

TROUBLED TRANSITIONS INTO COLLEGE AND THE EFFECTS OF A SMALL INTERVENTION COURSE

Abstract

We examined the causes of poor academic performance in students' first semester through interviews and questionnaires, and administered a small intervention course to freshmen on academic probation the following semester. This intervention had a modest positive effect on retention and academic self-efficacy, but not on locus of control or GPA.

Keywords

locus of control; retention; self-efficacy

Introduction

Student attrition from colleges in the United States is a widespread phenomenon, where 21.3% of adults over 25 have attained some college-level education, but not yet received a degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Attrition poses real stresses to students, their families, and to universities. The financial cost to universities is the easiest to quantify, whereas costs to individuals can only be estimated by comparing the income of individuals with different academic histories. Between 2003 and 2008, federal and state governments spent about \$9.1 billion on university appropriations and direct grants to students who did not return for a second year (AIR 2010). Though this sum does not take into account money that universities received in tuition from these students over that time, such funds should be added to the total amount of unnecessary finds that society spends on college-level education that does not result in a college degree. Median annual income of adults with only some college experience is around \$15,000

less than the income of adults who do have a degree from a four-year institution (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

At the institution where the following study was conducted, a four-year, public university in the Northeast United States with over 30,000 undergraduate students, between 16 and 22% of first year students at one of the university's primary colleges are routinely asked to leave the university because of low academic achievement.

Given that students who start college educations have academic skills sufficiently strong to get into post-secondary institutions and the efforts that universities put into attracting and retaining students, it is reasonable to work to help these individuals succeed in their attempts to complete a degree. Furthermore, it is imprudent to disregard struggling students who could be helped with minimal effort. Therefore, given the mutual self-interest of colleges and students, responsibility for finishing a college degree can and should be shared between these stakeholders.

Because of these issues, considerable effort has gone into studying the causes of student attrition, predicting those students who will struggle in their first semester at college, and minimizing the rate of attrition. Following is an overview of some of those efforts and techniques, as well as their effectiveness.

Causes of student attrition

A wide variety of factors have been identified that affect student retention. Known causes fall into roughly two categories: those that relate to an institution's climate, and those that stem from an individual's personal, cognitive or demographic background.

Institutional factors

Institutional variables include the college social environment and the degree to which a student feels integrated in it. Both the attitude towards the social environment and integration into that atmosphere are known predictors of attrition (Tinto, 1992; Allen *et al.*, 2008). Likewise, in a study that measured students' perceptions towards their institutions, Bean (1980) found that commitment to one's school accounted for the greatest amount of variation in the rate of attrition for both males and females. Surprisingly, perceived quality of institution was positively correlated with retention for females, but not for males (Bean, 1980). Likewise, the feelings that student have regarding being incorporated into the academic life of an institution have a moderately strong effect on persistence, at least for adult, non-traditional students (Sandler, 2000). The degree to which students enjoy the physical university environment, feel like they belong in the student community, and feel like university faculty and staff are sensitive to student needs are highly predictive of students' intentions to remain enrolled in their institution (Willcoxson, 2010).

Personal factors

Regarding variables that reflect an individual's own attributes, grade point average after students' first semester is, unsurprisingly, positively correlated with retention (Murtaugh *et al.*, 1999). Social factors are also known to affect decisions to remain enrolled in a four year academic program, especially loneliness and social support (Nicpon *et al.*, 2006). Monetary, familial obligations, and personal motivation to achieve are additional personal factors known to affect retention (Christie *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, academic self-efficacy (ASE), which refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments..." (Bandura, 1977), is known to be malleable in academic settings as students receive feedback on tasks (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003) and was found to be correlated with retention

(Zimmerman *et al.*, 1992; Chemers *et al.*, 2001). Because it is both malleable and may directly affect retention, ASE will be a focus of the following study.

Perhaps the broadest set of internal variables that have been shown to affect retention in a particular field of study is one's ability to form coping strategies in the face of academic challenges, such as confidence in acquiring content knowledge, persistence to stick with challenging material, assertiveness, and the establishment of foreseeable long-term goals (Seymour & Hewitt., 1997).

One final personal factor affecting the likelihood of attrition is one's locus of control (LOC), the extent to which one believes that causal actions reside in personal (internal) or external forces. A student's locus of control has long been known to correlate to academic success (McGhee & Crandall, 1968; Findley & Cooper, 1983). Students who weigh outside influences as having a relatively stronger effect on their lives tend to have modestly lower academic achievement than do students who more heavily weigh internal forces, such as motivation, effort, or ability.

Past efforts to minimize attrition

A wide variety of techniques have been employed to mitigate student attrition in undergraduate institutions. As expected, most of the interventions designed by institutions focus on institutional factors that affect retention, rather than internal student factors.

Supplemental instruction attached to difficult, entry-level science courses have, in some cases, been shown to increase retention by 10% (67.3% to 77.4% reenrollment) (Blanc *et al.*, 1983). Likewise, faculty-undergraduate research partnerships have been shown to have a similar effect on retention rates decreasing attrition from 9.8% to 3.2%, although in a self-selected group

of students (Nagda *et al.*, 1998). Randomized trials show more equivocal results, where attrition was only significantly lower among African American students (10.1% versus 18.3%).

Other factors shown to affect undergraduate attrition include the quality of undergraduate advising by faculty members (Metzner, 1989) and orientation sessions (Pascarella *et al.*, 1986), which are thought to increase retention indirectly through increasing social integration within the undergraduate population and by increasing commitment to an institution.

Efforts to predict student attrition

A variety of commercially and academically produced instruments have been developed either to predict which first year students are likely to encounter academic challenges or to intervene in students likely to face difficulties with academic success. Two such instruments are the Test of Reactions and Adaptation in College (TRAC, prediction) (Larose & Roy, 1995) and the MAP-Works[®] (Making Achievement Possible, intervention) system offered by Educational Benchmarking, Inc.

The TRAC instrument was developed to measure “affective, cognitive, and behavioral dispositions” correlated with early college success in order to identify students likely to require intervention in order to succeed in obtaining a degree (Larose & Roy, 1995). Though TRAC was shown to add some predictive power beyond that which is offered by a suite of variables most often used to predict student success (high school GPA and SAT scores) for some aspects of student success, such as hours studied per week and frequency of being late for class, it was less able to account for much more variation than high school GPA and SAT scores in measures of actual success, such as GPA after the first semester (Lacrose *et al.*, 1998). Two subscales of the

TRAC instrument were highly correlated to academic performance: Examination Preparation and the Giving Priority to Studies subscales (Lacrose *et al.*, 1998).

The MAP-Works[®] program is billed by it's developer to "[identify] students early in the term allowing for immediate support and intervention. MAP-Works[®] then serves as the infrastructure to manage those critical outreach efforts on your campus." One major limitation in testing this product beyond the data provided by the manufacturer is that it is designed as a predictor and intervention tool in one package. Students who complete the web-based survey are immediately presented with a summary of their results and provided with strategies with improving weaknesses. The transition survey is designed to measure the following areas: academic skills and ability, learning, quality of course instruction, interference with class attendance, basic study skills, [advanced] study skills, self-management, self-efficacy, self-evaluation, encouragement and support, commitment to first year and to college, student interest [in campus activities], sense of belonging, on-campus living, homesickness, high school involvement, and an overall evaluation of adjustment to college life. Upon completion, students are categorized as being at high, medium, or low risk of attrition. Students at high and medium risk of attrition are immediately offered coping strategies geared towards the student's areas of weakness.

Purpose of the studies

Two studies are described below. Part I is a multi-faceted attempt to describe the causes of academic probation and to predict probationary status amongst students who had not been previously identified as "at-risk" through traditional means (primarily SAT scores and high school GPA). The second part uses the information gleaned from Part I to inform the creation of

a small intervention course targeted to students who were on academic probation (GPA under 1.8) after their first semester.

Methods: Part I

Interviews

In order to categorize students' self-perceived causes of academic probation, interviews were conducted with students who were on probation ($n = 16$) as well as students who were in good academic standing ($GPA > 1.8$, $n = 21$). The additional population of students in good academic standing was interviewed in order to compare differences in the perceptions of academic life and the perceived causes of academic difficulties between students who had achieved high (>1.8) and low (<1.8) GPAs. Interview questions (see Appendix A) were developed by CC, RCJ, SAG and DTM. Interviews occurred during April 2009.

MAP-Works[®]

The MAP-Works[®] program was administered by university officials during the Fall of 2009 to all incoming undergraduate students. Response rates were over 90%, as resident assistants and orientation facilitators encouraged student participation.

Results: Part I

Interviews

Interviews with students revealed a wide variety of issues facing incoming first year students. There were, however, few discernable patterns between students who were on academic probation and those who were in good academic standing. For example, the initial

response when asked: “What do you think has had the most negative influence on how you are doing in your classes at [this university]?” was roughly similar between groups in regards to blaming an external agent (high GPA: 54%; low GPA: 64%). Similar numbers of students had at least a preliminary decision concerning declaring a major (high GPA: 95%; low GPA: 89%).

Though both groups of students reported meeting with an academic advisor during their first semester at roughly equal rates (high GPA: 73%; low GPA: 83%), students on academic probation were marginally more likely to report negative reactions regarding their academic advising during their first semester than were students who were in good academic standing (low GPA: 13%; high GPA: 35%). Examples of negative interactions recounted by students on academic probation include inaccessibility and lack of interest in students.

When asked how they would change their university given complete control, both groups responded in a similar manner. Roughly equal proportions mentioned making classes easier (high GPA: 18%; low GPA: 12%), making substantive changes to the way courses are taught to encourage student engagement (high GPA: 23%; low GPA: 24%), making classes smaller (high GPA: 18%; low GPA: 24%), or making a recommendation unrelated to academics (high GPA: 32%; low GPA: 35%) as their first response.

Despite the lack of discernable patterns between populations on academic probation and in good standing, the interviews did reveal some notable insights. Most striking was a sense of “being lost” mentioned spontaneously by students on academic probation. This sentiment was not mentioned by any students in good academic standing, and hints at the psychological toll that poor academic performance can have on students, most of whom have done well up until their first semester at college.

183 *MAP-Works[®]*

184 There was no significant difference in GPA between students that were identified by
185 *MAP-Works[®]* as being at high, medium or low risk (ANOVA: $N = 670$, $df = 2$, $F = 2.11$, p
186 $= .122$) (Figure 1).

187
188 **Methods: Part II**

189 *PASS course*

190 Based on information gathered during a literature review of issues surrounding attrition
191 caused by poor academic standing, experiences specific to students the enrolled at the institution
192 in which the study occurred that were obtained through the interview process, and the goals of a
193 collaborating group similarly charged with increasing student retention, the Portals to Academic
194 Student Success (PASS) course was developed by SS, CC, RCJ, SAG and DTM. The syllabus
195 was primarily developed by SS and focused on practical academic skills, notably: note-taking,
196 effective study techniques, stress management, short term (semester), medium term (less than
197 five years) and long term (greater than five years) goal setting and a four-year academic plan. In
198 addition to assignments directly related to the previous topics, students wrote essays reflecting on
199 the causes of their probationary status and, at the end of the course, the changes necessary in
200 order to maintain a GPA over 1.8.

201 Because of the information gathered from interview data concerning the methods of
202 instruction in undergraduate classrooms (see Results, Part I), it was necessary to address topics
203 beyond academic skill sets. Specifically, the desire to make substantive changes to classes
204 designed to increase student engagement suggested that there was a need the course was
205 designed to accommodate the promotion of metacognitive reflection, self-assessment, and

community strengthening, as proposed by Bransford, *et al.* (1999). In addition, the negative interactions with academic advisors mentioned by students on academic probation suggested the need for small class sizes where informal advising could occur with knowledgeable instructors and where students could be assisted in the development of a four year academic plan.

Furthermore, in order to enhance the transfer of concepts from the PASS course to other situations, the goals of every lesson and the nature of the problems identified during each class were made explicit to the students (Halpern, 1998). Transferring ideas refers to applying ideas and knowledge from one instructional environment to another environment outside of the initial context (Barnett & Ceci, 2002). The role of the college community's identity in which this study was conducted as an historically land-grant institution creates a unique, agricultural-themed college environment in a densely-populated urban and suburban area. This has created an institutional identity that appears conducive to community-based education, which can result in strong motivational gains for educational opportunities (Colby *et al.*, 2003).

Forty-eight students of the 127 who earned GPAs below 1.8 in the Fall of 2009 were randomly assigned one of the six instructors. Before the first day of class, five students were removed from the class because of unresolvable scheduling conflicts, leaving 43 students enrolled. Classes met for 80 minutes, once per week for ten consecutive weeks during the students' second semester in college, except for one week during the mid-semester break.

Peer and self-assessment was used to measure the effectiveness of academic skills and self-reflective essays. The rubrics used for assessment were created during student-faculty discussion, but guided towards assessments created for scientific content knowledge described in Etkina *et al.* (2006) and those developed for inquiry-based units (Diamond, 1998; Schunn *et al.*, 2004). The use of student-generated formative assessment has been shown to increase scientific

content knowledge and transfer (Etkina *et al.*, 2006), and it was expected that this would true for other realms of knowledge. The ability for students to become better, more self-regulated learners through explicit emphasis on metacognition will be measured.

A goal of creating this course was to generate a single learning environment that merges academic, civic, and social endeavors. While social theorists have long argued that learning is a social enterprise, the university classroom is not structured to engage students in multiple cognitive realms. Indeed educational discussions at scientific meetings (██████, *pers. comm.*) reveal that many scientists are reluctant to engage their students socially and civically because of lack of expertise and loss of rigor in the science classroom.

Locus of Control

The degree to which students possessed an internal or external locus of control (LOC) was measured in the Spring of 2010 and 2011 using the Internal Control Index (Dutteiler, 2002), which employed a five-point ranking scale for each of 28 questions. The instrument was utilized both at the beginning and end of the semester, as pre- and post-tests during class time for all students enrolled in the PASS course. Additionally, LOC was measured in two other populations of students that were not enrolled in the PASS course: students with a GPA from their first semester of less than 1.8 and students with a GPA from their first semester that was greater than 1.8. These students were recruited via email and given \$15 to come in and complete the same instrument as the PASS students a single time. Two analyses were conducted on each year's LOC data.

First, we employed a paired analysis of each PASS student's aggregate scores on pre- and post-tests with a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test in PASW Statistics GradPack 17.0.2 (2009) to see

how PASS intervention may have affected individual's LOC. Only students who completed both pre- and post-tests, and only those questions which were answered by all of those students, were retained in the analysis. We created aggregate scores by summing the rank scores of each student's responses to all retained questions. In 2010, 30 PASS students' responses to 22 questions were retained in the analysis, while in 2011, 19 PASS students' responses to 27 questions were retained.

Second, we compared the aggregate LOC scores of each of our three student populations (PASS students, Non-PASS students with GPAs below 1.8 (Non-PASS -), and Non-PASS students with GPAs above 1.8 (Non-PASS +)) with a Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA in PASW Statistics GradPack 17.0.2 (2009). We used the post-test scores for the PASS students in this analysis. Only students who answered >90% of questions, and only those questions which were answered by all of those students were retained for the analysis. Once again, we created student aggregate scores by summing the rank scores of each student's responses to all retained questions. In 2010, 13 'Non-PASS -', 36 'Non-PASS +', and 39 'PASS' students' responses to 22 questions were retained in the analysis. In 2011, 12 'Non-PASS -', 50 'Non-PASS +', and 31 'PASS' students' responses to 26 questions were retained. Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U tests were used to elucidate significant differences amongst student populations if we detected an overall significant difference with that year's Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Students' academic self-efficacy (ASE) in regards to academic aptitude was measured with an instrument developed by Owen and Froman (1988). The instrument, comprised of 33 questions with a five-point ranking scale for each, was given at the same time as the locus of

control questionnaire and to the same populations (see above). As with LOC measurements, a Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA was used to compare populations with Mann-Whitney U test for post-hoc comparison. ASE rank scores were analyzed exactly as described for LOC scores. For our paired analysis of PASS student's pre-to-post change in their aggregate ASE scores, 30 student's responses to 32 questions were retained for analysis in 2010, and 19 student's responses to 27 questions were retained in 2011. Meanwhile, for our comparison of ASE aggregate scores across surveyed student populations, 13 'Non-PASS -', 34 'Non-PASS +', and 39 'PASS' student's responses to 31 questions were retained for analysis in 2010, while 12 'Non-Pass -', 50 'Non-PASS +', and 31 'PASS' student's responses to 28 questions were retained in 2011.

GPA and Retention

Data from the study institution were used to compare the GPAs of students who earned a GPA of less than 1.8 who were enrolled in the PASS class and those who had not been enrolled in the PASS class at the end of their second semester at college (the semester that included their enrollment in the PASS course) and after their third semester. Retention was likewise compared at the end of students' second and third semesters after initial enrollment at college. The absolute number of students remaining enrolled into their third semester was compared between the PASS and non-PASS populations, whereas a Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the GPAs of those students who remained enrolled.

Results: Part II

Locus of Control

There were significant differences in the locus of control scores between the four comparison groups (students in good standing, probation students pre-PASS, post-PASS, and non-PASS) (Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA; $N = 120$; $H = 9.41$; $df = 3$; $p = 0.024$). Post-hoc analysis reveals that the locus of control of students who were in good academic standing was significantly more internal than the combined population of students who earned low GPAs (the non-PASS students and the pre-PASS students who were enrolled) (Mann-Whitney U Test; $N = 36, 45$; $Z = 2.30$, $p = 0.022$) (Figure 2). Surprisingly, once enrolled in the PASS course, students' LOC did not change significantly, and the trend was in the unexpected direction (i.e. more external) (Mann-Whitney U Test; $N = 32, 13$; $Z = 1.83$, $p = 0.068$) (Figure 3).

Academic Self-Efficacy

There was a significant difference in students' academic self-efficacy among the four comparison groups (students in good standing, probation students pre-PASS, post-PASS, and non-PASS) (Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA; $N = 120$; $H = 10.19$; $df = 3$; $p = 0.017$). Post-hoc analysis revealed that students after participating in the PASS course reported a higher academic self-efficacy than students with a GPA less than 1.8 not enrolled in the PASS course (Mann-Whitney U Test; $N = 39, 13$; $Z = 2.64$, $p = 0.008$). Furthermore, the combined scores of students with a low GPA but not enrolled in PASS and the students enrolled in PASS before taking the course were significantly lower than students with a high GPA (Mann-Whitney U Test; $N = 45, 36$; $Z = 2.43$; $p = 0.015$) (Figure 4). After participating in the PASS course, students reported a higher, but not significantly so, academic self-efficacy (Mann-Whitney U Test; $N = 32, 39$; $Z = 1.77$; $p = 0.077$). No other significant differences were found (Figure 5).

GPA and Retention

By the end of the students' first full semester after taking part in the PASS course, their third semester at college, there was no significant difference in cumulative or term GPA among students who had been enrolled in the PASS course and those students who earned less than a 1.8 GPA in their first semester but had not been enrolled in the PASS course (Mann-Whitney U: 3rd term GPA: $N = 54, 32, Z = .78, p = .43$; cumulative GPA: $N = 54, 32, Z = .83, p = .41$).

Of the 84 students who earned below a 1.8 GPA in their first semester at college but who were not enrolled in the PASS course, 54 were still enrolled by the end of their third semester. This translates to a 35.7% rate of attrition with no intervention. Of the 43 students who participated in the PASS course, 32 were still enrolled by the end of their third semester (25.6% attrition rate) (Figure 6).

Discussion

The single most striking result from this small class intervention is the effect it has had on the rate of retention. The 10% lower attrition rate among the students in the PASS course suggests that small-scale interventions can mitigate attrition amongst students who later prove an ability to continue matriculating.

Curiously, after completing the PASS course, students' self-perceived sense of academic self-efficacy was significantly higher than students who were on academic probation but not enrolled in PASS, despite the fact that there was no difference in GPA between these two groups. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is a boost in self-esteem that does not coincide with an actual increase in academic ability, yet is sufficient to affect the retention rate among students who are not forced to withdraw because of GPA requirements. The disconnect between

individuals' perceived and actual aptitude has been described previously as the Dunning-Kruger effect, in which an individual is unable to accurately assess his own abilities because of the knowledge required to actually possess mastery of a subject or ability (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

The likely reason that MAP-Works[®] did not accurately predict student achievement was because it was designed as an intervention tool. If at-risk students are told early on that they are likely to perform poorly in the coming semester, it is likely that this information alone can prompt them to better self-regulate. In other words, the warning may spur metacognitive awareness that leads to an increase in self-regulated learning activities. Boekaerts and Corno (2005), reviewed the use of interventions in the classroom designed to increase self-regulation, though, to our knowledge, the use of a self-regulation assessment tool itself as an intervention has not been studied in first-year university settings. Alternatively, it is possible that a warning of low academic aptitude early on in a student's college career could have the opposite effect and become a negative self-fulfilling prophecy. Such a phenomenon occurs when students' achievements are affected in either direction by positive or negative predictions of success (Jussim *et al.*, 1996).

In regards to the lack of change in students' locus of control, which remained more external than students in good academic standing, a review of the literature suggests that this result is not surprising. There is evidence that locus of control can change in individuals over decades in regards to some specific domains (Lachman, 1986), short term change has typically required intense, in-patient psychiatric treatment (Roberts *et al.*, 1992). Therefore, it is not surprising that students' locus of control did not change over the course of a one credit, semester-long course.

Though students on academic probation reported more negative interactions with advisors than students in good standing, it is possible that students who end up on academic probation are more demanding of advisors' attention, which leads to increased negative feelings between the advisor and advisee. Alternatively, students who note negative interactions between themselves and their advisors could be negatively influenced by their perception of negative interactions, which in turn could affect academic performance.

Future Directions

Though successful in affecting the rate of retention among students on academic probation, other goals remain elusive. Given the difficulties in affecting student achievement in a small-scale, short-term intervention, it is perhaps wise to broaden the scope of the intervention. Because of the legacy that the focus school has in the natural sciences, it may benefit from using a program that others have successfully implemented, the Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC). In this model, multiple courses are taught around a unifying, local environmental question. Courses are typically multidisciplinary, team-taught, and demand problem-based learning goals (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). Furthermore, by focusing on local environmental issues, EIC can increase students' sense of community, known to positively affect retention (Tinto, 1992).

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. GPA of students categorized by MAP-Works risk group.

Figure 2. Students' locus of control by academic performance and PASS enrollment. For students enrolled in PASS, LOC was measured at the beginning and end of the course. Lower scores indicate more external LOC, while higher scores indicate more internal LOC. Letters above bars designate significant group differences.

Figure 3. Locus of control by academic performance. Academic probation scores include those of students before PASS intervention and those of students who were not in the PASS course. Lower scores indicate more external LOC, while higher scores indicate more internal LOC.

Figure 4. Academic self-efficacy by academic performance and PASS enrollment. For students enrolled in PASS, LOC was measured at the beginning and end of the course. Higher scores indicate increased self-confidence. Letters above bars designate significant group differences.

Figure 5. Academic self-efficacy by academic performance. Academic probation scores include those of students before PASS intervention and those of students who were not in the PASS course. Higher scores indicate increased self-confidence.

Figure 6. Comparison of student retention of students in poor academic standing at the end of their first semester who, in their second semester, were enrolled in the PASS course vs. those not enrolled.

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508 **Appendix A**

509 (1) What is your major?

510 (2) What are some things you like about [this university]?

511 [follow up] What class have you taken that you have enjoyed at [this university]?

512 (3) What are some things you don't like about [this university]?

513 [follow up] What class have you taken that you have not enjoyed at [this university]?

514 (4) Are there certain courses that are giving you particular trouble?

515 (5) About how many hours per day do spend studying outside of class? 0, 1-2, 3-5, 6 or more?

516 (6) Have you ever taken, or heard about, a class that was designed to "weed out" students?

517 [follow up] What class was it?

518 [follow up] What made it a 'weeding out' class?

519 (7) Do you have to take "weed-out" classes like that in the future? Do you think you will do

520 well?

521 [follow up] Why do you think you will do well (or) not well?

522 [follow up] Do you think these classes should be changed? If so, how?

523 (8) What do you think has had the most positive influence on how you are doing in your classes

524 at [this university]?

525 [follow up] Why do you think that these things affect your grades?

526 (9) What do you think has had the most negative influence on how you are doing in your classes
527 at [this university]?
528 [follow up] Why do you think that these things affect your grade?
529 (10) Is [this university] more or less like what you thought it was going to be before you came
530 here?
531 [prompt] If no – what is different?
532 [prompt] If yes- what were your expectations?
533 (11) Do you feel that your high school experiences prepared you for your first year at [college]?
534 Please explain. We are trying figure out how well or not well, some students transition from high
535 school to [this university].
536 [prompt] How about socially?
537 [prompt] How about academically?
538 (12) What advice would you give your high school about preparing students to do well at [this
539 university]?
540 (13) If a friend of yours was coming to [this university], what advice would you give them about
541 student life and acclimating to [this university]?
542 [follow up] What about advice regarding doing well in classes?
543 *(14) When you think about students other than yourself who find themselves on academic
544 probation, why do you think that happens?
545 *(15) What would you recommend the university do to help those students succeed?
546 *(16) Why do you think you are on academic probation?

547 *(17)What happened when you learned you were on academic probation? Did you talk to
548 anyone about your academic status? How did they react? Who would you talk to? Explain: E.g.
549 Are your parents or anyone else concerned about your grades at [this university]?

550 *(18)Are you worried about your academic status? Do you think you will improve and why?

551 *(19) How important is it for you to get off of AP?

552 (20) Do you feel that your instructors (like professors or TAs) or any other employees of [this
553 university] are concerned about your grades?[follow up] Why or why not?

554 (21) Have you been in contact with your academic advisor?

555 [follow up] If no .. why not?

556 [follow up] If yes ..

557 [follow up] A. What are some good things about your advisor?

558 [follow up] B. What are some bad things about your advisor

559 (22) What do you think would help you improve your GPA?

560 (23) If a friend were coming to RU, what advice would you give? What about advice about
561 staying off probation?

562 (24) If you had complete control and could change anything about [this college or university],
563 what would you change?

564 (25) Did anything about student life surprise you when you got here?

565 (26) Other than being in class or studying what do you spend the rest of your time doing on a
566 typical day?

567 (27) [this university] has a reputation as a party school. How often do you see people getting
568 carried away with that and losing track of their coursework?

569 [follow up] What about you? How do you try to balance that?

570 [follow up] Is that working for you?

571 (28)Are you parents concerned about your academic performance.

572 [follow up] Why or why not?

573 (29) Where do you live?

574 [follow up] On campus? Where?

575 [follow up] Off campus? Where?

576 (30) In what types of extra curricular activities are you involved? Are you involved in any

577 student clubs? What do you do for fun? Have you found it easy to make new friends at [this

578 university]?

579 (31) Do you have a job? If so, where and how often?

580 (32) Do you have anything else you would like to share about things we have discussed?

Figure 1

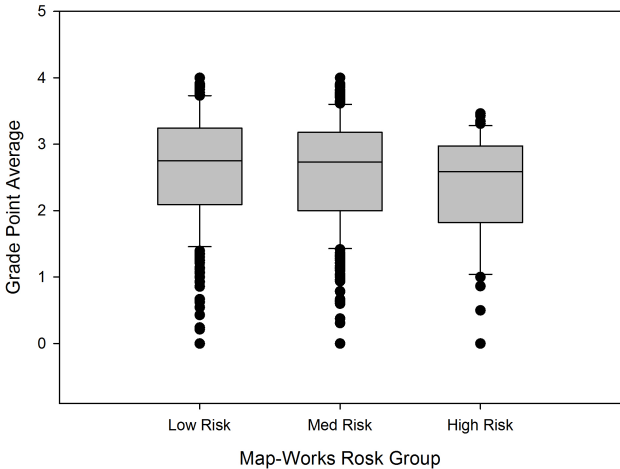


Figure 2

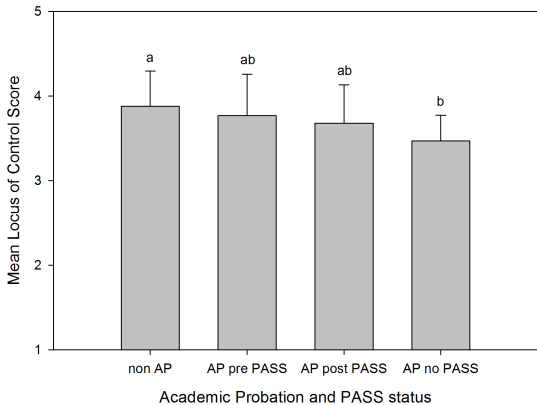


Figure 3

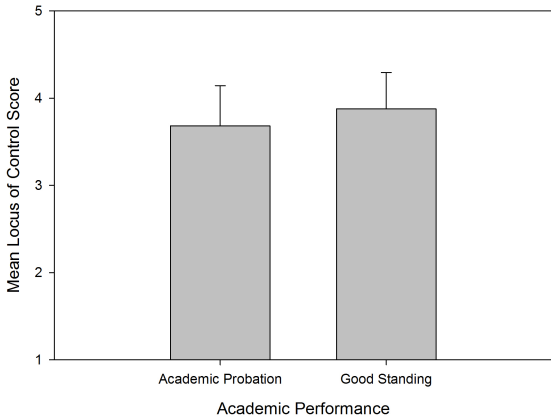


Figure 4

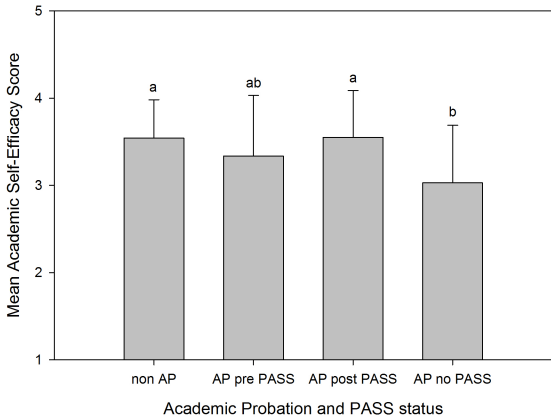


Figure 5

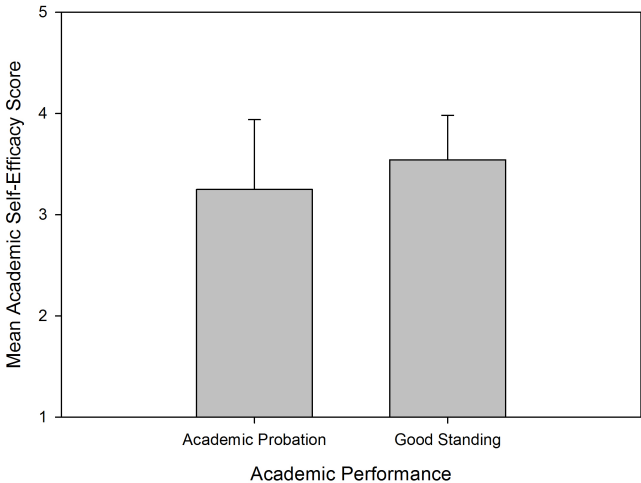


Figure 6

