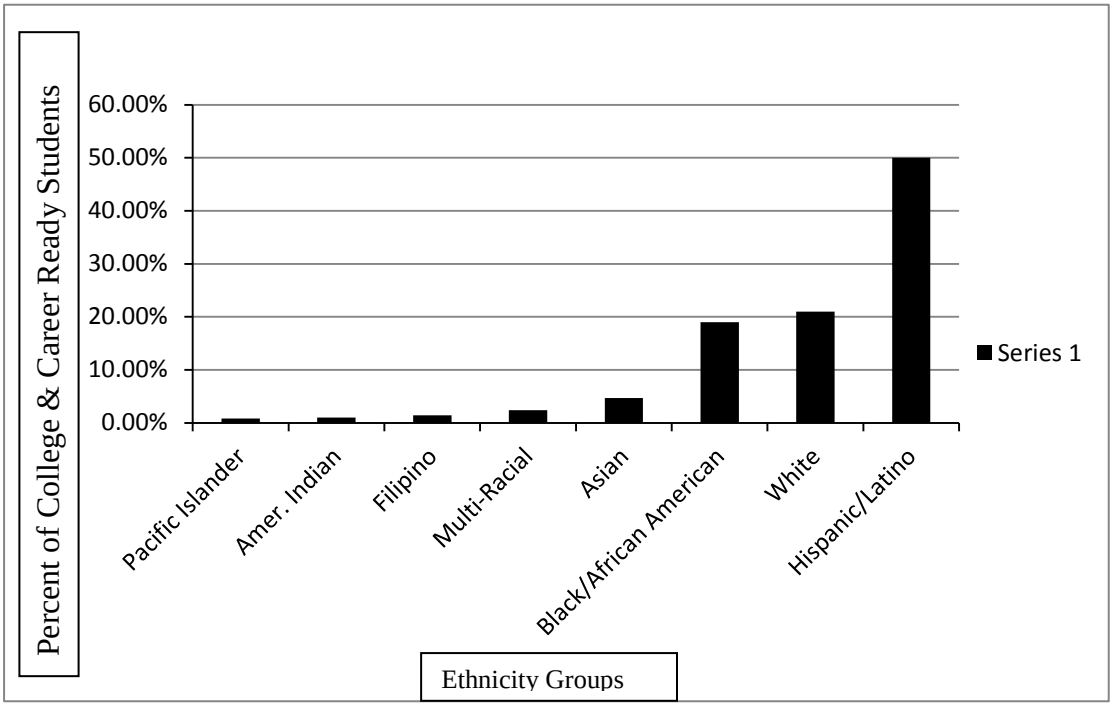


Figure 5. College & Career Readiness.
Adapted from "AVID, Data & Results", ACT, Inc. 2012, Retrieved from The ACT: http://media.act.org/documents/CCCR12- NationalReadinessRpt.pdf

Enrollment in the AVID program is voluntary, and runs on a 10-month school-year cycle, offering courses to middle and high school students. AVID addresses the fundamentals of college preparation. Eight schools, four middle and four high schools, in California participated in the AVID program (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002, p. 3). AVID funded a research study under the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Training in Education (CREATE) in 2001 to identify AVID's best practices of the program. Because of their consistent achievement in academic performance, the eight schools became candidates based on their academic accomplishments, acceptance into college and upholding high attendance rates, as well as recommendations from AVID regional managers (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002, p. 3).

Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) reported, "the adoption of the AVID program manifested in approximately 2,300 middle and high schools in 36 states and 15 countries"

(p. 1). AVID's program implementation and student progress is monitored through the AVID Data Systems, and results are analyzed to ensure success (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002). AVID is an elective class that recruits students in middle school whose grades range from B's through D's, but have the attitude and aptitude to purse rigorous academic study. AVID enrolls students into advanced studies using study modules that build skills needed for college. AVID students take advance placement courses with an AVID curriculum. Students receive assistance from AVID led teachers, provided with an AVID curriculum, and parents are encouraged to commitment to the college introductory process. Postsecondary survival skills, basic college techniques, study skills, organization, time management, critical thinking, reading, and writing skills are some of the college entry skills provided to AVID students (Watt et al., 2008). Although some AVID students receive the preliminary survival skills to move into higher-level studies successfully, others do not advance due to the issues at home like lack of family and community support.

The AVID program highlights the importance of providing students with the educational and economic means to survive in America today. Many students lack the initiative to challenge themselves with rigorous coursework, have deficiencies in academic recognition, and feel that a high school education is unrelated to their future (Oswald, 2002, p. 1).

Oswald (2002) confirms:

> While 90% of Caucasian students and 94% of Asian students had graduated from high school or earned a GED, the rate among African Americans was only 81%. Sixty-three percent of the Hispanic students had graduated. While 75% of

> Caucasians and 85% of Asians had attended college directly after high school, for African Americans and Hispanics, that figure fell to 71%. (p. 1)

Some AVID students do not perform at progressive levels in their traditional academic skills in school, although their background indicates that they can produce positive outcomes in higher education. Instead, they voluntarily block their skills and talents by enrolling in coursework that prohibits the challenge (Oswald, 2002, p. 1). Curricula with demanding pedagogical structure, aligning high school standards with college expectations, is necessary even more so in urban schools for at-risk students to fulfill their college aspirations (Roderick et al., 2009, p. 186).

Latinos (30%) and African Americans (13%) students who reside in households with parents without a college background are the largest group of AVID students. Their progress is important for reducing academic differences between ethnic groups. Eighty-nine percent of AVID students applied to four-year colleges and 74% of AVID students received acceptance to a four-year college Advancement Via Individual Determination, n.d., p. 1-2). College enrollments among AVID and other program students continue to trend upwards compared to other nation program.

Early College High School Initiative (ECHSI)—Graded-Credit Based Program. In response to the need of transitioning high school students into college students, high schools have been implementing college preparation programs across the nation. The Early College High School Initiative (ECHSI) is committed to providing the best teaching strategies to underrepresented groups of students. Those strategies permit high school students to meet rigorous college and career pathway benchmarks while integrating postsecondary academics to students prior to graduating (Berger, Adelman, &

Cole, 2010, p. 333). "Seventy-four percent of early-college high school students are of color. Fifty-six percent of the students receive free and reduced-price lunch, and nearly a third of all early-college high schools receive funding from Title I, the federal aid program for disadvantaged students" (Hoffman & Webb, 2009, p. 1). In 2002, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's ECHSI implemented two initiatives: refining students' high school and college experiences. The development of the ECHSI improved program experiences between high school and college students. The goal of the ECHSI schools is to insure that first generation students earn a substantial number of college credits by participating in dual enrollment courses while in high school. The objective is to graduate students ready for college-level coursework (Berger et al., 2010; Rosenbaum & Becker, 2010; Thompson & Ongaga, 2011; Kisker, 2006). Transitioning students from high school coursework to college coursework is a forward shift that many educational institutions have begun to adopt.

Many of the teaching practices offered to students are the development of a seamless path for students to move from high school to college, the delivery of topics and talents needed for college, a structured curriculum steering students in the direction of attaining mastery levels of chosen disciplines, and motivating students through presentation of incentives. Furthermore, these teaching practices guide students by providing mandatory meetings focusing on college planning strategies and tracking students' progress (Rosenbaum & Becker, 2001, p. 14-15). In addition, the teaching practices help students transition from high school to college by assisting students with college searches, completing college applications, and applying for scholarships (Rosenbaum & Becker, 2001, p. 14-15).

Berger et al. (2010) argue that in 2005-2006, seven out of 11 early college schools promoted one student to graduate from college earning an associate's degree by the time he or she left high school. In 2006-2007, a report surfaced indicating that 56 ECS students earned 23 credits, which translated to seven or eight college credits. Overall ECHSI provided multiple supports to help students be successful in both high school and college courses (Berger et al., 2010; Hoffman & Webb, 2009, p. 2; Rosenbaum & Becker, 2011). Rosenbaum and Becker (2011) confirmed that four years after the establishment of the 64 ECHSs, a total of 3,000 students graduated from high school in 2009, 44% of the students completed a minimum of 12 to 15 college credits and 25% completed 21 to 24 college credits or an assiciates's degree.

Similarly, 74% of early-college high school students are minorities, 56% receive free, and reduced lunch, and approximately one-third are Title I recipients. Hoffman and Webb (2009) support Berger et al. (2010), claiming that the purpose of the ECHSI is to ensure low-income minority students and first-generation college students can comprehend and complete college coursework in time to earn college credits that transfer to two-year or four-year colleges (Hoffman & Webb, 2009, p. 2). Regarding graduation rates, early colleges open for more than four years have graduated 2,258 students with 40% of graduates attaining more than 15 college credits and 11% graduated from high school and received their degree from a two-year college at the same time (Hoffman & Webb, 2009, p.3).

Nationwide, over 60% of first-year community college students took remedial courses. Surprisingly, the rates are 90% or higher in some urban communities (Rosenbaum & Becker, 2011, p. 16). This unpredictable increase in remedial

coursework causes college graduation rates to decline and college tuition to rise (Rosenbaum & Becker, 2011, p.16). Thus, one of the common responses to the gap of at-risk high school students shifting to postsecondary studies is the missing component of early college programs in urban high schools.

Gaining Early Awareness Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)—Pass or Fail Program. Research reports the significance of a partnership between high schools and colleges for the alignment of high school courses to first-year college courses for the elimination of remedial coursework. A report produced by U.S. Department of Education (2003) summarized a national evaluation of GEAR UP after the first two years of service. "GEAR UP is a federal program aimed at providing access to higher education for low-income students. GEAR UP began its program in 1998 as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965" (Muraskin, 2003, p. 1). During the first year of the GEAR UP program, 164 partnerships across the nation, served more than 100,000 students, with an average cost of about $650 per student from federal resources (Muraskin, 2003, p. 2). Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) re-endorsed itself as a component of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Muraskin, 2003, p. 1). GEAR UP subscribes educational equivalency for underprivileged students wanting to proceed into postsecondary education (p. 1). Specifically, GEAR up strives to make higher learning accessible and graduation a reality to low-income, at-risk minority students by making postsecondary information available to both students and parents (Muraskin, 2003, p. 3). U.S. Department of Education (2003) noted several mandates by the Higher Education Act of

1965. GEAR UP strives to increase the enrollment rate of postsecondary access and completion by supporting the following efforts:

1. Students and parents are provide relevant information pertinent to college preparatory courses, cost of tuition, financial aid, and various curriculum programs
2. one-on-one academic support and social support services to student
3. increased parental contribution from parents to child
4. promotion of academic excellence throughout the school year
5. transformation of educational institutions
6. strong commitment from students in challenging coursework. (Muraskin, 2003, p. 4)

Primarily GEAR UP students begin their program years by the sixth or seventh grade and continue through high school in the program. Approximately 50% or more of GEAR UP recipients qualify for free or reduced lunches, having a family economic status of low-income

(Muraskin, 2003, p. 1). Similar to other college prep programs, GEAR UP's main goal is to lay the foundation for students to eagerly plan for college. College and career fairs, guidance, counseling, college advisory, ongoing mentoring, and parental involvement are some of the educational practices provided by GEAR UP.

GEAR UP further discussed the characteristics of the student population. GEAR UP's first year program (1999-2000) begin its longitudinal study with 164 partnerships serving more than 100,000 students averaging approximately $650 in federal funds per student. Under 237 partnerships, GEAR UP served approximately 200,000 students

during the second cycle of business (2000-2001), 90% of seventh and eighth grade students. The majority of GEAR UP population of students is minorities, "36 percent were Hispanic, 30 percent African American, 26 percent white, 5 percent Native American and Hawaiian and 3 percent Asian" (Muraskin, 2003, p. 5).

GEAR UP provided partnership projects that could flow in two directions: projects with instructional emphasis that affect the leadership and management of the school, and providing services to students (Muraskin, 2003, p. 4) . Focusing on student services, the projects were organized into specific categories based on the types of supplemental services provided. GEAR UP provides four supplemental services to participating students: (a) tutoring services resulted from the support of paid professional staff, often teachers employed by the school (transportation issues and competing interests posed concerns about the after school tutoring projects struggling to keep participant's attendance at an acceptable rate); (b) college fairs and in-and out-of-state college tours transpired annually during each project appreciating and accepting responsibility by students taking ownership of their future ventures, not including, special events to increase college awarenes and individual support for students dealing with academic abilities and issues with behavior; (c) GEAR UP projects offered summer programs ending students' first year with unexpected low enrollment rates; and (d) professional development begin to grow as teachers begin to understand and by-in to the GEAR UP program initiatives between the first and second year (Muraskin, 2003, p. 4).

Walsh (2008) affirmed racial gaps in students transitioning to college. The 2007 population outcomes reported from the U. S. Census indicated a gap among races in college attendance, 68.5% Caucasian high school graduates attended college, despite

independent rates revealing 55.5% of African Americans and 57.9% of Hispanic students. Afterwards a contributing factor leading to the expanded variation pointed to the 9-point difference in high school graduation rates between African American and Caucasian students, and the 32-point difference between graduation rates of Hispanic and Caucasian students (Walsh, 2008, p. 3).

Walsh (2008) affirmed inequities of income among races and the effects on college attendance exist. Differences exist between socioeconomic reputation and graduating with a college degree. Individuals who come from families with low incomes are more vulnerable to not completing a bachelor's degree (p. 6).

In defense of the Pennsylvania's GEAR UP program, Walsh (2008) defined five program goals contributing to the overall increase in academic performance: (a) Early educational and career exploration support services; (b) Improve the quality of teaching by implementing professional development programs to meet the demands of the GEAR UP curriculum; (c) Provide teachers the opportunity to visit urban schools shadowing veteran teachers in the program; (d) Provide college and financial aid information to programs through the implementation of parental guidance programs; and (e) provide scholarship assistance to eligible students who desire to go to college (pp. 6-7).

Looking at other states, Pennsylvania's GEAR UP program initiative has made strides in improving graduation rates for underrepresented students. The graduation rate of high school seniors in the GEAR UP program in 2006 was 84.4%, while the percentage of GEAR UP students enrolled in college in 2006 was 52.2%. GEAR UP students showed an increase in high school graduation rates compared to the U.S. average. "The average freshman graduation rate for public schools in 2006-07 was

74.4%, exactly 10% lower than the GEAR UP students" (Walsh, 2008, p. 7). GEAR UP took the lead on nation-wide enrollment rates in accredited colleges and universities. Enrollment within the 18 to 24-year-old age groups was 38.9%, which was 13.3% below GEAR UP enrollees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007, p. 7). These enrollment rates included all ethnic groups of students.

Lozano, Watt, and Huerta (2009) affirmed, that GEAR UP student participants reading and math assessment scores increased over a three-year span, sixth to eighth grade in 47 GEAR UP and 133 non-GEAR UP schools in California (Cabrera, Deil-Amen, Prabhu, Terenzini, Lee, & Franklin , 2006, p. 79).

History of College Summit Programs Nationwide. The organization of the College Summit Program consists of a large community of people throughout the United States. The origin of the College Summit, directed by J. B. Schramm, began in 1993, starting in an inner-city residential building with four students in Washington, D.C. (College Summit: About Us, 2006-2012, para.1). Schramm notes, every year dozens of youths were ready for college but not going to college (About Us , 2012, para.1). College Summit supervises offices in 11 regions: Northern and Southern California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indianapolis, New York, the National Capital Region (DC, MD, and VA), St. Louis (MO), South Carolina, and West Virginia (College Summit, 2012c, para. 1).

The groundbreaking of innovations to education never cease to end in today's society. With the election of Bill Clinton as president of the United States in 1992 and taking office in 1993, the College Summit Program began its initiatives in an apartment complex. In 1993, four pioneering teens were the first students of the college prep

program in Washington, D.C. (College Summit, 2011, p.VI). The founder and CEO of College Summit, J. B. Schramm, continued his employment as an Academic Advisor at Harvard as he progressed through graduate school trying to recruit talented low-income students. Annually, many of the center's youths were ready for college but not going. Some under privileged teens showed no interest in going to college whatsoever (College Summit, 2011, para. 1).

Instructional best practices shared with College Summit high schools raised college enrollment rates while creating a pre-college environment that encouraged all students to remain focused academically and graduate college-ready (Sagawa & Schramm, 2008). A positive college-going school culture encourages all students to pursue college as a postsecondary option and prepares all students to make informed decisions through systemic services that engage all staff personnel, not just guidance and college counselors (Knight-Diop, 2010, p. 165). Educators, businesses, and communities must continue to implement innovative ways to create and teach college-readiness and work-readiness skills to all students.

College Summit Regions. Throughout the last 10 years, College Summit has established many partnerships throughout the United States from Northern California to West Virginia (College Summit, 2012c, para. 1). As College Summit continues to collaborate with teachers, counselors, principals and administrators alike, a post-secondary education among low-income students will become a reality (College Summit, 2011).

College Summit reports:

> Over the past decade, College Summit has worked in partnership with schools, school districts and colleges to develop a sustainable model for raising college enrollment rates community-wide. College Summit is raising college admissions rates school-wide and nationwide, and is doing so for more and more students each year. Fifteen percent school-wide college enrollment rates (CER) increases over baselines for partner schools. Since 2004, when some high schools began working with College Summit, the high schools building college culture outperformed the rest of the state by 13%. Similarly, St. Louis schools participating in College Summit saw 20% more of their students enroll in college in their first year of participation. So far, these students have stayed in college at above national norms for low-income students (College Summit, 2012d, para. 3)

Given that middle-income CERs are 30% higher than low-income CERs; the low-to middle-income gap declined by half in College Summit schools (College Summit, 2011, p. VII).

Research suggests that students who consistently achieve high marks in high school strive harder to participate in graduation day, since they meticulously prepared themselves for college and rewarding careers. To increase high school graduation rates, educators must inform students about the importance of graduating from high school, which is to become college-ready and ultimately have productive careers (Sagawa & Schramm, 2008).

College Summit Launches in St. Louis. College Summit (2012e) reported that:

> Jane Donahue (2004) saw that a program such as College Summit would benefit many youths throughout the metropolitan area, and; she pushed to make it happen in Missouri. Jane Donahue the writing coach has been living in St. Louis since 2004; she eagerly shared the College Summit Program with school districts and public officials who then walked small groups of St. Louis students through a college planning workshop in Colorado. After the workshop, nine rising seniors completed their college application process, as well as, college counselors now able to be efficient on their jobs. In 2005, College Summit begin its programs in St. Louis throughout various high schools serving 400 St. Louis Public School (SLPS) students. Associate schools have begun to see double-digit college enrollment rates; along with Wellston Public Schools and Normandy School district, 3,700 lives transformed (College Summit, 2012e, p.1)

Cities, communities, and schools need more people like Jane Donahue to begin innovative college prep programs that would enlightened more high schools students to stay on track academically so they can be college-ready upon graduating from high school.

The structure for college prep programs and career and technical programs could be modified as employment requirements change. High schools can prepare students for college by offering pre-college curriculums that produce college-ready recipients. As Ryken (2006) surmises,

> The implementation of college prep programs in high school is to assist students with making profound career choices in postsecondary educational and

> occupational goals. The contrast between Tech Prep programs and conventional vocational education is that it gives light to academics that are practical program agreements with colleges, hands-on activities in real-work simulation environments, programs of study, and involvement of students from various walks of life at different aptitude levels, whereas traditional occupational education did not include comprehensive academics that merge into postsecondary studies (p. 50).

Transitioning from middle school to high school is similar to learning how to walk again. Once students start high school, they must begin to think about postsecondary path(s) that lead them to their ultimate career (Tang, Pan, & Newmeyer, 2008). Those paths could be found through career and technical programs that have a program of study curriculum. A tech prep initiative claimed to prepare students academically and vocationally with demanding programs of study that articulated credit between the secondary and postsecondary institutions, creating a seamless route to continuing education and future careers (Sweat, 2006, p. 52). Schmeiser (2010), ACT's Education Division president and chief operating officer concluded, racial and income gaps can be reduced by providing a demanding, rigorous curriculum for all students in high school, which in turn, can drastically minimize racial and family income gaps when entering students are academically prepared for college (ACT, 2010, p. 1-2). Students advancing through college prep courses in high school have shown successful outcomes with academic performance as they progress in coursework in college (Center for the Study of Education Policy, 2005). High school students that have proceeded through vocational programs are among the diverse group of students who have gone on to

college. There was an increase of vocational education graduates in the field of public higher education in Missouri from 1996 to 2000. Beginning in 1996, 2,172 graduates enrolled in public colleges with an increase in numbers to 2,413 in 1998 and then 2,813 in 2000 (Ko, 2005). The final phase of a college prep program and tech prep program is to direct high school students through pre-college coursework, so they can graduate from college without taking corrective courses.

College Summit at Making a Difference High School. The research unfolds at a high school in an urban school district, founded in 1884, located in a Midwest county. The district encompasses 13 municipalities. The school district has an enrollment of more than 5,000 students in preschool through grade 12 with 1,100 students enrolled in the high school (Goldstein, 2001). Appropriate certification is required of all professional staff members by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Every school has a full-time, non-teaching principal. Students in the district engage in rigorous program curriculums, nationally recognized academic programs, extracurricular activities, and various tutoring programs. This Title I district is comprehensively transforming teachers, students, and staff to assist with overall increase performance of all students. The majority of students in the district are at-risk students, who receive free/reduced lunch.

A group of certified educators whose goal is “the ideal high school” leads this urban high school. This high school is the home of some 1100 students, Grades 9-12 (Goldstein, 2001). The majority of the student population at the high school is at-risk students, receives free and reduced lunch, and is first generation college students. Since the 2005 school year, the re-organized of the school separates into four areas of study,

Grades 9-12 General Education coursework. Those areas are: Advance Placement (AP) course work (Chemistry, Physics, English, and Calculus); College Prep Programs (College Summit and AVID), two career and technical programs of study (Family and Consumer Science, and Business, Administration and Management); with all students completing the comprehensive coursework requirements for graduation.

However, one program is unique of itself, the College Summit Program. College Summit is a college preparatory program that accepts all students regardless of their GPA. It offers a 33-week curriculum that embraces 12 postsecondary planning milestones, and goal setting that all senior students complete prior to them exiting the program. These milestones set the pace for students to learn strategies that provide them with the necessary skills to acquire admission to college. The College Summit organization collaborates with secondary schools across the nation to promote and support a learning environment that simulates a college atmosphere, so students graduate career and college-ready (College Summit, 2011, p. V).

At the beginning of 2006, the studied urban high school adopted a college prep program called College Summit, which offers a comprehensive scope and sequence of a curriculum broken down into seven thematic units, which directs high school students on the road to preparing for college, by setting postsecondary planning milestones. The goal of the College Summit Program is to provide students with a safe and supportive space within the school day in which they can explore, apply, and prepare for a variety of postsecondary options (College Summit, 2011, p. V).

African Americans and poor students' dropout rates in high school are higher due to apathy than Caucasian students' dropout rates (Zhao, 2011, p. 1). In 2009, 4.8%

African Americans and 5.8% Hispanics between the ages of 15 and 24 dropped out of high school compared to 2.4 % Caucasians (Zhao, 2011, p. 1). In 2007, the dropout rate for Caucasians was 5.3% as compared to 8.4% for African Americans. The percentage of Caucasian students enrolling in college immediately after high school was 71.7% in 2008 as compared to 55.7% of African Americans. Further movement on preparing nine through 12 grade students for college promotes academic achievement in both high school and college reducing dropout rates for all students (College Summit, 2013, p. 5).

A quantitative research conducted on two groups of high school seniors determined which College Summit Program was more effective with students progressing through postsecondary planning milestones: the College Summit Program (CSP) where students receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage or the College Summit Advisory (CSA) that students receive a grade as either pass or fail.

In essence, according to research, College Summit supports and transforms high school environments by establishing a curriculum that leads to positive relationships, transforming into relevant, rigorous, college-ready results (College Summit, 2010). This program is an essential component to the curriculum in all high schools. This program directed participating students to become scholars who would then be able to maximize their postsecondary planning potentials for unlimited career opportunities empowering them to become more organized and prepared to handle undergraduate level coursework (College Summit, 2013, p. 1).

Although the disparity continues to exist among these groups of students, some barriers are ongoing that prohibit some students from continuing their education beyond

high school, including parental involvement, at-risk high school factors, first generation college students, inadequate preparation for college entrance tests, the impact of socioeconomic status, cultural identity issues, and insufficient financial aid. Because the focus strongly exists around the College Summit Program, the discussion of a few barriers is necessary in this research.

The College Summit Program Curriculum

The weekly lessons in the College Summit Program allow students to navigate through various college options. Participating students created a collection of artifacts throughout the year. After the completion of all pre-college coursework, many of the students begin to realize they had acquired life-long planning and leadership skills that enabled them to succeed in college or the workforce (College Summit, 2011). The College Summit Navigator curriculum workbook consists of 33 weekly lessons, including seven thematic units. Each unit maps to a specific month or months during the senior year, which culminates in a final senior portfolio project. The CSNav Connections lead to the completion of one or more CSNav Milestones, which are the interim steps toward completing the senior portfolio. The College Summit Navigator Student Edition textbook sets the pace for students to begin each week with new college planning goals. These goals stage the outcomes for students to reach and outline the action steps needed to achieve the outcomes.

The Effects of the College Summit Program

Weekly lessons in the College Summit Program allowed students to navigate through various college options. Participating students created a collection of artifacts throughout the year. After the completion of all pre-college coursework, many of the

students realized they had acquired skill sets they could apply throughout life while succeeding through college or in the labor force (College Summit, 2011).

Summary

In essence, according to research, "College Summit excels in each of the three R's of high school reform: Relationships, Relevance, and Rigor. But there is a fourth 'R' that College Summit delivers as well: Results" (College Summit, 2010). The College Summit Program would be a great asset to any high school's curriculum. This program guides participating students through educational paths, which enables them to maximize their potentials for unlimited career opportunities.

Sixteen years ago, low income neighborhoods was one of few communities that offered paths to-college programs, career education, or advance placement, which now exist in many high schools. It has been noted by that school administrators were reserved on implementing such coursework into the curriculum, as well as, hesitant to offering professional development to the staff (Bower, 1994). The leaders felt they could solve this issue by transporting particular students to the county schools, therefore, alleviating "desegregation and advanced placement". As time passed, St. Louis began to integrate college preparation programs into their high schools. Currently, the following college prep programs exist throughout the state of Missouri: Advance Placement Programs; Career and Technical Programs; College Bound; College and Career Club; College Summit; GEAR UP; Scholastic Enhancement Experience Program; Kaufman Scholars, Incorporate; TRIO Programs; Talent Search; and Upward Bound.

College Summit opened its doors having only several teenage low-income students in 1993. Teaching and learning unfolded in the basement of a housing project in

Washington, D.C., under the direction of J.B. Schramm an Academic Advisor at Harvard. Nevertheless, each year dozens of such youths were ready for college but not enrolling in college (Summit, www.collegesummit.org, 2001). Since 1990, federal policy makers have agreed for more college preparation programs in high schools, since the goal of such programs and career and technical education is to prepare students for postsecondary education and full-time employment while in high school (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007, para. 2).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Overview

This study sought to determine which College Summit Program models, CSP or CSA, was more effective for postsecondary planning by evaluating students' progress toward completing postsecondary planning milestones. Also, the study evaluated student's average GPA, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and student's initial top-three choice colleges by comparing the CSP to the CSA program models and comparing the CSP to the NPS models.

This methodology sheds light on two models of the College Summit Program, highlighting milestone benchmarks of at-risk students who seek to reach their highest academic potential to prepare for college. The two groups of students were exposed to the same curriculum. The CSP students received academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentages with class time four days per week for a total of 240 minutes. The CSA students received a pass or fail grade with class time one day per week for a total of 90 minutes. Each group of students had individual Navigator textbooks and online CSNav account as well as access to computers and the Internet. Most of these students came from at least one of the following groups: low-income, first generation college students, and low-test scores (ACT or SAT). The demographics of the students were similar in nature; all students had similar goals and aspirations to attend college, every student maintained a GPA of 2.00 or higher, and each student received free and reduced lunch.

This chapter begins with a restatement of the research purpose, setting, population, sample of population, and research question. It then further describes the

comparative quantitative sampling procedures, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and the data analysis procedures. Other components of the chapter include a discussion of techniques that address reliability, validity, transferability of the study results, and research limitations.

This study analyzed the difference between two models of a college preparation program for at-risk, African American high school students. Based upon research students completing the 12 postsecondary planning milestones, should be able to confidently transition to college carrying with them the fundamental skills (note taking, research writing, analytical, and communication skills) enabling them to work at the same level as their counterparts.

High School Teaching for the Twenty-First Century: Preparing Students for College (2007) reported:

> College readiness begins with a four-part illustration of college expectations and maps backwards. First, habits of mind, professors consistently identify the skills needed for learning college level content, including critical thinking skills, interpretation, problem solving, and reasoning. Secondly, key content knowledge, essential knowledge that prepares students for advance studies. Thirdly, academic behaviors, includes general skills, reading comprehension, time management, and note taking, which students need to engage in college-level work. Lastly, contextual skills, practical skills for getting into and succeed in college, admissions process, placement testing, financial aid, and the academic norms and expectations of college life, such as how to communicate with professors and peers in an academic setting. (pp. 3-4)

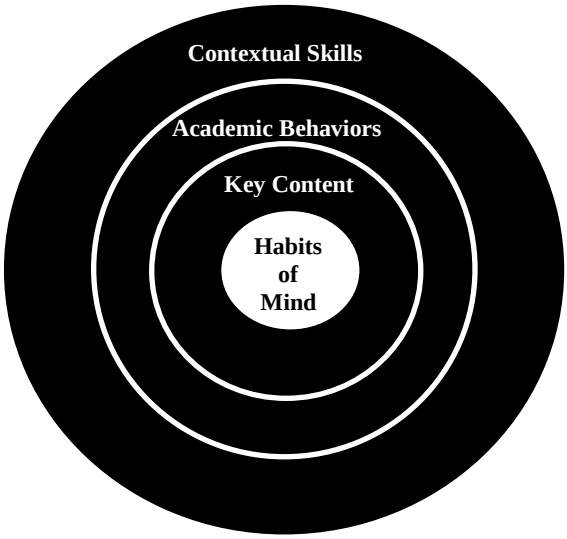


Figure 6. Facets of College Readiness.
Adapted from "Issue Brief". High school teaching for the twenty-first century: Preparing students for college (2007). p. 1-14.

The purpose of this study was to measure outcomes of student success resulting from pre-college practices of two-models of the College Summit Program through comparison of student's progression results of completion towards postsecondary planning milestones, student's GPA, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and admission to the first top-three choice colleges. The differences between CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and CSA students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail, reveals evidence of program's effective practices.

This research study took place in a College Summit classroom located in an urban high school setting in the state of Missouri. For purposes of confidentiality, the school to be studied is referred to as the Making a Difference High School. The district encompasses unincorporated areas of St. Louis County and 24 municipalities. The school

District enrolls more than 4,500 students in preschool through grade 12 with 1,100 students enrolled in the high school (Goldstein, 2001).

Selection of the Sample

Grouping into a small population of people from a large population of people defines a sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 92). Researchers simplify the research process by randomly selecting a group of students from the population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 93). The initial total population of seniors at the high school was 220 at-risk African American senior students from Making a Difference High School. Of the 220 high school seniors, 180 students were enrolled in either the CSP or the CSA. The remaining 40 non-program students enrolled in the North County Tech Program, either expelled from high school, or transferred to another school. Of the 180 population of students, 120 students (45 from CSA, 45 from CSP, and 30 non-participants) were randomly chosen for the sample. Ten students dropped out of school and thus were not included in the sample.

Description of the Research Setting

Primary data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) disclosing state and district demographics over a four-year span, 2008-2011, appears in 10 tables and two figures. Table 1 illustrates for the 2008 through 2011 school year, the district's total population of students slowly declined, as indicated by a loss of 189 students over a four-year span resulted. Between 2010 and 2011, the total student enrollment for the district resulted in an increase of 267 students (MODESE, 2012b).

Table 1. *Demographics: State and District Total Student Enrollment*

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Missouri	895,826	894,254	892,403	889,736
School District	4,626	4,537	4,170	4,437

Note: From MODESE 2012, Data as of April 22, 2012

Tables 2 and 3 describes total student enrollment broken down by race, and free and reduced lunch. State wide between 2008 and 2011, over 40% of the student population was on free or reduced lunch compared to 85% of the school district's student population on free and reduced lunch (MODESE, 2012b).

Table 2. *Demographics: Missouri Total Student Enrollment, Race, and Free and Reduced Lunch*

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Enrollment	895,826	894,254	892,403	889,736
Asian %	1.80	1.90	2.00	1.80
African Americans %	17.90	17.80	17.80	17.10
Hispanic %	3.60	3.80	4.00	4.50
Indian %	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
White %	76.30	76.10	75.80	74.80
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE) %	42.1	43.7	46.9	47.8

Table 3. District Enrollment Demographic Data

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Enrollment	4,626	4,537	4,170	4,437
Asian %	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10
African Americans %	98.80	98.40	98.00	97.50
Hispanic %	0.30	0.30	0.50	0.60
Indian %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.20
White %	0.80	1.30	1.40	1.40
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE) %	82.6	85.8	87.9	90.3

Note: From MODESE, 2012b, Data as of April 22, 2012

Table 4 describes the high school's enrollment by race, number of graduates, and free and reduced lunch. State wide between 2008 and 2011, over 73% of the student population was on free or reduced lunch compared to 82% of the school district's student population on free and reduced lunch (MODESE, 2012b).

Table 4. High School Total Enrollment Demographic Data

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
High Enrollment	1,351	1,363	1,190	1,184
Senior Class Graduates	164	188	220	263
Asian Percent	0.10	0.00	0.30	0.50
African American Percent	99.00	99.30	97.90	97.70
Hispanic Percent	0.00	0.10	0.30	0.40
Indian Percent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White Percent	1.00	0.50	1.60	1.30
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE) Percent	73.7	81.4	81.7	82.5

Note: From MODESE, 2012b, Data as of August 17, 2012

Table 5 describes the total student enrollment from 2008 to 2011 for Making a Difference High School. Compared to graduating seniors of the class of 2010, senior class graduates resulted in an increase of 81 graduates in 2011.

Table 5. *High School Senior Class Demographic College Assessment Data*

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Senior Class	164	206	220	245
Attendance Rate	72.2	80.5	84.5	83.8
Average ACT	16.4	16.4	16.6	16.2
#Grads at or above Nat. Avg. (ACT)	9	10	12	17
% of Grads at or above Nat. Ave. (ACT)	5.50	4.90	5.50	6.90
% of Grads Tested (ACT)	53.66	40.29	36.36	51.84
Graduation Rate	58.0	69.4	66.3	70.0
Total Dropouts 9-12	62	107	142	188
Total Dropout Rate	4.60	7.70	11.60	15.60
4 yr. College/ University Enrollment %	36.2	28.7	18.0	23.2
2 yr. College Enrollment %	25.2	31.7	19.9	35.5
Postsecondary School	13.5	16.5	2.4	0.9
Work Force %	19.6	17.1	6.3	21.8
Military %	1.8	1.8	0.0	2.3
Other Field %	3.7	1.8	14.1	16.8
Status Unknown %	0.0	2.4	27.7	1.4

Note: From MODESE, 2012b, Data as of April 22, 2012

Table 6 illustrates high school's college attendance and ACT/SAT data from 2008 to 2011. Attendance increased from 72.2% in 2008 to 83.8% in 2011. The average ACT score went from 16.2 in 2008 to 16.2 in 2011.

Table 6. *Demographics: High School College Attendance and ACT/SAT Data*

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Attendance %	72.2	80.5	84.5	83.8
Average ACT	16.4	16.4	16.6	16.2
#Grads at or above Nat. Avg. (ACT)	9	10	12	17
% of Grads at or above Nat. Ave. (ACT)	5.50	4.90	5.50	6.90
% of Grads Tested (ACT)	53.66	40.29	36.36	51.84
Average SAT				
Graduation Rate	58.0	69.4	66.3	70.0
Total Dropouts 9-12	62	107	142	188
Total Dropout Rate	4.60	7.70	11.60	15.60
College Enrollment Rate				

Note: From MODESE, 2012b. Attendance, ACT, and Annual Dropout Data as of April 22, 2012

Table 7 illustrates the high school's graduation rates and percentage of college enrollment data from 2008 to 2011. There was an increase in graduation rates, a decrease in enrollment to a four-year college, and an increase in enrollment to a two-year college.

Table 7. *Demographics of High School Graduate Rates and Percentage of College Enrollment*

High School	2008	2009	2010	2011
Previous Graduates	163	164	206	220
Entering a 4 yr. College/ University %	36.2	28.7	18.0	23.2
Entering a 2 yr. College %	25.2	31.7	19.9	35.5
Entering a Postsecondary (Technical) Institution %	13.5	16.5	2.4	0.9
Entering the Work Force %	19.6	17.1	6.3	21.8
Entering Military %	1.8	1.8	0.0	2.3
Other Field %	3.7	1.8	14.1	16.8
Status Unknown %	0.0	2.4	27.7	1.4

Note: From MODESE, 2012b, Building Graduate Analysis Data as of April 22, 2012

The Research Question

The research question states, what is the difference, if any, between movement towards completion of postsecondary planning milestones of College Summit Program (CSP) students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage to those College Summit Advisory (CSA) students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail? The research question was suitable for the methodology of this study because it led to the overall conclusion of this dissertation.

Independent Variables

The College Summit Program (CSP) students who reported to class four times per week receiving academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage.

The College Summit Advisory (CSA) students who reported to class one time per week receiving a grade determined as either a pass or fail.

The Non-Program Students (Non-Program Student) did not meet the deadline registration date to enroll in the College Summit Program.

Dependent Variables

Successful Completion of Postsecondary Planning Milestones*:* The difference between two groups of students completion of Interest Profiler, Saved Careers, Senior Year Plan, College List, Resume, Personal Statement, Practice Application, Saved Programs and Majors, Take the ACT/SAT, Apply to College, Complete the FAFSA, and Saved Scholarships was evaluated.

Cumulative Grade Point Average: Evaluated the difference between 2011 and 2012 senior graduates based on cumulative grade point averages (GPA).

Individual Maximum Scholarship Amounts: Evaluated the difference between the CSP model, CSA model, and NPS model student's individual maximum scholarship amounts.

Initial top-three choice colleges: The evaluation of the difference between the CSP model, CSA model, and NPS model student's first top-three choice colleges took place.

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses # 1: The College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage (CSP Group 1) will not demonstrate greater progression in completing postsecondary planning milestones than College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail (CSA Group 2), measured by percentage of completion of 12 postsecondary milestones: Interest Profiler; Saved Careers; Senior Year Plan; College List; Resume; Personal Statement; Practice Application; Saved Programs and Majors; Take the ACT/SAT; Apply to College; Complete the FAFSA; Saved Scholarships.

Null Hypothesis # 2: There will be no difference in cumulative GPA when comparing students in the Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model.

Null Hypothesis # 3: There will be no difference in average ACT score when comparing students in the Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model.

Null Hypothesis # 4: There will be no difference in percent of students with full completion of the Postsecondary Planning Milestones when comparing students in the Graded Model to those in the Pass or Fail Model.

Null Hypothesis # 5: There will be no difference in the average number of milestones completed when comparing students in the Graded Model to those in the Pass or Fail Model.

Null Hypothesis # 6: There will be no difference in average monetary scholarship awards when comparing students in the Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model.

Null Hypothesis # 7: There will be no difference in percent of acceptance to first top-three choice colleges when comparing students in the Graded Model, Pass or Fail Model, and Non-Program Model.

Methodology

This study used the survey research technique of a questionnaire to obtain information regarding the students experience in the program. The researcher also analyzed secondary data for all other sources of data. GPA data was collected by the school, and the College Summit online program collected milestone completion and other college choice data. A non-experimental approach is apparent due to the researcher having no control over the group assignments or level of treatment. Instead, there is evidence of observations regarding the way in which the independent variables affect the dependent variables.

Procedures

The methodology process sampled 120 at-risk, African American high school students out of a total population of 220 senior students. The collection of data ranged from postsecondary planning milestones, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges, derived from the CSNavigator online curriculum, high school transcripts, surveys and questionnaires. Furthermore, a comparison of ACT scores and attendance rates resulted from high school transcripts of students from the three groups. The researcher decided to collect outcomes of ACT scores and attendance rates to determine the relationships between the program models. All students in the College Summit classes continued to prepare for the ACT assessment by taking quarterly

benchmark assessments in science, mathematics, history, and English at Making a Difference High School throughout the year.

Additionally, this study incorporated a survey for research students. The questions centered on pre-college program experiences of responses received from 114 out of 161 high school students. The remaining 69 students experienced non-academic issues during the course of this study, 25 students were transferred to the alternative school, 15 students were terminated from the program because of insufficient credits to graduate from high school, 17 students transferred to another school district, six students skipped the class, and six had long-term absences. The student survey contained 12 questions. Survey questions related to the postsecondary plans, effects, expectations, and experiences of the College Summit Program, career interest of students, and college preparation skills acquired after the completion of the program. Some open-ended and some multiple-choice questions were used to gain responses.

Three different groups of students led to the results of this study. The CSP students who received a grade based on percentage points experienced 240 minutes of classroom instruction (Monday, Tuesday, and Friday—one 50-minute block class each day and Wednesday or Thursday—one 90-minute block class per week). The CSA students who received a pass or fail grade experienced only a one 90-minute block class per week of classroom instruction on a Wednesday. The NPS did not participate in the College Summit Program.

The preparation time included several pre-college learning strategies. Students were engaged in different collaborative work groups focusing on postsecondary planning, alignment of academic goals to college planning, organized college list to apply to

college, and identified their short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. Next, subject developed resumes, constructed personal statements, completed college applications, finalized financial aid action plans, completed FAFSA and state aid applications, applied and interviewed for scholarships, developed a postsecondary budget, and identified a career path. Finally, students acquired time management skills, solved problems, resolved conflicts; adapted to transitional issues, made formal and informal decisions, engaged in community involvement, enrolled in college, acquired a better understanding of financial literacy, and transitioned into postsecondary studies.

A one-week professional development workshop for all College Summit Program teachers took place at the end of the summer break during the first week in August. Thereafter, the College Summit educators' professional development workshops continued on the third Thursday of each month.

Instrumentation

There were several instruments used in the collection of data. Those instruments were the postsecondary planning survey, high school transcripts to collect average grade point averages and ACT scores, high school database system to retrieve individual scholarship amounts and initial top-three colleges of graduating students. Frankel and Wallen (2006) expressed surveys are limited in their reliability and validity, most often due to bias and interpretation of results on the part of the researcher and the survey students. In addition, the collection of secondary data from MODESE helped in finalizing the results. Secondary data, retrieved from MODESE, revealed graduation rates, attendance rates, college acceptance rates, and dropout rates of past graduating students.

Techniques were used to enhance the survey response rate: (a) making the survey questions clear, stating the importance of the instrument, making it look professional, and personalizing the introduction letter; (b) making weekly announcements about the follow-up letter to non-respondents after 10 days; and (c) placing a phone call if necessary to non-respondents.

Reliability and Validity

"Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures the intended variable" (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 141). To increase the reliability of the surveys, they made use of open-ended, multiple-choice and essay populated the questions.

Validity is the "degree to which a test measures the intended variable; a test is valid for a particular purpose for a particular group" (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 593). Questionnaires were distributed to program students by the College Summit coordinator for the collection of socioeconomic status. Two guidance counselors reviewed primary and secondary data for unbiased and accuracy reporting. The researcher confirmed data results by comparing dependent and independent variables between two groups of students. Data retrieved from GPAs, ACT scores, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three colleges determine the effectiveness between the two-models of the College Summit Programs. To maintain anonymity of the student, students' names were not identified on the data.

To validate the actual survey instrument, 114 students out of 161 (70%) responded to the survey. One hundred and six students completed an on-line, anonymous survey during the 90-minute, Advisory Seminar session on a Wednesday. Eight students were absent on the first day of the survey. The following Wednesday, the eight students

who were absent on the first day the survey was given were allowed to complete the survey.

Threats to Internal Validity

Results of the College Summit Program models pose threats to internal validity because the structure of the each program may have possibly made a difference in students' results. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) affirmed that when a study has internal validity, any relationship observed between two or more variables should be unambiguous as to what it means rather than being due to "something else". Mortality, location, history, attitudes of students, limitations, program models, pose threats to internal validity of this study. In this case, the something else would be the reason individuals did not submit their completed questionnaire. If this reason substantially altered the outcome of the study, a threat to validity exists. If the reason caused the questionnaire to be an accurate measure of the independent or dependent variables there is a threat to internal validity. If a student failed to submit a questionnaire the results of the study then is a threat to external validity.

Mortality. A mortality threat to internal validity limits generalizability. Over the course of the study, 60 students were lost as the study advanced, thus known as a mortality threat (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006, p. 170). Only 114 students responded to the survey out of 161 (70%) students. One hundred and fourteen students completed the survey during the 90-minute, Advisory Seminar session on a Wednesday. One CSP subject and seven CSA students were absent on the first day of the survey. The following Wednesday, the eight students completed the survey.

Location. The location of the College Summit Program models perhaps triggered a threat to internal validity. The College Summit two-model program classrooms offered different equipment and resources. The classroom of the College Summit Program model made available to students Dell and IMac computers, IPads, and the Internet compared to the CSA model students had to travel to the library to utilize computers.

History. Occasionally unscheduled college representatives from different colleges in Missouri would visit the classroom presenting a threat to internal validity. "Such an event is referred to in educational research as a history threat" (p. 175). Some of the college visits to the College Summit Program classroom did not offer an opportunity for the CSA students to meet with the representatives because of their class schedule. This caused CSA students feeling neglected from receiving college materials presented by the college visitor.

Attitudes of Students. Attitudes of students can possibly profess a threat to internal validity. College Summit Program students seem to advance progressively faster, having positive behaviors, through their postsecondary milestones than the CSA students lacking resources available to CSA students. CSA students expressed their opinions that CSP students received special privileges because they received more hours of class time and more resources. The frustration from the CSA students caused some of them to drop out of the program.

Implementation. The CSA teachers delivered different teaching methods to students compared to the delivery of teaching methods from the CSP teachers. The delivery of teaching methods between the two-model programs possibly caused a threat to the internal validity of the study, known as an implementation threat (Fraenkel and

Wallen, 2006, p. 179). The CSA teachers only had the opportunity to provide effective practices to students only on a Wednesday during Advisory Seminar compared to the CSP teachers providing effective practices to students four days per week in three, 55-minute classes and one, 90-minute class.

Data Collection Method

Primary and secondary data produced outcomes for this quantitative study. Testing of the hypotheses stemmed from statistical tests calculated in Microsoft Excel 2010. The collection of accumulated results for the 2011-2012 school year from the 180 students' average GPAs, ACT scores, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three college choices documented outcomes for the study. Descriptive data produced college enrollment rates for 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 documented comparisons between groups of graduating seniors.

A survey generated through Survey Gizmo incorporated questions about students' experiences in the College Summit Program. The survey consisted of 12 questions, 11 multiple choice and one open-ended question. One-hundred and fourteen students returned results in the survey. Parents received a letter of consent to grant permission that their child could participate in the research study. The cover letter explained the purpose and instructions for completing the survey. The letter stated that all responses would remain anonymous. The completion of a "live" survey of 114 respondents from "Making a Difference" High School in St. Louis, Missouri took place in designated College Summit classrooms. The NPS students did not complete a survey. Additional items produced evidence of demographics and socioeconomic status of students from secondary data from MODESE. On Tuesday, February 28, 2011, an announcement

originated at the beginning of the school day informing all educators and students about the on-line survey. The completion of the on-line survey took place on Wednesday, February 29, 2011 during the Advisory Seminar period in a designated classroom at the high school. Survey Gizmo counted completed surveys electronically after hitting the "submit" button. The coding of each survey received a letter and number beginning with A1, A2, A3, etc. A 70% response rate resulted as the total proportion of students who completed a survey.

Postsecondary Planning Survey and Descriptive Statistics

The survey questions are as follow:

1. Identify three overall expectations of the College Summit Program?
2. Which College Summit Program was more effective for making postsecondary planning and college access a reality for students?
3. Does the College Summit Advisory class provide enough time to complete all postsecondary milestones for the year?
4. How often do you access your personal College Summit CSNav.org account at home or work on your postsecondary planning milestones?
5. How has the College Summit Program prepared you to pursue your career studies in college?
6. What skills have you learned in the College Summit Program that will help you in your college years and beyond?
7. What pre-college experiences have you encountered prior to participating in the College Summit Program?

8. How has your participation in the College Summit prepared you to pursue post-secondary opportunities?
9. What are your initial plans after high school?
10. What will be your area of study?
11. What has been your overall experience in the College Summit Program? (open-ended response)
12. Please rate the curriculum structure of the College Summit class.

The summarized results of the survey appear in Table 8 below using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score for each question.

Table 8. *College Summit Postsecondary Planning Survey*

QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESULTS
Question No. 1	78.4% of the 114 students completed the survey, applied to college, took the ACT/SAT, applied for FAFSA.
Question No. 2	This question was a perception of preference and not a method of analysis; therefore, it was excluded from the analysis.
Question No. 3	79.3% of the 114 students selected, Yes.
Question No. 4	29.8% of the 114 students selected, at least one time per week.
Question No. 5	76.1% of the 114 students selected, provided best practices on choosing the right career path.
Question No. 6	74.6% of the 114 students selected, postsecondary planning, applying for scholarships, time management, financial literacy, critical writing, effective communication, interviewing techniques, and transitioning to college.
Question No. 7	54.4% of the 114 students selected "none".
Question No. 8	37.7% of the 114 students selected, the course taught them how to plan for college.
Question No. 9	57.9% of the 114 students selected a four-year college or university.
Question No. 10	25.4% of the 114 students selected Business, Management and Technology and 21.1% selected Health Services.
Question No. 11	80.6% of the 114 students selected, College Summit has helped me achieve some of my hardest goals in school.
Question No. 12	23.7% of the 114 students selected 4 and 22.8% selected 5.

Data Analysis. Several strategies outlined the data analyzed. The implementation of a quantitative data analysis determined whether to reject the null hypotheses. Tables, graphs, and statistical tests present results of data collected. The data analysis of a *z-test* determined the difference in means through calculation of students' GPA averages, average ACT scores, average postsecondary milestones completed, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice

colleges between two groups of students. *Z*-tests for difference in proportions determined the level of progression and full completion of milestone benchmarks. The 2011 and 2012 graduating seniors' ACT scores and attendance rates were included in this study as well.

Postsecondary Planning Milestones Survey. The survey results for the 2011 and 2012 school year recorded primary data of postsecondary planning milestones. The results revealed students' experiences in the college preparation program. The responses to the survey questions allowed for comparing pre-college experiences between the CSP students, CSA students, and NPS students during the 2011 to 2012 school year. A measurement of slight progressions or declines in the grade point averages occurred. One of the high school's guidance counselors assembled this primary data in the counselor's office. Then *z*-tests scores for difference in proportion guided the analysis of this primary data for the school years from 2011 to 2012.

Grade Point Averages. A comparison of GPAs for the school years 2011 to 2012 transpired. Secondary data of GPAs measured the percentage of progression or decline from year to year for the school years 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. A preliminary examination by the registrar administrator disclosed GPAs of upward or downward movement. Secondary data of GPAs for the 2008 to 2011 school years originated from MODESE's online database system. The high school's registrar gathered primary attendance data for the comparison of GPAs between the CSP, CSA, and NPS for the 2011 and 2012 school years. Then, *z*-tests scores for difference in means guided the analysis of this secondary data for the above school years from 2008 to 2012, focusing on the comparison of those school terms. Secondary data retrieved from MODESE of

attendance and dropout rates reflected measurements of student success through analysis of *z*-tests for difference in proportion.

Attendance Rate. The evaluation of attendance data measured the percentage of advanced or declined levels of high school seniors for the 2008, 2009, 2010 school years, as well as measured the percentage of decline for the 2011 and 2012 school years. Inquiry of attendance and discipline data revealed a collective measure of upward movement or downward movement in dropout rates tracked by the attendance personnel. Attendance data for the 2008 to 2011 school years originated from MODESE as secondary data. Secondly, the high school's attendance personnel gathered primary attendance data for the comparison of attendance between the CSP, CSA, and NPS students for the 2011 and 2012 school year. Then *z*-tests for difference in proportion guided the analysis of this secondary data for the above school years from 2008 to 2012, focusing on the comparison of the 2011 and 2012 school terms.

Individual Maximum Scholarship Amounts. Results from the high school's database system calculated individual maximum scholarship amounts of students. The retrieval of primary data of students' individual maximum scholarship amounts for the school year 2011 to 2012 began in January of 2012 to May of 2012. The assigned counselor for 12th grade students gathered primary data from the school's database presenting outcomes of scholarship amounts received. Throughout the second semester, the assigned counselor developed scholarship award reports for district leaders, superintendents, building administrators and students. The counselor also prepared scholarship reports for the Honors Convocation Day program held on the first Monday evening in May each year.

First Top Three Choice Colleges. Primary data revealing outcomes of students' first top-three choice colleges for the school years 2011 to 2012 identified outcomes of primary choice colleges of students. Students received notifications by way of college acceptance letters and/or electronic mail. The high school's assigned counselor gathered and tallied students' first top-three choice colleges through the school's database system. Throughout the school year, the assigned counselor and College Summit advisor continued to collect and report descriptive information pertaining to college acceptance of students.

Confidentiality. Because the researcher of this dissertation worked in the studied high school, this study remain anonymous. A neutral individual (counselor) supervised all dependent variables for the research study to offset the possibility of bias.

Descriptive Statistics of the Two Sample Groups

The high school's demographic population of seniors account for 95% African American, at-risk students in terms of a racial profile with over 90% of the student population living within a one-to-three mile radius of the school. The gender distribution in the class is in direct contrast with the overall student population. The percentage of females approximated to 68% while 32% represented the population of male students. All students were on free and reduced lunch.

Figure 7 descriptively compares the progression of postsecondary planning milestones of CSP and CSA students. Figure 8 descriptively compares the full completion of postsecondary planning milestones of CSP and CSA students. Figure 9 descriptively compares the average postsecondary planning milestones completed of CSP and CSA students. Figures 10, 11, and 12 descriptively compares the outcomes of

students' GPAs; individual maximum scholarship amounts; and the initial top-three choice colleges between CSP, CSA, and NPS students. In almost all categories, CSP students outperformed CSA and NPS students. All figures descriptively compare students from the samples.

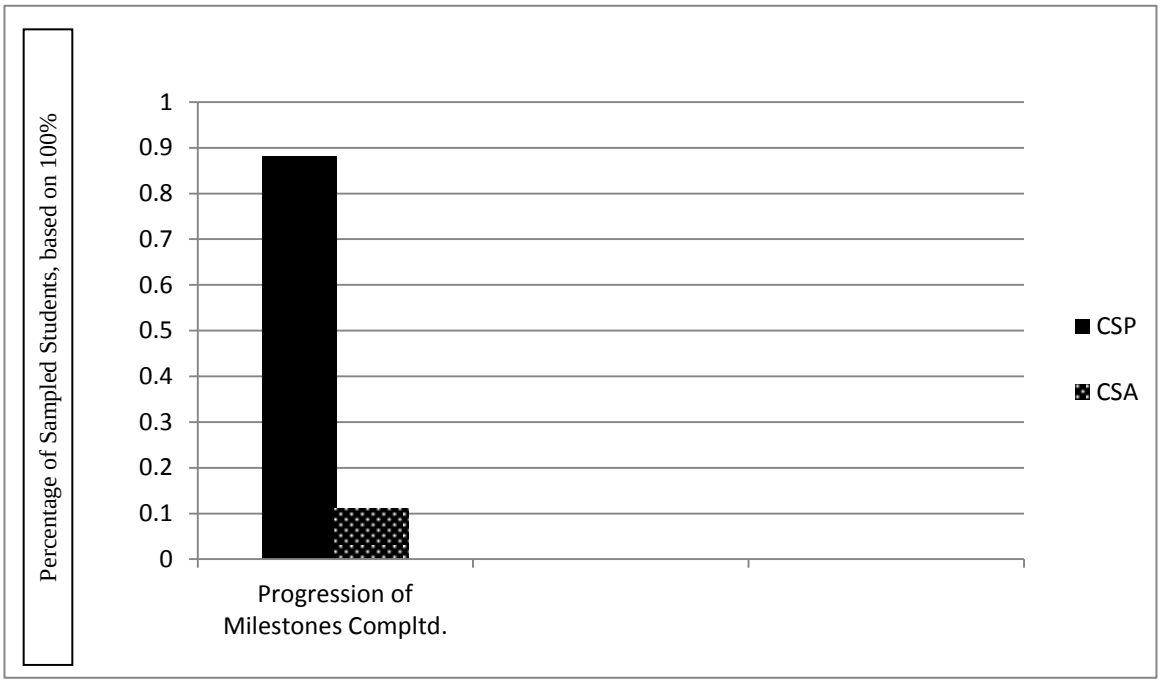


Figure 7. Progress of Postsecondary Milestones Between CSP and CSA Students. Progression of Postsecondary Milestones between CSP and CSA Students. Adapted from "CSNav Professional Center Reports" by College Summit, Inc. (2013a).

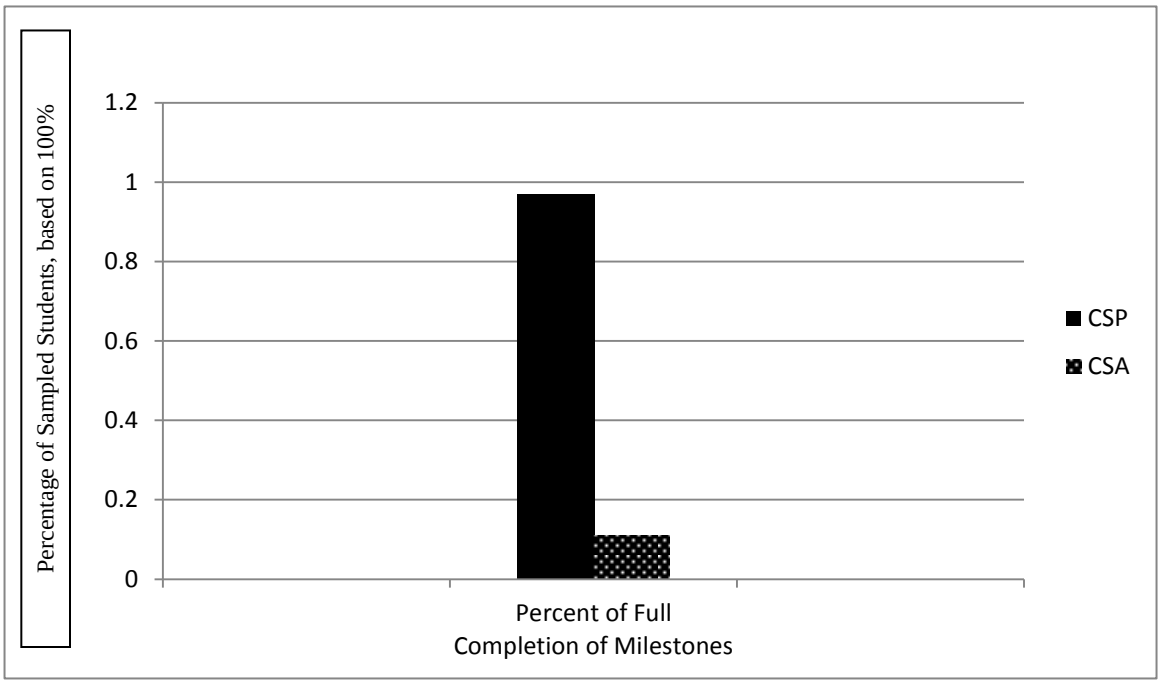


Figure 8. Full Completion of Postsecondary Milestones Between CSP and CSA Students. Full Completion of Postsecondary Milestones between CSP and CSA Students. Adapted from "CSNav Professional Center Reports" by College Summit, Inc., (2013b).

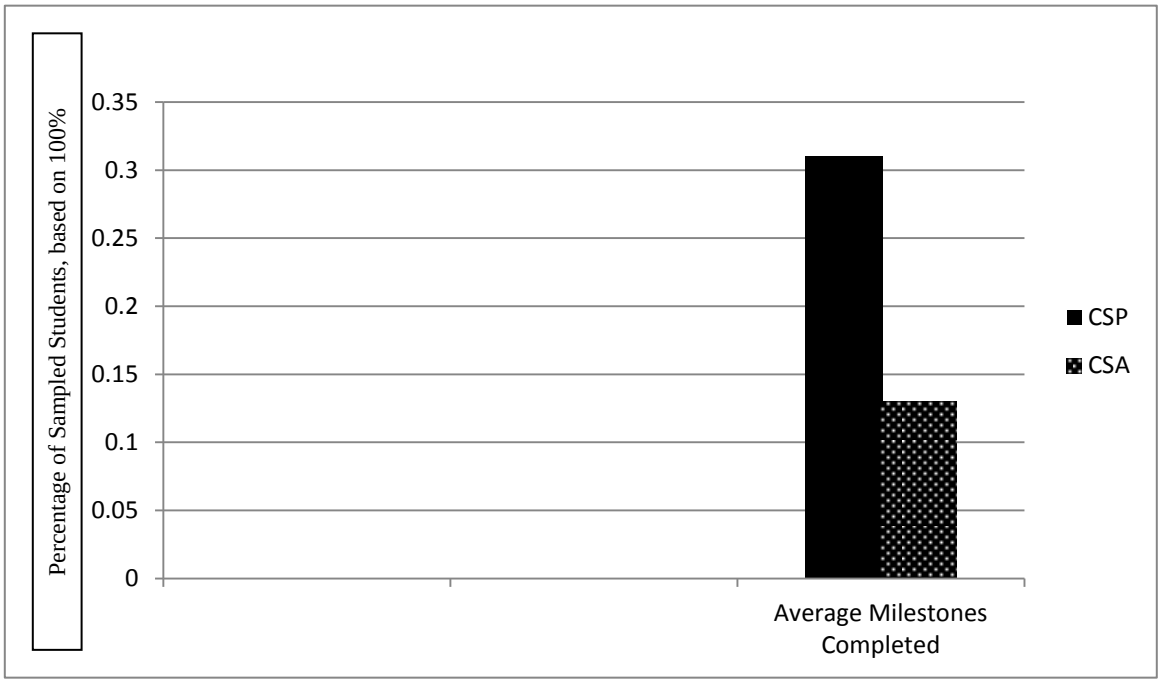


Figure 9. Average Postsecondary Milestones Completed Between CSP and CSA Students. Adapted from "CSNav Professional Center Reports" by College Summit, Inc., (2013c).

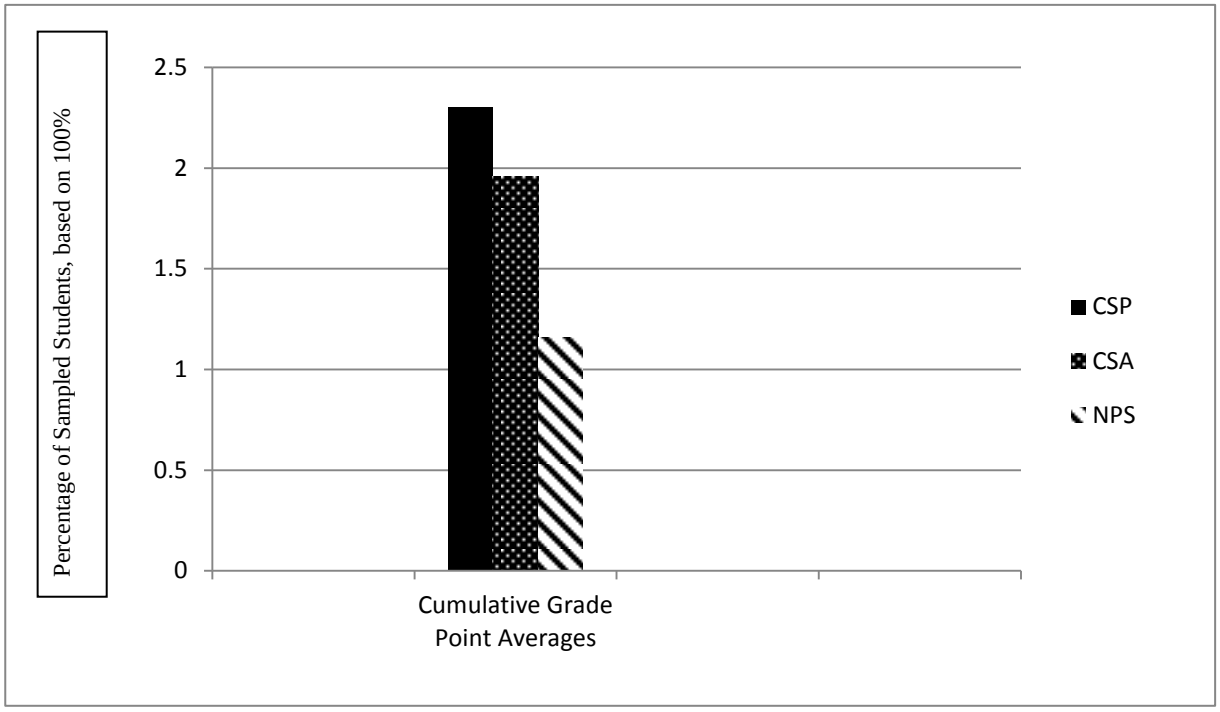


Figure 10. Cumulative Grade Point Averages Between CSP, CSA, and NPS Students. Adapted from "Tyler Student Information System" by Registrar (SISK12, 2012a).

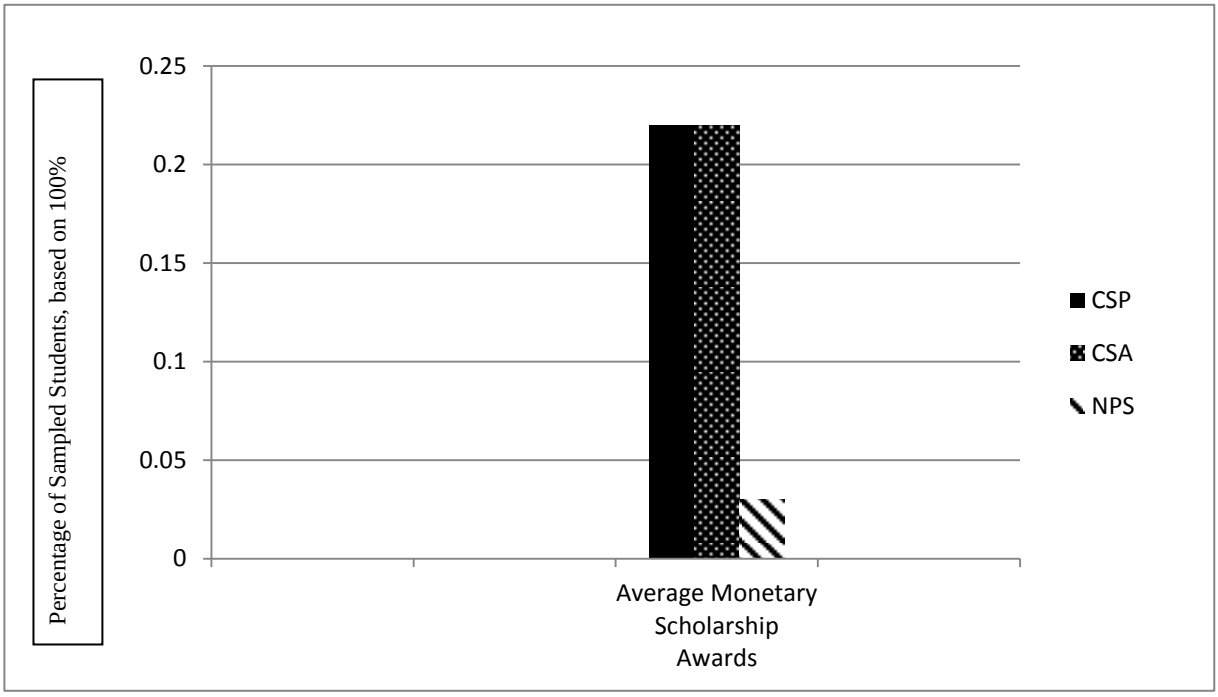


Figure 11. Average Monetary Scholarship Awards Between CSP, CSA, and NPS Students. Adapted from "Tyler Student Information System" by Registrar (SISK12, 2012b).

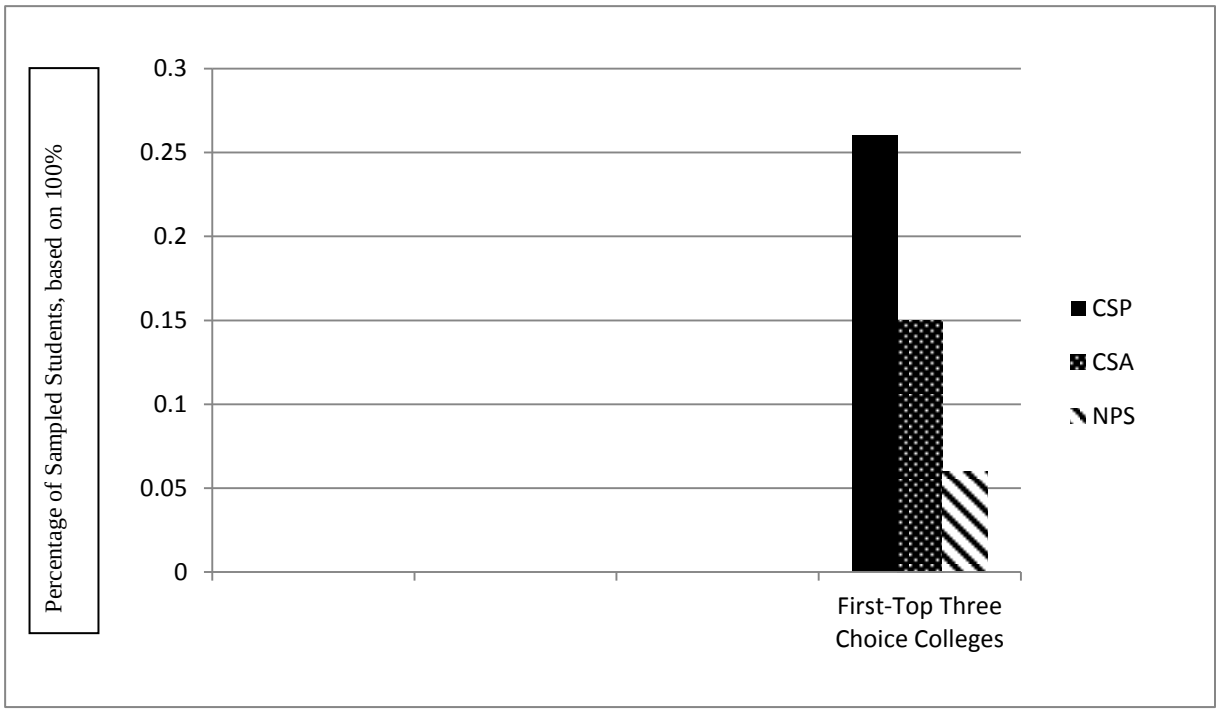


Figure 12. First-Top Three Choice College Between CSP, CSA, and NPS Students. Adapted from "Tyler Student Information System" by Registrar, NM/SISK12 (2012).

Summary

During the study seven teachers delivered instruction to the CSP and CSA students for the 2011 to 2012 school year. One hundred and eighty African American students participated in the study at an urban high school located in Missouri. The purpose of this study was to determine if students of the College Summit Program model who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage points produced higher outcomes than students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. Chapter 3 presented the total population of students and sample size of students, along with the instrumentation utilized. It also discussed the data collection procedures, the research questions investigated, and the methods of analyses employed. This section also focused on the description of the studied location, proposed research design, proposed data collection methods, procedures, and analysis efforts.

The researcher administered the survey to obtain information regarding the students' experience of the program. A random selection from three groups of students produced the sample size. The retrieval of a collection of data from 220 students resulted in different outcomes of postsecondary planning milestones, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges between students from the two-modeled programs. The implementation of data analysis summarizes the direction of the null hypotheses. Data collected was analyzed using *z-test* to determine the difference in means through calculation dependent variables between two groups of students. *Z*-tests for difference in proportions determined the level of progression and full completion of postsecondary milestones. Chapter 4 turns the discussion of the study to analysis of data and statistical test.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Overview

As affirmed in Chapter 1, the study reported here examined in detail a comparison of the outcomes between two models of the College Summit Program's and any effects on non-program participants. The organization of this chapter is aligned with the one research question and seven hypotheses. It reports findings gathered from students' CSNavigator management system, students results from Survey Gizmo, socioeconomic status surveys, scholarship awards analysis, initial top-three college forms, and students' transcript analysis. A comparison of quantitative data is presented in a table to illustrate the progression of postsecondary planning milestones: outcomes of students' GPA; individual maximum scholarship amounts; and the initial top-three choice colleges per student.

The independent variables were CSP Grade Model, CSA Pass or Fail Model, and the NPS Model. These three variables allowed comparisons of the dependent variables between the three model students by summarizing the school year results. Four dependent variables rendered evidence throughout this study: 1) Postsecondary Planning Milestones--the difference between two groups of students, CSP and CSA, completing the twelve milestones; 2) Acknowledgement of first top-three choice colleges--documentation of students receiving their first top-three choice colleges- between the CSP, CSA, and NPS models; 3) Individual maximum scholarship amounts-analysis of the difference between the CSP, CSA, and NPS model to address maximum amounts of scholarship awards; and 4) Cumulative GPA percentages was collected from the district's

SISK12 management system. The gathering of attendance rates and grade point averages for comparison resulted from the graduating class of 2011 and 2012.

The purpose of this chapter is to present results by determining which model program, CSP, CSA, or NPS yield the best practices that guided and assisted participating students with graduating from high school, acceptance in to college, enrollment into college, and the means to withstand the financial responsibility of college. The organization of this chapter focuses on the research question and seven hypotheses found in Chapter 1. It reports findings analyzed from various district data reports based on students' pre-college planning outcomes.

The Students

The study of this research transpired in an urban school district, founded in 1884. The district is located in St. Louis County, directly southwest of Making a Difference city with 24 municipalities. The school district enrolls more than 4,500 students in preschool through grade 12 (Goldstein, 2001). The racial profile of the district in 2011 was 1% Asian, 97.50% African American, 6% Hispanic, 2% Indian, and 1.4% Caucasian. Ninety percent of the student population relies on free and reduced lunch (MODESE, 2012c). The range of ethnicities indicates a limitation of this study. In addition, the use of one urban high school in one single district posed limitations of this study.

The total population of graduating candidates at Making a Difference High School during the 2012 school year was 220 seniors. Of the 220 high school seniors, 180 students became the population of students who participated between the two models of the College Summit Program, the remaining 60 NPS students enrolled in the North

County Tech Program. A random selection process originated a sample of 120 students out of 180 students.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Null Hypothesis # 1. The CSP students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage (CSP Group 1) will not demonstrate greater progression in completing postsecondary planning milestones than College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail (CSA Group 2), measured by percentage of completion of 12 postsecondary milestones: Interest Profiler; Saved Careers; Senior Year Plan; College List; Resume; Personal Statement; Practice Application; Saved Programs and Majors; Take the ACT/SAT; Apply to College; Complete the FAFSA; Saved Scholarships.

To discover whether or not a difference existed between students progression in completing the 12 postsecondary planning milestones a *z*-test for the difference in proportions was used for data analysis.

As illustrated in Table 9, because the *z*-test value is -2.50 and the critical value is -1.96 the researcher rejected the Null Hypothesis, and CSP data provided evidence to support the alternate hypothesis that a larger percentage of students completed the milestone benchmarks in the CSP model than in the CSA Model

.

Table 9. *Difference in Proportions: Milestones Completion*

	CSP	CSA
Percentage of Completion	.13	0
Critical Value	-1.96	
z-Test Value	-2.50	
Sample Size	45	

Note: Progression in Completion of Postsecondary Milestones for CSP and CSA models

Therefore, the data supports the assumption that students in the CSP completed more of the College Summit Program than the CSA students who also had less time to accomplish this.

Null Hypothesis # 2. There will be no difference in cumulative GPA when comparing participants in the Graded Model (CSP) model, Pass or fail Model (CSA) model, and Non-Program Model (NPS) model.

To discover if a difference existed between students' cumulative GPAs, a *z*-test for the difference in means documented results in data analysis.

As illustrated in Table 10, because the *z*-test value is 1.96 and the Critical Value is 1.95, the researcher rejected the null. Therefore, there is a difference in cumulative GPA when comparing CSP and CSA models.

Table 10. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP and CSA models*

	CSP	*CSA*
Mean	2.30	1.96
Known Variance	0.64	0.78
Observations	45	45
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	1.96	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.05	
z Critical two-tail	1.95	

Note: Cumulative GPAs for CSP and CSA model

Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis, and the data for the CSP model provided evidence to support the alternate hypothesis that a significant difference in means existed and that the CSP model mean cumulative GPA was larger than the CSA model mean cumulative GPA.

In comparing the CSP model to the NPS models students, because the *z*-test value is 5.73 and the Critical Value is 1.95, as shown in Table 11, the researcher did reject the null hypothesis, and there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in cumulative GPA when comparing the CSP and NPS models. The GPA for students enrolled in the Graded Model is higher than for the NPS students

.

Table 11. *z-test Difference in Means: CSP and CSA models*

	CSP	*NPS*
Mean	2.30	1.16
Known Variance	0.64	0.77
Observations	45	30
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	5.73	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	9.96	
z Critical two-tail	1.95	

Note: Cumulative GPAs for the CSP and CSA models

Therefore, the data analyzed for Hypothesis 2 supports the Alternate that the cumulative GPAs generated by the CSP model are greater than the GPAs of CSA model and NPS model.

Null Hypothesis # 3. There will be no difference in average ACT score when comparing participants in the Graded Model (CSP) model, Pass or fail Model (CSA) model, and Non-Program Model (NPS) model.

To discover whether a difference existed between students' average ACT score in CSP and CSA and CSP and NPS, a *z*-test for the difference in means documented results of data analysis.

Because the *z*-test value is 0.36 and the Critical Value is 1.96 for comparison of CSP and CSA, the researcher did not reject the null. Therefore, data did not provide enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in average ACT scores when comparing the CSP and CSA.

Table 12. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP and CSA models*

	CSP	*CSA*
Mean	10.87	10.2
Known Variance	70.98	81.12
Observations	45	45
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	0.36	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.72	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note: Average ACT Scores for CSP and CSA models

Therefore, the data analyzed for the Hypothesis 3 does not support the alternate that the ACT scores generated by the CSP model are greater than the ACT scores of CSA model. However, the results in Table 13 reveal that there would be a significant difference in average ACT score when comparing participants in the CSP model to NPS model.

Table 13 illustrates a comparison of CSP and NPS resulted in the *z*-test value of 4.96 and the Critical Value of 1.96 for CSP and NPS models. Therefore, the researcher did reject the null, and there was enough evidence to support the claim that there was a difference in average ACT when comparing CSP and NPS.

Table 13. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP and NPS models*

	CSP	*NPS*
Mean	10.87	2.77
Known Variance	70.98	32.53
Observations	45	30
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	4.96	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	6.88	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note: Average ACT Scores for CSP and NPS models

Null Hypothesis #4. There will be no difference in percent of students with full completion of the Postsecondary Planning Milestones when comparing students in the Graded Model (CSP) model to those in the Pass or fail Model (CSA) model.

To discover whether a difference existed between students percentage of completion of the milestones in the CSP and CSA model a *z*-test for the difference in proportions documented results in data analysis.

Because Table 14 details that the *z*-test value is -4.06 and the Critical Value is -1.96, the researcher did reject the null hypothesis, and there is enough data evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in the two proportions when comparing the CSP and CSA model. A larger percentage of students completed the Postsecondary Milestone benchmarks in the CSP model. Since the null hypothesis was rejected, the researcher has shown that there is a significant difference between the two proportions.

Table 14. *z-test for Difference in Proportions: CSP and CSA models*

	CSP	CSA
Percentage of Completion	.31	0
Critical Value	-1.96	
z-Test Value	-4.06	
Sample Size	45	

Note: Difference in percentage of full completion of postsecondary planning milestones

Therefore, the data analyzed for the Hypothesis 4 supports the alternate that there is a difference in the two proportions when comparing the CSP and CSA models.

Null Hypothesis # 5. There will be a difference in the average number of milestones completed when comparing participants in the Graded Model (CSP) model to those in the Pass or fail (CSA) model.

To discover whether a difference existed between students average number of milestones completed in the CSP and CSA model, a *z*-test for the difference in means was used.

As shown in Table 15, because the *z*-test value was 10.61 and the Critical Value was 1.96, the researcher did reject the null, and there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in average milestones completed when comparing the CSP model and the CSA model. The CSP model indicated a larger number of milestones completed than the CSA model.

Table 15. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP and CSA models*

	CSP	*CSA*
Mean	14.04	6.22
Known Variance	11.27	13.18
Observations	45	45
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	10.61	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note: Average number of milestones completed between CSP and NPS models

Since the null hypothesis was rejected, the researcher has shown that there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in average milestones completed when comparing the CSP model to the CSA model.

Null Hypothesis #6. There will be no difference in average monetary scholarship awards when comparing participants in the Graded Model (CSP) model, Pass or fail Model (CSA) model, and Non-Program Model (NPS) model.

To discover whether a difference existed between students average maximum scholarship amounts between the CSP, CSA, and NPS model, a *z*-test for the difference in means documented results in data analysis in Table 16.

Because the *z*-test value is 3.28 and the Critical Value is 1.96, the researcher did reject the null hypothesis, and there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in average maximum scholarship amounts when comparing the CSP model to CSA model.

Table 16. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP model vs. CSA model*

	CSP	*CSA*
Mean	24044.44	8600
Known Variance	528509343.4	469427272.7
Observations	45	45
Hypothesized		
Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	3.28	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.00	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note: Average monetary scholarship awards between the CSP and NPS models

Table 17 compares the CSP and NPS, because the *z*-test value is 3.58 and the Critical Value is 1.96, the researcher did reject the null hypothesis, and there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a difference in average scholarship amounts when comparing the CSP model to NPS.

Table 17. *z-test for Difference in Means: CSP model vs. NPS model*

	CSP	NPS
Mean	24044.44	6026.67
Known Variance	528509343.4	409299264.4
Observations	45	30
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z-Test Value	3.58	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.00	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note: Average maximum scholarship awards between CSP and NPS models

Null Hypothesis # 7. There will be no difference in percent of acceptance to first top-three choice colleges when comparing students in the Graded Model (CSP) Model, Pass or fail Model (CSA) Model, and Non-Program Model (NPS) model.

To discover whether a difference existed with students' first top-three choice colleges between the CSP, CSA, and NPS models, a *z*-test for the difference in proportions used.

Because the *z*-test value is -1.29 and the Critical Value is -1.96 in Table 18, the researcher did not reject the null hypothesis, and there not evidence to support the alternate hypothesis that a larger percentage of students enrolled in the CSP model received their initial top-three choice colleges than the CSA model.

Table 18. *z-test for Difference in Proportions: CSP model vs. CSA model*

	CSP	CSA
Percentage of College Choices	0.26	0.15
Critical Value	-1.96	-1.96
z-Test Value	-1.29	-1.29
Sample Size	45	45

Note: First top-three choice colleges between CSP and NPS models

Table 19 compares the CSP model and NPS models, because the *z*-test value is 2.20 and the Critical Value is -1.96 the researcher did reject the null hypothesis, and data provided by the CSP model supported the alternate hypothesis that a larger percentage of students received their initial top-three choice colleges over the NPS. Since the null was rejected, the researcher has shown that there is a significant difference in the two proportions.

Table 19. *z-test for Difference in Proportions: CSP model and NPS model*

	CSP	NPS
Percentage of Completion	0.26	0.06
Critical Value	-1.96	
z-Test Value	-2.20	
Sample Size	45	

Note: First top-three choice colleges between CSP and NPS models

Summary

The data presented in this chapter provided evidence to suggest that effective

practices existed in the College Summit Program when preparing at-risk, African American students for college. The extent of this chapter stems from one research question, and seven hypotheses which data results are summarized. Based on the results, Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5 supports the research question. Hypothesis 1 concludes that the data supports the assumption that students in the CSP completed more of the College Summit Program than the CSA students who also had less time to accomplish this. The data supports the alternate in Hypothesis 4 that a larger percentage of students completed more of the Postsecondary Milestone benchmarks in the CSP model than in the CSA model. In Hypothesis 5, the data supports the alternate that the CSP model completed a larger number of milestones than the CSA model.

Survey results reflected on students' experiences in the College Summit Program. The overall results of the survey indicated although the CSA class offered the least amount of class time during the week, 89 out of 114 students responded that the CSA class provided enough time to complete all postsecondary milestones for the year. Likewise, students' experiences indicated that they felt high school prepared them for college and that high school was important. Finally, students' experiences of the importance of the College Summit Program are reflective of their perceptions of how their classes assisted them in preparing for a postsecondary education. Results of students overall experience in the College Summit Program revealed that 91 out of the 114 students responded that the program assisted them in achieving many of their rigorous courses in high school.

Quantifiable data presented itself graphically illustrating the progression of postsecondary planning milestones: outcomes of student's GPAs; individual maximum

scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student. The next chapter provides effective evidence of the two model programs based on the progression of postsecondary planning milestones between two groups of students. Finally, recommendations for future studies of college prep programs are suggested.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Overview

President Barack Obama stated, four of every 10 new college students, including half of those at two-year institutions, take remedial courses, and many employers comment on the inadequate preparation of high school graduates (U. S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 5). "Every child in America deserves a world-class education. Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world" (Education, 2010a, para. 1). In addition, President Barack Obama confirmed, that by 2020, America must take on new missions that will guide students to completing college-level coursework. This mission must be the responsibility of everyone nationwide, raising the standards for all students, and schools.

Walking through the doors of a college or university is the vision of many high school students. "The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) insures that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at least the minimum, proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments" (Martin, 2008, p. 1).

Jorgensen and Hoffmann (2003) confirms,

> Education opens doors to children for a lifetime and leads to their success. NCLB of 2001 is the new period of accountability for every child. Children left behind must be identified and States will have the responsibility to provide the resources to teach every child how to read, to apply mathematics, to study, to learn, and to succeed.

> College Summit is one program that is upholding its accountability to meet college-readiness among low-income high school students by offering practices that motivate students to graduate from high school, assist high schools with increasing graduating rates, and preparing students for postsecondary institutions (College Summit, 2011b, p. 13).

Not all students are prepared for college, either academically or in other areas like study skills. Eighty to 90% of high school students aspire to graduate from college; however, only 30 to 35% graduate from college with a bachelor's degree. Stern and Stearns (2006) questioned how high schools could help solve this difference (pp. 3-4). One strategy that would persistently track "college for all" is to raise the level of expectations for all high school students to begin to out-perform themselves by out-educating themselves therefore college preparation, succeeding in college, and graduating from college becomes a reality (Stern & Stearns, 2006, p. 4). One such program that helps high school students prepare for college is College Summit.

This study compared the effectiveness of the two models of the College Summit Program in an urban school setting. Quantitative data from the CSNavigator management system, retrieval of grade point averages, totals of individual maximum scholarship amounts, and acknowledgements of initial top-three colleges all contributed to the recordings of data collected from students.

Of the 220 high school seniors at Making a Difference High School, 180 students participated in one of the two models of the College Summit Program (CSP and CSA), the remaining 40 NPS students chose to enroll in the North County Tech Program (NPS). The researcher randomly selected 120 students for the research study. The survey was

distributed to 120 seniors; only 114 students completed the survey. The main objective for the program was to increase college enrollment rates for low-income students. Students also had to take the ACT. There was mandatory professional development for participating College Summit Advisors (teachers) who taught the College Summit classes.

To quantitatively determine the difference between students progression of postsecondary planning milestones, grade point averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three top choice colleges, *z*-tests were performed and the results of these tests were displayed in tables. Demographic tables provide average student attendance and graduation rates; and measures of variability for a comparison between the state and school district. This also allows observation of the range of the groups ACT scores based on ethnicities; and descriptive analysis of similarities and differences to determine the degree to which scores are related. This also allows observation of the range of the groups ACT scores based on ethnicities; and descriptive analysis of similarities and differences to determine the degree to which scores are related. Figures illustrated the progression of postsecondary planning milestones completion, average grade point averages, maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges of students.

The study addressed one research question: What is the difference, if any, between the progressions of postsecondary planning milestones of College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage to those College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail?

In short, students benefited from both CSP and CSA, although CSP students completed more Postsecondary Planning Milestones perhaps because of extended time, access to computers, and motivation from a course grade. Students in these two groups were similar in terms of GPA and ACT, but students in the CSP earned more money in scholarships and had higher acceptances rates to their colleges of choice perhaps because of the College Summit activities.

Research Hypotheses and Discussion

Alternative Hypothesis # 1. This hypothesis addressed student progression through postsecondary planning milestones. It appears that the CSP model is a factor in promoting more students to complete the benchmarks when compared to the CSA model. This could be due to the increased time and available computers for students to accomplish these tasks. In addition, the students may have been more motivated because they earned a grade in the course.

Alternative Hypothesis # 2. This hypothesis addressed the comparison of student cumulative GPAs. There is no difference in the cumulative GPA when comparing CSP and CSA. Students with similar GPAs enrolled in both programs, so one program model did not have students with a higher GPA. This is important when comparing the two groups especially when considering college admission and scholarship amount. In addition, no difference between these two groups means that the CSP model did not inflate the GPAs of those students enrolled in that graded course.

Alternative Hypothesis # 3. This hypothesis addressed comparison of average ACT scores. Because the alternate hypothesis is supported for the CSP and NPS, it appears that the NPS would benefit from one of the two models of the College Summit.

There is no difference in the average ACT when comparing CSP and CSA. Thus, the extended time and completion of the Postsecondary Planning Milestones do not seem to make a difference in ACT scores.

Alternative Hypothesis # 4. This hypothesis addressed full completion of the Postsecondary Planning Milestones. It appears that the CSP Model is a factor in promoting more students to complete the benchmarks when compared to the CSA model. As mentioned for Hypothesis 1, the longer amount of time and access to computers may have contributed to this result. Students may also have been more motivated by the grade earned in the CSP model.

Alternative Hypothesis # 5. This hypothesis addressed a comparison of the number of Postsecondary Planning Milestones completed. Because the null hypothesis was rejected, the alternate hypothesis for comparison of full completion of postsecondary planning milestones between the CSP and CSA models was supported. As mentioned earlier, Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5 focused on comparing postsecondary planning milestones between the CSP and CSA, although differences in the comparisons existed: In Hypothesis 1 a comparison was made between the two models based on the percentage of student progression through Postsecondary Planning Milestones; in Hypothesis 4 a comparison was made between the two models based on full completion of Postsecondary Planning Milestones; in Hypothesis 5 a comparison was made between the two models based on the number of Postsecondary Planning Milestones completed.

Alternative Hypothesis # 6. This hypothesis addressed average maximum monetary scholarship awards. There will be a difference in average monetary scholarship awards when comparing participants in the CSP model, CSA model, and NPS model.

Those students participating in the CSP model received greater awards, despite having similar ACT and GPA to the CSA students. The CSP students also completed more Postsecondary Planning Milestones, suggesting that these activities may have benefited the students when applying for scholarships. The three postsecondary planning activities that contributed to greater scholarship amounts were the completion of the FAFSA and State Aid Applications, Scholarship Searches, and Scholarship Applications. These activities were completed by the student through the CSNav online management system.

Alternative Hypothesis # 7. This hypothesis addressed percent of acceptance to First top-three choice colleges. It appears that the CSP model is a factor in students receiving acceptance to their top-three choice colleges when compared to the CSA model and NPS.

Recommendations for the Program

It is essential for students to get started on the right path when planning for college, therefore the planning process begins much earlier than the senior year of high school. As low-income students begin their first year of high school, becoming college-ready should be one of their primary goals and part of the school's motto and image. Beginning the college preparation process in the ninth grade would allow a larger range of students for a longitudinal study. To create a long-term college-going culture within the high school the following educational interventions are recommended for the College Summit Program in the future: a) offer a five-day residential workshop on one of the partnering college campuses for rising seniors, identified as influential "peer leaders," approximately 20% of the senior class; b) implement a College Summit Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Program; c) establish an articulated partnerships with

two- and four-year colleges or universities for the College Summit Senior Program directing them to complete their last year curriculum coursework at an assigned postsecondary school; d) administer pre- and post-test to measure students' academic level in English, math, science, and history beginning in their ninth grade school year; e) implement a College Summit ACT Prep Seminar to prepare and support students in areas of academic deficiency advancing their skills to the level of successfully completing college courses in their freshmen year; f) motivate 9-12 grade students to choose a career pathway that prepares them for postsecondary education and a good career; g) offer financial literacy and financial aid workshops for students and parents; h) implement a transitional ceremony as students' progress from one grade level to the next while in high school; and i) offer a three-day educators training and professional development workshop prior to the beginning of each school year.

According to research, college preparation programs are normally supported by federal dollars provided to the school district. The AVID and GEAR UP programs both have associated cost per student that is funded by federal government to the participating school district. AVID's and GEAR UP's cost per student is approximately $600 to $800. Both programs have shown remarkable outcomes with low-income students going to college. The cost per student to enroll in the College Summit Program is $200. In a school environment that has all of the bells and whistles to prep students for higher education with students coming from affluent backgrounds, or the majority of the students are just self-motivating individuals to accelerate in their courses, it really would not be worth the federal dollars to the district for this type of expense. Most students can master the skills taught in these college entrance exams without the extra expense.

However, high schools that are partners with College Summit are commonly located in economically disadvantaged areas serving low-income students. The curriculum is especially designed by educators to help implement the program. Each student gets their own individual CS Navigator (textbook) to write in and keep which helps them with their postsecondary planning. Also, trained educators not only receive support from regional office staff but receive on-going professional development for the program which is essential to the success of the students. The CSNav on-line support systems, individual on-line student accounts, as well as incentives to students, is the overarching pinnacle for the program to transforming high school students to college students. Therefore, this added expense per student would be worth the efforts. The supportive CSNav online management system provides excellent strategies for students gaining acceptance in college. According to the results from this study, the College Summit Program is effective in providing systematic support for high school seniors to realize the value of pursuing a college education.

Although some students do well in a pass or fail course, offering the College Summit Program as a graded course motivates students to work harder and strive towards completion in their coursework. The research results indicated that when the College Summit Program was implemented as a graded course there was a significant impact on students preparing and gaining acceptance to college. The College Summit Program should be offered only as a graded course to all senior students who are in school during the school day. Most students are used to the traditional grading system; therefore, knowing they are competing with their peers encourages them to work harder through the

rigorous coursework. The only exception to offering the College Summit Program as a pass or fail course is if the program is offered after school or on the weekends.

The College Summit Program was proposed to this high school to increase college preparation and college enrollment efforts among at-risk, African American students who desired to go to college but could not advance in their academics because of lack of enthusiasm, low academic performance scores, and possibly dropping out of school. Specific students were selected as Peer Leaders for their leadership traits and abilities to influence their peers through the school year to remain focused on graduating from high school and pursuing a postsecondary education. The Making a Difference High School started the College Summit Program in the fall of 2006 as a pilot program providing pre-college activities to a chosen group of 25 senior high school students. The administrators, teachers, students realized the challenges that prohibited them from preparing for college, e.g., labeled as an at-risk students, first-generation student, becoming college ready, and the socioeconomic status of the family. Each year thereafter, an additional class of 25 seniors, volunteered for the program.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Further research conducted implementing a 230-minute College Summit class for each participating student would contribute to the literature on evaluating college preparation programs. Additionally, research performed in all public school districts nationwide that serve at-risk, low-income students would allow generalization of the results to a larger population of students. Much research focuses on urban schools, but the College Summit program could be implemented in rural or suburban schools as well. College Summit is offered in other school districts across the country; however, each

district is so different, it would be difficult to control for the confounding variables. However, a comparison of postsecondary outcomes for a school with College Summit and one without would also be valuable.

This research has shown promising results that revealed higher completion of postsecondary planning milestones, increase in average grade point averages, higher individual scholarship amounts, and greater acceptance into first-choice colleges by those participants in the College Summit Program where students receive a grade based on percentage points. The adoption of the College Summit Program has given students at the Making a Difference High School an opportunity to attend college.

Directions of Future Studies

To improve academic performance and standardized test scores, as well as prepare students for postsecondary studies and the workforce, this high school has implemented a program designed to help students become college-ready. The two College Summit Program models at Making a Difference High School included a 33-week college preparatory curriculum that guided students to the doors of a two-or four-year college. Although some college preparation programs have often received criticism for their level of academic rigor, many receive applauds for increasing overall student performance in high school, college entrance test, and preparation for college. Therefore, future research for continued college preparation programs in high schools remains necessary although extensive, particularly if students are to have the attributes of highly qualified individuals within a changing global economy. Below are several recommendations for future research.

1. Perform student and parent interviews of college-going students to determine

Their decisions to select a program of study.

2. Conduct a comparative study state and nationwide, investigating the progression of postsecondary planning differences between College Summit Program students who simultaneously participate in the program to those who do not.

3. Conduct follow-up studies of the College Summit Program students to determine whether or not the program resulted in college retention rates, and successful completion of their first year of college.

4. Conduct follow-up studies of the College Summit Program students to determine whether or not the program resulted in completing a two- or four-year college degree.

5. Articulate a college bound program bridging College Summit students to a two-and/or four-year college or university.

6. Conduct a study that analyzes students' academic performance between the traditional college preparatory curriculum and students' academic performance in the modified curriculum.

Summary

The results of this study inclined to suggest that: a) a difference in participation in completion of postsecondary planning milestones contributed to college preparation; b) a difference in students higher ACT scores were a result of the college preparation curriculum; c) a difference in completion of the College Summit Program contributed to students receiving maximum scholarship amounts; and d) a difference in completing the postsecondary planning milestones contributed to the likelihood of students receiving their initial top-three choice colleges.

The goal of the study was to compare students' progress in pre-college activities while evaluating effective practices between two models of the College Summit Program. This study evaluated the outcomes of students' completion of postsecondary milestones, difference in students' GPAs, awarding of individual maximum scholarship amounts, and offering of first top-three choice colleges. The conclusive results between CSP students who receive academic credit and a grade based on percentage showed greater outcomes then CSA students whose grade was determined as either a pass or fail. Results concluded that during the research study best practices were implemented in both College Summit Programs to increase acceptance into his or her top-three choice colleges with substantial individual scholarship awards among at-risk students.

Throughout the literature, various authors have concluded that Americas goal is to produce graduates who can effectively contribute to society by achieving a given career and become part of the village by employing their career to the economic market. Similarly, high schools must offer college prep or career and technical programs that align to state and industry standards paralleling with internships so students can successfully acquire the required skills needed for life sustainability. If America is to rise to the top in education, jobs, and careers, students, parents, businesses, organizations, and communities must pledge to the nation their talents to careers and genuine world experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Parent Consent Form for Child
Participation in Research Activities

Principal Investigator Wanda R. Davis, Telephone:314.496.0331 E-mail:

WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research

I give my consent for my child _____) to participate in the research titled, "An Evaluation of a College Summit Program in an Urban School Setting," which is being conducted by Ms. Wanda Davis, doctorate student, Education Department, Lindenwood University. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I or my child can withdraw consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as my child's, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

1. The purpose of this study is to determine which College Summit Program is more effective for postsecondary planning. My study will evaluate the progress of postsecondary planning milestones, students' Grade Point Averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges per student between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. A number of quantifiable data will be measured and compared: the progression of postsecondary planning milestones: students' Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student.
2. The benefits that my child may expect from the research are: research participants can receive extended knowledge about certain groups of College Summit students whom are better prepared for college than others.
3. The procedures are as follows: The research project will take place over a period of six months to a year. During that time, the researcher will be collecting data using a variety of instruments and techniques (survey (S) charts, tables, and/or graphs. I understand that the researchers might be asking my child to participate using a combination of these data collection instruments and techniques.
4. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.

5. No risks are foreseen. My child's participation is voluntary. I understand that my child will be given alternative, equivalent exercises if I or my child do not consent to participation. This choice will
not affect the grade of my child.
6. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form.
7. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by phone at 314-496-0331.
Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the researcher.

_____ _____

Signature of Research Date Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Appendix B

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Assent for Participation in Research Activities

Research Topic: Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban School Setting

Participant _____ Contact info _____

My name is Wanda Davis and I am a student at Lindenwood University. I am asking you to participate in a research study that will be comparing two college prep programs because you are a student who participates in the College Summit Program.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: In this study I will be looking at two college prep programs to see how students advance through college planning activities.

PARTICIPATION: You will complete all assignments that relate to college planning. Also, you will complete an on-line survey responding to questions about your opinions, feelings, and experiences about the College Summit Program. The results of your participation will be confidential.

RISKS & BENEFITS: Your safety and well-being are important to me. The questions that are asked on the survey will help me to understand your opinions, feelings, and experiences about the College Summit Program. You may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions, if so, you may skip those questions if you like. Your participation in this study is very important because you will be giving people information that can help other students in similar programs.

COMPENSATION: You will not be paid for participation in this study. However, your participation is very much appreciated. Although I have received permission from your parents for you to participate in this study, it's up to you if you wish to play a part in this research study. No one will be upset if you do not want to participate, or if you change your mind later and want to stop.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may call me at 314.496.0331 or email:WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

Please sign your name below, if you agree to be part of my study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature Date	Participant's Name (Print)
_____	_____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date	Investigator Printed Name

Appendix C

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Survey Activity

Research Topic: Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban School Setting

Participant _____ Contact info _____

Dear Parent:

My name is Wanda Davis and I am a student at Lindenwood University. I am asking your permission for your child to participate in a research study that will be comparing two college prep programs because your child is a student who participates in the College Summit Program.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: In this study I will be looking at two college prep programs to see how students advance through college planning activities.

PARTICIPATION: Your child will complete several assignments that relate to college planning. Also, your child will complete an on-line survey responding to questions about his/her opinions, feelings, and experiences about the College Summit Program. The results of your child's participation will be confidential.

RISKS & BENEFITS: Your child's safety and well-being are important to me. The questions that are asked on the survey will help me to understand your child's opinions, feelings, and experiences about the College Summit Program. Your child may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions, if so, your child may skip those questions if he/she like. Your child's participation in this survey is very important because your child will be answering questions that can help other students in similar programs.
COMPENSATION: Your child will not be paid for his/her participation in this study. However, your child's participation is very much appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may call me at 314.496.0331 or email:WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your child's participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

Please sign your name below, if you agree to let your child be part of my study. You will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Date Parent's Name (Print)

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date Investigator Printed Name

Appendix D

Lindenwood University
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Research Participant Thank You Letter

Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban School Setting

Principal Investigator Wanda R. Davis, Telephone: 314.496.0331
Email:WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for participating in the "Evaluation of a College Summit Program in an Urban School Setting", research study. The purpose for this research was to determine which College Summit Program was much more effective for postsecondary planning, receiving academic credit and a grade or receiving a pass or fail grade. This study evaluated the progress of postsecondary planning milestones, between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit and a grade and College Summit Advisory students who receive a pass or fail grade.

During the study, we received input and recommendations on future strategies that will help enhance the College Summit Program curriculum. The Making a Difference School District will review those recommendations to expand the reach of increased opportunities for new, innovative, and creative ways to boost college preparedness for all students.

Thank you again for taking the time to be a part of this research study. If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Wanda Davis, Principal Investigator at (314) 496.0331 or email:WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu. We value your expertise and appreciate your time, input and efforts.

Sincerely,

Wanda Davis, Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Superintendent Consent for Participation in Research Activities

An Evaluation of a College Summit Program in an Urban School Setting

Principal Investigator Wanda R. Davis, Telephone:314.496.0331
Email:WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Participants: 140 Making A Difference High School Students

Dear Superintendent,

Wanda Davis, Business Education Teacher at Making a Difference High School, as well as, a Doctoral Student at Lindenwood University would like to conduct a research study under the guidance of Dr. Graham Weir, Faculty Advisor and Dr. Michael Woods, Dissertation Chair. The purpose of this research is to make a contribution to existing research studies by making comparisons among two groups of students: College Summit Program students and non-participating students. The outcome of this study is to determine the impact that the program has on participating students enrolling in and graduating from college.

The student's participation will involve Completing a survey to identify problems/benefits of the program is to evaluate completion of postsecondary milestones, grade point averages, individual scholarship awards, and initial top-three choice colleges between two groups of students, students who receive a grade based on percentage points and students who receive a pass or fail grade. The location of the research procedure will be held in a neutral classroom.

The amount of time involved in the student's participation will be 6 months to one year. One hundred and forty participants will be involved in this research.

Minimal anticipated risks expected of the students associated with this research. There may be certain risks or discomforts to the students associated with this research (e.g., uncomfortable feelings that might come from answering certain questions).

No direct benefits anticipated for the students participating in this study. However, their participation will contribute to the knowledge about the impact that College Summit has on urban high school students enrolling in and graduating from college, as well as, their participation may help society.

The student's participation is voluntary and you may choose not to allow the students to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for the student's participation at any time. The students may choose not to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer. The students will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to let the students participate or to withdraw the students.

We will do everything we can to protect the student's privacy. As part of this effort, the students' identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Primary Investigator, Wanda Davis at 314.496.0331or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Weir Graham at 636.949.4656. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-9494846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my child's participation in the research described above.

Superintendent's Signature Date

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date Investigator Printed Name

Appendix F

Below you will find a list of survey items to evaluate the course impact and learning gains in the College Summit Program. The outcome of the electronic survey will produce selected items that evolve around how well the students are prepared for college. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. When the data gathering is complete, all data will be coded and transferred to the research project at the High School.

Postsecondary Planning Survey

1. Identify three overall expectations of the College Summit Program?
2. Which College Summit program was more effective for making postsecondary planning and college access a reality for all students?
3. Does the College Summit Advisory class provide enough time to complete all postsecondary milestones for the year?
4. How often do you access your personal College Summit CSNav.org account at home to work on ?
5. How has the College Summit Program prepared you to pursue your career studies in college?
6. What skills have you learned in the College Summit Program that will help you in your college years and beyond?
7. What pre-college experiences have you encountered prior to participating in the College Summit Program? (open-ended response)
8. How has your participation in the College Summit prepared you to pursue post-secondary opportunities? (open-ended response)
9. What are your initial plans after high school?
10. What will be your area of study?
11. What has been your overall experience in the College Summit Program? (open-ended response)
12. Please rate the curriculum structure of the College Summit class:

Appendix G

Prospectus Name Wanda Davis Modified: 1/9/12

1) **What type of research project is it?** *The type of research project that I will be studying is a Comparative Research.*
My research topic: *Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Programs in an Urban School Setting.*

2) What type of methods will you use? Quantitative _X_ Qualitative ____ Both ____

Hypothesis
H1 *The College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage demonstrate greater progression when completing postsecondary planning milestones than College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail.*

Research Question
H2 *Is there a difference between the progressions of postsecondary planning milestones*
of College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage to those College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail?

3) What is it you are attempting to do in the study (purpose)?
My purpose of this study is to determine which College Summit program is more effective for postsecondary planning. My study will evaluate the progress of postsecondary planning milestones, students' Grade Point Averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges per student between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. A number of quantifiable data will be measured and compared: the progression of postsecondary planning milestones: students' Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student. The goal of this study is to see if participating students not only get accepted into college, but are progressing through college, and landing the career they have been dreaming of for years.

4) Why is this study worth doing? [*rationale*]
The rationale for this study is to show the difference in the progression of postsecondary planning milestones, between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. Miller (2009) states, A

traditional grade stratifies students to level of achievement and can motivate students, reward effort, and perhaps signify suitability for a potential area of study. A pass or fail grade indicates simply that a student has achieved an expected level of competence, information that is critically important if medical education is to fulfill its obligation to the public. Students achieve more academically when they are graded under a traditional rather than pass-fail system (Burke, 2006).

5) What populations will you use (students) (data source)? Where will you get them?
The population of students is as follows: 2011 Normandy High School total population of senior students is 235, the sample size from the population of students is 114.

6) What measure(s) will you use to gather data with which subsets of students? (eg. teachers will do interviews, staff will complete survey, students will participate in focus groups). *The methods used are as follows: A survey, z-test to determine the difference in means, z-test for difference in proportion, and Chi-square test for independence.*

7) Explain how each source of data will help answer your question or test your hypothesis:
Each source of data will help me test the hypothesis and answer the research question by evaluating the progressions of postsecondary planning milestones between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage to those College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail.

8) Research context (eg. Jackson elem.; LCIE prog. at LU; 6 alternative education prog.)
The research context will be based around "Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban High School Setting".

9) What is your relationship to the participants?
My relationship to the students is the College Summit Advisor.

10) Time frame
The time frame for this research study is 6 months to one year.

11) Chair and/or dissertation Committee members: My Chair is Dr. Michael Woods, Adjunct Faculty of Lindenwood University; My Dissertation Committee members are: Dr. Graham Weir, Ed.D Department Chair, and Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Assistant Supervisor of Quantitative Research.

Appendix H

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

Application for IRB Review of Research Proposal Involving Human Students

Proposal #_____

1. Title of Project: Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Models of College Summit Programs in an Urban School Setting

2. Dissertation Chair/Faculty Advisor: Dr. Michael Woods
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Graham M. Weir Department: Education
Extension: 636.949.4315 e-mail: gweir@lindenwood.edu

3. Primary Investigator(s): Wanda Davis Department: **N/A** Local phone: 314.496.0331
e-mail: WRD546@lionmail.lindenwood.edu.

4. Anticipated starting date for this project: **Upon Approval** ending date: **May 25, 2012**.
(collection of *primary* data – data you collect yourself - cannot begin without IRB approval)

5. State the purpose of this proposed project (*what do you want to accomplish?*)**:**

College Summit is a national nonprofit organization that has been helping students from low-income communities to enroll in college for over fifteen years (Anonymous, 2011, pg. V). In order for you to understand the College Summit Program, I have provided a few definitions for you understanding below.

Anonymous (2011), pg. V states,

College Summit Program—is a partnering program that makes postsecondary planning and college access a reality for all students. Through participation in the program, students will create a Senior Portfolio that sets seniors up for success in formal and informal postsecondary learning opportunities; Postsecondary Planning—A comprehensive scope and sequence of seven separate thematic units. Each unit mapped to a specific month or months during the senior year and culminates in the completion of one or more Senior Portfolio products; Postsecondary Planning Milestones—A list of 12 College Summit milestones displaying students' progress toward completion of the Senior Portfolio.

The **purpose** of this study is to determine which College Summit program is more effective for postsecondary planning. My study will evaluate the progress of postsecondary planning milestones, students' Grade Point Averages, individual maximum scholarship amounts, and initial top-three choice colleges per student between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. A number of quantifiable data will be measured and compared: the progression of postsecondary planning milestones: students' Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student.

6. State the rationale for this proposed project (*why is this worth accomplishing?*):

The rationale for this study is to show the difference in the progression of postsecondary planning milestones, between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail. Miller (2009) states, A traditional grade stratifies students to level of achievement and can motivate students, reward effort, and perhaps signify suitability for a potential area of study. A pass or fail grade indicates simply that a student has achieved an expected level of competence, information that is critically important if medical education is to fulfill its obligation to the public. Students achieve more academically when they are graded under a traditional rather than pass-fail system (Burke, 2006).

7. State the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) of the proposed project:
The College Summit Program students who receive academic credit through calculating a student's grade based on percentage demonstrate greater progression when completing postsecondary planning milestones than College Summit Advisory students whose grade is determined as either a pass or fail.

8. Has this research project been reviewed or is it currently being reviewed by an IRB at another institution? If so, please state when, where, and disposition (approval/non-approval/pending).
No, this project is not and has not been reviewed by any other IRB at another institution.

9. Participants involved in the study:

a. Indicate how many persons, of what type, will be recruited as participants in this study.

LU participants	_____	Undergraduate students (Lindenwood Participant Pool)
	_____	Graduate students
	_____	Faculty and/or staff
Non-LU participants	25	Children / **Adolescents** [need guardian's consent for those who have not reached the age of 18]
(High School Study)	25	Adults (Students that are 18 years of age)
	_____	Persons with diminished autonomy (e.g. seniors, medical patients, persons in correctional facilities, etc.)
	_____	Other (specify):

b. From what source(s) will the potential participants be recruited? (specify):
The potential future participants will be recruited from a volunteer group of College Summit Program students who will visit all junior academic classes during the first week in April. These students will present valuable information for recruitment into the program.

c. Describe the process of participant recruitment.
Provide a copy of any materials to be used for recruitment (e.g. posters, flyers, advertisements, letters, telephone and other verbal scripts).
The following materials will be used for recruitment: flyers

d. If any persons within the selected group(s) are being excluded, please explain who is being excluded and why. (Note: LU Participant Pool students must be allowed to participate, though they may be excluded when analyzing data.)

e. Where will the study take place?
__X__ On campus –Normandy High School
_____Off campus – Explain:

10. Methodology/procedures:
Provide a sequential description of the procedures to be used in this study.
The methods used are as follows:
- 1st --Seeking (received) permission to conduct the study from the Superintendent of Normandy School District
- 2nd--Gather participants: 25 College Summit Program students (academic credit and a grade); 25 College Summit Advisory students (pass or fail grade)
- 3rd--Retrieving primary data: postsecondary planning milestones; students' Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student
- 4th--Conduct a postsecondary planning survey with research participants
Collection of Data: In order to acquire unbiased and reliable results, the collection of data will be under the direction of a guidance counselor not the primary investigator.
  - 6th— to evaluate the progression of postsecondary planning milestones between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive academic credit and a grade and College Summit Program Advisory students who receive academic credit by a pass or fail grade. I will be using z-test for difference in means, z-test for difference in proportion, and Chi-square test for independence

b. Which of the following data-gathering procedures will be used?
Provide a copy of all materials to be used in this study with application.

_____ Observing participants (i.e. in a classroom, playground, school board meeting etc)

__X__ **Survey** Postsecondary Planning Survey (on-line survey can be taken at home) **(Appendix F)**

_____ Interview(s) ___ (in person) ___ (by telephone) ___ Focus group(s)

_____ Audiotaping _____Videotaping

__**X**__ Analysis of secondary data – None

__X__ Other (specify): Primary data: postsecondary planning milestones: students' Grade Point Averages; individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student; postsecondary planning survey data

11. Will the results of this research be made accessible to participants, institutions, or schools/district? If yes, explain how.
No, results will remain confidential and anonymous and kept in a secured place.

12. Potential Benefits and Compensation from the Study:

a. Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to the participants (perhaps academic, psychological, or social) from their involvement in the project.
This research may benefit the students by showing the outcome of preparing for college between two groups of students, College Summit Program students who receive traditional grades based on percentage and College Summit Advisory students who receive non-traditional grades of pass or fail. Some students will benefit by realizing an increased in knowledge on the essential items needed to prepare for college such as, improved time-management skills; innovative self-paced and self-monitoring strategies while progressing their postsecondary options.

b. Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to society from this study.
The benefits of research to the student and society are: This research may benefit society by promoting a group of students who have completed various milestones that will allow them to enter postsecondary institutions and/or the real world of work. Overall, these benefits will be a great impact to society by graduating prepared, college ready individuals that will be able to contribute their professional attributes to society.

c. Describe any anticipated compensation to participants (money, grades, extra credit).
A Thank You Letter will be presented to the research participants. **(Appendix D)**

13. Potential Risks from the Study:

a. Identify and describe any known or anticipated risks (i.e. physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, etc) to participants involved in this study: No known or anticipated risks expected.

b. Describe, in detail, how your research design addresses these potential risks:

c. Will deception be used in this study? If so, explain the rationale.
There will not be any form of deception used in this study.

d. Does this project involve gathering information about *sensitive topics*?

[*Sensitive topics* defined as: political affiliations; psychological disorders of participants or their families; sexual behavior or attitudes; illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of participants' families or employers; legally recognized privileged relationships (lawyers, doctors, ministers); income; religious beliefs and practices.
No

If so, explain:

e. Explain the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data during the data gathering phase of the research, in the storage of data, and in the release of the findings.

To ensure anonymity, the guidance counselor will be coding the surveys to uphold confidentiality of participants' data during the gathering phase of the research, all research data will remain in a locked and secured location during the research study.

f. How will confidentiality be explained to participants?
See Consent Letter statement, i.e., "We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. As part of this effort, the child's identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location".

g. Indicate the duration and location of secure data storage and the method to be used for final disposition of the data.

Paper Records
__x__ Data will be retained until completion of project and then destroyed.
_____ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where? _____

Audio/video Recordings
_____ Audio/video tapes will be erased after completion of project.
_____ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where? _____

Electronic Data (computer files)
__x__ Electronic data will be erased after completion of project.
_____ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where? _____

14. Informed Consent Process:

a. What process will be used to inform the potential participants about the study details and (if necessary) to obtain their written consent for participation?

__X__ An information letter / written consent form for participants or their legally authorized agents will be used; include a copy with application. (Parent Consent Letter)

_____ An information letter from director of institution involved will be provided; include a copy with application.

_____ Other (specify):

b. What special provisions have been made for providing information to those not fluent in English, mentally disabled persons, or other populations for whom it may be difficult to ensure that they can give informed consent? N/A

15. All supporting materials/documentation for this application are to be submitted electronically with the application to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please indicate which appendices are included with your application. Submission of an incomplete application package will result in the application being returned to you unevaluated.

_____ Recruitment materials: A copy of any posters, fliers, advertisements, letters, telephone or other verbal scripts used to recruit/gain access to participants.

__X__ Data gathering materials: postsecondary planning milestones: students' Grade Point Averages;
individual maximum scholarship amounts; the initial top-three choice colleges per student;
postsecondary planning survey

_____ Information letter for participants.

_____ Informed Consent Form : Adult

__X__ Informed Parent Consent Form: **(Appendix A)**

__X__ Informed Assent Form for minors **(Appendix B)**

_____ Information/Cover letters used in studies involving surveys or questionnaires.

__X__ Permission letter from research site (superintendent) **(Appendix E)**

_____ Other:

In submitting this application the Principle Investigator certifies the information in this proposal is complete and accurate.
wd revised 12-10-11

Adapted, in part, from LU Ethics Form 8/03

Vitae

Wanda R. Davis currently teaches at Normandy High School in the Normandy School District, located in St. Louis, Missouri. Tenure of teaching has included Grade 12 College Summit and Grades 10 – 12 web design, graphics arts, and business education high school level educational courses. Desired areas of interest are College Summit Advisor and College Tour Director. School leadership in curriculum development, professional development, and counseling are exclusively areas of interest.

Anticipates graduating with doctoral degree in educational administration in May 2013. Educational studies have resulted in an Education Specialist Degree in educational administration and a Master of Arts Degree in educational administration from Lindenwood University, St. Louis, Missouri, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Fontbonne University, St. Louis, Missouri.