Adding Insight to Intrusive Advising and Its Effectiveness with Students on Probation

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In this study, I examined the effectiveness of adding insight-oriented strategies to an intrusive academic-advising approach with students on academic probation. Twenty males and 22 females at a comprehensive private university participated in the study. Students who attended three to eight meetings had a significant improvement in semester GPA compared to students who attended one or two meetings or no meetings. This study suggests that insight-oriented intrusive advising had a positive affect on academic achievement; however, other factors, such as motivation, may also play a role and are worthy of future investigation.

KEY WORDS: academic difficulty, advising centers, high involvement advising, interventions

Relative Emphasis: research, practice, theory

College students who are in academic difficulty often do not seek appropriate measures of intervention to improve their college grade-point average (GPA) and to prevent academic dismissal from school. Some students perform poorly in college because of a lack of ability or academic skills, but significant nonacademic factors may also inhibit students’ ability to perform to their potential (Dunwoody & Frank, 1995; Lucas, 1991; Trombley, 2001). Therefore, academic advising is a key factor in helping students to achieve their educational goals (King & Kerr, 2005).

Many forms of advising intervention have been studied with a variety of results. In this study, I uniquely focused on utilizing insight-oriented intrusive academic advising. This approach included personally interacting with students to disclose information regarding academic probation, constructing a learning contract, providing referrals to university support services, monitoring grades, establishing goals and concrete plans to reach them, and developing strategies to address nonacademic factors to improve academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

Much of the theoretical work on approaches to academic advising has focused on the developmental, prescriptive, or intrusive advising approaches. Developmental academic advising is a collaborative, process-oriented relationship between advisor and student where the student’s total educational, personal, and career goals are the main focus (Winston, Ender, & Miller, 1982). Prescriptive advising involves the advisor, with an outcomes-oriented approach in mind, directing and making decisions for the student (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984). Intrusive advising, also referred to as high involvement advising, includes personal contact, generating student responsibility for problem solving and decision making, assisting students in identifying resolvable causes of poor academic performance, and offering negotiated agreements for future actions (Earl, 1988). The effectiveness of combining intrusive advising with a developmental approach has been shown in a number of studies (Grites & Gordon, 2000; Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Upcraft & Stephens, 2000).

Insight-oriented intrusive advising is an adaptation of the high involvement model. In practice, students are required to sign a structured agreement (Garnett, 1990) and intervention efforts are centralized by a coordinating office (Backhus, 1989). The intervention involves personal meetings with both faculty and staff as needed by the student (Arndt, 1995). In addition, students in academic difficulty have required meetings with an advisor who oversees contract-like agreements stipulating the use of resources and promoting activities that improve study skills strategies (Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001).

The unique aspect of the insight-oriented intrusive model is the focus on addressing nonacademic factors that may prevent students from realizing their academic potential. In addition to examining learning styles, study skills, and time management, students are encouraged to consider their financial, family, and social situations. At times the advising meetings may resemble counseling sessions where students are asked to examine the thoughts and behaviors that may influence their academic performance. However, insight-oriented intrusive advising is not counseling; moreover, it is a process that helps students to develop an internal locus of control where they begin to understand the relationship between academic success and their own specific actions (Ender & Wilkie, 2000). Once the behavior and cognition patterns are identified, the advisor and student develop a plan to address the issues that are distractions from reaching educational goals.
For example, a destructive relationship with a family member or friend may consume an inordinate amount of the student's time. Even when that family member is not physically present, the student may expend significant mental energy processing past interactions, worrying about current scenarios, or planning future engagements. Helping the student to identify that this pattern of cognition and behavior compromises academic ability raises awareness. Thus, students gain insight about the reasons they are not performing to their full potential and often, with the assistance of the academic advisor, they are then able to adjust their thoughts and actions to maximize their academic performance.

The advisor provides support through the process and works with the student to develop a usable plan. At times the advisor may notice unusual or self-defeating behaviors that require counseling or therapy not usually associated with academic advising (Shane, 1981). Thus, a part of the plan may include referring the student to the counseling center on campus to further explore personal or emotional stressors that are beyond the expertise of an advisor. The referral is essential because students dealing with personal issues are more likely to earn lower grades and drop out than students without such challenges (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Students use a variety of approaches to navigate their college educational experiences. One differentiator among student behaviors is the inclination toward seeking help, which is important to recognize because it may affect a student's preferred type of academic advising (Alexich, 2002).

Karabenick and Knapp (1991) identified adaptive help-seeking behavior as characteristic of active, self-regulated students and involves strategies that promote independent mastery of long-term skill development. A developmental advising approach is appreciated by students with adaptive help-seeking tendencies because they see the value in being part of a strategy-forming process that is designed to improve their academic performance. Nonadaptive help seeking, where students choose not to seek help or engage in behaviors that promote little skill development or learning, is common among students on academic probation. Students with a nonadaptive approach tend to persist unsuccessfully in courses or wait passively until the professor or an advisor inquires about the student's progress (Newman, 1998). As a result, prescriptive advising is often used with students to address immediately the crisis situation, but the student does not gain self-understanding about the reasons that she or he chose a certain behavior (in most cases inaction). As a result, the nonadaptive behaviors (e.g., inaction) may be replicated in future semesters until the student drops out or is academically dismissed.

The traditional prescriptive approach may be ineffective because it does not address the root causes of poor academic performance, which are not necessarily related to the unsuccessful execution of student academic strategies. Financial, personal, and family problems may be the cause of poor grades (Dunwoody & Frank, 1995; Trombley, 2001). In any case, the prescriptive approach does not foster the development of the independent problem-solving strategies needed to improve poor academic performance.

Insight-oriented intrusive advising addresses the needs of students regardless of their help-seeking tendencies because through it advisors focus on identifying the nonacademic factors that contribute to the lack of academic success rather than on specific strategies to address directly the academic deficiencies. The resulting advice helps students to better understand that their academic experience cannot be separated from their overall college experience. Once students realize that every thought pattern, action, behavior, or circumstance can influence their academic performance, they can better plan and execute strategies that mitigate the negative influences on their academic performance and accentuate the positive ones.

Institutional Structure

Because academic advising is designed to reach all students, the level of importance regarding effective academic advising is second only to the institutional mission (Creamer, Creamer, & Brown, 2003). The structure in place for academic advising varies by institution, but the use of the faculty is prevalent. This is encouraging because the connection between interaction with faculty and student achievement is clear (Astin, 1984).

A survey conducted by the American College Testing Program found that almost 50% of institutions solely utilize faculty members to advise students (Habley & Morales, 1998). Other institutions primarily utilize faculty members to serve as academic advisors for students who have declared a major in the professor's department. A more centralized approach utilizes professional advisors housed in an academic advising center on campus. A combination of services is also common: The advising center services undeclared or underachieving students while the faculty members advise declared majors in their departments.
With retention as a priority, many colleges have focused on approving the expansion of advising centers. Faculty-student contact and student services that connect students to the institution, such as those offered by academic advising centers, have a significant effect on retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). By using faculty members for the majority of students and providing assistance to undecided or underachieving students, the college or university realizes greater revenues as retained students contribute to the financial foundation of the institution (Nemeth Tuttle, 2000). This is true for both public and private institutions of varying sizes (Pardee, 2000).

I conducted this study at a university that uses a total-intake model as described by Habley and McCauley (1987). All of the initial advising of entering students is conducted through one office. Students are reassigned to a faculty advisor once they meet the requirements needed to declare a major. However, students on academic warning or probation maintained a connection with the advising center because permission to make any academic transactions, such as adding or dropping a course, was to be obtained by both an advisor in the center and the assigned faculty advisor. The connection between advisee and professional advisors is very important for insight-oriented intrusive advising because in this approach the advising center staff must monitor the progress and course selection of students on academic warning or probation. As a result, the total-intake model works well in promoting the viability of the insight-oriented intrusive-advising approach.

Intrusive Advising Interventions

The effectiveness of academic contracts in increasing students’ academic performance has been tentatively determined. Although the results have not been statistically significant, increases in college GPA have been noted (Steinmiller & Steinmiller, 1991; Taylor, 1987).

Does simply informing students of their academic situation make a difference in their academic progress? McGuire and Noble (1973) conducted a study in which correspondence with low-achieving male students did not translate to academic improvements. However, a similar but more inclusive study utilizing personal contacts at William Rainey Harper College (Lucas, 1991) led to the conclusion that informing students about their status impacted progress.

In their study, Whitmer and Sanz (1988) demonstrated that study skills alone do not adequately address the needs of student athletes. Conflicting results regarding isolated intervention mechanisms highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach.

Kirk-Kuwaye and Nishida (2001) found that students on academic probation who attended one or two meetings saw a significant difference in semester GPA while students on probation who did not attend any meetings with an advisor were less successful in raising semester GPA. Furthermore, they found that students were often relieved to be called into the advisor’s office so that they could discuss academic as well as personal problems that interfered with their studies.

The relationship between the number of hours spent in advising and academic performance has also been the focus of several studies. One such research project conducted at Eastern Michigan University (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984) showed a positive correlation between hours spent in support counseling and college GPA. Other studies showed similar results (Schwitzer, 1993; Wilson, Mason, & Ewing, 1997).

Molina and Abelman (2000) found that the more intrusive the advising intervention, the greater the impact on the GPAs of students on probation. Authors of other studies have also concluded that the number of hours spent in intrusive advising has a significant effect on the GPA of students on academic probation (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984; Brehman & McGowan, 1976; Schwitzer, 1993).

Hypotheses

As a result of my literature review, I predicted that undergraduate students on academic probation who attended three to eight meetings of insight-oriented intrusive advising would significantly improve their semester GPA. In addition students who attended zero, one, to two meetings of insight-oriented intrusive advising would achieve less significant improvements.

Methods

Participants

The participants for this research study were full-time undergraduates who had completed at least 1 semester of study at a comprehensive private university. All 25 males and 22 females were on academic probation during the semester in which the study was conducted. Although some second-semester freshmen and a few seniors were represented, the vast majority of the participants consisted of sophomores and juniors. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 27 years, and the average age of
the participant pool was 20.8 years. Of the students
who completed the probation semester, 66% were
White, 26% African American, 4% Native American,
2% Asian American, and 2% Hispanic. Because
students could not be mandated to participate in
advising, they chose the amount of advising that they
received, and therefore they self-selected into one of
three comparison groups: those with zero advising
appointments, students who attended one or two
meetings with an advisor, and those who came for
three to eight advising conferences.

Probation Defined

Students at the university where this study was
conducted whose cumulative GPA fell below that
required to be in good academic standing were
placed on academic warning. Students on acade-
mic warning who did not bring their cumulative
GPA above the requirement to be in good aca-
demic standing were placed on academic probation.
Students on academic probation who did not bring
their cumulative GPA above the requirement to be
in good academic standing were suspended from the
university: Students who had earned up to 23 credit
hours were to obtain a 1.50 cumulative GPA to be
in good standing; for those who had earned up to
47 credit hours, the cumulative GPA requirement
was 1.65; students who had earned 71 credit hours
were to show a cumulative GPA of a 1.85; for those
with as many as 72 credit hours, a 2.00 cumulative
GPA was required. Similar systems of academic
probation and suspension are common at most
institutions (see Kelley, 1996).

Measures

The effectiveness of the number of advising
meetings was measured by the change in semester
GPA. The difference in GPA from the semester
prior to probation (warning) to the probation
semester is an appropriate measure of change in aca-
demic performance. Although a qualitative approach
might add depth to the understanding of the student
experience, I only measured the quantitative GPA
because it determines retention or dismissal of stu-
dents on academic probation.

The difficulty in course load and number of
credit hours permitted for a student on academic
warning or academic probation were identical for
all three comparison groups. All students on aca-
demic warning or academic probation were required
to take a course in college learning strategies. The
high school GPA for new students and the GPA
earned at a previous college for transfer students,
as well as Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) per-
centile ranks, if available, were used as measures to
ensure that the comparison groups were similar in
terms of academic potential.

The nature of insight-oriented intrusive advising
was the driving force behind the categorical
approach for the amount of advising used to divide
the students into the three comparison groups.
Students who only attend one or two advising meet-
ings do not experience the full benefits of intrusive
advising because of the limited time available in the
meetings and the amount of time that passes in
between the two meetings. Students who attend
three or more meetings get more than generic infor-
mation. For example, advisors can describe the
support services available on campus, grades needed
to achieve good academic standing, and other aca-
demic policies with students who attend three or
more advising meetings.

Procedure

The necessary institutional human-subjects
review approval was granted before the study was
initiated. All of the 51 students on academic pro-
 probation were notified by letter of their probation
status at the conclusion of the previous semester. The
letter outlined the cumulative GPA needed to pre-
vent academic suspension as well as the academic
resources available on campus. The students' sched-
ules were adjusted over the summer to bring them
in compliance with probation regulations (i.e., no
more than 13 credit hours). Once the semester
began, they were notified of the opportunity to
attend advising meetings after they responded to a
call slip sent via campus mail boxes.

Students who responded to the call slips were
given the choice of attending one to two advising
meetings where the focus would be on sharing
information and receiving midterm grades, or three
to eight meetings where students could focus on
strategies to improve their academic performance.
At the time of this study, faculty members were not
required to submit midterm grades and could vol-
untarily supply them to the advisor working with
students on academic warning or probation if
requested to do so. Students who did not respond
to the initial call slip were sent another reminder via
campus mail. Those who did not respond to either
correspondence made up the control group that
did not receive any advising.

The first comparison group was composed of
those who attended one or two individual advising
meetings. During the first of two 50-minute meet-
ings the advisor reviewed with the student the
grades needed to achieve good academic stand-
ing. This information was recorded in the form of a contract and the student was given a copy at the end of the first meeting. The student was informed of the various services that the university offers for improving academic performance: They received an overview of the Tutoring/Testing Center, the Career Center, and the Learning Center. Limitations for students on academic probation, the required College Learning Strategies course, and the university’s repeat policy were also discussed. Little time was left to gather insight about the reasons why the student had been academically unsuccessful during the previous semester. Preliminary goals for the semester were then mutually agreed upon and a second meeting was scheduled for shortly after the semester midterm examinations.

Before the second meeting, the advisor corresponded in writing with each of the students’ professors to obtain midterm grades. During the second meeting, the advisor disclosed the midterm grades to each student. The advisor then calculated the exact grades needed to secure good standing for the next semester. The advisor also worked with the student to plan an approach for the remainder of the semester; the strategy was based on the student’s progress in meeting previously set goals.

The second comparison group was composed of those who attended three to eight advising meetings. The advisor provided the same material to this group as he or she did to those who had committed to attending one to two meetings. However, advising with the students coming for three to eight meetings was more in depth. The meetings were held on a biweekly basis (eight maximum meetings in the 16-week semester), and so the second meeting was not delayed until after the midterm examinations; rather advisors and advisees met 2 weeks after the first meeting. This schedule allowed the advisor to work more thoroughly with the student using insight-oriented intrusive advising and to determine the nonacademic factors that played a role in the lack of academic success during the previous semester.

The preliminary goals set in the first meeting were expanded and refined in the second meeting. They were then used as a basis to formulate a set of actions for the remainder of the semester. During the following meetings the advisor helped the student examine the thoughts and behaviors that had led to the current academic situation. The advisor then worked with the student collaboratively to find effective ways to address the thoughts and behaviors that were limiting the student in reaching her or his academic potential. This process of insight gathering, adjusting goals, putting plans into action, and evaluating the effectiveness of these plans continued at each meeting.

To help control for the confounding variables of awareness and motivation, each student on academic probation was sent a letter before the beginning of the semester outlining the policies and procedures governing those on probation. Some students withdrew from school during this study: The control group lost 2 \((n = 13)\); comparison group no. 1 lost 7 \((n = 23)\); comparison group no. 2 (those who committed to the most advising meetings) lost 2 \((n = 11)\). All the students said that the reason for departure was of a personal nature.

Results

Table 1 shows the academic preparedness of the students in the study. The control group consisted of students who did not receive any advising; comparison group no. 1 was composed of students who had attended one to two meetings of advising, and comparison group no. 2 consisted of students who attended three to eight advising meetings. The high school GPA and SAT percentile ranks were used to determine if the groups were equal in academic ability. No statistically significant differences were found between the groups for high school GPA \((p = .12)\) or for SAT percentile rank \((p = .27)\) at the .05 alpha level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Control ((n = 13))</th>
<th>Comparison 1 ((1-2) meetings) ((n = 23))</th>
<th>Comparison 2 ((3-8) meetings) ((n = 11))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>(M) 2.13</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD) 0.58</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Percentile Rank*</td>
<td>(M) 26.91</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td>41.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD) 16.59</td>
<td>22.92</td>
<td>26.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *SAT percentile rank data not available as follows: control group: 1, comparison group no. 1: 7, comparison group no. 2: 2.
To find the change in semester GPA, the probation semester GPA was subtracted from the warning semester GPA. The results are shown in Table 2. An analysis of variance showed a significant difference in the change in GPA between the three groups \((p < .01)\): \(F(2, 44) = 6.213\). A Scheffe Test determined that only the difference in change of GPA between the control group and comparison group no. 2 was statistically significant \((p < .01)\) at the .05 alpha level.

Discussion

A variety of studies have been conducted to establish effective strategies to help students in academic difficulty increase their academic performance (Glenn, Rollins, & Smith, 1990; Peterson, Wagner, & Lamb, 2001; Yorke, 1998). Effective academic advising is especially important for unprepared, undecided, diverse, first-generation, and commuter students (King & Kerr, 2005).

Assessment is necessary to substantiate the effectiveness of the particular advising approach utilized. One element in the academic-advising assessment model developed by Upracht and Schuh (1996) is used to determine if advising affects outcomes such as academic achievement (as measured by GPA), persistence, or career decision making.

My research suggests that a comprehensive approach to advising, such as is the case with insight-oriented intrusive advising, appears to be effective in increasing the academic achievement of students on academic probation. Furthermore, the data indicate that this approach had a greater impact on the success of the students in the sample population than did one or two unconnected advising meetings.

The results of this study support the work of Kirk-Kuwaye and Nishida (2001) regarding the number of meetings with an advisor needed to see a significant change in semester GPA. The results of this investigation also support the findings of Molina and Abelman (2000) and other researchers (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984; Brehman & McGowan, 1976; Schweitzer, 1993) regarding the number of advising hours that significantly affect the GPA of students on academic probation. Students who attended one to two meetings of insight-oriented intrusive advising did not differ significantly in change of semester GPA when compared to those in the control group.

Students need to attend at least three meetings before an appreciable difference in GPA was noted. According to Table 2, both comparison group no. 1 and the control group experienced average decreases in semester GPA while only comparison group no. 2 achieved an average increase in GPA. This may be due to the fact that insight-oriented intrusive advising requires time for information gathering, problem-solving strategy formulation, and implementation of thought and behavior change techniques. Other factors could account for the differences in average GPA among groups. The complexities of the lives of college students prohibit a definitive determination of cause.

Garing (1992) stated that intrusive academic advising to students should be given at three critical times: at 6 weeks (midterm), during pre-registration for the following semester, and between semesters. My study supports Garing’s recommendation by showing that multiple meetings begun in the first week of the semester and continued on a biweekly basis were correlated with higher GPAs; however, the meetings in my study were not continued after the conclusion of the semester per Garing’s proposal.

The SAT percentile ranks of the three groups did not differ significantly and therefore suggest that the three groups were similar in academic potential. The average high school GPAs of the three groups also did not differ significantly, further supporting the homogeneity of the initial academic achievement of the three groups. Students who were moti-

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**Table 2 Changes in GPA of students on academic probation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Control ((n = 13))</th>
<th>Comparison 1 ((1-2) meetings) ((n = 23))</th>
<th>Comparison 2 ((3-8) meetings) ((n = 11))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warning Semester GPA</td>
<td>(M) 1.74</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD) 0.62</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Semester GPA</td>
<td>(M) 0.94</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD) 0.85</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in GPA</td>
<td>(M) -0.80</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>+0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD) 0.79</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NACADA Journal, Volume 27 (2), Fall 2007*
vated to achieve academically in high school are likely to follow through in college (Mitchell, 1992; Perry, 1993). The lack of difference in high school GPA among the three groups implies that motivation of the students at the time of matriculation was similar.

Limitations

Several limitations are associated with this study. These include student motivation, attrition, lack of ability to randomly assign students to comparison groups, small group sizes, and unequal group sizes. All subjects were from a single institution. Motivation may have played a role in the self-selection of students to the three groups. Because students were given a choice on the number of meetings they would attend, the data may indicate that the most motivated students took advantage of the program to the greatest degree and those who were least motivated chose to disregard the initial call slips. Furthermore, the motivated students could have exhibited adaptive help-seeking behavior (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991) in addition to the advising meetings, and these efforts may have contributed to their positive academic performance. Motivation and help-seeking behavior were not measured and thus conclusions from the study are limited.

Attrition was also a factor because some students withdrew from the university during the semester that this study took place. This reduced the participant pool slightly but the missing data were roughly proportional to the group sizes. In summary, a minimum of three insight-oriented intrusive advising meetings, in which academic and nonacademic factors were addressed, is correlated to improved academic performance of students on academic probation as reflected in the semester GPA.

Implications

Focused research on the impact of advising on student success and the effectiveness of advising practices has been very limited (Gordon & Grites, 1998). Regarding students on probation, in particular, much emphasis has been placed on various strategies to address the academic factors that influence academic achievement (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984; Steinmiller & Steinmiller, 1991; Taylor, 1987; Whitmer & Sanz, 1988). With increasing information gleaned from studies in which the influence of nonacademic factors on academic achievement has been assessed (Dunwoody & Frank, 1995; Lucas, 1991; McGuire & Noble, 1973; Trombley, 2001), the direction of research on academic achievement should continue to incorporate both academic and nonacademic factors.

The traditional approach to academic advising is in the one-on-one setting. However, a variety of advising formats, such as group advising and electronic communication, are now being used on many campuses (Creamer et al., 2003). The cost-effectiveness of these alternatives is clear; however, their value, particularly relating to the academic achievement of students on probation, is a consideration for future research.

Most institutions primarily utilize faculty members for academic advising. According to Habley and Morales (1998) less than one third of institutions formally compensate faculty advisors, and recognition for advising is declining. The time needed to utilize insight-oriented intrusive advising makes adopting this approach prohibitive for most faculty members. Professional advisors can devote more learning and training time to better understand the needs of undecided students than can faculty advisors. They are typically more committed to retention of undecided and undeclared students, tend to be more accessible, and are adept at referring students to campus services (Migden, 1989). The need for highly skilled advisors working in an advising center increases with the complexity of institutional academic policies, sequencing of courses, graduation and general education requirements, and the level of authority needed to complete academic processes (King & Kerr, 2005). The combination of these factors suggests that an advising center with professional advisors could be effective on most campuses and could complement the advising work performed by faculty members, who tend to be focused on teaching and research.

The results of this investigation suggest that initiating or expanding an on-campus advising center staffed by professional advisors is worth the investment. Such advising delivery may be particularly useful where insight-oriented intrusive advising is conducted by advisors with a background in human relations, student development, or counseling services. The advising center structural arrangement can benefit students on probation through relatively high numbers of meetings where they receive insight-oriented intrusive advising.

The results also challenge administrators in higher education to consider implementing mandatory advising for students on probation (Schwitzer, 1993). The outcomes of implementing such an institutional policy could then be compared to the results of this study where students were given the choice of whether or not to receive advising. The
results of the comparison would address the limitation imposed by the personal motivation factor in this study.

The student experience in academic advising should not be minimized. In this study, I used semester GPA as the sole quantitative measure of program effectiveness. However, the specific advising tactics vary by student, so further research is needed to assess the effect of insight-oriented intrusive advising on student personal development. The study could focus on changes in help-seeking behavior, academic confidence, ability to navigate the academic system, and utilization of support services as well as issues surrounding self-esteem and personal motivation.

Augmenting other retention strategies for students on probation, such as contracting (Taylor, 1987), learning strategy courses (Grites, 1984), assessment instruments (Grites, 2000), and peer tutoring (Farren & Vowell, 2000), with insight-oriented intrusive advising may produce the most effective results. The funds that a college or university would need to invest in this type of program development might easily be recovered or surpassed by the tuition and fees obtained from students who were retained as a result of the program. However, continued research in this area is needed to substantiate the effectiveness of such an investment.

References


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