

A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS OF AN ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO FRESHMAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND
RETENTION AT A HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

By

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A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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DEDICATION

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me” -Philippians 4:13

I give all honor and glory to my lord and my savior for allowing me the opportunities and blessings I continue to receive in my life. I would like to dedicate this paper to my grandma “Nana,” Bessie Wade, who was an elementary educator for over 20 years. She taught me the importance and power of education. She is the reason I excel in the English Language and bestowed the gift of intelligence and teaching upon me. Because of her, I have been blessed to teach and inspire my students in the English Subject area in Higher Education. I am forever grateful to have a grandmother who is like a second mother, best friend, and my favorite teacher of all time. I would also like to give a special thank you to my grandfather “Pop-Pop,” William Wade, for allowing me to always help him with his word scrambles and crossword puzzles in his daily newspapers. It was our time together that helped me define and understand words and terms. I love you both!

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Abstract

This Comparative Case Study Analysis will carefully investigate the significance of interactive instructional methods and their effects on Freshman students' academic performance and engagement in the classroom. In addition, the observation of student achievement and retention will reflect the differences in lecturing versus an active learning classroom environment in Higher Education composition courses. Interactive instructional methods can be used to create a more connected classroom environment. Most importantly, student learning and participation can increase all the while being thoroughly entertained in class.

The Research Design, Study Participants, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Significance of each of the three case studies are observed to provide evidence and outcomes of techniques used to increase student academic performance. Case Study One entitled *The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theory* on student academic performance through purposeful learning and goal setting. Case Study Two entitled *A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference?* provides insight on an active learning instructional method and the enhancement of student engagement and positive outcome of academic achievement, retention and GPA. Case Study three entitled *Learning Environment, Interaction, Sense of Belonging and Student Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups* can be used to show the

link between active learning and the retention of minority students as well as the enhancement in their GPA. Each of these case studies play a significant role in demonstrating the importance of student engagement in the classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	xi-xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Theoretical Framework	8
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	10
Limitations	11
Delimitations	11
Definition of Terms	12
Summary	13
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Interactive Methods	15
Lecturing and Active Learning	19
Technology	28
Pedagogy	37
Path-goal Theory, Leadsip, and Goals	47
Progressive Education	50
Student Achievement and Retention	51
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	64
Case Study One: The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention:	
Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theory	65

Research Design.....	65
Study Participants	66
Data Collection	66
Data Analysis	66
Significance.....	66
Case Study Two: A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference?	67
Research Design.....	67
Study Participants	68
Data Collection	68
Data Analysis	69
Significance.....	69
Case Study Three: Learning Environment, Interaction, Sense of Belonging and Student Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups.....	69
Research Design.....	70
Study Participants	71
Data Collection	71
Data Analysis	71
Significance.....	71
Summary	72
CHAPTER IV: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	73
Research Study Design	74
Cross Analysis of Study Design	74

Common Themes of Study Design	77
Study Participants	77
Cross Analysis of Study Participants	79
Common Theme in Participants.....	80
Data Collection and Findings	80
Common Themes in Data Collection	98
Summary	101
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	103
Proposed Solutions.....	103
Discussion	104
Summary of Findings.....	106
Implication of Findings.....	111
Recommendations for Future Research	112
Conclusion	113
REFERENCES.....	114

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Umi Jenson (2011) Factors and Contributing Measures Influencing Retention.....	57
Figure 2: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Theoretical Model.....	70
Figure 3: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Mean and Standard Deviations for Goal Setting.....	82
Figure 4: Friedman and Mandal (2010)-Rotated Factor Matrix of Goal Setting Questions.....	83
Figure 5: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Means and Standard Deviations for Independent Variables.....	84
Figure 6: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Differences in Student Retention Status.....	85
Figure 7: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Demographics.....	86
Figure 8: Tsay and Brady (2010)- Correlations Between Involvement in Cooperative Learning and Academic Performance.....	89
Figure 9: Tsay and Brady (2010)- Correlations Between Importance of Sense of Achievement, Grades, Peer Acceptance, and Group Success.....	90
Figure 10: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Theoretical Model.....	91
Figure 11: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Participant Background Information.....	92
Figure 12: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)- Means and Standard Deviations of Variables.....	93
Figure 13: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)- Items of Teacher and Peer Interactions.....	94
Figure 14: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Significant Coefficients for Group Participants.....	94
Figure 15: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Standard Regression Coefficients for Group of Participants.....	96
Figure 16: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Model for Majority Students.....	96

Figure 17: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Model for Ethnic Minority Students.....	97
Figure: 18: Comparative Analysis Coded Data Chart.....	98
Figure 19: Visual Linkage Active Learning.....	100
Figure 20: Visual Linkage Academic Achievement.....	100
Figure 21: Visual Linkage Retention.....	101
Figure 22: Comparative Analysis Coded Data Graph.....	109

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Freshman college students face an array of challenges when transitioning from a typical high school classroom environment to a college classroom environment. The atmosphere has changed as they become submerged in the fast pace of campus life. Many are influenced by generic and fictional films of what is believed to be college life and can become dismayed with the realism of a true college environment. There are students who may be the first in their family to attend college and are unaware of the expectations. Then, there are those who have had several family members who have attended college and enter with a colossus of advice and information to help them adjust. Researcher Matthew C. Atherton (2014) explains, “There are key demographic differences between first-generation students and students whose parents attended college. In terms of socioeconomic status, first-generation students typically come from households with fewer resources” (p.824). Despite a student’s background, walking into a new environment can be difficult and bring about feelings of uneasiness. However, students share a common goal which is to earn their degree in an area of selective subject matter. Moreover, a student must adjust to a new educational career and enter into a classroom containing unfamiliar faces. Therefore, it is up to the education professionals to ensure a comfortable classroom environment is created.

It is imperative that educational professionals are prepared for incoming freshman students. As the number students admitted into the University increases “[s]chool administrators are experiencing increasing pressure to increase student achievement” (Ward, 2013, p. 62). Student success is extremely crucial in order for the University to function properly. Therefore, “building a sense of community, establishing school routines, providing teachers with necessary resources, and advocating for school stakeholders,” is what leads to institutional achievement (Ward, 2013, p. 63). Most importantly, professors must adhere to institutional policies and

procedures for uniformity within their respective classrooms. Therefore, leadership within the classroom plays an important role within the classroom. Students are continually exposed to a high number of quality interactions with faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and other individuals (Woelks & Weeks, 2010, p. 20). Interaction within the classroom is deemed as significant which is why most subject matters require a participation grade be incorporated within the grading system. In particular, English is a universal core requirement for universities.

Because reading, writing, and speaking are vital to any areas of subject matter, English courses prominently teach students necessary skills that they will need throughout their college career. For instance, an English course will educate students on how to “Find” and “Evaluate” resources at their college library and how to utilize online database. Students will learn different styles of writing such as MLA, notable for arts and humanities, and APA, notable for sciences. English is presented as the foundation for college student writing that will assist in elevating grammar and vocabulary regardless of what major a student partakes in. However, English is not always seen as a favorite subject to students. English has obtained a stigma of dullness and is seemingly portrayed as a topic of never-ending writing, loads of reading, and non-stop lecturing. As a result, students enter an English course ready to lay their head down or pull out an electronic device that will pass the time. However, this nature of dreading an English class can work in favor of the professor. Woelk and Weeks (2010) explain, “Bringing together students who have common service and leadership goals serves as a productive way to extend college services to the student population while enhancing learning opportunities for student participants” (p. 20). Students provide service to an institution thorough their willingness to represent the university positively through their involvement in campus organizations, community service events, or attendance to leadership conferences. Professors can utilize this

leadership in the classroom by assisting students to use their acquired skills to connect with each other in the classroom. These students simply need motivation and constant interaction and this is a learning opportunity for both the students and the professor.

Background of the Problem

The classroom can feel like a full-time job for most students. Students are provided with a schedule with exact time and dates and an instruction manual known as a syllabus. Students understand that not being on time, not attending class, or failing to adhere to the guidelines of the syllabus can be detrimental to their grades or even to the performance in their college careers. In addition, academic preparedness can be an issue for students. Researcher Matthew C. Atherton (2014) recognizes, “The negative effects of social capital on first-generation student preparedness are a key issue that needs to be addressed by colleges to ensure first-generation students’ success” (p. 828). Therefore, motivation plays a factor in a student’s ability and willingness to learn. English courses, like most courses, require the full attention of students in order for information to be retained properly and effectively.

There is a recognizable shift in student attention in a traditional classroom setting from being able to concentrate to becoming unfocused. This could be due in part to the dependency on technology and the way messages and advertisements are received on a quick basis. Students are believed to have everything readily available at their fingertips. According to Andrew Leep, Jacob E. Barkley, and Aryn C. Karpinski (2015), “Cell phones are an integral part of college life and culture. Even a casual observation of today’s college students will reveal cell phones being used, both overtly and covertly, in every possible campus setting, including the classroom” (p. 1). Freshmen students are in current transition from their high school classroom environments. Therefore, they may have come from elaborately decorated and colorful classrooms stocked with

reminder bulletin boards, organized with specific shelves to submit their paperwork, and customized with a bell or horn that tells them when to transition to and from class. They are now walking into uniform classroom set ups and are stricken with the responsibility to remind themselves when assignments are due. They are also coordinating their schedules for time management. In high school, classes may have been forty minutes to an hour, while college has a range of class times that could be from one to a whopping four hours in length. Between the stress of taking on new responsibilities and the acclimation to a new environment, focus can become challenging in classrooms filled with consistent lecture. If a professor is constantly speaking and providing no transactional interaction from the students, then this can cause issues for student learning. For instance, a student will cease to attend class or due to lack of motivation and excitement, will end up receiving a low grade. A crucial part of student learning is the teacher's ability to lead and motivate students through "[F]acilitating learning, managing conflict, disseminating information, allocating resources, empowering learners, motivating students, and aiming for high marks in student satisfaction" (Noland, A., & Richards, K., 2014, p.6). The classroom should be a place filled with passion and motivation in order for students to achieve high success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate different instructional methods within a Freshman Composition English course and the relationship to student achievement and retention. This study will demonstrate that interactive activities within a classroom setting has a dynamic impact on student learning as opposed to consistent lecturing. In addition, this study will suggest that motivating students stems from Leadership behaviors.

Need for the Study

The need for this study stems from the decrease in student attendance and decline in student grades in English Composition Courses at an HBCU. On a uniform grading scale, students need a 70% which is a C or higher to pass English Composition. Because English Composition is a core class, student must pass this class before they can begin taking courses relative to their majors or minors.

Motivation within the classroom has changed over the years with some patterns that can be seen as similar. Similarities include, keeping lesson plans engaging and intriguing, creating a community environment, and providing a wide variety of information on the topic. However, in present times, students need information that is culturally and socially relevant. With the creation of smart phones, smart televisions, and vast array of computer and tablet choices, students need innovation more than ever. Therefore, it is important to adjust the classroom to the needs of students. Even the attention spans of students need to be taken into consideration with apps and media websites like Vines and YouTube. Lepp, Barkley, and Karpinski (2015) recognize that “many college students perceive the cell phone primarily as a leisure device, and most commonly use cell phones for social networking, surfing the Internet, watching videos, and playing games” (p. 1). Moreover, college has become beacon of creativity for students. There is a need for interactive activities to enhance student learning and to create a classroom environment that is inspirational and impactful. According to Ryan Hannah (2013), “The classroom is where they [students] will gain an understanding of their place in the world and the gifts that they have to offer it. It is where the student develops what they want their future to look like, as well as knowledge of the skills needed to reach that goal” (p. 1). Although it is a student’s responsibility to ensure they are regularly attending class, it is also the professors’

responsibility to create a classroom environment that holds retention. Ryan Hannah (2013) explains, “When making adaptations to the classroom the teacher cannot forget about the emotional environment. This is the atmosphere created by the teacher that can either encourage or discourage students to be successful” (p. 19). Students may need specific accommodations in order to successfully advance. For instance, all must have needs to be met individually. There are ways to easily accommodate them as well without changing things for the rest of the class (Hannah, 2013, p. 14). It is hoped this study will assist professors teaching English Composition courses with new and innovative ways of teaching that will uplift students and increase their attendance while increasing their grades and abilities to progress in class.

Theoretical Framework

The Path Goal theory provides an explanation of the effect of leader behavior on subordinate motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Hierarchical influences are expressed through different dimensions of behavior. The key element in this theory is motivation. Motivation is based upon specific types of leadership depending on the needs of the subordinate. The essential goal of this theory is to empower subordinates to become more propelled to work hard and achieve their goals. According to Robert House (1971), “The Path Goal theory derived from the path-goal hypothesis advanced by George Gopoulos et al. (1957).” The Path Goal Theory is founded upon Vroom’s (1964) Expectancy Theory. Entranced by Expectancy Theory, Martin Evans (1970) distinguished the Path Goal Theory. With further research into the Path Goal Theory, Robert House began his own testing of the theory bringing further development to the theory (p. 322). It is important to understand both the differences and similarities between Vroom’s (1964) Expectancy Theory and Martin Evans (1970) Path Goal Theory. Expectancy Theory focuses on a particular path of behavior which leads an individual to the expectation that

their behavior will lead them to a particular outcome. In contrast, Path Goal theory focuses on a specific leadership behavior that is suitable for an individual to advance in achieving their goal. A commonality between both theories is the element of behavior. The behavior of the individual leads them to a particular expected outcome or the behavior of the leader drives them to a specific outcome.

During House's (1971) initial research, he recognized two types of behaviors. Two major behavioral dimensions that have emerged from leadership research are those which sociologists have termed instrumental and social-emotional, or expressive, leadership behavior (p. 321). He recognized that effective leadership will initiate structure and consideration for subordinates. The Path Goal Theory is used to suggest that the leader is what guides the subordinates to further their goals. According to House, research has indicated that leaders who initiate structure for subordinates are generally rated highly by superiors and have higher producing work groups than leaders who are low on initiating structure (p.321). The involvement of the leader allows for greater job satisfaction. According to Randall S. Schuler (1976), House and Mitchell (1974) reviewed several studies in which the relationship between participation of subordinates and their job satisfaction was moderated by authoritarianism (p. 321). Therefore, House and Mitchell (1974) recognized four leadership behaviors. These four behaviors are Directive, Supportive, Participative, and Achievement Oriented. Directive Leadership provides details to subordinates on how to do a task and what expectations are involved in doing so. According to House and Mitchell (1974) leader directive behavior has a positive correlation with job satisfaction and the expectancies of subordinates who are engaged in ambiguous tasks (Awan, Zaidi, Naz, & Noreen, 2011, p. 135). Supportive Leadership expresses an approachable method in which the leader shows concern for their subordinate. Path-goal theory states that supportive leader

behavior will positively impact the subordinates' satisfaction who works on highly structured, stressful, frustrating or dissatisfying tasks (Awan, Zaidi, Naz, & Noureen, 2011, p. 135). With support, the subordinate will become better acclimated with the task they are performing. Participative Leadership involves the subordinates in the decision-making process. Participative leader behavior will also positively impact on subordinate outcomes when the task is unstructured, varied, or complex because it reduces ambiguity (Awan, Zaidi, Naz, & Noureen, 2011, p. 135). Lastly, Achievement Oriented Leadership is a showmanship of confidence in the subordinate that they have the abilities to complete a high standing task. House (1974) suggested that "the task might be the important contingent variable, because of its influence on the level of ego involvement of subordinates... for effective task performance" (Schuler, 1976, p. 320.).

Depending upon the behavior displayed by the subordinate, specific leadership behaviors can tend to their needs. For instance, if a subordinate needs encouragement or accompaniment, then they would ultimately desire supportive leadership. Knowledge that someone has concerns for their needs will motivate their performance. When the task is highly structured supportive leadership makes the work tolerable and pleasant and people are more comfortable with supportive leader (Awan, Zaidi, Naz, & Noureen, 2011, p. 138). If the subordinate needs to be in control there are two types of recommended leadership that could work. The first is participative leadership if the subordinate already has internal control. The subordinate would just need the involvement of others to adhere to what they want. Participative leadership has positive effect on motivation of subordinates when the task is unstructured (p. 138). Furthermore, if the control is external, then the subordinate would require Directive Leadership. If a subordinate needs structure Directive Leadership would work well for them. Finally, if a subordinate needs a challenge, then Achievement Oriented Leadership would best fit.

The Path Goal Theory provides a clear model for the leader's abilities to motivate subordinates. The leader is supposed to avert all obstacles from the subordinate in order for them to advance in achieving their goals. The motivation functions of a leader are to increase the net positive valences associated with work-goal attainment ... and increase the subordinate's path instrumentality for personal outcomes (House, 1970, p. 323). Therefore, the leader plays an influential role in the lives of the subordinates. This theory can be easily applied in any work environment and provides a thorough listing of behaviors necessary for goal achievement.

In addition, John Dewey's theory of education is applicable. The theories that fall under philosophical movements are known as Pragmatism, Instrumentalism, and Experimentalism. Pragmatism originates from mathematician Charles Sanders Pierce. Pragmatism focuses on an experimental mind. Psychologist William James narrowed and extended Pierce's Pragmatic method (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 41). Dewey used the idea of pragmatism to express his philosophy of education. He believed that learning stems from experience. According to his pedagogic creed, he states, "education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one in the same thing" (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 441). Moreover, he believed that the primary function of a school was to be a social institution. He states, "Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all agencies are concentrated that will be the most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends" (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 445). He believed in transforming the traditional classroom that followed a set of customs that did not allow for the full exploration of experience. Furthermore, he believed that the nature of the experience is what advances a student to grow and learn. He believed that interaction was a key element for driving an educational experience.

He explains, “The word ‘interaction’ ...expresses the second chief principle for interpreting experience in its educational function and force” (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 455). He describes experience as a “moving force.” Therefore, creating an eye-opening education experience for a student. He recognizes that “an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense...” (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 515). Continuity also plays a significant role in education. In fact, Dewey believed that continuity and interaction go hand in hand in education. He expresses, “The principle of continuity in its educational application means nevertheless, that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process” (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. 521). Therefore, Dewey’s philosophy of learning by doing transforms the classroom.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student achievement?
- 2) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student retention?

Significance of the Study

This study could offer information on issues of student retention and depreciation in grade point average. It can also provide insight to a solution that could increase student engagement, teacher motivation, and transform the classroom environment positively. Innovation within the classroom could provide students with a greater passion for English and increase Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening skills. The study can also increase positive student behavior such as participation and attentiveness. The study could discover a significant

difference between lecturing and interaction. It could show an increase in student confidence and student social skills. It could also increase student critical and creative thinking. Although there are professors who may prefer a less talkative classroom environment, this study can show how conversation and interaction work hand in hand to increase student learning. Because student achievement is crucial, this study could show an increase in a student's Grade Point Average which will increase their success during their college career. This study could also work favorably for professors as students could be more engaged and interested in the topic heightening the confidence of professors. The study is meant to be beneficial for both students and professors.

Limitations

During this case study analysis, limitations can be found. Creswell (2009) acknowledges that all studies contain limitations. The limitations include:

- It is not generalizable
- It is non-experimental
- It specifically focuses on Freshman students at an Historically Black College/University

Delimitations

This Comparative Case Study Analysis will not be observing Student Achievement and Retention of upperclassman students. The studies used focus primarily on the Grade Point Average and Retention of freshman students. Students who have made it to upperclassman status have reached the appropriate Grade Point Average and have become adjusted and solidified in the College/University they attend.

Definition of Key Terms

Historically Black College University- According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are institutions that were established prior to 1964 and have the principal mission of educating Black American. These institutions were founded and developed in an environment of legal segregation and, by providing access to higher education, contributed substantially to the progress Blacks have made in improving their status.

Gamification- “the use of game elements and game design techniques in a non-game context” (Zarzycka-PisKorz 2016, p.21).

Active Learning- “[The Student] enters into dialogue with the teacher and other participants of the pedagogical process, and actively participates in the cognitive activities, performing creative, searching and problematic tasks” (Kutbiddinova, Eromasova, and. Romanova 2016, p. 6558).

Passive Learning- “the student acts as an object of educational activity: he/she must learn and reproduce the material that is transferred to him/her by the teacher or another source of knowledge” (Kutbiddinova, Eromasova, and. Romanova 2016, p. 6558).

Lecturing- “Lecturing involves the transfer of information from the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the student without passing through the minds of either” (Eison 2010, p.2).

Academic Achievement- “...depiction of students’ academic performance and... intended representation of academic ability” (York, Gibson, and Rankin, 2015, p. 6)

Academic Performance- "Extent of academic integration... determined primarily by the student's...level of intellectual development” (York, Gibson, and Rankin, 2015, p. 14).

Summary

An educational leader can have various traits and values. An educational leader can be envisioned as a person who is goal-oriented, empathetic, passionate, and open-minded. This leader is driven by a vision that is beneficial for their institution, department, and their employees. Most importantly, an educational leader provides value to students. A professor is a prominent example of an educational leader. Therefore, this study is relevant to educational leadership and student motivation because it will show the connection a Professor has with a Student and how it is relative to student learning. The classroom should be a diverse and creative arena that makes students have a desire to learn. A professor can increase student learning through lesson plans that are exciting and intriguing and that allow for interaction. Students will be retained within the classroom, retain information, and retain confidence depending on the instructional methods of the professor.

Moreover, it is crucial to understand the demographic of student entering into the Institution. Historically Black Colleges and Universities have always had to find innovative ways to retain and motivate students to success. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), “[Historically Black Colleges and Universities] were founded and developed in an environment of legal segregation and, by providing access to higher education, contributed substantially to the progress Blacks have made in improving their status” (n.p.). Watson Scott Swail (2003), conducted a study on the retention of minority students in Higher Education. Swail explains, “Access and completion rates for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students have always lagged behind white and Asian students, as have those for low-income students and students with disabilities” (p. V). This demographic of students can be challenging to retain based on the following factors: Academic Preparedness, Campus Climate, Commitment

to Educational Goals, Social and Academic Integration, and Financial Aid (p. Vii). Classroom techniques can improve student retention because of the climate created. Swail (2003) states, “institutions that successfully support minority access and achievement focus on learning environment rather than race or ethnicity. Institutions that support diverse learning experiences are those that emphasize quality instruction and learning” (p. 61). Therefore, the implementation of interactive activities in the classroom can support diversity and integration.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Focus and motivation in the classroom have been widely researched. There have been countless studies conducted and several articles written on how to keep students engaged and alert in the classroom. In today's society students are distracted by the dominance of technology. Instead of interacting with their classmates verbally and intuitively about the topic presented to them, they are constantly interacting with a machine. A study by Leep, Barkley, and Karpinski (2015) "found that cell phone use as a whole was negatively associated with academic performance" (p. 7). The machine becomes a crutch and students are not able to think for themselves, become socially confident, or enhance their learning capabilities. Therefore, teachers have worked to find ways, the most prominent being interactive activities, to keep the classroom engaged.

Interactive Methods

Rimma A. Kutbiddinova, Aleksandra A. Eromasova, and Marina A. Romanova (2016) conducted a study on the use of Interactive Methods in Higher Education. Kutbiddinova et. al emphasized in their literature review researcher Reutova (2012) who explains, "Interactive methods are directed toward increasing interaction of students not only with the teacher, but also with each other and toward the dominance of the student activity in the learning process" (as cited in Kutbiddinova et. al. p. 6570). The research of Kutbiddinova et al. (2016) describes three types of learning: passive, active, and interactive. Kutbiddinova et. al (2016) states, "In the passive learning, the student acts as an object of educational activity: he/she must learn and reproduce the material that is transferred to him/her by the teacher or another source of knowledge" (p. 6558). Passive Learning occurs during lecture-monologue, reading literature, or demonstration (p. 6558). Conversely, In Active and Interactive Learning "[The Student] enters

into dialogue with the teacher and other participants of the pedagogical process, and actively participates in the cognitive activities, performing creative, searching and problematic tasks” (p. 6558). Kutbiddinova et. al. (2016) found advantages of interactive methods such as “greater interaction of students with the teacher and classmates, the dominance of the activity of students in the learning process” (p. 6560). These methods increase self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation (p. 6570).

Furthermore, the classroom is a place for learning, adapting, and applying knowledge. Learning can be jubilant or it can be deadening depending on the atmosphere created in the classroom. When students are engaged in the classroom, they display a hearty demeanor. According to Matthew J. Tews, Kathy Jackson, Crystal Ramsay, and John W. Michel (2015) “Fun in the classroom is argued to have a positive impact on student engagement because fun may facilitate the conditions of engagement” (p. 20). When students are not engaged they appear to have impaired vigor. Therefore, Professor’s should permit fun for the merriment of the classroom. Tews et. al. explain, “Despite the popular belief that fun has a positive impact in learning contexts, empirical research on fun in the classroom has been limited” (p. 16). To provide further extension to this research, Tews et. al. conducted a study with the goal “to develop and validate a new scale to assess fun in the classroom and examine its relationship with student engagement” (p. 16). Fun in the classroom can heighten participation and enliven the learning experience. Tews et. al (2015) explain, “A number of educators and researchers alike believe that incorporating fun in the college classroom is a key strategy to engage students in the learning experience” (p. 16). Because student engagement is a vital part of learning in the classroom, it would be a futile effort to continue to teach in a classroom setting that is disengaged. According to Tews et. al, “A number of studies have demonstrated that an

instructor's appropriate use of humor may humanize the classroom, reduce anxiety, foster creativity, enhance student learning, and lead to higher ratings of teacher effectiveness" (p. 17).

A shift in the way students learn should be recognized. Tews et. al. explains, "fun may be important in the college classroom as it may be an integral part of Millennials' lives beyond the traditional learning context" (p. 17). In Tews et. al's study, their multi-stage scale resulted in a two- dimensional measure: Fun activities and Fun delivery. They define fun activities as, "a variety of hands-on exercises and ways to promote social involvement among students" and they define fun delivery as "instructor-focused, including the use of humor, creative examples, and storytelling" (p. 16). The study conducted by Tews et. al. mentions three respects. The first is "to determine what elements of instructional design and delivery represent fun and develop a corresponding scale for further use in research and scholarly endeavors" (p. 17). Therefore, Tews et. al conceive, "a fun instructor-initiated design and delivery elements as activities and interactions of an enjoyable, entertaining, humorous, or playful nature within a learning context" (p. 17). The second is the, "aim to validate the utility of the newly developed fun scale by examining its relationship with student engagement" (p. 17). This will allow them to observe how fun "makes a difference in the learning process" (p. 17). The third is "to examine the impact of the new scale on student engagement relative to other relevant aspects of the classroom experience, namely praise from instructors and peer socializing (p. 17).

Tews et. al. used two studies for their research. Participants included students in various courses at a large research-intensive university in the mid-Atlantic. Study one, Fun in the Classroom Scale Development, was used to measure fun in the classroom. The perceptions of fun from 61 undergraduate engineering and education students were documented. 83% of students were freshman and sophomores. 65% were females. Tews et al. explains, "these

students were asked to reflect on their classroom experiences and identify in writing what they perceived to be fun (enjoyable, entertaining, humorous, or playful) with respect to instructional design and delivery” (p. 18). Using the student responses, themes were identified to make the creation of 20 scale items of perceived fun of instructional design and delivery elements. Next, 253 undergraduate students rated the items from the 20 scale from 1 (not fun) to 5 (extremely fun). The top three items rate were humor, instructor bringing in food, and video clips. Another survey was administered on the remaining 17 scale items to 190 students in undergraduate management and engineering courses. According to Tew’s et. al., “The students were instructed to reflect on the frequency in which the fun elements occurred in their preceding course with a 5-point scale ranging from 1D never to 5 D all the time” (p. 18). A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed to transition a large number of data into a smaller number. The top four choices of these students were selected. The final 13 scale items were rated by 148 undergraduate students from five kinesiology and recreation classes. Tews et. al. explains, “Through this scale development effort, we have established that fun in the classroom is best represented by two primary dimensions—fun activities and fun delivery” (p. 19).

In addition, Study two, Fun and Student Engagement, is used “To validate the impact of the newly developed scale” (p.19). Engagement helps make learning meaningful. Tews et. al. explain, “With respect to meaningfulness, embedding fun in a classroom environment may make course content more interesting and accessible (p. 20). 722 Undergraduate freshmen from 36 different courses were provided with surveys. The surveys contained a five-point scale: 1 (never) and 5 (all the time). There were 13 items listed for fun in the classroom, 5 items listed for peer socializing, and 4 items listed for instructor praise. Random coefficient modeling (RCM) was used to finalize results. The results demonstrated that fun had an impact on student engagement.

Lecturing and Active Learning

Active learning strategies have assisted with engagement within the classroom. Jim Eison (2010) explains, “Active learning instructional strategies include a wide range of activities that share the common element of —involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing” (p. 1). These strategies provide an opportunity for deeper learning. Active Strategies include having students speak with a partner, gather in small groups, or present to the entire class. This will allow students to express themselves and their ideas creatively instead of having to sit idle during a lecture. He also describes lecturing as “Lecturing involves the transfer of information from the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the student without passing through the minds of either” (p. 2). Students relish the idea of attending a class that is enjoyable. Eison (2010) explains, “watching students today during instructor presentations, in both regular size classrooms as well as large lecture halls, will reveal significant proportions of students (a) daydreaming, (b) attending casually to the lecture, (c) listening to iPods, (d) instant messaging on a cell phone, or (e) playing on a laptop computer” (p. 2). Lectures can be enhanced. There should be periods of time or pauses between lectures that allow for interaction. Eison (2010) explains, “Interactive lectures are presentations that provide students with multiple brief opportunities for structured engagement. In contrast to the —traditional lecture, interactive lectures involve both (a) several relatively brief segments of —instructor talk (or mini-lectures) and (b) explicit opportunities for student thinking and responding” (p. 6). Students will have time to absorb information. Eison (2010) describes various activities that will prove effective for learning. Some notable active learning strategies include: The Pause Procedure, Personal Response Systems or Clickers (p. 7). The Pause Procedure is described as an activity in which the instructor will pause two to three minutes during a fifty-minute lecture to allow students to

attain information (p.7). Think-Pair-Share starts with reading assignment, a short lecture, or a video in which the instructor will pose a single question and students are instructed to reflect or think about then share their responses with a partner (p. 7). Personal Response Systems or Clickers allow as a resource for students to poll in their answers by selecting the correct letter or number on an external device (p. 7). Each of these activities serves to enhance student participation and increase learning.

In addition, Yuen Fook Chan, Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, and Lai Fong Lee (2015) conducted a qualitative study on active learning practices in United States higher education. Active learning is proposed to enhance student participation through group discussion, project and case study utilizing strategies such as reflective writing and assigned reading. Chan et. al (2015) explains that “[t]he findings proposed that strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing” (p. 519). Therefore, the research of Chan et. al. will “shed some light on teaching, learning and assessment practices in higher education” (p. 522). Classroom observations, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires were the instruments used for research. Chan et al. used a qualitative research approach in this study to identify Active Learning practices. Through the observation of two courses participating in active learning lesson structures, surveying undergraduates and post graduates, and specifically interviewing both Professors and students, Chan et al. was able to acquire data on the impact of Active Learning.

The participants included five undergraduates, five postgraduates, and five instructors who were interviewed. In addition, the sample population was described as 181 undergraduate and post-graduate students and 22 instructors from the School of Education who were surveyed. Open-ended Questionnaires on a 6-point Likert scale, interviews, and documents such as Syllabi,

assignment guidelines, sample assignments, and lecture notes were collected to acquire data. Moreover, two courses were observed “to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching, learning and assessment practices in the authentic context” (Chan et. al, 2015, p. 522).

Responses from the sample population were assessed and organized on two tables which explained the types of students Active Learning works for and the best strategies for Triggering Active Learning. Furthermore, Interviews from two teachers’ courses were used to reveal strategies that engaged students in learning. Undergraduate student interviews were used to explain the differences they observed in the class structure and their experience learning. Post-graduate student interviews were used to discover the enhancement of learning in small group settings. The results indicate that “The identification of active learning does have a positive impact on student learning” (p. 524). Ultimately, the research shows that Active Learning can transform the classroom into a place where learning can be both fun and informative. The research of Chan et. al. demonstrates that Active Learning can motivate both Instructors and Students. The study provides insight on Active Learning strategies in Higher Education that can engage college students. Because Active Learning was implemented, students had the opportunity to interact and learn from both instructors and their colleagues. The data is significant because it provides evidence and recommendations that assists with student engagement and learning in the classroom.

Elisa L. Park and Bo Keum Choi (2014) conducted a study on the transformation of the classroom for college students at SoongSil University in Korea. They recognized success in an Active learning classroom. Their research examines the history of Educational Spaces. The classroom transformed over time based upon education needs. Park and Choi (2014) recognize, “classroom design has changed over time in step with changes in educational purposes and

methods. Tracing back to ancient Greek times, a formal higher education system did not exist. Instead, the instructional style was rhetorical, with students surrounding their teachers during educational dialogues” (p. 750). The design of the classroom transformed in Medieval times and became the traditional design. Park and Choi (2014) explain that, “The traditional college classroom design is based on the educational space that first appeared in medieval universities. Since then college classrooms have not changed except in their size” (p.749). During Medieval times, cathedral schools were prominent and desks were arranged “in two vertical lines facing each other, the same pattern that was utilized by monks and nuns for mass” (p. 750). These spatial patterns changed in the fourteenth century. Park and Choi (2014) explain that, “the fourteenth century painting by Italian painter Laurentius de Voltolina shows a University of Bologna classroom with five linear rows of desks with five desks per row, and the teacher standing at the front center of the space behind the pulpitum (lectern) reading a book to students” (p. 750). During this time books and paper were a rarity and lecture became the main source of knowledge. According to Park and Choi (2014), “The term ‘lecture’ originated in the fourteenth century from ‘lectus,’ Latin for an ‘oral discourse on a given subject for purposes of instruction’” (p.750). During the industrial period, these lecture rooms expanded. Park and Choi (2014) state, “lecture rooms expanded in their sizes during the industrial period to accommodate education’s shift from elitism to massification. To accommodate the increasing demand for enrollment placements, universities built more, larger and taller buildings” (p. 750). This classroom design became the structure for Asian Colleges inclusive of Korea. Furthermore, Korea adopted the U.S. Education system as its model for Higher Education. Park and Choi (2014) explain, “After Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, the U.S. higher education system was looked to as an exemplary model for establishing modern higher education institutions in Korea.

The first Korean government... launched the ‘Promoting Private Higher Education Law,’ which triggered a massive expansion...of higher education institutions” (p. 751). By the twentieth century, the design of a lecture hall proved unsatisfactory for the spatial needs and achievement for students in Korea. Therefore, U.S. Active learning classrooms were observed. North Carolina University proved to have a successful active learning classroom design. According to Park and Choi (2014), “One of the most distinguished examples of new classroom design was created by North Carolina State University (NCSU) through the ‘Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs (SCALE-UP)’ project, led by Physics Professor Robert J. Beichner” (p. 752). This design is supported by “the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, Hewlett-Packard, Apple Computer, and Pasco Scientific, the project’s main focus was on creating an innovative educational environment that enabled and encouraged interactions between students and their teachers” (p. 752). This classroom does not have a typical lecture hall design. Instead, “The class spaces included a laptop computer with access to the Internet, 7-foot-diameter round tables, computer projection screens at opposite ends of the room, and large whiteboards covering the walls” (p. 752). This classroom design is used for a wide variety of topics. Park and Choi (2014) explain, “According to the SCALE-UP official website, more than 250 colleges and universities across the United States have adapted the SCALE-UP design classroom for physics, chemistry, math, engineering, and literature classes” (p. 752). The University of Munich in Germany implemented Active Learning Classrooms and found that “Students’ reactions were enthusiastic beyond expectations” (Park and Choi, 2014, p. 756). Active Learning Classrooms were built to encourage interaction and innovation between hundreds of students and the professor. However, the U.S. design limited seating to 30 students and primarily designed these classrooms for Social Sciences and English. Park and Choi (2014)

recognize, “The rationale for building this new type of classroom was... that active learning can make students creative and such can actively occur when students take control of their own learning and social interaction in a small group setting where knowledge is acquired and shared” (p. 756). Therefore, Soongsil University in Korea attempted to implement its first non-traditional active learning classroom. Two questionnaire surveys were created to understand student satisfaction and dissatisfaction with traditional classrooms versus active learning classrooms. The first survey focused on understanding perspectives on Traditional classrooms. This survey was given to college students enrolled in “Introduction to Education” and “Educational Administration Management.” These students were placed in the traditional 60 seated Korean classrooms. Park and Choi (2014) examined factors in seating positions such as classroom time arrival, proximity to friends, relationship to the instructor, grades and evaluation methods, and classroom time arrival using a Likert scale (p. 759). Research showed a “Golden Zone” versus a “Shadow Zone” in seating for students and proximity. Front and center or the “Golden Zone” was selected by 74.8% of students as an area for optimal learning. Students are more motivated and have the best view of screens and whiteboards. In the “Shadow Zone” which were areas in remote distance from the whiteboard, screens, and instructor, students were more distracted and were reported as “chatting with nearby students, playing with a smart phone, or sleeping” (p. 758). Arrival Time was based on where students preferred to sit and was dependent upon relationship to the instructor and relationships with friends. Seating also showed student motivation. While students in the “Golden Zones” were more willing to participate, those in “Shadow Zones” were more reluctant to participate and received relatively lower grades.

Conversely, students placed in the Active Learning Classroom received a different experience. Park and Choi (2014) explain. “A key finding in the new design, based on the

student survey results, was the importance of enabling active communication and interaction among and between students and instructor” (760). The classroom accelerated active participation through classroom design. For instance, the design consisted of five round tables which held five movable chairs that were structured for group presentation and discussion activities (p. 761). Park and Choi (2014) state that “[b]y creating an academic atmosphere in which each space is like the middle of the classroom, students become more interested, motivated, and involved in the learning experience” (p. 761). In addition, there were three Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screens were added for presentations and discussions (p.762). The second survey was provided to this Active Learning Classroom of students who were taught from March 2011 to December 2012. They were provided a 39-multiple choice short-answer question survey. The data was analyzed in two steps. The first was to gather student perceptions in the differences between the traditional classroom and the Active Learning classroom using a frequency test. The second part used MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) to determine student’s perceptions on five personal characteristics: Gender, Major, Academic Year, and Emphasis on Academic Achievement. The research shows “Active interaction and participation were enhanced” (p.762). Furthermore, Park and Choi (2014) state, “In the ALCs, students had closer relationships with classmates, maintained stronger motivation for learning, held a stronger sense of belonging to the class, regarded the class as more fun, and looked forward to the next class in the ALC (scored from high 3.0 to mid of 4.0)” (p.766). The Active Learning Classroom had a positive impact on student learning. Park and Choi (2014) explain, “The traditional classroom design has existed for centuries, and it is likely to continue to dominate higher education classrooms worldwide. However, as society changes, higher education should be willing to change, too” (p. 768). Therefore, the design of a classroom proves significant.

Moreover, Jung Hyun, Ruth Ediger, and Donghun Lee (2017) conducted a study that shows “active learning pedagogy activities are significant factors that increase students’ satisfaction with their individual and group learning processes” (p. 108). Hyun et. al. (2017) cites Prince (2004) to define active learning as “any instructional method other than lecture that engages students in learning” (p. 108). This study found that Active Learning can be used in a Traditional style classroom and an Active Learning classroom to produce student success. Hyun et. al. (2017) states, “classroom space has become a focus of interest, in the light that changing traditional classrooms into spaces that more readily accommodate the active learning pedagogy would effectively promote learning outcomes” (p. 109). Hyun et. al. (2017) mentions three pioneer projects for Active Learning Classrooms: SCALE UP which are classrooms with round tables and technological equipment in North Carolina State University, TEAL (Technology Enabled Active Learning) which is a classroom that added software to enhance visualizations and stimulations at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and ACLs (Active Learning Classrooms) at The University of Minnesota which contain “a 360 degree glass-surface marker board, multiple flatpanel display projection systems, roundtables that accommodate nine students each, and a centered teaching station that allows selection and display of table-specific information” (p. 109). These innovative classroom spaces allow for increased student engagement. Hyun et. al. (2017) examine student satisfaction in a traditional classroom and active learning classroom. Sixteen classrooms were surveyed at the University of Minnesota. Eleven classes were undergraduate and five were graduate classes. Five classes were taught with Active Learning Classrooms in which four were undergraduate and one was graduate. Eleven classes were taught in traditional classrooms in which seven were undergraduate and four were graduate. These classes were of a variety of many disciplines. Hyun et. al. (2017) explain, “In the

eighth and ninth week of the ten-week quarter, depending on the class schedule, a FERPA-trained student research assistant visited the designated class and administered the survey to the students” (110). The responses from the Survey were coded. The surveys were assessed using an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. The following variables were used for assessment: Student Satisfaction, Active Learning Pedagogy, and Classroom type, Student Sex, and Course Level. The results showed, “Students were satisfied with their individual learning process in a traditional classroom when active learning pedagogy was used” (p. 114). It was also found that “students’ satisfaction was increased in ALCs than those in traditional classrooms” (p. 114). With Active Learning strategies implemented in the classrooms, students remained satisfied. Hyun et. al. (2017) explains, “This study showed that students’ satisfaction both with their individual and group learning process was positively affected by active learning pedagogical activities both at the undergraduate and graduate level” (p. 116). The study establishes that Active learning plays a crucial role in any classroom setting.

Danielle Camacho and Jill Legare (2015) researched existing literature to highlight the growing focus of Active Learning Techniques (ALTs). This research insists Active Learning be used in classrooms and provides a variety of Active Learning techniques. Camacho and Legare explain, “Educators must be flexible and adapt teaching methods and styles to focus on the learner” (p. 38). Camacho and Legare cite Wagner (2011) who described seven survival skills for our 21st century workforce inclusive of critical thinking leading to problem solving and accessing and analyzing information (p. 38). Active Learning encourages each of these skills. Detlor, Booker, Serenko, and Julien (2012) explain, “Active learning strategies such as role play, problem-solving, and organized learning groups create opportunities for student participation and engagement” (as cited in Camacho and Legare, 2015, p. 39). These techniques can be applied in

the writing process. Camacho and Legare state, “The writing process allows students to process and synthesize information. Writing is effective when groups or pairing are not possible or when the class size is too large to ask students to present to the group” (p. 40). Problem based learning is another active learning technique. Kwan and So (2008) designed a learning experience that required students to investigate a problem, collect and analyze data (as cited in Camacho and Legare, 2015, p. 41). Students acquired in-depth knowledge of the topic. Furthermore, Bridge Courses commonly known as courses titled “Success Strategies” can implement problem based scenarios (p. 41). Another way of keeping students’ active in the classroom is through Scavenger Hunts. Legare took students in an environmental studies course on a field trip to Cameron Park in Waco, Texas. Students spent two hours locating plants and animals in groups. Their findings had to be presented through round table discussions. Through this assignment “students demonstrated mastery of learning objective measurement” (p. 41). Technology can also be used as an Active Learning strategy for visual learning. Camacho and Legare explain, “if an assignment focuses on MLA or APA formatting, the instructor could provide a Jing video accompanied by audio” (p. 42). Technology can be useful in the classroom in many ways.

Technology

Researcher Karim Mattarima explains the importance of student activities in an English class. Mattarima (2011) recognizes, “Teachers should have continuously hard and creative efforts in developing their instructional activities to encourage their students’ participation by designing other dynamic and interesting activities, like developing their creativity in using the least frequency of such individual strategies” (p. 244). It is significant to utilize and incorporate interesting interactive activities into lesson plans. Furthermore, Mattarima explains,

“Understanding individual differences of students such as motivation, learning strategies, attitudes, and learning styles is necessary for teachers to set appropriate instructions” (p. 238).

Instructional styles have a grave impact on student learning. Traditional lecturing is not as effective as it used to be. Students desire interaction to focus and one way to offer interaction is to provide technology. Technology has become an inextricable part of society. Technology is used in education to implement grades, create dynamic lesson plans, and keep track of tests and other paperwork. In today’s society students are very attached to technological devices from smartphones to laptops and tablets. Therefore, it is important for technology to also be used in the classroom for the benefit of both the student and the teacher. According to Yen-Ting Lin and Min Jou (2013), “In the era of Web 2.0, both instructors and students are heavily immersed in various web applications such as SkyDrive, Evernote, DropBox, and Google Apps on a daily basis” (p. 157). Using these technological elements allows instructors to create new strategies for teaching and learning. The study conducted used quasi-experimental research on an Industrial course of Product Design at the University of Taiwan. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gauge student learning, motivation, and attitudes (Lin & Jou, 2013, p. 159). This allowed gathering a better perception of student learning. It also provided the instructors with a new strategic plan. The design of this research used Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MLSQ) and was based on a Likert Scale. Furthermore, the development of a website was created to consolidate which subject was taught and included five hundred minutes of learning activities (p.159). The results of the learning motivation survey found that more than 87.5% of the students had increased learning motivation, but the remaining students (12.5%) had decreased (p. 161). This survey was a pre-assessment which showed that some students were not motivated by the new use of technology that was going to be implemented. Furthermore, the

results from the learning attitude survey showed that most students 82.5% reported having positive attitudes towards learning in the web application supported learning environment and 80.0% of the students agreed that they had good interactions with their peers and the course instructor (p. 161). Technology allows for students to enter the classroom in a familiar environment making it beneficial for them to become acclimated into the classroom.

Advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) allow for the improvement of classroom experience (p. 157). Therefore, students are fulfilled with more excitement to utilize technology in the classroom when participating, turning in assignments, and checking the status of their work. This provides them with a better satisfaction and gives them the motivation to be more successful in class.

Similarly, Solak and Recep Cakir (2015), conducted a study to establish a correlation between the motivation and achievement levels of language learners through the use of technology in the classroom. Because today's students are digital natives, learning needs to be channeled through sound, picture, writing, video, and animation (p. 51). A vital part of language learning is reading, writing, and speaking. They used a descriptive research model to analyze attitudes, beliefs, and views. For data collection, a Material Motivational Survey was used from Keller (1987). The survey was designed to measure the motivational level of Technology used to teach English words. The results showed descriptive Statistics based on participant responses. The study shows a positive correlation was found between academic achievement and motivation and suggested a positive impact on technology and vocabulary learning (p.50). Some results included responses such as the material is eye catching and the content and style of writing convey a message and content worth knowing.

Active learning has become a creative way to build knowledge. Rita Kumar and Robin Lightner (2007) explain, “By ignoring the move toward active learning, academia misses an opportunity to increase student learning and our students are less prepared for this kind of learning when they encounter it later in their careers” (p. 55). Kumar and Lightner (2007) investigated interactive classroom teaching and corporate training through the use of games. Kumar and Lightner state, “non-traditional interventions, such as games, simulations, multimedia instruction and interactive activities are valuable teaching methods” (p. 53). Games increase participation in the classroom because students are kept engaged. Kumar and Lightner explain, “this study compares the classroom techniques of college instructors and corporate trainers and assesses the effectiveness of games as an active learning classroom technique to engage learners” (p. 55). 62 Instructors from a 2-year regional campus of a state college/university and 45 Corporate Trainers from big and small companies were surveyed. In addition, 5 faculty members in Math, Psychology, English, Arts and Visual Communication, and Nursing implemented a new interactive game (p. 55). The survey study was assessed using ANOVA. Furthermore, the 5 faculty members replaced traditional lectures with games such as crossword puzzles, word scrambles, and team concept matches. Once the games were completed and student learning was assessed a 20 to 30-minute interview was conducted with the faculty (p. 55). The students in these classes were anonymously surveyed to find out if they learned anything using games. The student responses were positive. According to Kumar and Lightner, “... they [Students] learned a lot, it was not a waste of their time, that the activity was enjoyable, accomplished its goal, and they wished more faculty members used such activities” (p. 58). Moreover, Corporate trainers saw a positive outcome with games used for training. Kumar and Lightner state, “Ultimately both groups, corporate trainers and college instructors, care about adult learners. Therefore,

attention to research and trends within both the field of corporate and academic instruction may reveal valuable insights for improving learning” (p. 59).

Jason Khaler (2014) conducted a study on the use of technology on First-Year students’ writing. Khaler thoroughly explains the importance of Composition classes and the impact these classes will have on student writing throughout their college journey. Khaler provides several examples of the writing process and how it continues to change over time. Most importantly, Khaler provides his own research on how technology enhanced his student’s writing and relationships. Khaler used social media platforms such as Twitter to heighten student learning and engagement.

Khaler (2014) studied three sections of his First Year Composition course ENGL 111 at Saginaw Valley State University. Each class met twice per week. He implemented the social media platform Twitter for student engagement in the classroom. Twitter feeds were used for reflection, engagement, research, and response. Twitter feeds are explained as: “Twitter feeds present the newest tweets first, at the top of a list. Newer tweets are then added to the top, “pushing” older tweets down” (Khaler, 2014, p. 91). Students were required to use Twitter for specified assignments. For instance, Khaler implemented a Hashtag assignment that “force[s] the speaker to be center, direct, and meaningful” (p. 97). This meant that those involved in posting information needed to center their attention on the specific event, hone into the details of the event, and provide meaningful explanation to support their response. Therefore, daily posts about current events helped students think critically about their writing since they only had 140 characters that they can post. A Hashtag is explained as: “One click of a hashtag at the end of a tweet pulls up information and opinions of billions of people... Twitter, and is limited to only 140 characters or less. Hashtags are generally used at the end of the tweet and is included in the

140 character count” (p. 97). The assignments Khaler implemented using Twitter allowed students to relate to each other and the instructor. 65 first year students from three sections of Composition were observed during this study. 7 students were from an Early High School program. While the first two classes were more traditional. The third section contained “non-traditional” students. Section three contained 23 students in which 5 students were from an Early College program and 5 students were International students from Saudi Arabia.

Khaleer (2014) collected a series of blog and twitter assignment posts to display growth in student writing. Furthermore, he allowed students to post tweets during classes by keeping them displayed on projector to lead class discussion. Khaleer challenged his students with difficult topics that allowed students to both critically read and critically think about posts. Final reflections were collected from students to gain a sense of how each student felt about the implementation of Twitter in the classroom and their experience writing.

Kahler (2014) found that the lure of technology allowed for a more strategic way to teach composition versus a traditional process approach because “it forces students to consider the elements of writing in an authentic, material way” (p.144). Twitter allowed students to build on top of earlier work which showed their effort, ability to make connection, and rhetorical velocity. The International students did struggle with the use of Twitter due to language barriers, but were provided with extra time for assignments. There were even opportunities for the International students to post in their native language. Ultimately, students were engaged in assignments and gained a new experience being able to write and respond to peers. The Instructor was also able to connect with students and have an open discussion classroom setting.

Khaler's (2014) study shows a new approach to learning through the implementation of Twitter. Technology allowed students to connect to one another not just in group discussion during class, but also by practicing their writing and responses online. This allowed for relationships to grow and connections to be made through writing. The class was motivated to post online and express themselves and their opinions connected with examples and facts. Students actively went through the writing process and built on their earlier works. This study is significant because it provides research that shows an interactive instructional method and recommends this to be implemented in Higher Education composition courses.

Moreover, Cervantes (2009) researched the effectiveness of games as a teaching tool. Cervantes states, "Clearly, English classes need to be more interactive to keep students interested in the lessons. After ten years of teaching, I have learned that English need not be a boring subject" (p. 20). Cervantes found that supplementing games in place of Teacher-centered lessons that feature lectures were more effective for learning. Cervantes (2009) explains, "English-language instructors should be careful about monopolizing a class with too much teacher-talk—for speaking and writing activities" (p. 20). Therefore, adding fun opportunities in class can provide more motivation for students to participate and learn. Cross (1992) explains, "When students are absorbed by games, they internalize and acquire the essential vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects of English in an unconscious manner because they are focused on the message and not the language itself" (as cited by Cervantes, 2009, p. 21). One notable game Cervantes recognizes is a modified game of "Taboo," to which can assist with specific language needs. In short, the original game is played with two teams. One person from each team is given a turn to make team members guess the word on their card. However, they cannot use any of the words already listed on the card for description. If this occurs, the person will be buzzed by an opposing

team member and the opposing team will receive the point (p. 21). Cervante's modified version of the game requires words to be described in complete sentences. Cervante's (2009) explains, "if the keyword is "ring" the clue-giver can say "It is a noun," or "It is what a man gives to the woman he loves on the day he marries her" (p. 21). Thus, one word descriptions or sounding out the word in syllables are unacceptable. In addition, students normally want an incentive when a game is played. Cervantes (2009) explains, "For each game I typically award 5 extra points to the winners, 3 points to the next highest, and 1 point to the rest of the class" (p. 25). Cervantes survey her English Class and discovered the following: Effect on student participation, Effect on student attitudes, and Effect on student learning. For participation, students showed more courage to speak in class, participated more, it improved teamwork in the classroom. For student attitudes, the class was more relaxed, boredom was reduced, and students were happy to play games. For student learning, games helped students apply what they learned, increased vocabulary, and boosted self-confidence (p. 38). Cervantes (2009) states, "I use language games in my English classes and also in the training courses that I give to professionals, and the response is always very positive" (p. 38). Cervantes also makes Instructors aware to understand the students in their classes. Cervantes explains, "Although games do add life to an English class, it is not necessarily good to have the class play games every day" (p. 38).

Technology can also be used in the form of games for learning. Ewa Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) conducted a study that "investigates what game elements could be responsible for increasing motivation to participate and engage in a grammar learning game" (p. 17). The study examines the use of gamification to increase learning. Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) states, "gamification can be engaging and fun and, therefore, may influence the motivation of the participants" (p. 22). The paper focuses on Kahoot which is a popular online game used as a

learning tool. Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) explains, “It is user-friendly for both parties as well as it contains the basic game elements: points, a leader board, instant feedback and a reward” (p. 18). The study was conducted at the Pedagogical University on Krakow. 112 Students from various departments taking General English courses were observed ranging from ages 19 to 24. 76 were women and 36 were men. They each played the game 1 to 3 times. A two-part questionnaire was provided that focused on student motivation. The results from the first part of the questionnaire showed four items: fun, learning effectiveness, learning recommendations, and types of feelings accompanying the game (p. 31). Grammar learning effectiveness was grade high. The second part of the questionnaire showed: familiarity with language games, motivating reasons to play, and the role of the fun component (p. 32). The results showed that students were not familiar with online class games but are motivated for Kahoot or any game in class (p. 32). Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) states, “Playing a game together goes beyond the traditional way of learning, as the questioned game was designed to practice and revise the language, but also provides a thrill which is absent when doing ordinary grammar exercises” (p. 34). Making a lesson more excitable through games can increase motivation. Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) explains, “Jane McGonigal, one of the greatest gamification enthusiasts and experts, as well as an American game designer, indicates... [g]ames can be applied as supporting tools measuring sport achievements, progress in language learning, enhancing cognitive processes, supporting patients in getting over specific medical conditions, simulating real life contexts” (p. 22). Games are an emerging tool in the classroom.

Clausen (2017) found that Board Games in the classroom can help enhance learning. Clausen explains, “Games have long been a staple of active learning environments. They are a fantastic way to reduce anxiety, promote competition, and energize classrooms” (p. 33). Clausen

is an English Language Instructor in Saudi Arabia. His use of games has helped students “memorize and use vocabulary, practice key grammar points, review a range of content covered over many units, break the ice with one another, and role-play situations with real world importance” (p. 33). In a Business English Course, Clausen implemented a “Business Decisions” game. The students build the game with material provided such as a blank game board, dice, game pieces, blank cards, and play money. The students are responsible for creating a company name. This game allows them to essentially create their own company while making decisions of employee pay, a slogan, and product philosophy. Clausen (2017) explains, “As you use Business Decisions, you will want students to assume more and more ownership over the rules and content of the game” (p. 35). The instructor serves as the banker in the game and expresses interest in each company to “heighten the drama of the game” (p. 35). The game teaches students the competitiveness in the business world. In addition, it allows students to use their writing skills to create a business plan to reflect their company as supreme. Student’s may not always be in the mood to play a game, but this does not mean they still cannot Actively learn. Moreover, it is the Instructor’s style that also gives flair to the classroom.

Pedagogy

Although technology serves as a useful instructional resource, the delivery of a teacher and pedagogy is important. A crucial part of student learning is the teacher’s ability to lead and motivate students. Therefore, understanding teacher management style as it relates to student outcomes is important. Aaron Noland and Keith Richards conducted a study to show a positive relationship between the variables of teacher transformational leadership, learning, and motivation. The reason for the study is to substitute the teacher---student relationship for the leader---follower relationship in order to test the relationship between transformational

leadership and student motivation and learning (Noland & Richards, 2014, p.5). An analysis of the Transformational Leadership model yielded the results. Transformational Leadership was assessed through a Multi-factor Leadership questionnaire. The scale used was a self-report leadership diagnoses with an eighteen item measure. Student learning was assessed on the questionnaire as respondents were asked to report on their attitudes regarding their courses. The scale used was an Affective Learning Scale. Lastly, student motivation was assessed using Richmond's (1990) motivation scale which portrayed five 7-step bi-polar adjectives (p.14). The results demonstrate transformational teaching was significantly related to student motivation. The predictor variables were inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation. All of these were demonstrated in the results of the survey. Furthermore, the results also indicated that transformational teaching was significant to student affective learning (p.14).

Gloria Brown Wright (2011) researched classroom innovations that were successful for both teacher and students in the classroom. She touches on Maryellen Weimer's (2002) Learning Centered-Teaching. Wright states, "Weimer identifies five areas where the teacher-centeredness of the classroom is clearly seen: the balance of power, the function of content, the role of the teacher, the responsibility of learning, and the purpose and processes of evaluation" (p.92). The teacher is accountable for the knowledge retained and experiences gained in the classroom. Wright observed student-centered learning and the role of the teacher to create this atmosphere. Wright explains, "students are the center of the educational enterprise, and their cognitive and affective learning experiences should guide all decisions as to what is done and how" (p. 93). Teachers should be effectively and strategically provoking learning that is positively received by

students. Wright explains, ...many college teachers believe that a student-centered classroom provides a more effective learning environment and are making efforts toward this end (96).

Furthermore, recognizing student culture is significant. Michele Ebersole, Huihui Kanahele-Mossman, and Alice Kawakami conducted a study that examined the perspectives of Teachers moving towards culturally responsive teaching. According to Ebersole, Kanahele-Mossman, & Kawakami (2016), “This article suggests ways teacher educators might re-conceptualize culture based courses to deepen teacher perspectives rather than merely enhance teaching activities which support culturally responsive teaching and learning” (p. 97). Therefore, teacher Education and diversity coursework, culturally responsive teaching, complex challenges, and research questions are all assessed throughout this study. There are eighteen teacher participants who are enrolled in a Masters of Education program that assisted in this study. The study assembled data from a course entitled Ethnicity and Education. Using a qualitative method, eighteen teacher participants from a rural island community were observed throughout the course through analysis of coursework, questionnaire responses, group interviews, and self-reflective discussions of identity. Culture is defined in this study as racial and ethnic background. While we realize the term culture is inclusive of multiple identity categories such as gender, sexuality, social class, and age (p. 98). The results show three distinct patterns which include doing culturally responsive activities, moving towards a culturally responsive perspective, and being a culturally responsive teacher. Under the pattern of doing culturally responsive activities, most teachers used this as a separate unit during their teaching. Each found challenges with implementing activities because of a lack of knowledge or unfamiliarity with different culture groups. Under the pattern of moving toward a culturally responsive perspective, teachers recognized students being more open and learning different things about different cultures.

Under the pattern of being a culturally responsive teacher, teachers were able to show distinct differences and one recognized that teaching is a political act and is moving towards a transformative perspective that supports culturally responsive teaching and embeds culture in every aspect of teaching throughout the day (p. 101).

In addition, students who are from various cultures, come to college seeking to find themselves. Student development is an element that students are most attracted towards. Having the knowledge that they can be a part of something whether that be a team or an organization is enthralling for them. A study conducted by Rashida G. Gabdrakhmanova, Elena Khodyreva, and Biyanka Tornyova (2016), showed unique properties of a student's identity as internal integrity, relative independence, and originality in social interactions and relationships. Having these qualities allows a student to be open to new opportunities. Furthermore, the grade point average required may be challenging for some students to achieve; especially, if the student is already involved in various organizations, working more than one job, or tackling fifteen or more credits in one semester. Finding student leaders to perform in a fast-paced environment is not always a simple task. With such high demands in place, the evaluation of students' identity can be assessed through their basis of studying reflexivity, readiness for self-determination, creativity (Gabdrakhmanova et al., 2016). A professor must assist in the development of a student's identity. Considering the identity development, it is necessary to focus special attention on its characteristic as the process of person's social and existential integrity transformation.

Freshman students who are just entering into college are normally the age of seventeen through nineteen. During the adolescent age, students need support and motivation to enhance their learning. Adolescents are still maturing and coming to college, they are excited to further the learning taught to them throughout middle school and high school. Sarah M. Kiefer, Kathleen

M. Alley, and Cheryl R. Ellerbrock (2015) conducted a study to investigate teacher and peer support for young adolescents' academic motivation, classroom engagement, and school belonging (p. 1). Using a mixed methods design and a multidimensional perspective, an understanding of the teacher's role of support for student motivation is looked into. Two main questions were framed: Question one is how do teacher and peer support relate to student motivation, engagement, and belonging? Question two is what ways do teachers and peers support student motivation, engagement, and belonging? This study provides insight into ways to foster responsive learning environments for young adolescent learners at a time in their lives where educators and peers play a prominent role (p. 2). This sequential explanatory mixed methods study was used to create a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which teachers and peers support adolescent motivation, engagement, and belonging and yielded important implications for educators (p. 4). Quantitative procedures included the collection of student surveys. The surveys included a five-point scale ranging from 1-not true at all to 5-very true. Students also reported demographic characteristics relative to gender, race, and grade level (p. 5). For teacher support, teacher autonomy and support structure were measured with 20 items from the Teacher's Social Construct Questionnaire (Belmont, Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell, 1988). Subscales included promotion of choice, respect, and relevance. Student perceptions of teacher involvement were measured with four items from the Classroom Life Instrument (Johnson & Johnson, 1983). The involvement expressed how much the teacher cared about the student. For peer support, student perceptions of peer emotional support included perceptions that classmates like the student as a person. Furthermore, academic motivation was measured by Adaptive learning skills from Midgley and Associates' (2000) and classroom engagement focused on classroom behavioral engagement (Skinner & Belmont 1993).

Lastly, School belonging focused on personal belonging in school looking into student academic and learning (Goodenow, 1993; Goodenow & Grady, 1992). The results showed for academic motivation, relevance in learning was positively associated with motivation and teacher monitoring. For classroom engagement, teacher respect and involvement were associated with engagement. Peer support was associated with engagement above and beyond teacher support and teacher autonomy support accounted for variance in engagement after controlling prior adjustment for gender or race. For classroom involvement, peer support was associated with engagement above and beyond the teacher. Also, teacher respect was associated with involvement. For School Belonging, Teacher choice was negatively associated with belonging, teacher respect and involvement were positively associated with belonging, and peer support were accounted for variance in adjustment of gender and race (Kiefer, Alley, & Ellerbrock, 2015, p. 9).

A student who constantly participates, analyzes their thoughts, ideas, and opinions, and becomes passionate about a subject, can be seen as a result from good teaching methods. Students enjoy learning about a subject that has advanced their critical and creative thinking and captured their attention. Jerry W. Samples and Susan E. Copeland conducted a study to suggest definitions and examples that demonstrate good teaching. They present information that discusses faculty and student voices who have expressed their thoughts on good teaching with educational psychologists. This also includes the impact of good teaching on the student learning full circle from teacher to learner. Furthermore, it includes the traits and characteristics of good instructors, teachers, and professors. Collectively, the definition of good teaching methods, the results and measures, and the need for good teaching to ensure classes and courses are successful is expressed (Samples & Copeland, 2013, p. 176). The study conducted, examines the

characteristics of excellence in teaching through the assessments of faculty across various disciplines. This study focused on workshops for teachers that assisted in allowing them to think about good teaching. These teachers were given a series of questions to answer in two separate groups. Therefore, there was a lot of group think involved (p. 178). These workshops were assessed over a 10-year period from 1998 to 2010. The research design was based on Lowman's (1995) model of *Mastering Techniques of Teaching*. This model is based on a two-dimensional model. The first dimension is Intellectual and the second dimension is dealing with interpersonal Rapport. The two key factors in this model are to avoid stimulating negative emotions and to promote positive emotions. This research produced results with regards to commitment to his or her [The Teacher's] profession as well as general descriptors of good teaching (Samples & Copeland, 2013, p. 177). Teachers were provided with the survey and their responses were assessed. The survey results demonstrated that the bond between the teacher and the student is formulated based on the teacher's ability to create lessons and learning techniques intriguing to the students. Each question set the foundation on the thoughts of what each teacher perceived as good teaching. Overall, in collaboration, each teacher had similar ideals on what good teaching looked like. It was found that good teaching is a creative interactional process that uses dialogue between the student and the teacher to grasp new concepts and the relationship formed allows for both the student and teacher to gain insights about each other (Samples & Copeland, 2013, p. 179). Lowman's model proved to assist well in these results.

In order to achieve good teaching methods, professors must constantly be professionally developed. Some of the most important parts of education are professional development and goal setting. Education is an ever-changing environment. Therefore, new learning techniques are developed and new trends arise causing an educational institution to shift or change its goals in a

beneficial direction. Educational Leaders must keep up with the environment in order for things to continue to operate to the best capabilities. Barbara Stacy Rieckhoff and Catherine Larson (2012) conducted a study that expresses the impact that a Professional Development School Partnership (PDS) has on leadership development. Because school leaders are tasked with making a vision, this article studies the perspective of Principals as they embark to create a model of development that implements their visions. These visions must adhere to school-wide sustainable changes and focus on improvement goals that target professional development (p.57). The study conducted used a mixed method multi-source approach with three years of collected quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative research consisted of surveys and the qualitative research consisted of narrative response from participant interviews. The qualitative research proved to have a greater impact on the research because of how much in-depth knowledge was collected (p.60). The quantitative research focused on the original goals of the participants and their standards for professional development. The design of this research was created to portray administrators such as principals as agents of change and to show the many active variables that impact school change. This design is meant to express a model of reform known as Green's *Four Quadrant Model*. Therefore, through the use of a collaborative partnership, research was conducted to demonstrate the four dimensions of the work of a principal. These dimensions include understanding oneself and others, understanding the complexity of organizational life, understanding relationships and their importance, and engaging in best practices (p.59). These dimensions build a design for educational leadership. The data collected from the surveys and interviews were analyzed through further investigation that prompted researchers to consult external reviewer reports and examine the school action plans (p. 61). Moreover, the interviews provided further external knowledge. The results of

the *Critical Change Survey* indicated that participation in the survey resulted in increased opportunities for teacher leadership, provided support for attaining school improvement goals, and had many positive impacts documented regarding leadership (p.61). However, it was not noted if having a clear vision improved their teaching and learning. In fact, participants were unwilling to express their opinions on clear visions. There were four areas of increase which included positive changes in leadership capabilities, sustainable changes, communication, and collaboration. The areas that did not increase included articulation of a clear vision, developing internal structures, and achieving school improvement.

One of the most intricate parts of being an educational leader is one's ability to transform and build a student climate centered around success. Educational leaders are responsible for student achievement both academically and socially. This means that an educational leader must have procedures and structures set that will allow students to excel in the classroom while also providing them with the necessary resources to network as they progress in their career of choice. Researcher Cheryl James Ward conducted a study to suggest the importance of school leadership is what drives the success of the institution. The study implies, "building a sense of community, establishing school routines, providing teachers with necessary resources, and advocating for school stakeholders," is what leads to institutional achievement (p. 63). Therefore, strategic planning and designing a supportive environment play a crucial role in leadership evaluation. Furthermore, within this study, "the researcher analyzes the leadership actions of one principal" in order to demonstrate the value of leadership (p.63). The study conducted used a case study methodology used by Creswell (1998): exploration of an entity or phenomenon (the case) by time (one year) and activity (leadership) (Ward, 2013, p. 63). This qualitative research case study gathered data of a principal's leadership activities, administrative structure, and

school district history for one year. The research used first hand observation and sampling to gather data. All information from observations was coded through manual techniques and examined through three sets of leadership practices from Leithwood (2004): Setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organizations (Ward, 2013, p. 65). Under the leadership of Principal Ferdinand, the school performance progressed greatly. Its API (Academic Performance Index) increased 155 points from 670 to 825. The school also went from the lowest performing school in the district as rank 24 out of 24 to rank 8 out of 24. When setting directions, Principal Ferdinand made sure he painted and enhanced the school appearance, met with teachers and staff to create a vision for the school, and created a designated support system for teachers. Furthermore, Principal Ferdinand made time for professional learning committees to train and inform his staff of new programs. When redesigning the organization, Principal Ferdinand embraced community and made community his goal of model leadership (p. 66). Moreover, the open-ended teacher survey identified 13 principal characteristics that embodied creating a vision and inclusive and supportive climate. Ward's research can be applied to any academic institution.

In addition, Heather Camp (2017) observed the importance of goal setting for teacher development in Higher Education. Her research shows a study on twelve teaching assistants in an English Department and their goal achievement at Minnesota University. Little (2014) explains that "Goals include biological and social needs that are met through routine decision making, as well as more abstract values and ambitions that drive an individual's personal projects" (as cited in Camp, 2017, p. 61). The participants held half a year to two years teaching experience. Initially, participants had to attend a workshop that introduced them to goal setting. They then were responsible for creating an Action Plan for their goals. Data was collected from

written records, peer teaching observations, and goal setting group observations. Nine of the twelve teachers completed a questionnaire at mid-term and six of the twelve teachers completed a questionnaire at the end of the semester. The results showed that teaching improved and felt more driven to complete goals (p. 66). According to Camp, “Findings indicate that teachers viewed goal setting as a positive investment of time and felt it improved their teaching” (p.67). Commitment played a factor in their progress. Camp explains, “Without commitment to one’s goals, significant progress is unlikely” (P. 69). Goal achievement is important and can enhance leadership and academic success for both teachers and students.

Path-goal Theory, Leadership, and Goals

Academic success is a common goal for college students. Professors have a responsibility to assist students with achieving their goals. Leadership can assist in a positive outcome for students to achieve academic success. Researcher Ray Kest (2006) explored Principles of Leadership. The Path-goal theory was mentioned as a style of leadership used for goal achievement. Kest (2006) explains, “The theory is based on the premise that a leader’s behavior influences the performance of subordinates” (p. 55). There are four leader behaviors identified. The first is Directive Leadership in which a subordinate knows what to expect and a time line is given for an accomplishment. Directive leadership could lead students to greater satisfaction because assignments or tasks are structured and scheduled. The second is Supportive Leadership where the leader shows support and concern for the subordinate. Supportive leadership could lead to higher satisfaction because students may feel encouraged to complete tasks. The third is Participative Leadership in which group members are consulted before making a decision. Students could feel higher satisfaction with Participative leadership due to being on a team and having a sense of belonging. The fourth and final is Achievement Oriented Leadership in which

challenging goals are set with expectations for subordinates to achieve at a high level (p. 55). Achievement Oriented Leadership could lead to higher satisfaction for students because of the high expectations to perform. Each of these styles can influence academic success.

Moreover, Goal achievement is important for both a student and a professor. Students and professors all have unique backgrounds, histories, ethnicities, genders, and educational levels. There are assumptions that that these traits can have an effect on leadership style and motivation specifically gender. Polston-Murdoch (2013) conducted a study to determine the influence of leadership. The study was designed for a dual purpose “(a) to determine if there is a relationship between subordinates’ perception of leadership style and subordinate commitment to his/her leader and (b) to determine if supervisor’s gender moderates the relationship between leadership style and subordinate commitment to his/her leader” (p. 14). The study focuses on the Path-Goal Theory. According to Polston-Murdoch, “Path-goal theory, originally developed by Evans (1970) and later modified by House (1971), was designed to identify a leader’s most practiced style as a motivation to get subordinates to accomplish goals” (p. 15). There are four Path-Goal styles that can be exercised by leaders: Directive Leadership, Supportive Leadership, Participative Leadership, and Achievement-oriented Leadership” (p. 16). This study observes the subordinate’s perspective. Polston-Murdoch explains, “The premise of this study is that subordinates’ expect leaders to behave with certain stereotypical gender characteristics and, when leaders behave as expected and as perceived by the subordinate, the subordinates will show commitment to supervisor” (p. 13). The commitment of a subordinate is based on “increased obligation to make a relationship succeed and mutually satisfactory and beneficially” (p. 19). Gender could play a role in the type of leadership administered for motivation. Polston- Murdoch states, knowing the gender relational dynamics between leaders and subordinates could

transform how organizations hire and/or promote talent” (p. 19). For this study, Polston-Murdoch used a “Hierarchical multivariate analysis...to measure leadership style as the predictor variable, subordinate commitment to superior as the criterion variable, and leader’s gender as the moderator (p.22). Two instruments used for measurement were a Path-goal leadership questionnaire and supervisor related commitment scale. The control variables were subordinate age, education, gender, and superior/subordinate tenure. The participants were employees who report to superiors. Data were collected from 117 responses. The Path-goal questionnaire related to the four types of leadership styles and was comprised of five questions. According to Polston-Murdoch example of questions included, “My supervisor asks for suggestions from subordinates concerning how to carry out assignments” and “My supervisor asks subordinates for suggestions on what assignments should be made” (p. 24). In addition, the Supervisor-related commitment scale used a nine-item Likert scale for measurement. Five items measured identification and four measured internalization of supervisor. The results showed that gender did not impact subordinate commitment. Polston-Murdoch states, “Contrary to the hypotheses set in this study, the statistical findings do not support the hypotheses that superior’s gender moderates the relationship between leadership style and subordinates’ commitment to superior” (p. 32). This study shows that the Path-goal theory can be applied to help others develop their own skills and that subordinates will be committed to their leader regardless of the leader’s gender.

Goals allow for personal and professional development. Tobin, Brown, and Carney (2013) conducted a study on the use of goal statements to facilitate participation. According to Tobin et. al., “Leaders with personal power influence the group with their self-confidence. Courageous leaders are able to take risks, share life experiences and serve as role models” (p.67). Therefore, to be an effective leader Tobin et. al. identifies Social and Emotional Intelligence.

They first examined the differentiation between Emotional Intelligence and Social Intelligence for motivation. Goleman (1995) defines emotional intelligence “as having the ability to motivate oneself and endure in times of frustration; to manage impulsivity and postpone satisfaction; to control one’s moods and keep distress from affecting the ability to think; and to be empathic and optimistic” (as cited in Tobin et. al, 2013, p. 67). Social Intelligence is defined by Goleman (2006) as Social Awareness or “the ability to instantly sense another’s inner state and understanding his or her feelings and thoughts as well as understanding complicated situations” (p.67). These abilities will assist in helping students with goal attainment. For this study, 21 students were observed in an accredited community counseling program who participated in a 10 week one-and-a-half-hour experiential group. Students created multiple goal statements in groups and sub-groups. A qualitative analysis was used to assess data and coded into the following themes: involvement, awareness, emotions, and skill building. Data showed “goal statements...provided a sense of structure and purpose for the experiential group” (p. 71). This activity provided students with determination to reach their goals. When goals are in place, a supportive and innovative learning environment can be created from Academic leaders for the success of the outcome of these goals. Students will become inspired. This can lead to higher performance from students in the classroom in which they will be retained through attendance.

Progressive Education

Talebi Kandan (2013) researched American Philosopher and Educator John Dewey to expresses his notability as a pioneer in the progressive movement of education. Dewey’s educational theories can be seen in his works “My Pedagogic Creed” (1897), “The School and Society” (1900), “The Child and the Curriculum” (1902), “Democracy and Education” (1916) and “Experience and Education” (1938). Within these works, the common theme is that

“education and learning are social and interactive processes” (Kandan, 2013, p. 4). Dewey believed that education was more than just learning a set of skills. Kandan recognizes that according to Dewey, “the main purpose of education should not revolve around the acquisition of pre-determined set of skills, but rather the realization of one’s full potential and the ability to use those skills for the greater good” (p. 4). The classroom is more than just its curriculum. In “Child and Curriculum” (1902), Dewey provides an example of two conflicting schools in which one school focused only on curriculum and subject matter. The result of this method cause inactivity of the student. Kandan expresses that Dewey believed, “in order for education to be most effective, content must be presented in a way that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new knowledge” (p. 5). Dewey’s ideas impacted the educational arena. Kandan explains, “Dewey not only re-imagined the way the learning process should take place, but also the role that the teacher should play within that process” (p. 6). Dewey’s theory of education still plays a critical role in education today.

Student Achievement and Retention

The retention of students is vital to any institution. Therefore, an understanding of how to engage and captivate students will assist in keeping students grounded in an institution. Jalyynn Roberts and Ronald Styron Jr. (2010) conducted a study that focused on how student satisfaction plays a critical role in their retention. There are specific factors that assist in a student’s success to survive college life. According to Roberts and Styron Jr. (2010) the following factors provide student satisfaction: “academic advising, social connectedness, involvement and engagement, faculty and staff approachability, business procedures, learning experiences, and student support services” (p. 1). Students require magnanimous relationships and attractive learning

environments. Academic Advising can help guide a student on a direct path. Students often change majors or become undecided causing them to panic, stress, and lose focus. Therefore, confiding in a mentor provides them on a path with purpose. Roberts and Styron Jr. explain, “When one considers the mentoring and counseling aspect of academic advising, it becomes obvious that helping students realize their purpose in higher education and why they are pursuing their current educational goals” (p. 3). Furthermore, students are always looking to become socially connected. Socializing and networking is a major part of college life.

Students need to feel like they are a part of something. It provides connectivity and a sense of belonging allowing the student to feel right at home. According to Roberts and Styron jr. “like most other challenges in life, a person is more likely to accomplish difficult tasks when he/she is in the company of others who are like-minded and facing similar challenges” (p. 3). Relating to others can help excel a student because he/she can connect on similar experiences. Moreover, an institution must also practice beneficial business procedures. For instance, customer service is critical in retaining students. Roberts and Stryron jr. explain, “common patterns of exchanges occur between the student and various offices such as the business office, residence life, financial aid, departmental offices that define major requirements, social/athletic events, parking management, etc.” (p. 4). Every reaction a student has with a different department has an impact on that student moving forward. It is imperative that students receive accurate information, are provide suitable answers to their questions, and are guided to the right departments. According to Roberts and Styron jr., “Students can become equally disenfranchised with an institution when they feel they have been given the run-around or misled” (p. 5). Student’s should not feel slighted, confused, or misdirected when provided with information. In addition, a student’s learning experience will impact their progression at an institution. Roberts

and Styron jr. state, “One of the most important missions for institutions of higher learning is to provide meaningful learning experiences for their students. These learning experiences are determined by the collective effort of faculty, staff and students” (p. 5). Students come to college to be enriched in knowledge.

In addition, they choose to learn and want to have access to a learning experience that will satisfy their career goals. Therefore, students deserve to be bestowed with valuable information and a classroom experience that can be cherished. Roberts and Styron jr. explain, “Meaningful learning experiences are an essential key to student retention, and it is imperative for institutions of higher learning to create valuable and enriching learning experiences within their academic programs” (p. 5). Students deserve to have their attention captured with engaging lessons and enlightening relationships within the classroom. Roberts and Styron jr. explain, “When meaningful learning experiences are missing from the curriculum, students often become disengaged and dissatisfied because they see no relevance in what they are learning” (p. 5). The classroom is a place where students and faculty have the opportunity to learn from each other. If a student enjoys the classroom environment, they will gain a sense of fulfillment.

Lastly, students should be provided with as much support as possible. Student Support Services act as a resource to students. Roberts and Styron jr. state, “It is important for institutions of higher learning to implement and maintain various academic resources that promote student success ...because these resources are needed by a significant number of students who are not adequately prepared for the academic challenges they will face at the university” (p. 5). Students should be provided with the option to seek further help academically especially for core class such as English and Mathematics. According to Roberts and Styron jr., “Most of the academic support services are tutoring centers which offer academic assistance in a variety of areas, such

as speaking, writing, Student Satisfaction and Persistence, and mathematics” (p. 6). Tutoring centers are beneficial for college students in order to assist them with perfecting their craft. Ultimately, all of these listed factors are significant to retaining students. Roberts and Stryon Jr. state, “Now more than ever, higher education administrators must be cognizant of the reasons why students depart from institutions of higher learning prematurely and what can be done to help students overcome these barriers so they can achieve their academic and career goals” (p. 2). Student achievement is the core of an institution. Therefore, it is important to note the factors that will solidify a student at an institution and keep them focused on the path to graduation.

The study conducted by Roberts and Styron jr. was used to obtain insight on “perceptions of services, interactions, and experiences” (p.1). The participants used were from the College of Education and Psychology (CoEP) at a research-intensive university located in the Southern region of the United States. Approximately 240 students participated.

They were age 18 to 52 years old and mostly Caucasian and African American. They were sorted into two different groups. 93 students were those who changed majors and 172 students were those who kept the same major. A five-point likert scale was used to survey students using a 51-item instrument in which 13 items were demographic and 32 were for measurement of attitude, academic advising, social connectedness, on campus involvement, business procedures, faculty approachability, and learning experiences. The results displayed using MANOVA (Multivariate analysis of variance) showed statistically that learning outcomes had the highest impact on students. Therefore, this provides evidence that the classroom has a large impact on students.

Retention also plays a factor with the background of a student that attends college. At risk students can be challenging to retain. Marcia L. Laskey and Carole J. Hetzel (2011) explain,

“Students who enter college under prepared are often considered at-risk students” (p. 31). These students often lack necessary skills needed to be successful such as: class attendance, maintaining concentration, and effective study habits. They conducted a study in 2011 that investigated factors relating to the retention of At-risk students. The participants were from a midsized, private four-year institution located in the mid-west. They were accepted into college in the CAP program (Conditional Acceptance program). This is a one-year program designed to provide students the opportunity to be admitted to college under special circumstances. The data was collected over a three-year period and was extracted from student records. This information includes demographics, participation in tutoring sessions, ACT scores, and high school and college GPA. The 115 participants were age 17-19 undergraduate students. The following factors were observed: Neuroticism (mental or personality disturbance), Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extraversion (concern with outside self). The following research questions were noted: 1) How do personality factors of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness affect college GPA and retention of at-risk college students? 2) Do high school GPA and/ or ACT scores predict college success? 3) Do high school type (public/private) and/or location (rural/urban/ suburban) affect retention and college GPA of at-risk students? 4) Do academic support/ tutoring positively affect college GPA and retention of at-risk students?

Statistical data was collected to provide evidence to the following questions. The results for the first research question demonstrated that students high in extraversion are focused on socializing and not academics but those with high conscientiousness and agreeableness had a higher acceptance for help and a motivation to academically succeed. Furthermore, students who scored high in neuroticism had a positive outcome of GPA due to their focus on achievement. The results from the second research question show that “high school GPA may not be a good

predictor of success for both at-risk and non at-risk students because of differences between schools, teacher expectations, and student performance” (Laskey and Hetzel, 2011, p. 39). The results from the third research question challenged the notion that students with ethnic backgrounds do not do as well as white counterparts because the students achieved at the same level. One factor could be because of the rigorous requirements. Finally, the fourth research question results showed the positive outcome of tutoring. Laskey and Hetzel explain, “CAP students who were retained utilized tutoring services significantly more than students who were not retained” (p. 39). This program provided students with guidance to become better prepared for college. Laskey and Hetzel recognize, “In relationship to retention, when students feel they can be successful in their academic pursuits, they are more likely to stay in school” (p. 40). Students must be academically sound to become encouraged to succeed.

Furthermore, it is important to observe current theories in retention. Umi Jenson (2011) provides insight on factors that influence student retention. Tinto’s (1975) model is often referenced when it comes to retention. Jensen explains, “According to Tinto, persistence occurs when a student successfully integrates into the institution academically and socially. Integration, in turn, is influenced by pre-college characteristics and goals, interactions with peers and faculty, and out-of-classroom factors” (p. 1). This theory is challenged due to it depending on a “student’s ability to integrate and assimilate into the institution” (Jenson, 2012, p. 1). Therefore, in 2004 the concept of Dual socialization was expressed by Rendon, Jamalo, and Nora (2004). Jensen explains, “According to this concept, institutions share responsibility in the successful cultural and social integration of students into college” (p. 1). This provides responsibility to the institution to assist in the integration of its students in order to retain them. Jensen recognizes, “The authors claim that the assumption that minority students are solely responsible in

assimilating and incorporating themselves to the culture of the college excuses institutions from dealing with their own barriers to retention” (p. 1). Cultural connections are important with the growing diversity in higher education. Jensen provides a summary of key factors that are crucial to student success and retention on an individual, institutional, and social level:

Table 1. Factors and Contributing Measures Influencing Retention

Factors Influencing Retention	Examples
Individual Level	
Academic Performance	College GPA and academic performance, high school GPA, course load and credits earned, academic self-discipline
Attitudes and Satisfaction	Positive attitude about academics, commitment to college, sense of belonging and social connectedness
Institutional Level	
Academic Engagement	Undergraduate research activities, university size, opportunities to join clubs
Social and External Level	
Social and Family Support	Faculty and staff support, family support, familiar and authentic cultural environment, sense of belonging and community, mattering or sense of importance

Figure 1: Umi Jensen (2011) Factors and Contributing Measures Influencing Retention

Individually a student must perform academically. Jensen explains, “Academic performance does not simply refer to GPA but also to academic discipline” (p. 3). The academic achievement of freshman students is influenced by their academic self-discipline. Self-Efficacy theory plays a role attitude and self-satisfaction. Nevs, Evans, and Sergerstrom (2009) “found that dispositional and academic optimism were associated with better motivation and adjustment, reduced drop-out rates, and higher GPA” (as cited in Jensen, 2012, p. 3). When students are motivated to learn, their stamina and will to learn is stronger. Nevs, Evans, and Sergerstrom (2009) “concluded that with increased self-efficacy and a ‘belief in a positive outcome, students can succeed in the academic world, regardless of whether or not they are optimists’” (as cited in Jensen, 2012, p. 3).

Moreover, Academic Engagement on an institutional level positively influences retention. Students need to become integrated whether joining a club or organization associated to their interest or major or seizing opportunities to do research on campus. Finally, social and external levels impact retention. Jensen explains, “For minority students, especially Native Americans, social support and family matter greatly in their retention and successful college experience” (p. 3). The feeling of being in a place that is a safe haven or feels like a family environment enhances retention. Jensen states, “Current theoretical frameworks for understanding student retention are integrating Indigenous perspectives on education and placing greater responsibility on institutions to remove systematic obstacles for college completion” (p. 4).

In addition, reflecting on student experience is important to understanding retention. Dev. K. Dalal, Milton D. Hakel, Michael T. Sliter, and Sarah R. Kirkendall conducted a student that observed the classroom reflections of students. Hopkins (1997) states, “reflection is the ability to think critically about successes and failures, extract ideas and information from a variety of sources, and recognize when current information can be used in the future (as cited in Dalal et. al., 2012, p. 75). When students reflect on their experiences, they not only are provided with the ability to understand themselves and their abilities. There are many benefits to reflection. Reflection shows a spike in knowledge and the enhancement and growth of a student. Reflection also helps professors better their own classroom experience. E-portfolios have become a significant tool for reflection. Dalal et. al. explains, “The benefit of combining reflections with e-Portfolio artifacts allows students to gain a deeper appreciation for assignments and lessons” (p. 77). Reflection allows a student to find a deeper meaning to their educational experience. In this study nine raters, three graduate students of psychology, four undergraduate students, one non-research assistant, and one faculty member rated a variety of reflections collected from 324 e-

portfolio users. 1, 456 reflections were submitted. After careful analysis and coding of the reflections and gathered scores from the nine raters, it was shown that there is a positive relationship between reflection, GPA, and retention are positively correlated.

Student attendance also plays a critical role on their GPA. Researcher Mohamad Hani Termos (2013) conducted a quantitative study on student attendance and academic performance through the use of a Classroom Performance System. Instructional technology was used to “increase student performance and promote active learning” (p. 68). This type of technology is known as a Class Performance System (CPS). A Classroom Performance System can vary in name based on manufacturers. Termos (2013) explains, “Some of the names are group response system, student response system, audience response system, audience voting system, classroom communication system, classroom response system, electronic response system, and personal response system” (p. 68). These systems continue to be attractive teaching tools. According to Researcher Fies (2005), “The two main factors that make this technology effective in increasing student participation are anonymity and group learning” (as cited in Termos, 2013, p. 68). During this study Termos observed the effectiveness of CPS and the “relation to participation, attendance, and achievement of students in multicultural Anatomy and Physiology classes at South Texas College” (p. 70). A quasi-experimental design was used. Four experimental classes were observed with one as a control class. All sections were taught under the same teaching standards. However, three groups used CPS and the controlled group did not. In the controlled class and one experiential class were taught by Termos and the other three classes were taught by two instructors differing in age and teaching experiences to eliminate any bias (p. 69). In the controlled class, attendance was measured by sign in sheets daily. In the other three classes, attendance was measured through the CPS. Participation in the CPS classes was measure by the

number of clickers used and documented on the CPS. Students worked in groups of three to four to encourage active learning (p. 69). 129 students were enrolled in the program, but only 120 signed consent forms. The 9 that did not sign decided not to show up for class. The controlled group consisted of 32 students. Participation was shown in a high percentage for the CPS classes. Termos explains, “The four CPS experimental sections had high percentages of participation, which did not go below 86.8%, while, in the control group, participation did not exceed 68%” (p. 70). Lectures were given to the control group in the absence of CPS. There was a drop in attendance in the controlled class. Termos states, “Over the semester, there was at least a 10% higher attendance rate in the experimental sections than that of the control group. In the control group, attendance dropped to as low as 68.7% and had an average of 78.5%” (p. 71). On the other hand, the CPS courses had a better average in attendance. Termos explains, “the lowest attendance in the CPS sections was 76.5%, and the lowest average of attendance among the four CPS experimental sections was 87.5%” (p.71). Achievement was assessed through pre and post-tests. During the pre-test the control group had the second highest score average. However, During the post-test, all of the CPS classes had a higher score than that of the controlled group. Termos states, “all experimental sections’ averages on the posttest were higher than that of the control group that had 74.74% increase even though the score average on the pretest was the second highest” (p. 73). Ultimately, this study shows that the students in CPS classes had higher rates of achievement.

In addition, Anna Lukkarinen, Paula Koivukangas, and Tomi Seppala (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between class attendance and student performance. Lukkarinen et. al. (2016) state, “Students’ class attendance and engagement plays an important role in today’s higher education” (p. 341). Retaining students in a classroom is valuable to a Professor because

it shows that student's desire to come to class. Lukkarinen et. al. (2016) explain, "Several factors can influence the level of attendance, including university culture, workload, teaching methods, and the teacher. Class attendance can vary considerably across countries, universities, and courses" (p. 342). The Professor plays a pivotal role in keeping students retained in order for them to enhance their learning. Lukkarinen et. al. collected data from 86 students in an Advanced Methodological course at Finnish University in Europe. Variables considered were exam points, total attendance, bonus motivation (extra points), age, gender, and pre-course. Students were placed in three distinct groups. Group 1 consisted of 43 students who dropped out of the course before final exams and Groups 2 (29 students) and 3 (14 students) were students who received exam points based on "varying levels of class attendance" (p. 343). Descriptive statistics show the level of success in exam rates for the groups of students. Lukkarinen et. al discovered, "one of the students in group 3 received very low points in the exam. The minimum number of points is 36, while the minimum number of points earned by students in group 2, who attended classes more actively, is much lower at 4. Similarly, the average exam points of group 2 are, at 53.6 points, lower than the average of group 3, at 56.2 points" (p. 344). Their research also showed a correlation in exam points with attendance points, bonus points, and gender. Lukkarinen et. al explain, "Exam points have a positive correlation with attendance, bonus points, and gender (with females earning higher exam points). Belonging to the female gender is also positively correlated with attendance and bonus points" (p. 344).

Furthermore, students in group 3 who had lower attendance were surveyed with the following questions: What influenced your decision not to attend classes? And What, in your view, enabled you to pass the exam nevertheless?" (p. 346). This group had a homogenous response of "the timing of classes overlapped with their other courses or with work" (p. 346).

The researchers also found a discrepancy in gender for group 3. Lukkarinen et. al. discovered, "...group 3 is that it only consist of male students, although 20% of all course participants were female. Males may be more risk-taking than females or have higher confidence in their ability to succeed without attending classes" (p. 346). This information is applicable to both professors and students. Lukkarinen et. al. explain, "First, they [results] can be used as a means to motivate students to attend teaching, because attendance is demonstrably related to learning outcomes. Second, they can be used to provide direction to those students who cannot or do not wish to attend teaching" (p. 346). Ultimately, attendance plays a significant role in student academic performance.

David O. Allen and Don J. Webber (2010) conducted a study that showed a connection between attendance and exam performance. Allen and Webber explore the link of absenteeism with academic performance in Higher Education. They explore the significance of attendance policy and student specific factors that lead to absence. In addition, they compare their findings to Marburger's (2006) study on whether attendance policy should be implemented or removed for better results in attendance.

The research is based on Marburger's (2006) study on the implementation of attendance policy. One cohort of students' variation of behavior is observed to show the final results on exams due to their attendance or non-attendance in class. A 12 week module ran in which students were split from the cohort into three seminar groups. Seminar one was at 11:30am, Seminar two was at 1:30pm, and Seminar three was at 3:30pm. During this observation students receive a mark or a tick for class attendance. There were five important variables observed. According to Allen and Webber (2010), "for this cohort five important variables were parameterised [parameterized]; these relate to attendance, ability, two variables which represent

attempts to capture the different learning and revision strategies students appear to adopt when preparing for the exam, and a peer group effect” (p. 7). The exam performance was assessed for these students. A cohort of students was observed and split into three seminar groups. Each of the three seminar groups’ attendance was observed during this study. The data collected was class attendance marks and assignments submitted. There were also observations collected to show student social connections in classrooms. The data was analyzed through statistical analysis using RESET (Ramsey Regression Equation Specification Error Test) and F-tests. The results displayed that attendance is only a small portion of student achievement. However, the results displayed that student outcomes were better with attendance. Those who missed assignments and presentations received lower exam results. A transparent link was found between attendance and exam. There was also a connection between social relationships and attendance. This study can be used to show that students have a higher academic performance when they attend class. Students enjoy having social connections with others to make their class experience more gratifying. Oftentimes, students will not desire to attend class based on peer groups. Lack of connection with peer groups will in turn cause absenteeism. This study helps to make a connection between a more engaging classroom and academic performance.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The objective of this Comparative Case Study Analysis is to examine the relationship of the analytic framework used in three relative studies. A synthesis of methodology, instruments, and variables will provide an extensive investigation of similarities and differences in each study. In addition, Methodological analysis, participants involved, and collected data will be punctuated to discern the rationale used in each study. Key Evaluating Questions (KEQs) and strategies used by Researchers will be examined. In the following studies, the researchers emphasize classroom instructional methods and their relation to academic performance.

Case Study One, entitled “The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theory” (2010), provides insight on academic performance and student retention. Academic goals provide an increase in student motivation which enhances predicted GPA. This study is significant to the Comparative Case Study analysis because the findings will demonstrate an improvement in student retention and GPA when students are integrated in a classroom that provides purpose and goals.

Case Study Two, “A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference?” (2010), provides insight on an active learning strategy and how it impacts student GPA and overall academic achievement. Students are successful in college when they meet their academic goals. This study is significant because the findings demonstrate that group experiences help provide personal growth to students. This leads to their engagement in the classroom and a rise in their GPA.

Case Study Three, “Learning Environment, Interaction, Sense of Belonging and Student Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups” (2010), provides insight on the link between the instructional method of Active Learning and the relationship to student academic achievement and retention. This study is significant to the Comparative Case Study Analysis because it

demonstrates the importance for minority students to excel in the classroom so they remain retained.

Case Study One: Friedman, B.A. and Mandel, R.G. (2010), The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theories. J. College Student Retention, 11 (2) p. 227-246

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2190/CS.11.2.d>

Barry A. Friedman and Rhonda G. Mandel (2010) conducted a study on the importance of Academic Performance in relation to student retention. They focused on the Expectancy and Goal setting theory to predict college student GPA of first year students. Friedman and Mandel (2010) state, “Students’ academic expectancy motivation at the start of the college significantly predicted cumulative GPA at the end of their first year” (p. 227). Helping student set academic goals is important for a Professor. Friedman and Mandel explain, “The present study used expectancy and goal setting theories to understand and predict student motivation to perform well and stay in college” (231). A Student Motivation Questionnaire (SQM) was administered to collect data.

Methodology

Research Design. A Student Motivation Questionnaire (SQM) was developed by Friedman and Lechner in 2005 that specifically measures freshman college student goal setting behaviors and expectancy instruments. This survey is used to acquire data on student retention and academic performance based on a student’s motivation in the classroom.

Hypotheses.

H1: Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores (SAT) and High school GPA will predict college academic performance and retention.

H2: Freshmen that enter college with higher motivation to perform academically and socially in college are more likely to stay in college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs.

H3: Freshmen that set academic and social goals are more likely to stay in college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs

Study Participants. 583 freshman students at a state college in northern New York were participants. 65% were female, 14% were minorities, and 60% were students whose parents earned a college degree.

Data Collection. 72 items were listed by using SQM. Responses were placed on a 7-point Likert scale and measured the following: performance and expectancies, approach to goal setting, grade attractiveness, attractiveness of making friends, and effort to obtain good grades.

Data Analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to code data and analyze student responses. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) used retention as an independent variable on three levels: Academically disqualified, Left school after one year, and stayed in school after their first year. A multiple regression analysis found the relationship between students' level of motivation and academic performance which impacted their GPA after one year. The controlled variables were: gender, race, and parent education.

Significance Freidman and Mandal's (2010) study can be used to show the importance of student academic achievement and retention. Students must have set academic goals to achieve

higher GPA and remained retained. This study can be used to explain the importance of the Expectancy theory or Path-Goal theory to motivate students in the classroom.

Case Study Two: Tsay M. and Brady, M. (2010). A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference? Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 10 (2), p.78-89

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ890724.pdf>

Mina Tsay and Miranda Brady (2010) conducted a study on Active pedagogy in relation to and academic achievement. Their study displays an understanding of student involvement in the classroom. Because student engagement is crucial to learning, Tsay and Brady (2010) explain, “To meet the demand, many educators are using active learning pedagogies, such as cooperative or team-based learning” (p.78). This study shows the benefits of retaining students through active learning. Tsay and Brady state, “One possible explanation for cooperative learning’s success is that effective learning often occurs through an individual’s interaction with his or her environment” (p.79). A positive relationship was discovered between student GPA and active learning. Tsay and Brady explain, “A significant positive relationship was found between the degree to which grades are important to a student and his or her active participation in cooperative learning” (p.78). Classroom observations, Test Scores, Quiz grades, and Final Grades were instruments used for research.

Methodology

Research Design. This empirical analysis uses experiments and content analysis to collect data from students who were separated into groups. At the beginning of the semester, participants were separated into consistent groups of four to six and were assigned a group

research project. Each group was assigned a code. A research project was provided to be worked on over the course of four months.

Research Question. What is the relationship between student involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance in a communication research methods course?

Hypotheses.

H1: Student involvement in cooperative learning is positively associated with academic performance.

H2: The importance of grades to a student is positively associated with academic performance.

H3: The importance of group success to a student is positively associated with involvement in cooperative learning.

Study Participants. The participants were 24 undergraduate students at a large Northeastern University who attended a communications research course. Their ages were from 18 to 22. The gender breakdown was 40.2% male and 59.8% female. Demographically there were 87.5% White, 5.5% Asian, 3.2% African American, 2.1% Hispanic, 1.2% American Indian, and 2.5% who did not indicate race.

Data Collection. Individual surveys were provided to participants. The survey displayed 13 items that assessed student active participation in cooperative learning. A Likert scale from 0 (never) to 100 (always) was used for responses. Academic performance was measured through RATs (short, closed-book quizzes with 12 multiple choice questions that cover topics from class) and final grades which were calculated through the following: Individual RATs, Group RATs, final project, mid-semester assignments, and in class exercises.

Data Analysis. Bivariate correlations were used to show the following: relationship between involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance; level of importance of sense of achievement, grades, peer acceptance, and group success; and the relationship between student involvement and cooperative learning.

Significance The research of Mina Tsay and Miranda Brady (2010) demonstrates that the instructional method of group work provides an increase of student GPA and an increase of active participation. Tsay and Brady explain, “Results from the study support the notion that cooperative learning is indeed an active pedagogy that works to foster higher academic achievement” (p.85). This study provides insight on the connectivity of peers and the advancement of students academically.

Case Study Three: Meeuwisse, M., Severiens, S. E., and Born, M. P. (2010). Learning Environment, Sense of Belonging, and Study Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups. Springer, p.528-545
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11162-010-9168-1>

Marieke Meeuwisse, Sabine E. Severiens, and Marise Ph. Born (2010), conducted a study that investigated ethnic minorities and their relationship to learning environments, student interaction with peers and teachers, sense of belonging, and study success. Active learning techniques were used to enhance motivation and engagement in a classroom setting. Meeuwisse et. al. (2010) states, “... activating and cooperative learning environments foster peer and faculty interaction, and in turn, that this interaction positively affects generic learning outcomes such as levels of engagement and the decision to continue studying” (p. 533). Surveys were used to collect data from participants.

Methodology

Research Design. Meeuwise et. al. (2010) investigate the link between the learning environment, teacher and peer interactions, sense of belonging, and study success. Specifically, groups of ethnic minorities and majority students would be tested through the following model:

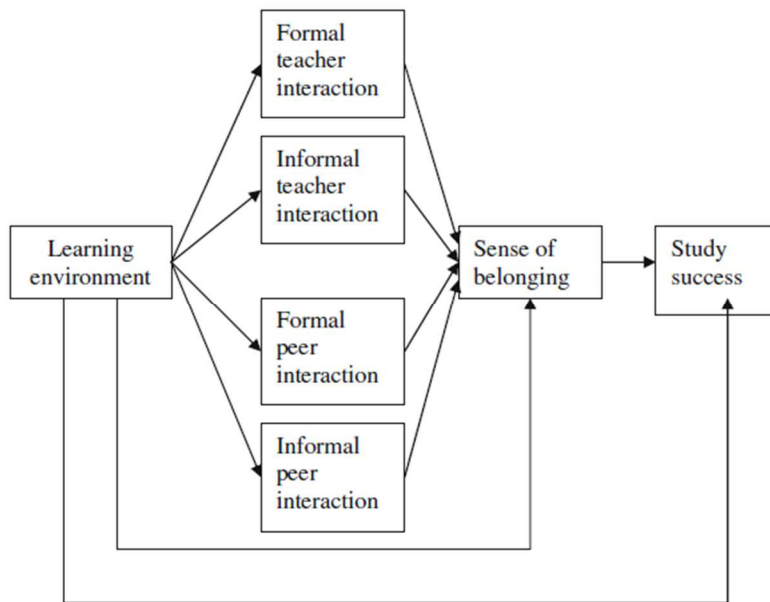


Figure 2: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Theoretical Model

Research Questions.

1. To what extent can the positive links between the learning environment, peer and teacher interactions, sense of belonging and study success as described in the theoretical model be confirmed?
2. Does the model hold true for both the group of minority students and the group of majority students? And if not, are the relationships different in a group minority students compared to the relationships in a group of majority students?

Study Participants. 523 first year students from four different universities in the Netherlands were participants. 145 were ethnic minorities and 378 were majority students. First year students were specifically chosen due to the relatively high drop-out rates between first to second year.

Data Collection. Participants were provided surveys. Items on the scale included: type of teaching, type of exams, and teacher's behavior. The responses used a 5-point Likert scale 1 being never to 5 being very often.

Data Analysis. Linear structural modeling analyses were used to determine the relationships between learning environment, four types of interaction, sense of belonging, and study progress.

Significance. Mueewise et. al (2010) found that an active learning environment in fact “did foster quality interactions among students and between students and their teachers” (p. 543). This also led to a sense of belonging for both minority and majority students. Implementing learning that connects and develops relationships in the classroom will provide academic achievement and retention in the classroom. Meeuwise et. al. states, “Since their feeling of belonging influences their study progress, it is important to enable majority students to develop such informal relationships within the institution” (p. 544). This study will be used to show how instructional methods such as active learning influences relationships, encourages academic achievement, and enhances retention.

Summary of Findings

The intent of assessing these three studies is to show the connection of the importance of interactive instructional methods and student learning. These studies demonstrate that students

desire a more engaging classroom to increase positive GPA outcome and retention. With the implementation of various instructional methods that cater to these desires, the overall academic performance of a student can significantly increase. These studies provide evidence and insights on how to create a more attractive classroom atmosphere. These studies will prove necessary for both instructors and students looking for new innovation in the classroom.

Chapter IV will consist of the investigator's analysis of Methodology utilized in each study. Recognition will be given to corresponding themes. An in-depth review of each study's Data Analysis and Data Collection will be provided. The literature review from each study will connect important components to comprehend the importance of the study. A thorough comparison and contrast will be illustrated to demonstrate resemblances and demarcations between each study. Using Atlas.Ti 8, I took the findings from each study and coded and themed relevant information that will provide a rigorous review of the outcomes demonstrated from the results of each study. Recommendations will be offered to give additional knowledge of Instructional Methods and their relationship to Student Achievement and Retention of freshman students. In addition, these recommendations can present further enlightenment for Faculty and Professional Staff in Higher Education institutions.

CHAPTER IV: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Each case study was chosen because it supplies an understanding of the impact the learning environment has on Student Achievement and Student Retention. The following studies: “The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theories” by Friedman and Mandel (2010), A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference?” by Tsay and Brady (2010), and Learning Environment, Sense of Belonging, and Study Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups” by Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010), provide a distinct view on Instructional Methods and their impingement on students within the classroom. Each study offers techniques and the outcome of those techniques in a classroom environment. In addition, each study supports the theories refined in this Comparative Case Study Analysis: Path-Goal Theory and Dewey’s Theory of Education. In this chapter, a comparative analysis was conducted to convey commonalities in themes, analysis and findings, and results and conclusions.

In the Case Study by Friedman and Mandel (2010) entitled, “The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theories,” the research examined academic motivation using goal setting for first year students. Therefore, cumulative GPA was predicted to acknowledge an increase in student performance and retention. Next, in the case study by Tsay and Brady (2010) entitled, “A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working in teams make a difference?” the research examined active pedagogy to demonstrate a relationship between cooperative learning and academic performance. Lastly, in the case study by Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) entitled, “Learning Environment, Sense of Belonging, and Study

Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups,” the research examines the relationships between the learning environment and its impact on student retention and overall achievement.

In addition, in this chapter, the investigator used Atlas. Ti 8, to code and theme data that will show the density of the results and provide Visualizing linkages. Furthermore, the investigator provided a thorough description of each study and examined the relative and extraneous components of each. The diagrams and charts will portray an in-depth at the data. The Co-occurrences will be assessed in response to the Research Questions. Atlas. Ti 8 is a data driven software that will depict similarities and differences within the research.

Research Study Design

The research of each study used a Quantitative Design. Creswell (2009) explains that Quantitative design “means that the researcher draws conclusions from the results for the research questions, hypotheses, and the larger meaning of the study” (p. 292). In addition, the studies use a Transformative Approach. Transformative Design uses, “The basic mixed methods approach was an explanatory sequential design with an initial survey, a quantitative phase, followed by an interview, qualitative phase” (Creswell, 2009, p. 286). These design approaches can be used to discover linkages in this Comparative Case Study Analysis.

Cross Analysis of Study Design

A Transformative or mixed methods design was used for the three studies. Creswell (2009) explains, “Mixed methods involves combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study” (p. 43). These studies use questionnaires and surveys to acquire a social or emotional connection and assess variables. Creswell (2009) states, “Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative

data usually includes closed-ended responses such as found on questionnaires or psychological instruments” (p. 43). The most prominent design in each study is Quantitative. Creswell (2009) explains that quantitative study designs, “have been elaborated into more complex relationships among variables found in techniques of structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, and logistic regression” (p. 41). The three studies express how the use of the Quantitative Approach can be used to fortify the data collected and research conducted. The Quantitative Approach, in Friedman and Mandel’s (2010) study, provided clarity on predicted academic performance and retention when involved in goal setting. Using questionnaires to survey students and assessing these on a multiple regression analysis to predict the value of the variable retention and the variable academic performance as it relates to goal setting assists in providing an accurate account and outcome of the data. Creswell (2009) states, “quantitative strategies have involved complex experiments with many variables and treatments...” (41). Creswell (2009) explains, survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions. The Quantitative Approach used in the study conducted by Tsay and Brady (2010) used surveys to assess the independent variable of Cooperative Learning and the dependent variable Academic Performance in student groups divided into four to six. The surveys for Cooperative Learning looked at four factors, Sense of Achievement, Grades, Peer Acceptance, and Group Success and Test Scores known as RATs were used to assess Academic Performance. Bivariate Correlations (the analysis between the relationship of two variables) were used to discover the correlation between involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance and correlations between the importance of sense of achievement, grades, peer acceptance, group success, and involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance. Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) used the Quantitative Study design for a more complex

experiment by using their own theoretical model to find links between the learning environment and its impact on majority and minority students. They also used surveys to measure interaction in the learning environment. Formal Teacher Interaction, Informal Teacher Interaction, Formal Peer Interaction, and Informal Peer Interaction were assessed in the learning environment to measure the outcome of sense of belonging and study success. The theoretical model they created was assessed for the group of minority students and the group of minority students and assessed using a linear structural modeling analysis to find interrelationships between the two groups.

Although a quantitative design was used for each of these study designs, a qualitative design also embodies a role in each study. Creswell (2009) states, the historic origin for qualitative research comes from anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and evaluation. Qualitative designs can be found in all of the studies. For example, each study shares a commonality of being a case study design. Creswell (2009), explains, “Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (42). In addition, Friedman and Mandel (2010), Tsay and Brady (2010), and Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) use a qualitative design approach to obtain a social understanding of their participants. For instance, Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) used Grounded theory in their study design. Creswell (2009) explains, Grounded Theory is a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants (41). Their entire study is built upon the foundation of their own theoretical model or grounded theory. On the other hand, Friedman and Mandel (2010) and Tsay and Brady (2010) used Ethnography to acquire a social understanding

of their participants. Creswell (2009) states, “Ethnography is a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviors, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time” (42). These studies utilize participants from various backgrounds, genders, and ethnicities. Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010), also used a form of Ethnography since their study observes social interactions in the learning environment for minority and majority groups of students.

Common Themes of the Study Design

Each study used a Mix Methods design to discover relationships that show an impact of instructional methods and student achievement and retention. There is a common theme that academic achievement is critical to the retention of students and that the learning environment influences these variables. Goal setting, group work, and interaction were shown to influence student retention. Furthermore, the researchers reviewed types of social interactions from peers and teachers that provide a connection to students that motivates them to participate and academically pursue good grades. The theme of instructional methods in the learning environment provides evidence that an active environment will encourage students to achieve higher academically resulting in good grades and overall good grade point average as well as remain in the University setting after freshman year.

Study Participants

Study participants are a critical part of research. Creswell (2009) explains, “the researcher needs to anticipate any cultural, religious, gender, or other differences in the participants and sites that need to be respected” (p. 136). Participants must be well informed that they will be a part of a study. Creswell (2009) states, “Participants need to know that they are actively

participating in a research study” (p.137). Participants should be displaying collaborative skills such as providing reciprocity throughout the process. Researchers must avoid exploiting, deceiving, and collecting harmful information from participants (Creswell, 2009, p. 137). The research should not show partiality and should not pressure participants to be involved in their study.

Case Study One-Goal Setting. In Friedman and Mandel’s (2010) study, undergraduate students attending a New York State College were participants in a survey. The demographic breakdown showed 65% were females, 14% were minorities, and 60% had educated parents with a college degree. The participant retention showed differentiation as 45% were currently enrolled after their freshman year, 36% did not return, and 37% were academically disqualified (GPA failed to reach the requirements). The participants were surveyed to detect a connection between student academic and social motivation, and student goal setting during their freshman year of college.

Case Study Two-Cooperative Learning. In Tsay and Brady’s (2010) study, participants included 24 Undergraduate Students at Northeastern University who were a part of a communication research class who were divided into groups of 4 to 6. The demographic breakdown showed 40.2% were males and 59.9% were females ages 18 to 22. The demographics included: 87.5% white, 5.5% Asian, 3.2% African American, 1.2% Hispanic, 1.2% American Indian, and 2.5% who did not indicate their race. These student groups were provided with codes that helped differentiate the performance of each group by assessing questionnaires, surveys, tests, and that showed group and individual performance in class. The participation of these groups assisted in discovering a connection between cooperative learning and academic achievement and retention in a University setting.

Case Study Three-Learning Environment and Retention. In Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born's (2010) study, participants were inclusive of 523 first year students from four different universities in the Netherlands. 378 were majority students and 145 were ethnic minority. First year students were specifically selected due to the decline in retention between first and second year. These students participated in surveys used to measure an active learning environment such as the type of teaching, type of exams, and teacher behavior. The surveys was used to find links between the learning environment and the impact interaction has on study success and sense of belonging to minority and majority students.

Cross Analysis of Study Participants

Friedman and Mandel (2010) used relatively diverse undergraduate participants who experienced different levels of retention. There were participants who currently enrolled after their freshman year, participants that did not return, and participants who were academically disqualified because their GPA failed to meet the requirements. In addition, parent education was also reviewed. Utilizing this audience provides a reasonable outcome for data driven purposes that show the importance of goal setting for academic performance and retention. Participants who have experienced issues with retention can provide clarity and information on their performance that cause them not to return to the University. Collecting this information can fuel a more successful outcome that examines retention groups and the impact goal setting had on their academic performance.

Tsay and Brady (2010) took a group approach for their participants. Dividing 24 freshman students into groups allowed for observation of various social interactions between peers and teachers. The participants provided a perspective on how an active and collaborative learning approach impacts student performance and retention. Cooperative Learning was used by

evaluating overall group performance and individual performance in a learning environment. The information provided by participants allowed the researchers to discover the components of cooperative learning that increased academic performance and student retention.

Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) used a large sampling size of a diverse group of freshman students from four different universities to acquire data on the impact of the learning environment on majority and minority freshman students. The researchers looked at study success and sense of belonging that ensued from informal and formal peer and teacher interactions. The participants allowed the researchers to attain enough data to provide evidence of a relationship between academic achievement and retention for their theoretical model.

Common Theme in Participants

Each study used freshman participants. Each study recognized the importance of using freshman in their studies because the first year for freshman is critical for retention. Friedman and Mandel (2010) actually observed participants who were at different retention levels, Tsay and Brady (2010) grouped participants to display how togetherness builds retention, and Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) used a large pool of freshman minority and majority students to discover the components that solidify retention for both majority and minority students.

Data Collection and Findings

Each of the studies used a survey design for data collection. Creswell (2009) explains, “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 200). Instrumentation is used in the form of a survey. Creswell (2009) explains, “As part of rigorous data collection, the proposal

developer also provides detailed information about the actual survey instrument to be used in the proposed study” (205). Research questions/hypothesis are tested from the collected data

Case Study One-Goal Setting. Friedman and Mandal (2010), predicted Academic Performance and Student Retention. They used a Student Motivation Questionnaire (SMQ) to measure college freshman’s goal setting behaviors according to Vroom’s Expectancy Theory. There were 72 total items that were measured using a 7-point Likert scale. Three demographic variables included were: gender, race, and parent education (college educated or non-college educated). Freshman students attending a New York State College were surveyed three weeks after the semester began. Of the 1,365 surveys emailed, only 583 students participated. 65% were females, 14% were minorities, and 60% had educated parents with a college degree. Student response rates differed by retention status. 45% were currently enrolled after their freshman year, 36% did not return, and 37% were academically disqualified (GPA failed to meet the requirements). A multiple regression analysis determined the connection between student academic and social motivation and goal setting initially entering college. The variables of race, gender, and parent education were used as well as SAT scores and High School GPA. The data was analyzed using ANOVA.

Furthermore, three hypotheses were tested to predict student retention and performance:

H1: Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores (SAT) and High school GPA will predict college academic performance and retention.

H2: Freshmen that enter college with higher motivation to perform academically and socially in college are more likely to stay in college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs.

H3: Freshmen that set academic and social goals are more likely to stay in

college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs. The table below explains the standard deviations of the goal setting variables:

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Goal Setting Variables^a (N = 581)

	Mean	SD
I have a high degree of influence in determining my school goals.	5.51	1.50
I should not have too much difficulty in reaching my school goals.	5.02	1.35
I receive a considerable amount of feedback concerning the quality of my output in school.	4.34	1.45
Most of my peers try to outperform one another on their school goals.	3.73	1.55
My school goals are very clear and specific.	5.03	1.63
My school goals will require a great deal of effort from me.	5.71	1.67
I really have little voice in the formulation of my school goals. ^b	5.54	1.56
I am provided with a great deal of feedback on the quality of my schoolwork.	4.15	1.52
I think my school goals are ambiguous and unclear. ^b	5.34	1.64
It will take a high degree of skill on my part to fully attain my school goals.	5.26	1.51
The setting of my school goals is pretty much under my own control.	5.42	1.49
My instructors seldom let me know how well I am progressing toward my school goals. ^b	3.97	1.43
A very competitive atmosphere exists among my peers and me with regard to attaining our respective school goals.	3.41	1.63
I fully understand which of my school goals are more important than others; I have a clear sense of priorities on these goals.	5.27	1.45
My school goals are quite difficult to attain. ^b	4.18	1.46
I work with my instructors when determining my school goals.	3.79	1.50

^aItems were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = "strongly disagree," 4 = "neither agree nor disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree."

^bThe scales on this item were reversed.

Figure 3: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Mean and Standard Deviations for Goal Setting

Figure 4 below explains the rotated factor matrix:

	Factors		
	Goal Clarity and influence	Peer competition	Goal performance feedback
My school goals are very clear and specific.	.76		
I think my school goals are ambiguous and unclear. ^b	.74		
I have a high degree of influence in determining my school goals.	.73		
The setting of my school goals is pretty much under my own control.	.70		
I really have little voice in the formulation of my school goals. ^b	.62		
A very competitive atmosphere exists among my peers and me with regard to attaining our respective school goals.		.87	
Most of my peers try to outperform one another on their school goals.		.85	
My instructors seldom let me know how well I am progressing toward my school goals. ^b			.89
I am provided with a great deal of feedback on the quality of my schoolwork.			.65

^aExtraction method: principal component analysis with varimax with Kaiser normalization rotation.
^bScales were reversed.

Figure 4: Friedman and Mandal (2010)-Rotated Factor Matrix of Goal Setting Questions

Figure 5 below explains the standard deviations for independent variables:

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Students that Academically Disqualified, Did Not Return on Their Own Volition, and Returned After Their Freshman Year

	Academic disqualified (N = 58)		Did not return (N = 66)		Currently enrolled (N = 457)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Control variables						
Percent female	.53	.50	.68	.46	.66	.47
Percent minority	.17	.38	.09	.28	.10	.30
Parent education	.57	.50	.59	.49	.64	.48
SAT score	1013.10	168.64	1073.18	75.71	1059.04	139.29
HS GPA	82.10	11.68	87.98	4.50	88.07	4.41
Goal setting ^a						
Goal clarity and influence (factor 1)	-.06	.90	-.04	1.06	.01	1.00
Goal peer competition (factor 2)	-.35	.96	.11	1.05	.02	.98
Goal performance feedback (factor 3)	.08	1.05	-.09	1.00	.01	.99
Expectancies						
Academic motivation	140.57	69.05	151.45	59.74	153.33	64.97
Social motivation	117.20	64.78	112.44	61.09	128.27	68.41
Other variables						
Good grades are attractive	5.93	1.49	6.41	.72	6.33	1.19
Effort to get good grades	5.28	1.77	4.54	1.39	5.76	1.46
Making friends is attractive	5.91	1.30	5.98	1.22	5.94	1.17
Effort to make friends	4.86	1.65	4.92	1.48	5.05	1.55

^aStandardized factor scores.

Figure 5: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Means and Standard Deviations for Independent Variables

Figure 6 below retention status differences:

Table 4. Differences among Students that were Academically Disqualified, Did Not Return on Their Own Volition, and Returned After Their Freshman Year: Results of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Control, Goal Setting, Expectancy and Other Variables

	Sum of squares	Mean square	F
Control variables			
Percent female	.96	.48	2.13
Percent minority	.27	.13	1.40
Parent education	.39	.19	.85
SAT score	130424.44	65212.22	3.02*
HS GPA	1853.05	926.52	29.74***
Goal setting factors			
Goal specificity and priority (factor 1)	.44	.22	.22
Peer competition (factor 2)	8.64	4.32	4.37**
Goal participation and feedback (factor 3)	1.03	.51	.51
Expectancies			
Academic motivation	8396.18	4198.09	.99
Social motivation	18748.62	9374.31	2.07
Other variables			
Good grades are attractive	9.04	4.52	3.21*
Effort to get good grades	16.02	8.01	3.60*
Make friends is attractive	.16	.08	.05
Effort to make friends	2.40	1.20	.49

* $p \geq .05$. ** $p \geq .01$. *** $p \geq .001$.

Figure 6: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Differences in Student Retention Status

Figure 7 below explains first year GPA based on demographics, test scores, and goal setting:

Table 5. Control, Demographical, Expectancy, Goal Setting, and Other Variables Regressed on Student Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) After 1 Year of College^a

	β	t
Control variables		
Percent female	.01	.05
Percent minority	.01	.01
Parent education	.01	.43
SAT score	.10	2.27*
HS GPA	.41	9.41***
Expectancies		
Academic motivation	.13	2.67**
Social motivation	-.09	-1.79
Goal setting factors		
Goal specificity and priority (goal factor 1)	.02	.67
Peer competition (goal factor 2)	.03	.80
Goal participation and feedback (goal factor 3)	-.03	-.85
Other variables		
Good grades are attractive	.02	.54
Effort to get good grades	.08	1.63
Make friends is attractive	-.02	-.46
Effort to make friends	-.08	-1.74

^a $R = .50$, ($R^2 = .25$), $F = 16.86$, $p \leq .001$.

* $p \geq .05$. ** $p \geq .01$. *** $p \geq .001$.

Figure 7: Friedman and Mandal (2010)- Demographics

The charted data can be analyzed to answer the research hypotheses. The first hypothesis was Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores (SAT) and High school GPA will predict college academic performance and retention. Table 5 supports Hypothesis one. The data shows that the SAT scores and High School GPAs were low for students who were academically disqualified than those who returned or left on their own accord. The second hypothesis was Freshmen that enter college with higher motivation to perform academically and socially in college are more likely to stay in college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs. Table 5 also supports this hypothesis. Good grades were a motivating factor for students who were enrolled in class a second year. The effort put forth for achievement of good grades was more attractive for students who were retained versus those academically dismissed. Lastly, the third hypothesis was Freshmen that set academic and social goals are more likely to stay in college beyond their first year and achieve higher GPAs. Table 5 shows that goal setting was not a predictor of the outcome measure. However, the table does show that students who were academically disqualified had less drive for goal achievement.

Case Study Two-Cooperative Learning. Tsay and Brady (2010) explored the relationship between cooperative learning and academic performance in higher education. 24 Undergraduate Students at Northeastern University who attended a communication research course were participants. 40.2% were males and 59.9% were females ages 18 to 22. The demographics included: 87.5% white, 5.5% Asian, 3.2% African American, 1.2% Hispanic, 1.2% American Indian, and 2.5% who did not indicate their race. The 24 students were divided into groups that contained of 4 to 6 people per group and were assigned a class research project and various readiness assessment tests (RATs). Students were provided with codes for themselves and their groups that were used for issuing the anonymous surveys.

The Independent Variable was the involvement in cooperative learning. A 13-item survey was issued to evaluate student's active participation in cooperative learning. A Likert scale was used on a scale of 0 for never and 100 for always. Seven components were reviewed which included: group processing, motivation, competition, dependability, accountability, interactivity, and collaborative skills. Each component was measured as follows: Group processing by students ability to assist in accomplish group goal; Motivation by student's interest to partake in group activity; Competition by the student's care of others who might succeed them; Dependability by student's dependence on others to achieve the overall group goal; Accountability by student's ability to share work and be involved in the material; Interactivity by student's cooperation of others and willingness to learn from others; and Collaborative Skills by student's contribution of his/her own skills.

In addition, four factors were also reviewed: Sense of Achievement, Grades, Peer Acceptance, and Group Success using a 1 to 7 Likert scale. 1 for not important and 7 for very important. Moreover, the dependent variable was academic performance and was evaluated through the RATs scores. RATs contained 12 multiple choice questions on specific class topics administered at the beginning of class over a four-month period. These quizzes were both taken individually and as a group. The final grade for the course was inclusive of the following: Individual RATs, Group RATs, Final Project, Mid-Semester Assignments relative to the project, In-Class Exercises, each item was worth 20% of final grade.

The following three hypotheses were tested:

H1: Student involvement in cooperative learning is positively associated with academic performance.

H2: The importance of grades to a student is positively associated with academic

performance.

H3: The importance of group success to a student is positively associated with involvement in cooperative learning.

The research discovered a significant positive correlation between involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance. Students who actively participated in cooperative learning scored higher than students RAT score. This provided evidence to hypotheses one. Figure 8 below expresses the valuation:

Table 1. Correlations between involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance.

	Individual RAT scores	Group RAT scores	Final Course Grade
Involvement in Cooperative Learning	0.62***	0.46***	0.58***

*** $p < 0.001$

Figure 8: Tsay and Brady (2010)- Correlations Between Involvement in Cooperative Learning and Academic Performance

The research discovered a significant positive correlation between grade importance and academic performance on RATs. Sense of Belonging was also significant. This showed support to Hypotheses two. However, there was no significant difference between group success and involvement in cooperative learning. Therefore, there is no supporting evidence for hypotheses three. The table below shows this evaluation:

Table 2. Correlations between importance of sense of achievement, grades, peer acceptance, and group success and involvement in cooperative learning and academic performance.

Importance to Student in Class	Involvement in Cooperative Learning	Individual RAT Scores	Group RAT Scores	Final Course Grade
Sense of Achievement	0.09	0.17*	0.02	0.06
Grades	0.18*	0.25*	0.10	0.17*
Peer Acceptance	0.01	0.08	0.002	0.05
Group Success	0.04	0.03	0.0003	0.04

* $p < 0.05$

Figure 9: Tsay and Brady (2010)- Correlations Between Importance of Sense of Achievement, Grades, Peer Acceptance, and Group Success

The results support that involvement in cooperative learning strongly predicts student academic performance in class. Active learning can increase the outcome of good grades and overall student participation and performance in the classroom. Encouraging group work motivated students to be prepared for class, provide constructive feedback to peers, share their work, and verbally contribute ideas. Tsay and Brady (2010) explain, "...cooperative learning is indeed an active pedagogy that works to foster higher academic achievement" (p.85). The results of this study show that team-based learning presents a positive outcome in the classroom.

Case Study Two-Learning Environment and Retention. Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born's (2010) study investigates active learning environments along with student interaction with teachers and peers, sense of belonging, and study success. To examine these links, a theoretical model was created.

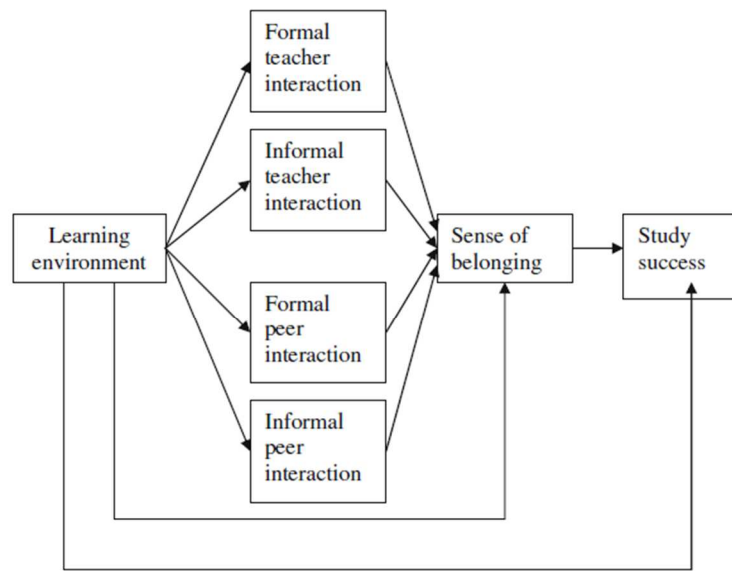


Fig. 1 Theoretical model

Figure 10: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Theoretical Model

The Research questions introduced were:

1. To what extent can the positive links between the learning environment, peer and teacher interactions, sense of belonging and study success as described in the theoretical model be confirmed?
2. Does the model hold true for both the group of minority students and the group of majority students? And if not, are the relationships different in a group minority students compared to the relationships in a group of majority students?

523 first year students from four different universities in the Netherlands participated. 378 were majority students and 145 were from ethnic minority. First year students were selected according to the high dropout rates. The participants' demographic background information can be seen in Figure 11.

Table 1 Participant background information

	No.	%
Gender		
Male	161	30.8
Female	361	69.0
Missing	1	.2
Total	523	100.0
Ethnicity		
Majority	378	72.3
Western minority	55	10.5
Non-Western minority	90	17.2
Total	523	100.0
Country of origin		
Netherlands	378	72.3
Morocco	9	1.7
Turkey	11	2.1
Surinam	27	5.2
Netherlands Antilles/Aruba	10	1.9
Other (non-)Western countries	88	16.8
Total	523	100.0
Gender * ethnicity		
Majority male	117	22.4
Majority female	260	49.7
Minority male	44	8.4
Minority female	101	19.3
Missing	1	0.2
Total	523	100.0

Figure 11: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Participant Background Information

Surveys were provided to measure active learning environments. Items included: type of teaching, type of exams, and teacher's behavior. An 8-item survey was rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, 1 being never and 5 being very often. Figure 12 shows the valuation:

Table 2 Means and standard deviations of the variables in the model

Scale	Respondents	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (minority-majority)
Learning environment (<i>k</i> = 8)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	3.00	.67	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	3.08	.63	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	2.97	.68	
Formal teacher interaction (<i>k</i> = 7)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	2.71	.73	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	2.70	.78	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	2.71	.71	
Informal teacher interaction (<i>k</i> = 8)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	2.25	.75	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	2.26	.76	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	2.24	.75	
Formal peer interaction (<i>k</i> = 8)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	3.47	.62	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	3.40	.66	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	3.50	.60	
Informal peer interaction (<i>k</i> = 5)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	3.71	.83	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	3.69	.87	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	3.72	.82	
Sense of belonging (<i>k</i> = 6)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	3.70	.70	Ns
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	3.62	.74	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	3.73	.68	
Study progress (credits)	Total group (<i>N</i> = 523)	45.09	17.96	2.85**
	Ethnic minority students (<i>N</i> = 145)	41.53	18.01	
	Majority students (<i>N</i> = 378)	46.45	17.77	

Note: Type of learning environment, formal teacher interaction, informal teacher interaction, formal peer interaction, informal peer interaction and sense of belonging were measured on a five-point scale. Credits were measured on a scale from 0 to 60

** $p < .01$

Figure 12: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)- Means and Standard Deviations of Variables

In addition, teacher and peer interactions were evaluated through interviews with 138 ethnic minority and majority students. These students were asked about their social and academic experience. A four-item measure of formal interaction and informal interaction with teachers and peers was developed from the interviews. Students were asked to rate these items on a 5-point Likert Scale, 1 being not true at all and 5 being completely true. Figure 13 shows the valuation:

Table 3 Items of teacher and peer interaction (formal and informal) scales

Scale	Items
Formal teacher interaction (<i>k</i> = 7)	<i>Interaction between teachers and students on university and study-related matters</i> Teachers approach me to enquire about my study progress Teachers are available for their students Teachers know my qualities Teachers have time to answer questions Teachers don't realize when you have a question (reverse scored) My contacts with teachers have a positive influence on my academic performance I learn a lot from the teachers at this institution
Informal teacher interaction (<i>k</i> = 8)	<i>Interaction between teachers and students concerning personal matters</i> Teachers are not interested in my personal situation (reverse scored) Teachers tell me about themselves Teachers say hello when we meet on campus Teachers don't know much about my personal situation (reverse scored) Teachers know my name Teachers never ask me how things are going at home (reverse scored) I talk about my personal situation with teachers I have good personal contacts with at least one teacher
Formal peer interaction (<i>k</i> = 8)	<i>Interaction among students regarding university and study-related matters</i> Fellow students invite me to work together on school tasks It is difficult to find a group of students to collaborate with (reverse scored) In this program, students work on their own Peer students approach me to discuss study tasks Peer students do not appreciate my feedback (reverse scored) Peer students listen to my remarks I collaborate well with fellow students My interpersonal relationships with fellow students have a positive influence on my study performance
Informal peer interaction (<i>k</i> = 5)	<i>Interaction among students regarding personal matters</i> I hardly know anyone here (reverse scored) Fellow students are interested in me Fellow students often ask me to spend time with them Peer students are involved with me I have close interpersonal relationships with fellow students

Figure 13: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)- Items of Teacher and Peer Interactions

A Linear structural modeling analyses was used to discover interrelationships between both groups, Ethnic Minority and Majority, and the learning environment, four types of interaction, sense of belonging and study progress. The results showed:

- learning environment to formal teacher interaction (standardized coefficient of .42);
- learning environment to informal teacher interaction (standardized coefficient of .42);
- learning environment to formal peer interaction (standardized coefficient of .27);
- formal teacher interaction to sense of belonging (standardized coefficient of .28);
- formal peer interaction to sense of belonging (standardized coefficient of .36);

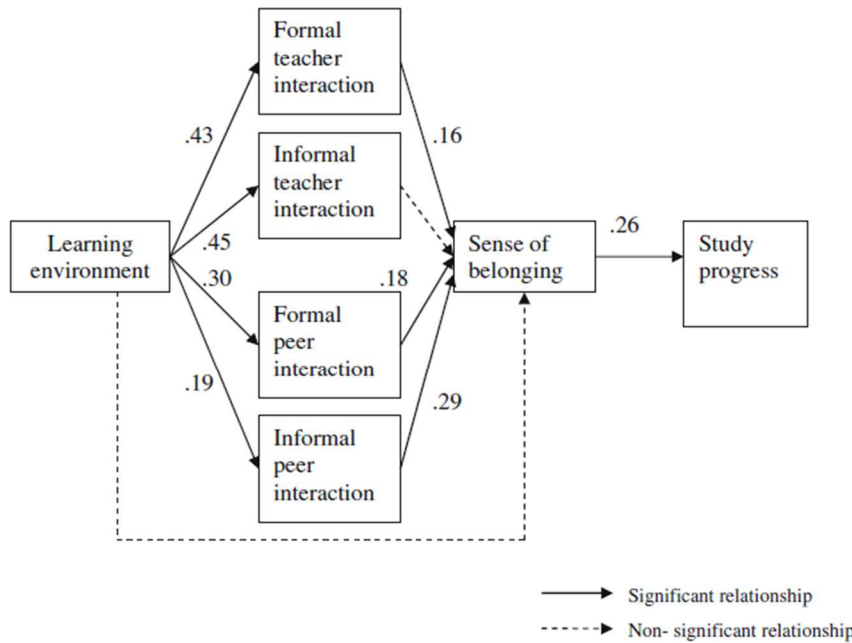


Fig. 2 Accepted model with statistically significant coefficients for total group of participants ($N = 523$) (chi-square = 10.80, $df = 5$, $p = .06$, RMSEA is .05 and the CFI is 1.00)

Figure 14: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Significant Coefficients for Group Participants

The model with both groups displayed support that the more active the learning environment becomes, the more minority students have better quality formal and informal interactions with their teachers. Collaborative work also positively impacted the learning environment. However, the model did not show a connection between the learning environment and sense of belonging for minority students and it did not show a connection between belonging at an institution and study progress. Figure 15 shows regression coefficients for both groups.

Table 4 Standardized regression coefficients of the models of the total group of students, ethnic minority students and majority students

	All students (<i>N</i> = 523)	Ethnic minorities (<i>N</i> = 145)	Majorities (<i>N</i> = 378)
Learning environment > Formal teacher interaction	.43	.42	.44
Learning environment > Informal teacher interaction	.45	.42	.47
Learning environment > Formal peer interaction	.30	.27	.32
Learning environment > Informal peer interaction ^a	.19	.12	.22
Formal teacher interaction > Sense of belonging ^b	.16	.28	.07
Informal teacher interaction > Sense of belonging ^{c,h}	-.08	-.13	-
Formal peer interaction > Sense of belonging ^d	.18	.36	.08
Informal peer interaction > Sense of belonging ^e	.29	.11	.39
Learning environment > Sense of belonging ^f	.08	.13	.06
Sense of belonging > Study progress ^g	.26	.13	.34
Informal teacher integration > Study progress ⁱ	-	-	-.12

^a Tested relationship was not significant for ethnic minority students ($p < .05$)

^b Tested relationship was not significant for majority students ($p < .05$)

^c Tested relationship was not significant in the model for all students and ethnic minority students ($p < .05$)

^d Tested relationship was not significant for majority students ($p < .05$)

^e Tested relationship was not significant for ethnic minority students ($p < .05$)

^f Tested relationship was not significant in any of the models ($p < .05$)

^g Tested relationship was not significant for ethnic minority students ($p < .05$)

^h This arrow was not drawn in the model for majority students

ⁱ This arrow was not drawn in the full sample model and the model for ethnic minority students

Figure 15: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Standard Regression Coefficients for Group of Participants.

Two other models were tested. One specifically for Minorities (Figure 16) and the other for Majorities (Figure 17).

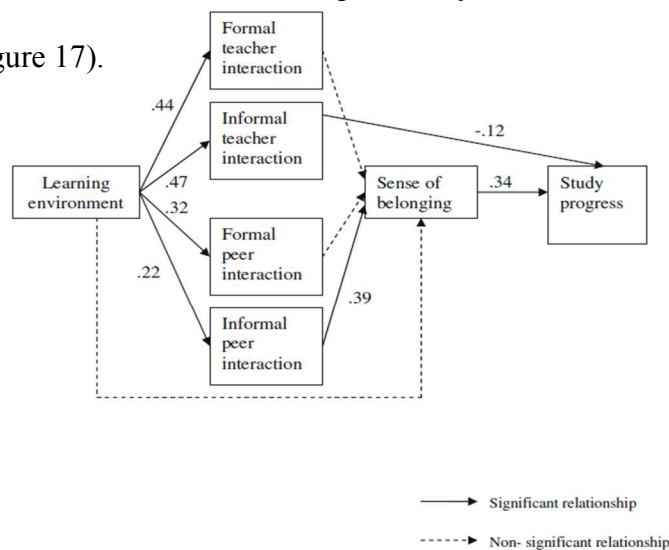


Fig. 4 Accepted model for majority students (chi-square = 9.25, *df* = 5, p = .10, RMSEA is .05 and the CFI is 1.00)

Figure 16: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Model for Majority Students

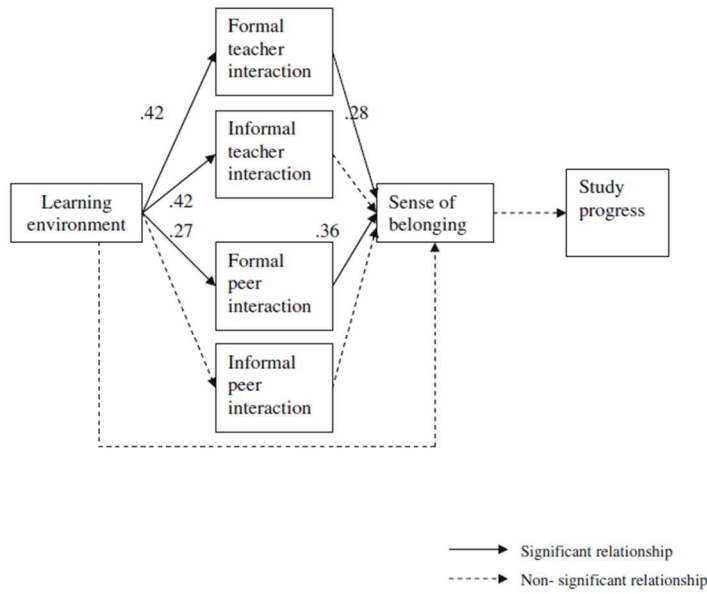


Fig. 3 Accepted model for ethnic minority students (chi-square = 3.41, df = 5, $p = .64$, RMSEA is .00 and the CFI is 1.00)

Figure 17: Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010)-Model for Ethnic Minority Students

A review of the data yielded results that answer the following research questions:

Question 1: To what extent can the positive links between the learning environment, peer and teacher interactions, sense of belonging and study success as described in the theoretical model be confirmed? The data showed positive relationships between the learning environment and peer and teacher interactions, sense of belonging, and study success.

Question 2: Does the model hold true for both the group of minority students and the group of majority students? And if not, are the relationships different in a group of minority students compared to the relationships in a group of majority students? The data showed that there is a differentiation based on the two separate models. Ethnic Minority students felt at home with formal relationships with teachers and fellow students. Ethnic Minorities sense of belonging to an institution did not influence their study progress. On the other hand, majority students felt more at home with informal relationships with peers and sense of belonging did influence their study progress, thus, displaying a difference between the two groups.

Common Themes in Data Collection and Findings

After a thorough review of each study's data analysis and results, Atlas Ti.8 was used to code information to determine themes, commonalities, and differentiations between the studies. The studies were uploaded into Atlas. Ti. 8 and each were coded associated to the variables Academic Achievement and Student Retention. The data assessed supports my research questions:

- 1) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student achievement?
- 2) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student retention?

Coding Text Documents

The three studies were uploaded into Atlas.Ti 8. Each were carefully coded recognizing components that support my research. Six common items were coded which resulted in a 130-total assessment. The six items commonly found include: Academic Achievement, Active Learning, Goal Setting, Group collaboration, Retention, and Social Interactions. The results were analyzed on a code document table and exported onto an excel spreadsheet which shows the density total from each study. The following chart below provides this data:

	Cooperative Learning	GPA and Goals	Student Retention	Totals
Academic Achievement	17	14	5	36
Active Learning	10	2	6	18
Goal Setting	13	13	0	26
Group Collaboration	9	1	2	12
Retention	1	20	1	22
Social Interactions	3	1	12	16
Totals	53	51	26	130

Figure: 18: Comparative Analysis Coded Data

From the data shown, it can be concluded that Academic Achievement is critical for freshman students. In Friedman and Mandel's (2010) study on Cooperative Learning and Tsay

and Brady's (2010) study on Goal Setting there is a similar density total at 53 and 51. Although Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born's (2010) study on Student Retention shows a lower density total, their study shares all common items with the exception of Goal Setting. Together, the six items expressed share a common bond. An observation of the Density Chart reveals that Instructional Methods have a connection to Student Achievement and Student Retention. The findings from the density of each study provide evidence to the Research Questions:

- 1) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student achievement?
- 2) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student retention?

After coding the data, each code was color coded, placed into a network, and transformed using an automated layout design to show Visual Linkages in Networks. The Instructional Method of Active Learning is shown to increase learning, participation, and interaction. Cooperative learning or group learning is a prominent factor in this increase. See Visual Linkage Network below:

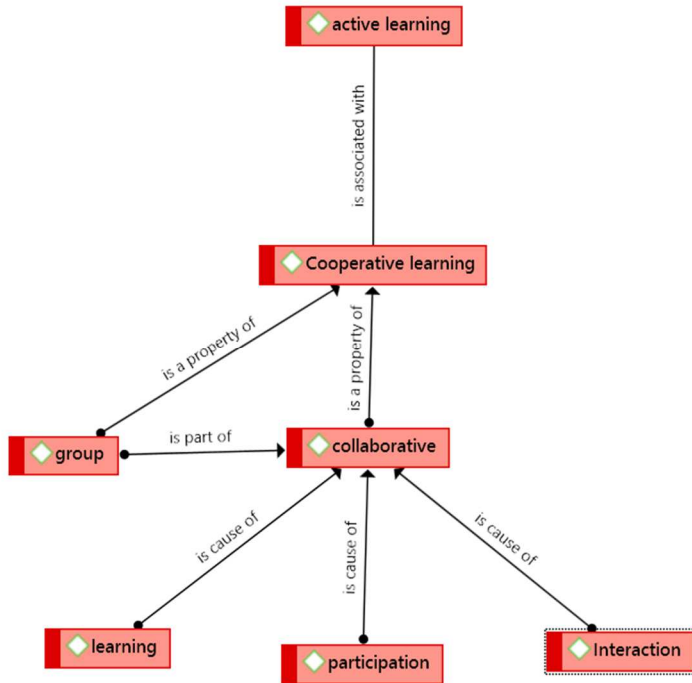


Figure 19: Visual Linkage Active Learning

Furthermore, Academic Achievement is fueled by goal setting which becomes motivation for freshman students. Being fueled by their goals opens them to more involvement and social connection. See Visual Linkage Network Below:

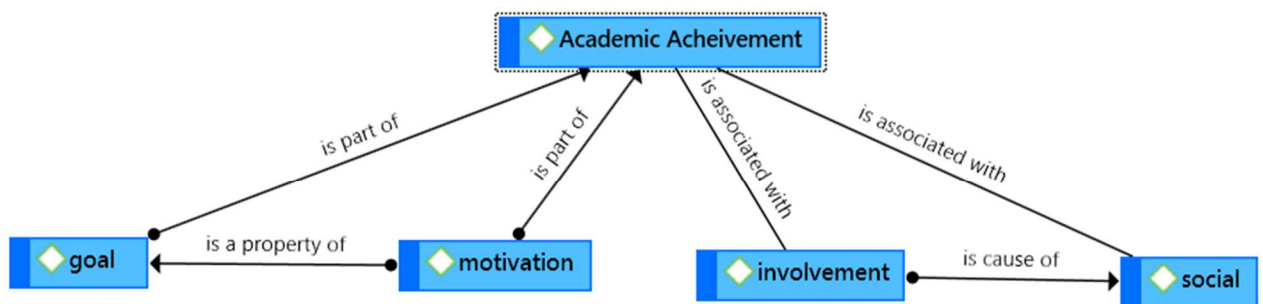


Figure 20: Visual Linkage Academic Achievement

Moreover, Instructional Methods allow for Academic Achievement which in turn creates retention amongst students. Academic performance is a factor under retention because it shows progress, good grade outcomes, and creating over all achievement for students. See Visual Linkage Network:

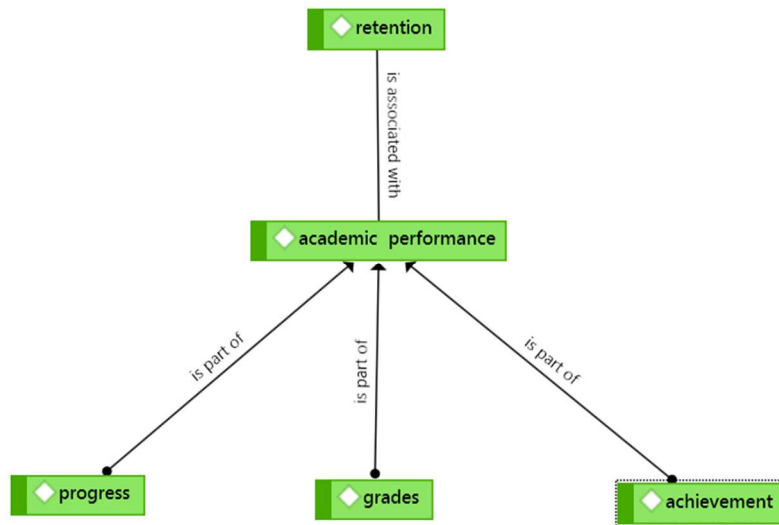


Figure 21: Visual Linkage Retention

Summary:

The three studies express points that were made in the Literature Review. Instructional Methods are a prominent and important factor for Student Achievement and Retention. All of studies used mix methods to provide evidence and clarity in their findings. Common Themes showed in each study and included: Academic Achievement, Active Learning, Goal Setting, Group collaboration, Retention, and Social Interactions. Two Studies, Friedman and Mandel's (2010) Goal Setting Study and Tsay and Brady's (2010) Cooperative Learning Study, expressed an importance of Goal Setting while one did not. However, Academic Achievement, Active Learning, Student Retention, and Social Interaction were the most prominent findings across the

three studies. In each study, the participants used were freshman students. Chapter V will provide recommendations from the outcome of findings from each study.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate different instructional methods within a Freshman Composition English course and the relationship to student achievement and retention. According to John McDermott (1981), “terms such as ‘integration,’ ‘interaction,’ ‘transaction,’ and ‘means-end relationships,’ are not objects of Dewey’s philosophy so much as they are descriptions of both the affairs of nature and the method of inquiry” (Dewey & McDermott, 1981, p. xxvi). The findings of this study show a high importance for interaction in a classroom. The most prominent instructional method for interaction is Active Learning. The classroom plays an intricate role in encompassing student achievement and producing student retention. In addition, Robert House’s (1971) Path-Goal Theory identifying the four leadership behaviors Directive, Supportive, Participative, and Achievement Oriented in the classroom is critical to the overall learning experience. John Dewey (1981) states, “experience already contains in itself facts and truths...it contains within itself the attitudes, the motives, and the interests which have operated in developing and organizing the subject matter...” (p. 472). Applying interactive techniques expressed in the literature review, coupled with the Theoretical Framework of the Path-Goal Theory and John Dewey’s Theory of Education, an alignment of positive outcomes can be seen between student achievement and student retention in freshman college students. The following Comparative Case Study Analysis allows for suggestions and recommendations from the findings and conclusions.

Proposed Solutions

In English Composition courses, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening are significant elements for students to learn. An in-depth review of the literature in Chapter II and

the Comparative Analysis of the three studies in Chapter IV, provide solutions that will deepen the learning process for Composition courses. The three variables used as focal points in this research are Instructional Methods, Student Achievement, and Student Retention. In addition, the results answer the following proposed research questions: To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student achievement? To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student retention?

Discussion

Instructional Methods. The Case Study results from Tsay and Brady's (2010) study, on the use of Cooperative Learning techniques in the classroom, discovered a connection between active pedagogy and academic achievement through group work and discussion. In the Review of Literature discussed in Chapter II, researchers expressed a positive connection between the instructional methods used in classrooms and the outcome of student achievement and retention. Many of these studies discussed classroom techniques that not only enhanced the learning process but retained students in the classroom as well. Active Learning is the primary instructional method that led to outcomes of student achievement and student retention. These studies echo Tsay and Brady's (2010) Cooperative Learning study. Kutbiddinova et al. (2016) conducted a study on Interactive methods in Higher Education. The results showed advantages of interactive methods to in self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation (p. 6570). Tews et al. (2015) conducted a study that used fun in the classroom for a positive outlook on student engagement. Using a variety of hands on activities the results showed an enhancement of student learning and a higher rate of teacher effectiveness (p. 17). In addition, Eison (2010), conducted a study that used interactive lectures and presentations to increase participation and learning (p.7). The study yielded positive results increasing student participation in the classroom. Chan et. al.

(2015) used reflective writing techniques in their study for students to reflect on their overall classroom experience and the results identified that active learning had a great impact on students (p. 524). Furthermore, Hyun (2017), conducted a study to show that active learning increases student satisfaction both individually and in group settings. The results showed active learning increased student satisfaction in the classroom (p. 108). In addition, Cervantes (2009) conducted a study that uses games as an effective teaching tool in English Classes. One prominent game was Taboo for word association. The results showed that students were more relaxed and acquired a boost in self-confidence. Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) conducted a study on the use of electronic games in class. The results showed an increase in motivation and learning effectiveness. This study focused on the popular online game *Kahoot*. John Khaler (2014) conducted a study on the use of technology on First-Year students' writing. This study allowed students and the professor to use Twitter for group discussions. It even allowed for International Students to write in their native language to assist in communication. The students were actively writing every day and the results showed an increase in motivation to write.

Student Achievement. In Friedman and Mandel's (2010) study on Goal Setting. Their results showed a connection between student achievement and retention through Goal Setting. The overall goal of student achievement is significant in teaching techniques. Studies from the Review of Literature in Chapter II echo's this study. Tobin et. al. (2013), conducted a study on Goal Setting to facilitate participation. Students created goal statements in groups and sub groups and the results showed involvement, awareness, emotions, and Skill Building. Students with set goals had heightened achievement in class leading to positive grade outcomes. For example, Noland and Richards (2014) conducted a study on transformational leadership in the classroom and student motivation and found that transformational teaching was significant to student

learning (p.14). Wright (2011) conducted a study on learning centered teaching and found that by provoking learning by catering to student interests is positively received and encourages learning for students (p. 96).

Student Retention. Meeuwise, Severiens, and Born's (2010) study Learning Environment and retention recognized the impact Sense of Belonging, and Study Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups has on student retention and overall achievement. The results showed an increase in student retention through social relationships acquired within the classroom in an active learning environment. Ebersole et. al. (2016), conducted a study on culturally responsive teaching and the impact it has on student development. The results showed ethnic students were more responsive in a diverse environment (p.97). Gabdrakhmanova et. al. (2016), conducted a study on student identity. The results showed that developing and recognizing student identity helps students achieve in a classroom setting (p. 95). Jenson (2011) conducted a study that researched factors that influence student achievement and retention. The results showed the following factors influence retention: Individual Level-Academic Performance, Attitudes and Satisfaction, Institutional Level-Academic Engagement, Social and External Level- Social and Family Support. Jenson discovers that social support is especially important for minority students (p. 3).

Summary of Findings

Each case study used a mixed method technique providing data through qualitative design to capture the emotional connection instructional methods have on students and a quantitative design to identify statistical evidence used to display the impact instructional methods have on student achievement and retention. The study participants used in each study

are similar as only freshman students were examined. The data collection for each study also had similarities as surveys were used to gather statistical information that resulted in a positive outcome between instructional methods and student achievement and instructional methods and student retention.

Case Study One-Goal Setting. Friedman and Mandel's (2010) study determined a connection between student academic and social motivation and goal setting. The results from their study showed that SAT Scores and High School GPA were predictors for academic performance and retention, Freshman Student's that enter college with a higher motivation to perform academically and socially are more likely to be retained beyond their first year of college, and Freshman that set academic and social goals achieve higher GPAs. The surveys used for assessment allowed for students to express their feelings regarding Goal setting. Students reported that goal setting helped them perform academically.

Case Study Two-Cooperative Learning. Tsay and Brady's (2010) study discovered a relationship between Cooperative Learning and Academic Performance. The results from their study showed a significant positive correlation between grade importance and academic performance on final exams, involvement in Cooperative Learning Strongly predicts student academic performance in class, and Team Based learning has a positive outcome. In addition, the surveys and group reporting allowed for groups to express their feelings within a group setting. Students reported team-based learning encouraged them to succeed through social interaction.

Case Study Three-Learning Environment and Retention. Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born's (2010) study found a link between active learning environments and student interaction with teachers, peers, sense of belonging, and study success. An observation of Minority Students and

Majority Students was conducted during this study. The results showed a positive relationship between the learning environment and peer and teacher interactions, sense of belonging, and study success. Ethnic minority students felt at home with formal relationships with teachers and fellow students. Ethnic minority students' sense of belonging to an institution did not influence their study progress. On the other hand, Majority students felt more at home with informal relationships with peers and sense of belonging did influence their study progress. In addition, the surveys allowed students to report their feelings with social interactions with teachers and peers. From these reports, students reported the overall quality of their learning environment was important to their success.

Using Atlas ti.8, the coded information allowed for a comparison of themes to emerge and visual linkages to be created to show connection. The six coded items found as commonalities were Academic Achievement, Active Learning, Goal Setting, Group collaboration, Retention, and Social Interactions. The following chart below displays the density of the results. The results show a listing of percentages at 50%, the other 50% stems from student personal overall learning experience. The results are depicted on the graph below:

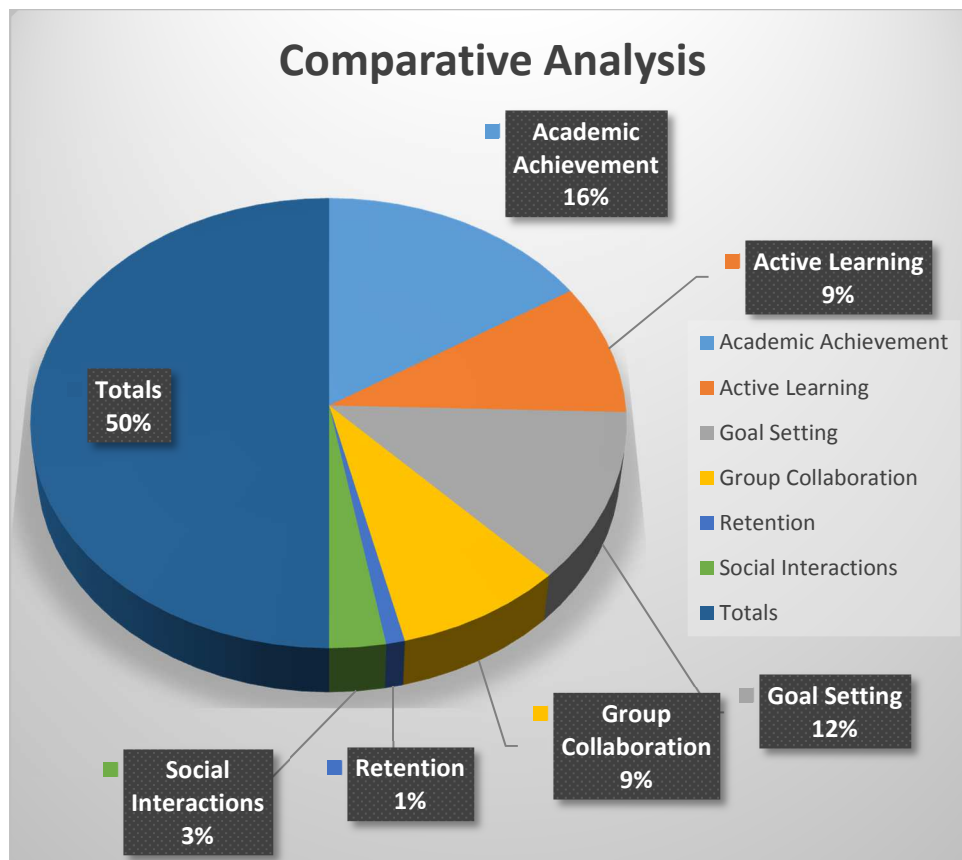


Figure 22: Comparative Analysis Coded Data Graph

This information can be used to answer the proposed research questions:

- 3) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student achievement?
- 4) To what extent is there a relationship between instructional methods and student retention?

Academic Achievement. Creating an invigorating classroom environment causes students to become higher achievers resulting in higher GPAs. Therefore, Instructional Techniques assist in creating a motivating environment. Solak and Recep Cakir (2015), conducted a study to establish a correlation between the motivation and achievement levels of language learners through the

use of technology in the classroom. The study shows a positive correlation was found between academic achievement and motivation and suggested a positive impact on technology and vocabulary learning (p.50).

Active Learning. A learning environment that is engaging provides positive outcomes. Park and Choi (2014) state that “[b]y creating an academic atmosphere in which each space is like the middle of the classroom, students become more interested, motivated, and involved in the learning experience” (p. 761). In addition, Hyun et. al. (2017) cites Prince (2004) to define active learning as “any instructional method other than lecture that engages students in learning” (p. 108). This study found that Active Learning can be used in a Traditional style classroom and an Active Learning classroom to produce student success.

Goal Setting. Goal setting is a motivator for Freshman Students. Little (2014) explains that “Goals include biological and social needs that are met through routine decision making, as well as more abstract values and ambitions that drive an individual’s personal projects” (as cited in Camp, 2017, p. 61). Freshman who set goals achieve better academically and become retained. Camp explains, “Without commitment to one’s goals, significant progress is unlikely” (P. 69).

Group Collaboration. Group work will enhance student social interaction and participation. Yuen Fook Chan, Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, and Lai Fong Lee (2015) conducted a qualitative study on active learning practices in United States higher education. Active learning is proposed to enhance student participation through group discussion, project and case study utilizing strategies such as reflective writing and assigned reading.

Retention. Freshman students are the foundation of any University. Therefore, it is important to find techniques that retain them. Roberts and Styron Jr. conducted a study to obtain insight on

“perceptions of services, interactions, and experiences” (p.1). The overall experience for freshmen was significant in this study. Roberts and Styron jr. explain, “When meaningful learning experiences are missing from the curriculum, students often become disengaged and dissatisfied because they see no relevance in what they are learning” (p. 5).

Social Interactions. Freshman students seek to create relationships and bonds with others. It provides them with a sense of belonging and acceptance. David O. Allen and Don J. Webber (2010) conducted a study that showed a connection between attendance and exam performance. The results from this study showed a connection between social relationships and attendance.

Implications of Findings

This Comparative Case Study Analysis offers evidence that Instructional Methods impact student achievement and retention. The study appears to answer my research questions and provides techniques that can be used for enhancing the learning environment at Higher Education Institutions. This study suggests that traditional techniques such as lecturing and presentations should become more interactive. Active Learning Techniques prove to be the most prominent within this study. Therefore, using group learning or Cooperative Learning Techniques can increase student achievement and retention. Goal setting is critical for motivation and grade point average increase. Friedman and Mandel ‘s (2010) study entitled, “The Prediction of College Student Academic Performance and Retention: Application of Expectancy and Goal Setting Theories” found that goal setting increase student grades for first year students. The classroom experience and connection between students and teachers was found to impact student achievement and retention. In the case study by Tsay and Brady (2010) entitled, “A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does working

in teams make a difference?” Active Learning techniques are used to demonstrated a relationship between cooperative learning and academic performance. Lastly, social interaction and belonging seeks to increase student retention. In the case study by Meeuwise, Severiens, and Born (2010) entitled, “Learning Environment, Sense of Belonging, and Study Success in Ethnically Diverse Student Groups,” the results demonstrate the differences in connection between minority and majority students.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research conducted uses already existing data and is non-experimental. It would be beneficial to implement the techniques found in this research and experiment in a classroom setting in a Higher Education institution. For instance, two freshman English Composition classes could be observed one using traditional techniques and the other active learning techniques to discover the outcome between the two courses. In addition, research could be conducted for upperclassman courses to recognize if instructional methods also have an impact on student achievement and retention of upperclassman students. It would also be useful to investigate a deeper connection between achievement and retention of minority students versus majority students.

My research is concerned with only freshman college students. The nature of my data does not allow me to explore whether the instructional techniques will allow for student achievement and retention for upperclassman students. In addition, it is not generalizable and is non-experimental. My findings are restricted to college students specifically at a historically black college/university.

Conclusion

This Comparative Case Study Analysis offers evidence that Instructional Methods assist in student achievement and retention. This study provides information on issues of student retention and solutions that increase student engagement, teacher motivation, and transform the classroom environment. Because English Composition is designed to increase Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening skills, this study discovers techniques to enhance these skills. This study is beneficial for both students and educators. Each study aligned with the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework provides evidence that Instructional Methods have a relationship with Student Achievement and Retention. Ultimately, the overall premise of Higher Education is to be a beacon of learning and a place that provides students with an experience of connectivity to retain them. The classroom experience is the center of the student learning experience, therefore this study captures the essence of vitality in a classroom setting and how Active Learning techniques will increase student achievement and retention.

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