TRANSITIONING ADULT EDUCATION STUDENTS INTO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education

May 2012

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To the faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of BRYCE RALPH HUMPHERYS find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank my chair and committee members for their feedback, guidance and support. I would also like to thank the faculty, staff, administrators and especially the students at Yakima Valley Community College who provided me with the support, assistance and feedback necessary to complete my dissertation. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, siblings, children and, most importantly, my wife for their patience, long suffering, and unflagging support as I embarked upon and completed this journey. I could not have done it without you.
TRANSITIONING ADULT EDUCATION STUDENTS
INTO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Abstract

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Washington State University
May 2012

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At both a national and state level there is a growing need for skilled workers in the labor force. Educating low skilled adults is one way to address this need. Adult education programs teach low skilled adults basic academic skills to prepare them for work and life in U.S. society. Until recently little attention was paid to transitioning students from adult education programs into college. Since 2004 the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has led colleges across the state in launching multiple initiatives designed to help transition adult education students into college programs. In this exploratory study, the author investigated elements of a transition effort at the Grandview Campus of Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC). He specifically sought to determine the relationship between the number of students transitioning from the YVCC adult education program into college classes and the campus climate, student support services, college orientation activities, enrollment in specific transition classes, student age, student gender and student ethnicity. Using the results of correlation and regression analyses coupled with qualitative data from focus groups, the author
found that certain support services, some orientation activities, student age, student gender and enrollment in transition classes were related to students transitioning. Additionally, the author concluded that elements of campus climate, college faculty, individualized attention from college employees, support from fellow students, and family support also had an impact on students transitioning.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

It is ever more important that individuals in our society gain a college education in order to be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. Furthermore, the economic wellbeing of our country is contingent upon having an educated workforce. According to Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, and Sum (2007), our country is facing an economic and educational “perfect storm” (p. 3) because there is an unmet demand for literate and educated individuals in the labor market, yet the fastest growing segment of the labor force is minority workers with limited education who are not prepared to meet the demand. To meet the need for a larger number of educated adults in the workforce, Kirsch et al., (2007) call for a heightened effort to increase the educational level of the undereducated adults in our country, a task that has typically fallen to adult education programs and community colleges.

Adult education refers to educational programs and services designed to develop an individual's literacy, life, employment, and academic skills. A wide variety of organizations provide adult education including public libraries, school districts, community-based organizations, religious organizations, and community colleges. Together, these providers serve between 2.6 and 3 million students per year in the United States (CAAL, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The purpose of adult education programming is to help students participate in society and secure employment (Boylan, 2004). Typical adult education programs may include English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Literacy and Civics, and/or Adult Secondary Education (ASE). The academic level of adult education
curriculum extends from a beginning elementary school level to the equivalent of 10th grade in public school and terminates with the General Education Diploma (GED). Unfortunately, completion of the GED does not equate with many career opportunities or greater earning potential (Hollenbeck & Huang, 2003). Nor does obtaining a GED signify that an individual is ready to begin college level work.

Community colleges are open access institutions, meaning they admit all adults regardless of academic preparation. Community colleges have a broad mission that includes academic transfer programs, professional/technical training, personal interest classes, and short term training for incumbent workers. As their name implies, community colleges tailor their academic programs to meet the needs of the local community. They tend to have commuter campuses and their tuition is a fraction of what universities charge. The access and affordability features of community colleges make them an attractive option for individuals who cannot easily relocate to a university campus or would have difficulty paying higher university tuition costs. Community colleges serve 45% of all undergraduates in the United States (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008). Community colleges are especially attractive to low-income, minority, and first-generation students, enrolling 43% of all first-time college freshman and a higher percentage of minority students than universities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008; Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005). Due to the open access policies of community colleges, many, if not most, new students are not prepared to perform college level work. As a result, community colleges tend to have robust developmental education programs designed to help students improve their skills in reading, writing, and math. Typically, students are charged full tuition for developmental courses and earn non-transferrable college credit.
Nearly half (between 45 and 50%) of all community colleges also offer adult education programs, serving approximately 33.4% of all adult education students in the country (Morest, 2004).

**Adult Education Students Transitioning to College**

Unfortunately, few adult education students end up enrolling in college. In an analysis of survey data from 2003 and 2005 high school graduates and degree completers, the National Commission on Adult Literacy found that only 27% of GED holders nationwide had transitioned to college while 63% of high school graduates had enrolled in college (Reder, 2007). Based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Duke and Ganzglass (2007) estimated that only 1.7% of all adult education students enrolled in college.

Historically, few adult education programs or community colleges have made much effort to transition adult education students into college. Over the past decade, however, efforts have increased at national, state and local levels to develop and implement strategies designed to help students transition from adult education programs into college. As this fledgling effort expands, there is a growing need to research and evaluate specific transition strategies in order to identify those practices which are most effective at helping adult education students transition into post-secondary education (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Reder, 2007; Zafft, Kallenbach & Spohn, 2006).
Research Problem

Adult education in the state of Washington falls under the purview of the state community and technical college system. Ironically however, the effort to transition adult education students into credit-bearing college coursework received little or no attention at the individual college level until the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) launched an initiative in 2004 to transition adult education students into vocational career pathways. By 2011 the effort to transition adult education students into college was central to multiple key SBCTC initiatives.

Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) is one of 34 community and technical colleges in Washington State and has two campuses in the communities of Yakima and Grandview that serve residents of Yakima and parts of Kittitas Counties in Eastern Washington. Agriculture forms the foundation of the regional economy and has brought a large number of migrants, most of Mexican descent, to the area. Unfortunately, agriculture is a source of many low paying and seasonal jobs. According to the Educational Needs Index (2011) using 2005 American Community Survey Data, Yakima County ranked 59 out of 2,071 counties in the United States in terms of the most need for educational and economic reform. The population of Yakima County is young, undereducated and suffers from high unemployment and high poverty. There are few places in the country where the need for adult education and higher education services is higher.

Due to the low education and high poverty levels in the YVCC service district, the college has large adult educational programs that are vital to the short and long term wellbeing of Yakima County. Consistent with statewide trends, the transition of adult education students into
college level coursework only recently emerged as an institutional focus at YVCC. However, this transition of adult education students to college has been a major focus at the YVCC Grandview Campus since 2006.

During the 2006-2007 academic year faculty and staff at the YVCC Grandview Campus began experimenting with multiple strategies designed to support the transition of adult education students to college. Only 15% of adult education students who were sufficiently prepared academically to transition at the YVCC Grandview Campus actually did transition into credit-bearing classes that year. However, by the 2009-2010 academic year, the percentage increased to 25%. While college staff would like to increase this rate even further, it is unclear which, if any, strategies implemented over the past few years actually had an impact on student transitioning. The college needs to identify those strategies that were most effective so they can be expanded. By the same token, efforts that have not had an impact should be abandoned.

**Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this study is to determine what college initiated actions at the YVCC Grandview Campus helped adult education students make the transition into college. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the question of “What strategies have been or are implemented to encourage adult education students at the YVCC Grandview Campus to enroll in credit-bearing college courses?”
Significance and Outcome

This study is significant in two ways. First, the study will identify recommended actions that YVCC can implement with the intent of increasing the number of students that transition from ABE to credit-bearing college courses. Second, it will add to the scholarly research on the effectiveness of specific practices within transition programs. There is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding this topic and multiple authors have called for additional research in this area (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Reder, 2007; Zafft, Kallenbach & Spohn, 2006). While a great deal of research has been done on best practices for helping students in developmental education courses prepare for enrolling in college level courses, little research has been conducted on strategies for moving adult education students into developmental or college level coursework (Boylan, 2004).

This study seeks to (a) identify transition strategies implemented by the college that have had a positive impact on student transitioning and (b) recommend changes to existing strategies or additional strategies that the college could implement.

National and State Context for Transitioning

Influences at a national and state level have had an impact on transitioning efforts at YVCC. While federal legislation has set a framework that provides some impetus for transition programs the major influences have come at a state level. Influences at a state level tend to result from policy changes in response to economic needs. They are also accompanied by initiatives launched by private foundations. While a summary of key initiatives and foundations that are related to efforts in Washington State are presented here, there are similar efforts in other states

**Federal influences.** The *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)* of 1996 reformed the federal welfare system. PRWORA established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and requires individuals receiving TANF benefits to engage in job skills training (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Some states link adult education and workforce development programs into a system that serves TANF recipients. Since completion of some post-secondary education is often necessary to complete a workforce development program, efforts to train TANF recipients provides some impetus for developing transition programs.

The *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)*, which was enacted as Title II of the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* of 1998 governs adult education programs and is a major source of funding for adult education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) within the U.S. Department of Education administers AEFLA and established the National Reporting System (NRS) in 2000 to collect data, monitor progress, and ensure accountability in adult education programs. The NRS system has adopted “Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education; training; unsubsidized employment; or career advancement” (p. 9) as one of three core indicators of success for adult education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). One of five outcome measures is, “The percentage of adult learners who establish a goal to continue their education at the postsecondary level and who entered postsecondary education or training after
program exit” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 9). These reporting requirements of the NRS have some impact on transition efforts at a local level.

**Private foundation initiatives.** Efforts launched by private foundations have exerted a major influence on transition efforts in Washington State. Three major initiatives: *Achieving the Dream*, *Bridges to Opportunity*, and *Breaking Through*, have all had an influence on or been influenced by transition efforts in Washington State. While multiple foundations are involved with these and other initiatives, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has special significance because of its location within and focus on Washington State.

*Achieving the Dream* was launched by the Lumina Foundation for Education in 2004 and seeks to bring about change in community college practices as well as state and federal policy. The focus of the initiative is to increase access of historically underrepresented students to higher education and increase the success of all students in completing remedial coursework, persisting in postsecondary education, and successfully completing college level coursework and degrees. The effort is currently active in 30 states and 160 community colleges (Achieving The Dream Colleges Count, 2011). While adult education falls outside the scope of Achieving the Dream, the focus on underrepresented students, successful completion of remedial coursework, and intensive use of data for decision making has had a positive influence on transition efforts in some colleges including YVCC.

*Bridges to Opportunity* was launched by the Ford Foundation and sought to bring about change in state policies that would influence community colleges to expand education opportunities and resultant employment opportunities for under prepared adults. Six states participated in the five year initiative from 2002-2007. They were Colorado, Kentucky,
Louisiana, New Mexico, Ohio, and Washington (Jenkins, 2008; Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (WSBCTC), 2011a). The participation of Washington State in this initiative led to the SBCTC to develop a focus on transitioning.

*Breaking Through* is a collaboration between Jobs for the Future, the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE), and multiple private foundations. It is an effort using four strategies of accelerated learning, comprehensive support services, labor market payoffs, and program alignment to help low-skilled adults succeed in completing occupational and technical programs (Jobs for the Future, 2011a). In April 2011 Jobs for the Future launched a second phase of the initiative called ABE to Credentials (Jobs for the Future, 2011b). This four year initiative seeks to work with 40 community colleges across the country to develop instructional systems that build on the success of the Breaking Through initiative and a successful transition model developed by the Washington SBCTC called I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training). ABE to Credentials seeks to assist 18,000 adult learners in earning at least 12 college-level credits, earn a credential, and be prepared to succeed in college.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is engaged in a dizzying number of initiatives in an effort to improve public and secondary education. The foundation has a K-12 education goal that all students, especially low-income and minority students, will graduate from high school ready to enter college. In the postsecondary arena the foundation seeks a substantial increase in the number of adults completing a college education. The foundation's postsecondary efforts include a $1 billion pledge to college scholarship programs with a focus on low-income and minority students, $16 million in Achieving The Dream efforts, $1.75 million in Washington State's I-BEST program, $7.28 million to help at-risk youth complete a high school diploma and
college credits and $110 million to improve the effectiveness of remedial programs. Additional initiatives include online and competency-based academic programs, efforts designed to increase college completion, strategies for moving students through remedial classes faster, the development of online open learning course content libraries, the formation of new accountability models for colleges, experimenting with performance funding models including the Washington State Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) and integrating technology into remedial math classes (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2011).

**Washington State efforts.** While two year colleges have existed in the state of Washington since the 1920s, their current organization within the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) was established in 1991 by the Washington’s Community and Technical College Act. The same act stipulated that the SBCTC was responsible to “provide for basic skills and literacy education” (§ 28B.50.20). Adult education services in Washington State are composed of ABE, ESL, English Literacy and Civics Education, and adult literacy programs. Community and technical colleges are the primary providers of adult education services within the state.

A focus on the transition of adult basic education students into college emerged from the participation of the SBCTC in the Ford Foundation Bridges to Opportunity Initiative beginning in 2002. As part of the initiative, the SBCTC conducted research in 2003 on the academic and employment success of low skilled adults in Washington. The report showed that only 13% of students who enrolled in ESL programs and less than 30% of students in ABE programs enrolled in college-level courses. Additionally, only 1% of GED graduates in Washington earned an Associate Degree or one year college certificate within five years of completing the GED. The
primary finding of the report was that students who completed at least one year of college credit-bearing classes and earned some type of credential, ended up earning a higher wage than those who did not. The researchers contended that community colleges should set a goal for each adult education student to reach the goal of one year of college and a college credential (Prince & Jenkins, 2005). Immediately after the study was published, this student benchmark became known as the “tipping point” (WSBCTC, 2005a) and over the course of three years the SBCTC launched several initiatives designed to help increase the number of students reaching the tipping point. Specifically, the initiatives were titled the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), Opportunity Grant, and Student Achievement Initiative (SAI).

I-BEST was launched as a pilot in spring 2004 by the SBCTC (WSBCTC, 2005b). This program pairs an adult education instructor teaching basic skills content (reading, writing, math) with a professional/technical instructor who teaches specific job skills. In an I-BEST class, the professional/technical content provides vocabulary and context for the basic skills instruction. Nursing assisting, para educator training, and commercial truck driving are three examples of I-BEST programs in the state of Washington (Wachen, Jenkins & Van Noy, 2010). Colleges receive enhanced funding from the SBCTC to support I-BEST programs. Research on student success showed that, compared to a matched group of students, I-BEST students were more likely to persist into a second year of collegiate studies (78% vs. 61%), enroll in credit-bearing courses (90% vs. 67%), earn college credits (52 vs. 34 quarter credits), earn a college certificate (55% vs. 15%), and make point gains on basic skills tests (62% vs. 45%) (Jenkins, Zeidenberg & Kienzl, 2009). The success of I-BEST led to the additional state level reforms of Opportunity Grants and SAI that have also had positive impacts on student transitions.
In 2006 the state legislature allocated $4 million to the SBCTC to initiate a pilot Opportunity Grant program. The program was expanded in 2007. The purpose of the program was to provide financial grants to low-income adults to assist them in reaching the “tipping point” of completing a year of college credits and earn a college credential. The funds were to be used to assist students who may not be eligible to receive traditional financial aid. A review of the program showed that students who received Opportunity Grant funds were 11% more likely to complete their studies and 4% more likely to reach the “tipping point” than a comparison group of students. Students who received Opportunity Grant and Pell Grant funds had completion rates that were 18% higher than the comparison group and were 11% more likely to reach the tipping point. Those who completed their training programs and reached the “tipping point” were more likely to be employed (WSBCTC, 2011b).

In 2007 the SBCTC launched its Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), a performance funding system designed to help all college students reach the “tipping point.” Colleges earn points for the number of students that met certain academic benchmarks, called momentum points. There were four categories of momentum points: (a) building towards college-level skills through making basic skills point gains and passing remedial writing and math courses, (b) first year retention of completing 15 and 30 college level credits, (c) completing a college-level math course, and d) completing a college credential (WSBCTC, 2008; WSBCTC, 2010a). A progress report showed that between the baseline academic year of 2006-07 and 2008-09, college enrollment across the state grew 4%, but student achievement as measured on the SAI, grew 19%. In the following year of 2009-2010, enrollment grew by 1% while achievement grew 12%. Presumably, these results showed that colleges were becoming more effective in helping students
move through the college system faster than during the baseline year of 2006-2007 (WSBCTC, 2010a). Each year colleges received funding from the SBCTC based on the number of SAI points earned that year.

With the statewide emphasis on helping students reach the tipping point and the corresponding financial benefits associated with the effort, the transition of adult education students into college programs received greater emphasis by colleges across the state. The SBCTC hosted a Student Transition Summit in 2010 to identify best practices evolving in the state's colleges to move adult education students into college level courses (WSBCTC, 2010b). The meeting was an effort to identify those strategies used by colleges that were resulting in the student achievement gains measured by SAI.

**YVCC Transition Model**

Adult education programs at YVCC are composed of ESL and ABE programs and housed with the Basic Skills Department. The department was historically focused on developing a nationally recognized effort to transition students from the ESL program into the ABE program (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). Such a sequence is logical since most ESL students served by the college are migrant farm workers with low levels of formal education. However, serving adult education students was not a major institutional priority. Factors for the low emphasis included: adult education was not a high priority at the state level, adult education programs generate little revenue since students pay a nominal tuition fee of $25 per quarter for their classes, and the state funds Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollments for adult education at a lower rate than FTEs for credit-bearing courses. As a result, adult education programs were afforded a low level of status
within the college and most YVCC adult education classes were taught by adjunct faculty.

Transitioning adult education students into college classes was seldom considered so the number of students who did transition to college was very small. The few students who did transition succeeded through happenstance or simple luck and sheer determination.

Two seminal events. Two key events early in 2006 laid the groundwork for the rise of the transition effort as a priority at YVCC. First, in February the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services convened a gathering of employees to celebrate the support they gave to academically under prepared students in an effort to help them succeed. This event honored the work conducted by faculty in the Basic Skills Department as well as other departments. It was also a time to recognize and appreciate the growing institutional focus on serving under prepared students. This event sowed seeds that would later mature into the college's transition effort. Second, in the spring of 2006 YVCC was invited to be an Achieving the Dream school. YVCC's participation in this initiative led the college to sharpen its focus on serving groups of under prepared students and also resulted in a major cultural shift over the next five years as the college developed its capacity to gather and evaluate student data. With its new found ability to mine and evaluate its own data, YVCC enhanced its ability to determine the effectiveness of intervention strategies targeting under prepared students.

An interest in transitioning ABE students into college courses slowly grew over the next four years, first within the Basic Skills Department and later across other college departments. YVCC participation in state sponsored initiatives including I-BEST and Opportunity Grant programs helped spread awareness of transition strategies to new communities within the college. YVCC developed I-BEST programs in three content areas and used Opportunity Grant
funds to provide financial assistance to students in the I-BEST programs. By state mandate, the college also participated in the SAI. As YVCC faculty, staff and administrators attended state level meetings where these programs were discussed and explained, they became informed about the state initiatives and brought this knowledge back to other colleagues within the college. Thus, through project implementation, formal meetings, and informal conversations, awareness grew across the college of the state initiatives and their local application.

The ever increasing focus on under prepared students supported by the institution’s ability to gather and interpret student data and the encouragement by the state to participate in its initiatives, naturally led to a focus on transitioning. By 2010 transitioning had become an institutional priority. The 2010-2015 YVCC Strategic Plan identifies the transition of students, including the transition of students from ABE to college, as a strategic institutional focus.

During the 2010 and 2011 academic years, groups of faculty and staff representing multiple divisions of the college began meeting regularly to address curricular and student services issues related to transitioning adult education students into college. They continued to develop and pilot multiple interventions and strategies.

Local Setting

The setting for this study is the YVCC Grandview Campus, located 45 miles southeast of Yakima. The campus serves over 1,600 students per academic year through its academic transfer degrees, a limited number of professional-technical degrees as well as large ABE and ESL programs. Approximately 45% of the students enrolled at the campus are enrolled in adult education programs. Campus students are approximately 78% Hispanic and 65% female. The
The campus provides an intimate setting with a relatively small staff of about 25 full-time employees. Since such a large percentage of the overall student body are adult education students and all employees and students interact in such close physical proximity, the campus was a prime location for the transition effort to take root at YVCC.

The transition of adult education students into credit-bearing college level courses has been a focus at the YVCC Grandview Campus since 2006. A fairly new campus dean felt that, from a social justice standpoint, adult education students should be afforded every opportunity to enroll in college classes. From a practical perspective it made no sense to recruit, admit, and teach adult education students only to stop serving them after they took the GED exam. He led campus faculty and staff in implementing a variety of strategies designed to reduce internal barriers for adult education students and encourage them to enroll in college courses. As the effort continued, faculty and staff initiated other changes. These strategies fell into three general categories.

**Campus climate.** Adult education students were invited to participate in the vast majority of Grandview Student Council events at no charge, something they previously could not do. The campus began issuing college ID cards to adult education students at no charge. Previously, they had to pay for the cards. Adult education classes were scheduled all across the campus rather than in one specific wing. Staff performing receptionist, admission, registration, and cashiering duties were cross trained so each staff person could serve all students rather than a select group. Faculty offices were also co-located, thereby integrating adult education faculty with faculty teaching credit-bearing courses.
**Student support services.** Adult education students received access to campus tutoring, computing, counseling and advising services. A counseling and advising center was established adjacent to the primary ABE classroom and the admission and registration services for adult education and college credit students were all consolidated into one office.

**Orientation to college activities.** College faculty and staff began giving classroom presentations to adult education students about topics such as applying for financial aid, how to prepare for college classes, time management, etc. In addition, the campus began offering introduction to college and study skills classes for adult education students. Adult education faculty began speaking to students about attending college and exposed students to college jargon. They also began teaching their classes more like college classes by raising the academic and performance expectations of students, requiring homework, and introducing grading scales. Finally, the campus offered remedial English, math, and study skills courses that came to be called “stacked classes” because they stacked a course for adult education students with a credit-bearing developmental education course. Even though on paper there were two classes, the students for both courses attended the same classroom with the same instructor and performed the same work.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This review will examine the literature related to the characteristics of different transition models with a focus on two models, the College Preparatory and Career Pathways Models and the success of these two models in helping students transition to college. Next, it will review barriers to persistence for adult education students. Vincent Tinto's theory explores student persistence and provides a rationale for studying a summary of three strategies that educational research has found enhance student persistence.

Transition Models

Zafft et al. (2006) sought to characterize adult education to college transition programs into different models. The researchers used a qualitative approach to interview program coordinators of different transition programs. Next, they developed a framework of five different models labeled as 1. Advising, 2. GED-Plus, 3. ESOL, 4. Career Pathways, and 5. College Preparatory. The Advising Model relied primarily on individual advising and optional college success workshops while the GED-Plus Model used curriculum that not only prepared students to take the GED test, but also provided academic and success skill instruction to prepare students to enter college. The ESOL Model focused on students who were educated in their home country and provided intensive English instruction with very little math instruction. The Career Pathway Model integrated adult education curriculum with technical skills that qualify students for specific types of employment. The College Preparatory Model filled the curricular gap
between completion of the GED and college entrance, taught college success in classes that mimic a college-like structure, incorporated advising, and placed students into cohorts. The authors point out that any successful transition model will need to address common barriers that include the curricular deficiencies between adult programs and postsecondary training, counseling needs, setting clear outcomes, aligning assessment practices with college entrance, and establishing collaborative relationships with referring agencies and higher education programs.

The models relevant to this study are the College Preparatory and Career Pathway Models. The literature discussed multiple examples of best practices that fit within these two models.

**College Preparatory Model**

In 2005 the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) produced a summary report that incorporated research from eight research reports commissioned by CAAL that studied aspects of the role community colleges play in adult education programming across the country. The report calls for the creation of a “National Opportunity System” that would provide all U.S. adults access to educational pathways that seamlessly integrates all the country’s higher education and training systems. The system would be specifically designed to help low-skilled adults move from adult education into postsecondary education. The report identified 28 different best practices and recommendations for transition programs that tended to fit within the College Preparatory Model. It also identified four significant challenges that transition efforts must address. These challenges were
1. The cost to establish and sustain a transition program,
2. The potential conflict between adult education and college faculty,
3. A potential lack of sufficient student data needed to inform decision making, and
4. Internal barriers within the institution.

In addition to the CAAL report (2005), a review of other documents revealed additional best practices. Documents studied included program review documents, research reports, journal articles, policy reports, and other program related documents. These studies specifically identified structural elements of transition programs, best practice strategies implemented within programs, and recommendations for improvement. This author developed a detailed outline of the College Preparatory Model incorporating elements from the different studies. The model contains nine elements:

1. Quality Staff,
2. Student Recruitment,
3. Admission, Assessment & Orientation,
4. Career, Academic & Personal Counseling,
5. Support Structures,
6. Quality Instruction,
7. Introduction & Orientation to College,
8. Data for Continuous Improvement, and

1. Quality staff. Successful transition programs contained experienced, trained, committed, and knowledgeable staff who understand the characteristics, needs and challenges of
first-generation, non-traditional students (Boylan, 2004; CAAL, 2005; Duke & Ganzglass, 2007; Gittleman, 2005; Harrington, 2000; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a; Valentine, Hirschy, Bremer, Novillo, Catellano, & Banister, 2009). The staff maintained a student centered approach providing active support to students and expressed confidence in their abilities. In addition, the programs supported teachers with ongoing professional development and set high performance goals.

2. Student recruitment. The transition programs actively targeted and recruited students into the program (Harrington, 2000; Liebowitz, 2004; Lombardo, 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a and b; Walker & Strawn, 2004). Targeted students came from adult education programs and performed at an academic level deemed sufficiently high enough to succeed in the transition program.

3. Admission, assessment & orientation. Transition programs had a formal admission process that typically included assessment and orientation (Boylan, 2004; CAAL, 2005; Chisman, 2004; Harrington, 2000; Liebowitz, 2004; Lombardo, 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010b). Ideally, the transition program had aligned its assessment instruments with or incorporated the use of assessment instruments used for college admission and placement, such as Accuplacer or COMPASS exams.

4. Career, academic & personal counseling. Counseling services were a key component of programs. Counselors provided academic advising, personal support, assistance with college admission and financial aid procedures, a method to monitor student goals, study skills guidance, assistance with career selection, and an orientation to college (Alamprese, 2005; CAAL, 2005; Chisman & Crandall 2007; Dann Messier & Kampits, 2004; Harrington, 2000; Knell & Scogins,
Some programs adopted a case management model.

5. Support structures. Programs also incorporated multiple types of support structures that tended to fall within one or more of three different strategies (Alamprese, 2005; CAAL, 2005; Chisman, 2004; Dann Messier & Kampits, 2004; Duke & Ganzglass, 2007; Harrington, 2000; Knell & Scogins, 2004; Liebowitz, 2004; Lombardo, 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a and b; Valentine et al., 2009; Walker & Strawn, 2004). The first strategy was the provision of wraparound support structures such as tutoring, supplemental instruction, mentoring, orientation programs, child care, and transportation services. The second strategy was offering some form of financial aid assistance such as scholarships, grants, reduced tuition, or tuition waivers. The third common strategy was the formation of student cohorts.

6. Quality instruction. The transition programs boasted a strong instructional program that utilized individualized instruction, contextualized instruction, and real life applications for students (Alamprese, 2005; Boylan, 2004; CAAL, 2005; Chisman, 2004; Chisman & Crandall 2007; Dann Messier & Kampits 2004; Duke & Ganzglass, 2007; Harrington, 2000; Knell & Scogins, 2004; Liebowitz, 2004; Lombardo, 2004; National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a and b; Valentine et al., 2009; Walker & Strawn, 2004). A key recommendation for, and component of, successful programs was the development of a clear and seamless curricular continuum from adult education to college with specific competencies and benchmarks for measuring academic performance. Many programs integrated computer technology into instruction, offered computer application courses, and/or offered online courses.
7. Introduction & orientation to college. Transition programs also included an introduction, orientation, and preparation for college (CAAL, 2005; Dann Messier & Kampits 2004; Harrington, 2000; Knell & Scogins, 2004; Liebowitz, 2004). Four strategies were common (Alamprese, 2005; Chisman, 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a and b; Walker & Strawn, 2004). The first was to structure classes, content, and workloads so they were equivalent to college courses. In some cases adult education students could earn college credit while in other cases adult and college students were integrated together into the same class. The second strategy was to offer workshops or classes that taught study skills, stress management, time management, research skills, college success strategies, career development, how to apply to college, how to score higher on the college placement exam, and/or how to create presentations. A third strategy was to administer the college placement exam to students. The fourth strategy was to introduce students to a college campus by giving campus tours, teaching classes on the campus, making college services available to students, interacting with college students and staff, and arranging for visits by former adult education students who were now attending college.

8. Data for continuous improvement. Programs consistently gathered and tracked student data such as student test scores, pass/fail rates, withdrawal rates, student persistence rates, individual academic progress, and college enrollment. Programs used the data to establish benchmarks, set goals, and conduct program assessment and improvement (Boylan, 2004; CAAL, 2005; Dann Messier & Kampits, 2004; Duke & Ganzglass, 2007; Gittleman, 2005; Knell & Scogins, 2004; Lombardo, 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010b). Of particular concern to transition programs that were not affiliated with institutions of higher
education was developing the ability to track students after they left an adult education program and entered college.

9. Collaboration & partnerships. Transition programs developed key collaborations and partnerships both internally and externally (Dann Messier & Kampits, 2004). Successful adult education programs that resided within a college enjoyed strong collaboration and support internally (Alamprese, 2005; Boylan, 2004; CAAL, 2005; Chisman, 2004; Chisman & Crandall 2007; Duke & Ganzglass, 2007; Liebowitz, 2004; National Commission on Adult Literacy 2008; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a; Walker & Strawn 2004). The programs enjoyed equal status, administrative support, services, faculty, facilities, access to resources, and participation in college activities as other programs within the institution. There was close collaboration between adult education and developmental education faculty and programs, often sharing facilities, equipment, and instructional materials. Students could enroll concurrently in both programs that ideally were melded into a single service delivery model. The adult education program also worked closely with college admissions, financial aid, counseling, and student support services.

Transition programs also developed key external partnerships that included other adult education programs, private foundations, state departments of education and labor, universities, community colleges, career centers, and social service providers (Dann Messier & Kampits, 2004; Gittleman, 2005; Knell & Scogins 2004; State of Maine Department of Education, 2010a and b; Theis, 2009; Walker & Strawn, 2004). For programs that were independent of an institution of higher education, collaboration with a college or university was very important and in some cases was formalized in memorandums of understanding or articulation agreements.
The partners collaborated in placement testing, recruitment activities, assistance with application procedures, financial aid planning, data collection, support for transition students, advising, admissions instruction and shared staff and resources.

**Career Pathway Model**

The Career Pathway Model encompassed programs with multiple titles including Bridge Programs, Stackable Certificates, and Career Pathways but with the same purpose and features. All of these programs had the goal of helping low-skilled, low-income adults gain skills necessary to secure entry level employment in a career field so they could command a salary higher than minimum wage and have the opportunity to advance their skills. These programs combined instruction in basic academic skills with industry-specific technical skills and terminated in a short term credential that was recognized by employers (Alssid, Goldberg, & Klerk, 2010; Community Research Partners, 2008; Workforce Strategy Center, 2007). Multiple publications contained case studies or vignettes of Career Pathway programs (Alssid, Gruber, Jenkins, Mazzeo, Roberts, & Stanback-Stroud, 2002; Bonjione, Elshoff, Paino, Abouda, Aponte, & Godby, 2009; Bragg, Harmon, Kirby, & Kim, 2010; Bragg, Bremer, Castellano, Kirby, Mavis, Schaad & Sunderman, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Jobs for the Future, 2010; Mazzeo, Rab, & Alssid, 2003; MPR Associates Inc., 2010; Tacelli, 2004; Women Employed, 2005; Workforce Strategy Center, 2007; Zeidenberg, Cho, & Jenkins, 2010). The Career Pathway Model included the elements of the College Preparatory Model and included four additional elements. The elements were:

1. Career Pathways,
2. Accelerated Learning,

3. Contextualized Learning, and

4. Partnerships with Business.

1. Career pathways. Educational institutions worked with employers, workforce agencies, and other interested parties to link adult education programs with a specific career field in order to create a hierarchical career ladder or pathway. The pathway often targeted high-wage, high-demand careers, had specific criteria to enter and a competency-based curriculum that led to a series of credentials. After earning an entry-level credential, students could return to school to receive further training and higher credentials, thereby allowing them to advance their career (Alssid et al., 2002; Alssid et al., 2010; Bragg & Barnett, 2009; Community Research Partners, 2008; Hull & Hinckley, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Theis, 2009). An example would be the pathway from Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), to Medical Assistant (MA), to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), to Registered Nurse (RN), to Bachelor of Nursing (BSN), to Master of Science in Nursing (MSN).

2. Contextualized learning. Contextualized learning was an umbrella term used to describe curricular and instructional strategies for integrating the teaching of basic reading, writing, and math skills with specific technical skills (Alssid et al., 2010; Bragg & Barnett, 2009; Community Research Partners, 2008; Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004; Sticht, 1997; Theis, 2009; Wachen, Jenkins, & Van Noy, 2010). The purpose of contextualized learning was to accelerate student learning and could include team teaching strategies.

3. Accelerated learning. Career Pathway programs sought to shorten the amount of time it took students to complete training in an effort to reduce the amount of time students spent
completing remedial coursework and to place students in the workforce faster. Strategies included shortening the length of courses, combining courses, offering intensive mini-courses, contextualized learning, and breaking degrees into smaller “chunks” (Bragg & Barnett, 2009; Community Research Partners, 2008; Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). Part of the rationale behind accelerated learning strategies was that there is an inverse relationship between the number of remedial courses students need to take and degree completion (Adelman, 1998; Morris, 1994).

4. Partnerships with business. Employer participation was vital to the creation and success of a career pathway program. Content for technical skills training had to be driven by employers, certifications had to be recognized by business and industry, and employers had to be willing to hire program completers (Alssid et al., 2010; Alssid et al., 2002; Bragg & Barnett, 2009; Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Community Research Partners, 2008; League for Innovation in the Community College, 2007; Theis, 2009).

Transition Program Successes

The literature discussed multiple measures for determining the success of different transition programs; however, the ultimate indicator of success is whether or not students in the programs persisted in their studies and transitioned into postsecondary education. However, student persistence rates and the percentage of students transitioning to college varied widely amongst programs. Comparison between programs is difficult because there does not seem to be a standard method for calculating or reporting transition rates. Yet, a summary of student transition rates is instructive in understanding transition programs, including the areas of strengths and weakness for each program.
**College Preparatory Model success.** This researcher found only a handful of reports that discussed the success of transition programs that fell within the College Preparatory Model. An evaluation of the 22 Maine College Transition (MCT) programs showed that they served 1195 students in 2009. The overall number of students that transitioned to postsecondary education was unclear due to inconsistent data reporting by different program sites. However, a noteworthy finding was that 87% of students attending programs co-located or working closely with postsecondary schools transitioned to college. In contrast, only 53% of students in programs that were not co-located or did not collaborate closely with a postsecondary school transitioned to college (State of Maine Department of Education, 2010).

A case study of the role of community colleges in offering adult education in Massachusetts described three groups of transition programs in the state. One was a network of programs operated by community colleges. Another was a network of programs funded by the Nellie Mae foundation, and the third were unaffiliated transition programs. In 2001-2002 the percentage of students completing a transition program was 86%, 67%, and 54% respectively while the percentage of program completers that transitioned into postsecondary education was 96%, 89%, and 83% (Liebowitz, 2004). Thus, the percentage of program participants that transitioned to postsecondary education from community college sponsored programs was 83% while 60% of participants in Nellie Mae funded programs transitioned and 45% of students in unaffiliated programs transitioned.

An evaluation report of ABE-to-College Transition programs funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation analyzed student records for the spring 2004 semester. Of the 241 students served by 22 programs in the study, 168 completed their programs. A total of 116 (69%)
enrolled or were expected to enroll in postsecondary education and 64 (55%) applied for financial aid (Gittleman, 2005).

Since the late 1990s, the state of Kentucky increased its efforts to transition GED graduates into higher education programs. The percentage of GED graduates who transitioned into postsecondary education within two years increased from 18% in the 2002-2003 academic year to 26% in the 2010-2011 academic year (Kentucky Adult Education, 2011).

In a report discussing strategies for helping low-skilled adults enter and succeed in colleges and careers, Liebowitz & Taylor (2004) highlighted successful programs, two of which were transition programs. Jefferson Community College in Kentucky had a dual enrollment program for adult education students allowing them to enroll in some classes and receive college services on campus. By 2004 the program had served 2830 students and 77% had enrolled in college. The second was an ABE program at Wayne County Community College in Detroit, MI. In 2003 there were 55 program graduates and 45 began attending college.

An evaluation report of a transition program operated by Rio Salado Community College in Arizona indicates that in the 1999-2000 fiscal year 354 program participants enrolled in college classes and 86% completed their college courses. Students enrolled in 448 classes and passed 69% of the classes with a C or better (Harrington, 2000).

**Career Pathway Model success.** Career Pathway Models maintained a strong focus on developing students' employable skills. Thus, both college transition and job placement were outcome goals for programs that fell within this model. Because this dissertation focuses solely on transitioning to college, job placement data is not reported here. Many program descriptions in the literature did list the percentage of students that transitioned to college (Bragg et al., 2007;
Bragg et al., 2010; Community Research Partners, 2008; Jobs for the Future, 2010; Mazzeo et al., 2003; Tacelli, 2004; Women Employed, 2005). Table 1 summarizes these results. It is interesting to note that the transition rates fluctuated widely between 2 and 100% of students served and the average rate for all programs was 45%.

**Barriers to Student Persistence**

Helping students persist in their studies is of utmost importance for transition programs to be successful. Much of the literature related to persistence of adult education students focuses on barriers to persistence. For this dissertation, barriers to persistence are categorized using a framework developed by K. Patricia Cross (1981). According to Cross, barriers to persistence can be grouped into three categories situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers. Situational barriers refer to things in an individual's environment while dispositional barriers refer to negative perceptions of self and one's ability to learn. Institutional barriers refer to practices and procedures within an educational institution that inhibit persistence. The following description of items in each category is illustrative of the types of barriers discussed in the literature and not intended as a comprehensive list.

Common situational barriers cited in the literature include family responsibilities, childcare, work demands, transportation, lack of support, adult responsibilities, and health concerns (Boesel, Absalam, & Smith 1998; Comings, Parrella, & Soricone, 1999; Cook & King, 2004; Harrington, 2000; Quigley, 1997; Silva, Cahalan, Lacierno-Paquet, & Stowe, 1998).
Table 1

Transition Rates for Selected Career Pathway Model Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Years Reported</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Transition Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Hawk CC</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Transportation, Distribution, Linguistics Pathway</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabrillo CC</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Computing, Engineering, Health Care, Criminal Justice Pathway</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of DuPage</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Manufacturing Bridge Program</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Lake County</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Manufacturing Bridge Program</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC of Denver</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>by 2005</td>
<td>Essential Skills Program - Teaches Basic Academic &amp; Occupational Skills</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga CC</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>Health Care Pathway</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daley CC</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>Manufacturing Bridge Program</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Ford CC</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Manufacturing Bridge Program</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McHenry CC</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Manufacturing Bridge Program</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakton CC</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Health Care Pathway</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODWIN</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1966-2004</td>
<td>Prepare to Enter College</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouachita TC</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>Career Pathway Initiative</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhodes State College</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>Manufacturing Pathway</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoreline CC</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>General Service Technician Pathway</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline College Center for Workforce Dev.</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Allied Health and Biosciences Preparation</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CC = Community College; TC = Technical College

Dispositional barriers frequently cited in the literature include concerns students have about their ability to succeed, negative past experiences with education, worries about not fitting
in, low self-esteem, feeling alienated from the dominant culture, and believing that one is too old for school (Cook & King, 2004; Harrington, 2000; Silva et al., 1998).

Institutional barriers commonly noted include inadequate articulation between adult and postsecondary programs; time, place, and cost of courses; weak connections with employment; and course schedule and selection (Cook & King, 2004; Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL), 2005; Kazis, Callahan, Davidson, McLeod, Bosworth, Choitz, and Hoops, 2007; Liebowitz, & Taylor, 2004; Quigley, 2007; Silva et al., 1998)

**Tinto and Student Persistence**

Perhaps the most well-known paradigm regarding student persistence is the integration model put forth by Vicent Tinto (1977, 1993). Many, if not most, persistence strategies in higher education today are built upon Tinto's theory of student persistence (Braxton & Hirschy, 2005).

Tinto posits that student departure from higher education is a result of events that take place after a student enrolls in the institution not events which occurred before enrolling. Student voluntary departure is an indication of the extent to which the student was integrated both academically and socially within the institution. Academic integration can be facilitated by the student's academic performance and interactions with faculty and staff while social integration can be influenced by extracurricular activities and interactions with other students. Student involvement in their learning and college life, student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom, and student fit within a peer group can all have a positive impact on student persistence.
Tinto makes several recommendations for increasing student persistence. They include developing college recruitment, admission, and orientation programs; establishing effective assessment and placement procedures; providing financial assistance; developing an inclusive campus; implementing proactive interventions; and implementing first year programs. First year programs would include an academic orientation, teaching study skills, building a sense of community with students, a student monitoring and early warning system, counseling and advising, and academic involvement and support programs. Furthermore, Tinto recommended that nonresidential schools such as community colleges focus on developing classroom-based communities of students, increasing student-faculty interactions, bridging the gap between the school and external communities, and carefully delivering services in a timely fashion.

**Specific Strategies to Enhance Student Persistence**

There are numerous examples of studies in the literature that address student retention and persistence within adult education programs and community colleges. The literature surrounding adult education programs focuses primarily on barriers to attendance with only a few studies that address interventions designed to support student persistence. On the other hand, the literature addressing student persistence within community colleges is much richer identifying multiple challenges and strategies. This researcher drew from literature in both areas to investigate best practices surrounding three strategy areas.

**Campus climate.** Establishing a campus that is welcoming to students where they feel comfortable is a strategy that gives students a sense of belonging, helps build a sense of community, and fosters student involvement (Comings, Parrella, & Soricone, 1999; Maine

**Student support services.** Multiple studies involving adult education and community college students identified different support services as positively impacting student persistence. Counseling and advising is a key service that multiple studies have identified as related to increased student persistence (Bailey & Alfonso, 2005; Maine Transition Project, 2010; Nash & Kallenback, 2009; Tracy-Mumford, 1994). An important role of the counselor or advisor is to work with the student to set goals and work to achieve them (Comings et al., 1999). Comprehensive support services that include things such as tutoring, supplemental instruction, and mentoring also positively impact student persistence (Comings, J., 2007; Grubb, 2003; Kulik, Kulik, & Schwalb, 1983; Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004; National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2006; O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Scrivener & Coghlan, 2011; Summers, 2003; Zepke & Leach, 2005). Financial aid is another key support service associated with increased student persistence (CAAL, 2005; Kazis et al., 2007; O’Brien & Shedd, 2001; Pascarella & Terezini, 2005; Zepke & Leach, 2005).

**Orientation to college activities.** New student orientation to college activities, student success courses, and first year experiences are different types of orientation activities that teach students skills such as study skills, time management and how to navigate the college system. All of these interventions have a positive impact on student persistence (Harrington, 2000; Kulik et al., 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Pascarella & Terezini, 2005; Quigley, 1997; Scrivener & Coghlan, 2011; Stovall, 1999; Zepke & Leach, 2005).
Summary

Two transition models are especially applicable to this study, the College Preparatory and Career Pathway Models. Most of the transition efforts at YVCC in general and the Grandview Campus specifically fall within the College Preparatory Model. However, the I-BEST program clearly fits within the Career Pathway Model. The College Preparatory model has nine defining characteristics. The Career Pathway Model shares the characteristics but has four additional features. The transition strategies examined by this study fall within the defining characteristics of both models. Campus climate and college orientation activities fall within the feature of “Introduction & Orientation to College” while student support services falls within the characteristic of “Support Structures.”

In order for a transition program that follows either model to be considered successful, students must persist in their studies and transition into college classes. While program evaluation procedures are not consistent, examples from both College Preparatory and Career Pathway Models show that programs following both models are effective in moving students from adult education programs into college. In nearly every case, the percentage of students in these programs that transition to college, far exceeds national percentages.

Student persistence, as defined by Tinto, is highly dependent upon the integration of new students into the academic and social fabric of the college. Many of the defining characteristics of the College Preparatory and Career Pathway Models are designed to support student persistence. The literature reports that each of the three strategies evaluated as part of this project, namely campus climate, student support services, and orientation to college activities, are related to increased student retention and persistence.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study drew upon both quantitative and qualitative methodology and was conducted in two phases. The first phase consisted of collecting quantitative student record and survey response data. Data from the first phase of the study was used to identify any relationships between students transitioning and campus climate, student support services, and college orientation activities. The second phase of the study was the gathering of qualitative data from two different student focus groups. Members of the focus groups were students who had transitioned to college and were asked to describe their experiences as students at YVCC. The focus group data was used to better understand what influenced the students to successfully transition into college. He also triangulated the focus group data with the quantitative student record and survey data to better understand the role of campus climate, student support services, and college orientation activities in helping adult education students transition to college. Finally, he also identified additional factors that influenced transitioning.

Quantitative Phase

The initial phase of the study began with gathering student records for 314 adult education students who attended the YVCC Grandview Campus during the 2006-7 to 2009-10 academic years. The student records contained demographic information including student ethnicity, gender, and birth date. The records also contained elements of students' academic history including whether or not the students enrolled in specific “stacked classes” or a Nursing
Assisting I-BEST program and whether or not they each transitioned into college. Stacked classes were designated as transition classes that covered the subjects of reading, writing, math or study skills and integrated adult education and developmental college students into the same classroom.

The next phase was conducting a survey that identified student perceptions about college strategies designed to facilitate student transitions to college. Specifically, the survey asked students to give feedback about the campus climate, student support services, and orientation to college activities. As explained in the “Survey Implementation” step, the survey was administered to the entire target population using multiple administration methods of print, online, telephone, and face-to-face formats.

**Areas of inquiry.** At the heart of this exploratory study, are seven areas of inquiry and sought to identify a relationship between each area and students transitioning into college. The first three areas are addressed by the survey and are labeled as “Use of Student Services,” “Orientation to College Activities,” and “Campus Climate.” The remaining four areas of inquiry relate to student demographics and enrollment history. They are “Gender,” “Age,” “Ethnicity” and “Stacked Classes.” A Mann-Whitney U Test, correlation and regression tests, and a one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to explore the possible relationships between these areas and student transitioning.

**Population and sampling.** The population for this study consists of all students enrolled in ABE Level 4 and 5 Reading and Writing classes at the YVCC Grandview Campus between the 2006-07 and 2009-10 academic years. (Students in ABE classes are assigned to one of five hierarchical academic skill levels.) The population of the study was limited to students enrolled
in ABE Levels 4 and 5 Reading and Writing classes because they had progressed academically far enough that they could begin transitioning into developmental college classes. Therefore, all students enrolled in ABE Levels 1-3 were not included from the population because they were not ready to transition. Additionally, the population did not include students who enrolled prior to the 2006-2007 academic year because the transition efforts at the YVCC Grandview Campus were in a nascent stage or nonexistent in previous years. Finally, students enrolled after the 2009-2010 academic years were excluded because an insufficient amount of time had passed to determine whether they had transitioned or not. Limiting the population of the study in this manner is a strategy that designed to increase the internal validity of the study (Tuckman, 1991).

The entire population was composed of only 314 individuals. With such a small population and a high likelihood that survey return rates would be low, the researcher did not select a sample, but attempted to survey the entire population. Since the target population is fairly mobile, some of the contact information that YVCC had on file for the population was obsolete. Additionally, the population was predominantly female (77.7%) and had low education levels, characteristics that correspond with low return rates for printed surveys and initial nonresponse to telephone surveys (Fowler, 2002; Mangione, 1998). However, these population characteristics also correspond with a high likelihood to respond to face-to-face interviews or call backs for telephone surveys (Fowler, 2002). As a result, the study used print, telephone, face-to-face and online survey implementation methods, an acceptable practice for trying to increase response rates (Fowler, 2002; Lavrakas, 1998).

Survey design. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher and asked students to rate elements of three strategies implemented at the Grandview Campus to support
student transitioning: campus climate, student support services, and orientation to college activities. The survey instrument contained 59 questions, which are listed in Appendix D.

Questions 1 through 14 asked students to rate the importance of specific student support services to their success at YVCC while questions 18 through 30 asked students how often they used each service. For example, students identified how important it was to their success and how often they “Used the YVCC computer lab,” “Met with the college counselor,” and “Received tutoring assistance.” Student responses in this section were utilized for descriptive analysis but not for correlation and regression analysis tests.

Survey questions 35 to 47 asked students to identify how they learned specific skills designed to orient them to college. For instance, students were asked how they learned, “How to apply for financial aid,” “How to balance family, work, and school responsibilities,” and “How to apply for admission to college.” Possible responses were, “In class from my teacher,” “From a presentation,” “From college staff,” or “Did not learn at YVCC.” The purpose of these questions was to identify what skills students learned at YVCC and which ones they did not learn at the college.

Questions 15 to 17 asked students to rate the importance of specific activities indicative of a positive campus climate to their success while questions 32 to 34 asked students to indicate how often they engaged in those activities. For example, students indicated how important it was to their success that they “Talked and socialized with students from other classes” and how often they did it. Additionally, questions 48 to 59 asked students to express their agreement or disagreement to statements about the campus climate. Sample statements included, “While attending YVCC, I was encouraged to continue my education,” “While attending YVCC, others
congratulated me for my accomplishments,” and “While attending YVCC, I felt that people at YVCC wanted me to succeed.”

Survey questions about campus climate had a scaled agree/disagree response format with five possible answers. Questions about student services had four possible responses on a Likert type scale and questions about college orientation activities had four possible responses allowing students to indicate where they learned about a particular topic within YVCC or if they learned it outside of YVCC.

In order to keep track of who had responded to the survey and to link responses to student demographic data, each student record was assigned a unique identifier number that was printed on each individual's cover letter, survey and any other correspondence from the researcher. The number also served as an access code for respondents completing the online version of the survey. In this manner survey responses were connected with demographic and academic history information. As a result, the survey did not ask for any demographic information.

Survey development, field testing and surveyor training. While designing the survey questions, faculty and staff who worked with adult education students reviewed the questions and provided feedback. They helped identify words and questions students may not understand. Additionally, their feedback helped the researcher modify questions so they would solicit feedback that would truly address the research questions investigated by the study. Also, the lead YVCC institutional researcher helped develop the format and layout of the survey.

Field testing of the survey instrument was conducted in two steps. First, the researcher conducted individual interviews with six currently enrolled adult education students. Following a protocol outlined by Fowler (1998), he first asked each student to read the cover letter and
survey. Next, the researcher went through the survey again with each student asking them about their understanding of the meaning of the questions and responses as well as the vocabulary used in the cover letter and questionnaire. The goal of the interviews was to identify any words or phrases that were confusing in an effort to ensure that all who took the survey understood the directions, interpreted the questions the same, and were able to answer each question. Based on feedback from the interviews, the researcher modified the survey items, cover letter, implementation protocols, and formatting for the printed survey.

The second step in field testing was to conduct a trial field implementation. The researcher implemented the survey in two classes. In the first class of adult education students, he utilized the cover letter and printed survey. In the second class, which was a stacked class containing adult education and developmental students, he utilized the telephone survey protocol and administered the survey orally. He conducted a class discussion about the survey format, wording, questions, and answers in both classes after administering the survey. The written and oral survey implementation each helped identify different aspects of the survey that could be improved. The field implementation helped the researcher further refine question wording, evaluate the ease of use of the printed questionnaire, and refine the telephone implementation protocol. It also gave him an idea of how long it would take to complete the print survey and administer the survey orally (Fowler, 2002).

Once the researcher made final changes to the survey, cover letter, and implementation protocols (Appendices C and D), he trained his research assistant who was to help complete surveys over the telephone. He reviewed with the assistant the survey documentation and discussed how to utilize the implementation protocol, how to encourage participants to respond,
how to record survey responses, how to complete a call tracking sheet and what times and days to conduct the telephone surveys.

**Survey implementation.** The study utilized an implementation plan designed to yield as high a response rate as possible. First, the researcher emailed the cover letter (see Appendix B) and a link to the online survey to 64 individuals, which were those in the population for whom YVCC had a personal email or was currently enrolled in YVCC and had a current YVCC email address. He also mailed the survey with a cover letter and a self-addressed and stamped return envelope to each person in the population. Next the researcher and his assistant began calling on the telephone all 309 individuals (98% of the population) for whom YVCC had a phone number. They recorded each phone call on a tracking sheet to identify the time of day the individual was contacted, the type of response received, and whether the phone number was valid or not. They conducted the first round of telephone calls during the afternoon.

A large number of surveys were returned because the mailing address was no longer valid and ultimately, 56 addresses (17.8%) proved to be invalid. Some surveys returned by the post office as undeliverable contained a forwarding address. In these cases, the researcher re-mailed the survey to the new address. Additionally, some respondents reached by telephone asked to receive another copy of the survey via the mail and the researcher re-mailed surveys to them. In total, 22 surveys were re-mailed.

After 11 days, the researcher mailed out a reminder postcard to non-respondents who had valid mailing addresses asking them to complete the survey. Meanwhile, the researcher and his assistant continued to conduct the surveys via telephone. They made their second round of phone calls in the evening and were able to reach more individuals so they made successive
rounds of phone calls in the evening. However, they would make calls in the morning or afternoon if respondents requested a call back at a certain time of day. The researcher and his assistant attempted to contact each non-respondent at least four times and some up to seven times. Unfortunately, there were many individuals they were not able to reach because 136 (43.3%) telephone numbers were disconnected, wrong numbers, or in some other way incorrect. In addition, there were 46 individuals who were not contacted via telephone despite multiple attempts. Thus, it is unknown whether the phone numbers were valid or not.

Within ten days after mailing out the reminder postcards, the researcher contacted 79 members of the population who had transitioned to college and for whom the researcher had valid contact information. The majority had current mailing addresses and received a letter inviting them to participate in the focus groups (Appendix F). If they had not yet completed a survey, he included a printed copy and invited them to return it at the focus group. There were three whom he contacted via telephone because he did not have a current mailing address. Additionally, while conducting phone calls to administer the survey, the researcher invited some of the targeted students to the focus groups. Finally, he also looked up currently enrolled students when they were on campus attending classes to invite them personally and give them an opportunity to complete the survey if they had not already. The researcher ended up administering the survey face-to-face to two respondents.

Survey returns. An a priori analysis using G*Power software completed prior to conducting the surveys indicated that 89 completed surveys were needed to for the necessary statistical tests to have sufficient power for detecting a difference with a moderate effect size. As a result, the researcher had a goal of receiving 100 returned surveys to ensure there were a
sufficient number of correctly completed surveys to allow for analysis. However, due to the
difficulty of contacting respondents and low response rates, the goal was not reached. Of the 314
individuals in the population, 75 completed surveys representing 23.9% of the population.

At least 42 individuals were not contacted because the researcher did not have a current
mailing address, telephone number, or email address. Thus, the number of individuals who were
most likely contacted in some fashion was 272, yielding a 27.6% response rate to the survey.

**Variables and measurement.** The quantitative portion of this study investigates the
impact of the six different variables on the variable of “students transitioning to college.” The
three variables of “campus climate,” “student support services,” and “college orientation
activities” were composed of summed survey responses. The variables of “ethnicity,” “age” and
“gender” came from student demographic data held by YVCC. The variable of “stacked classes”
was developed from student academic enrollment history.

**Validity and reliability.** Several steps were taken to increase the validity and reliability
of survey responses. The field testing of the survey instrument and combining student responses
to multiple questions about the same topic increased the validity of student scores (Fowler,
2002). To increase internal validity, the researcher narrowed the scope of the study population.
To increase external validity, he sought to match the demographic characteristics of respondents
with the characteristics of the entire population and ensure there was sufficient power to conduct
the necessary statistical tests. The demographic characteristics of the respondents closely
matched those of the population as shown in Table 2.

Field testing and interviewer training helped ensure the reliability of student responses.
The field testing of the cover letter, survey questions, printed questionnaire, and implementation
protocol ensured that each question only addressing one item, reduced ambiguity in survey questions, and verified that respondents interpreted each item the same way. To ensure reliability of responses, the responses to three questions were excluded from the data analysis. Two questions were rejected because respondent comments during survey implementation over the telephone revealed that respondents were not interpreting the questions consistently the same way or the way the researcher intended. The third question was rejected during the analysis phase because it did not address the overall composite category of Student Support Services that Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Population and Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Survey Population</th>
<th>Survey Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 and under</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and up</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in I-BEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Survey Population N = 314; Survey Respondents N = 75
the question was supposed to address. Finally, training the research assistant also enhanced reliability by ensuring consistent implementation of the telephone surveys.

**Qualitative Phase**

After completing the survey the researcher conducted two focus groups with students who had transitioned into credit-bearing college courses at the YVCC Grandview Campus. The purpose of the focus groups was to bring to light the personal experiences and understandings of the students in order to better understand influences that helped the students transition and assist in the interpretation of survey data.

**Sampling.** The researcher intended to use purposeful sampling in order to select focus group participants who were enrolled during each of the academic years included in the study; were pursuing academic as well as professional/technical degrees; represented different age, gender, and ethnicity categories; and were enrolled in stacked classes. However, once he saw how low the return rates were for the survey, the researcher determined that he would need to invite all students in the population who had transitioned into college instead of inviting a sample.

**Procedures.** The researcher established days and times for two different focus groups and then began inviting students to attend using the telephone, mail, and face-to-face invitations. While conducting telephone surveys, the researcher invited some students to attend one of the focus groups. He also called students for whom he had a valid telephone number but an invalid mailing address. Additionally, he mailed a letter to all eligible individuals for whom he had a current mailing address and who had not indicated already via telephone that they could not
attend. As an incentive, the invitation letter stated that light refreshments would be provided to focus group participants. Finally, he looked up currently enrolled students when they were on campus attending classes to give them a personal invitation to attend the focus groups. In total, he invited 79 students to participate in the focus groups. The night before each focus group he made telephone calls to those students who had previously committed to attend and any others for whom he had a current telephone number. While making these calls, he also asked those who had not completed a survey to do so and bring it to the focus group. One student brought a survey to a focus group. Between five and seven individuals confirmed their attendance at each of the focus group sessions. However, each focus group ended up having three participants.

When conducting the focus groups, the researcher first disseminated and read an informed consent letter (Appendix G). Next, he explained the purpose of the focus group and the expectations for each participant to ensure that each participant in the focus groups had the opportunity to speak and all participants were treated with respect. During the focus groups he acted as a moderator guiding the discussion using a protocol (Appendix H). A research assistant took detailed notes of the discussion and each focus group session was recorded with a video camera.

**Validity and reliability.** The researcher used four primary strategies to ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative data. First, he sought to triangulate the data with the survey. Second, he searched for disconfirming evidence as he analyzed each type of data. Third, he engaged in researcher reflexivity by acknowledging his own biases and perspectives. Fourth, he utilized thick, rich description when writing his analysis.
Role of the Researcher

The project was conducted by a doctoral student pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Washington State University. The researcher is also a senior administrator at Yakima Valley Community College where he works as the Grandview Campus Dean. In this capacity he is responsible for the operations and college employees at the Grandview Campus. The researcher has a professional, and in some cases a personal, connection to the setting, instructors, and students.

Because of his position at the college, the researcher had to be careful to ensure that students did not feel coerced to participate in the study. He also had to be aware of potentially biased responses from students who may have felt they should make statements that reflect positively on the college.

Ethical Issues and Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher secured IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval from Washington State University (WSU) (see Appendix A) to conduct the study. Additionally, he also secured necessary approvals from YVCC to conduct the study with YVCC students as a college employee.

The study followed guidelines of informed consent. Individuals invited to participate in the survey received a written statement explaining the purpose of the study and stating that participation was voluntarily (Appendix B). Completion of the survey signified their consent to participate. Individuals participating in the focus groups likewise received a written statement
explaining the purpose of the study and stating that participation was voluntarily (Appendix G). Persons not wishing to participate in the study were not coerced into participating.

The researcher ensured that data were handled in a sensitive and confidential manner. No student names or personally identifiable data were included in the final dissertation report. Finally, he completed the project in an expedient and professional manner.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations. This study was confined to the YVCC Grandview Campus and did not include students enrolled at other college locations. Furthermore, it focused on students who were prepared academically to transition to college during the 2006-2009 academic years and did not include students at other academic levels or enrolled during other years. The study did not address all elements of the College Preparatory or Career Pathway Transition Models nor the models as a whole. Rather it initially focused solely on the strategies of campus climate, student support activities, college orientation activities, and stacked classes that fit within two defining elements of the models, namely Support Structures and Orientation to College. However, qualitative data that emerged from focus groups did provide data applicable to additional elements of the transition models.

Limitations. This study was not a true experiment using random selection and random assignment, thus bringing into question the external validity of the study. As a result, application of the study's findings to other settings must be done with caution. Because the study was not a true experiment, it also did not control for other variables that may have impacted on student transitioning. Thus, there may be other factors that have a greater influence on student
transitioning than this study addressed. Finally, this study was limited by those students who responded to the survey and the invitation to attend focus group sessions. Non-response bias was a large concern for this study and because such a small percentage of the population responded to the survey and focus group invitation, it is possible that those individuals who did participate were not representative of the overall population.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The researcher first analyzed the quantitative results and then analyzed the qualitative results. Finally, he joined the two types of data together and summarized them into ten findings for the study.

Quantitative Results and Analysis

The first step in analyzing the quantitative data was to numerically code all of the survey, demographic, and academic history data. The second step was to determine the average response values for each of the survey questions and the percentage values for the demographic and academic history variables. The third was to conduct a series of statistical tests that included calculating the measures of central tendency and variance, conducting a bivariate correlation, performing a multiple regression analysis, and conducting a one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test.

Coding. The researcher conducted quantitative analysis on three different survey variables, three demographic variables, and two academic history variables. He gave a numerical code to each variable.

Responses to questions 1-14 were coded as follows: “Very Important” as a 3, “Somewhat Important” as a 2, “Not Important” as a 1, and “Did Not Apply to Me” as 0. During the analysis phase, the researcher rejected responses to question 3 because feedback from respondents as they
completed the survey showed that they did not interpret the question consistently nor as he intended.

The variable “Use of Support Services” was composed of questions 18-19, 21-29, and 31. Student responses to these questions were coded as follows: “Very Often” as 3, “Fairly Often” as 2, “Sometimes” as 1, and “Never” as 0. Responses to questions 20 and 30 were rejected because comments made by respondents during survey implementation led the researcher to conclude that respondents did not interpret question 20 as intended. In addition, the researcher concluded that question 30 did not measure student use of a support service.

The variable “Orientation Activities” was composed of questions 35-47. The purpose of the question responses was to show whether or not respondents engaged in any of the activities at the college. Therefore, all responses that indicated that the student engaged in the activity at the college were coded the same. Responses of “In class from my teacher,” “From a presentation,” and “From college staff” were all coded as 1. Responses of “Did not learn at YVCC” were coded as 0.

The variable “Campus Climate” was composed of questions 32-34 and 48-59. Responses to questions 32-34 were coded as follows: “Very Often” as 3, “Fairly Often” as 2, and “Sometimes” as 1. Responses to questions 48-59 were coded as follows: “Strongly Agree” as 4, “Somewhat Agree” as 3, “Have No Opinion” as 0, “Somewhat Disagree” as 2, and “Strongly Disagree” as 1.

Demographic variables were “Gender,” “Ethnicity,” and “Age.” For the variable of “Gender,” males were coded as 1 and females as 2. For the variable of “Ethnicity,” “Hispanic” was coded as 1, “White, non-Hispanic” was coded as 2, while “Black/African American non-
Hispanic,” “Asian,” “Native American/Alaskan Native,” and “Other” were coded as 3. There were five coded categories for the variable of “Age.” Ages of 24 years and under were coded as 1, 25 to 34 years as 2, 35 to 44 years as 3, 45 to 54 years as 4 and 55 years and older as 5.

The two academic history variables were “Transitioned” and “Stacked Classes.” Students who transitioned to college were coded as 1 while those that did not were coded as 0. For the variable “Stacked Classes,” most students were coded with the number of stacked classes in which they enrolled. However, since few students enrolled in four stacked classes, this group was combined with the students who enrolled in three stacked classes. Additionally, the number of students who enrolled in five, six, and seven stacked classes was so small that all these scores were combined together and coded with a 4 to facilitate the conducting of statistical tests.

**Average survey responses.** The questions with the highest and lowest scores for each variable are listed in this section and the mean scores for all survey questions are listed in Appendix I.

Student responses to questions one to 14 reflected students' conclusions about what services were most important to their success at YVCC. The items with the highest average scores were question 6) “Talked with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes” (2.8), question 4) “Talked with your teacher about your career plans” (2.6), question 9) “Talked with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC” (2.6), question 11) “Received encouragement when you struggled in school” (2.6) and question 2) “Met individually with the college counselor” (2.5). These mean scores indicated that students felt each item was “Very Important” to their success. Interestingly, the highest three items all related to interactions with instructors.
The three survey items with the lowest scores related to students' importance rating of support services are listed here. Question 10) “Received help with transportation to YVCC” (1), question 8) “Received help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies” (1.4) and question 17) Participated in Grandview Student Council sponsored events” (1.3) indicated that students perceived these items as “Not Important” to their success at YVCC.

For the composite variable of “Use of Support Services,” survey items with the highest score were question 23) “Talk with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes” (2.1), question 28) “Receive encouragement when you struggled in school” (1.9), question 26) “Talk with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC” (1.7), question 21) “Talk with your teacher about your career plans” (1.6) and question 18) “Use the YVCC computer lab outside of class” (1.6). These responses showed that students used these support services “Fairly Often.” As shown above, four of these items were also identified by students as “Very Important” to their success at YVCC. Three of them described interactions with instructors while question 24) “Receive encouragement when you struggled in school” could also refer to an instructor assisting a student.

The items with the lowest scores for the variable of “Use of Support Services” were question 27) “Receive help with transportation to YVCC” (.4), question 34) “Participate in Grandview Student Council sponsored events” (.6) and question 25) “Received help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies” (.7). These responses indicated that students used these support services “Never” or “Sometimes” and, as shown above, they are also the services students deemed least important to their success.
The survey items with the highest score for the composite variable of “Orientation to College Activities” were question 44) “Study skills to help you succeed in your classes” (.91), question 40) “How to take the COMPASS placement test” (.84), question 45) “Where to go within YVCC to get the help you need as a student” (.84) and question 46) “How to enroll in a college class” (.84). Each of these responses deals with learning how to navigate the logistics of the college system and most students reported that they did learn these things at YVCC. Over half of the respondents reported learning all but two of the other items at YVCC as well.

Students reported learning the great majority of items (52%) in the classroom from teachers, 39% from staff and 9% from a presentation. A total of 69% of respondents reported learning “Study skills to help you succeed in your classes” from teachers while 54% reported learning “How to set goals for your studies at YVCC,” and 53% stated they learned “How your education at YVCC will prepare you for future jobs” from teachers. A summary of how students responded to these questions is found in Appendix J.

Of particular interest were student survey responses related to learning about financial aid services. Only 64% of respondents learned how to apply for financial aid at YVCC. Of those that did, there was not a consistent pattern in how they learned it with 13 learning it from staff, 25 from faculty in class and 10 from a presentation. This reflects an inconsistent strategy for teaching transition students about financial aid.

The items with the lowest scores for the variable “Orientation to College Activities” were question 37) “How to balance family, work and school responsibilities” (.39) and question 38) “How to handle the stresses related to going to school” (.47). These items have a commonality
of dealing with life skills related to managing time, stress, and priorities. Over half of the respondents reported that they did not learn these things at YVCC.

For the composite variable “Campus Climate,” students responded positively to all the survey questions. The items with the highest average ranking were question 58) “I was treated with respect” (3.7), question 54) “I felt comfortable on the YVCC Grandview Campus” (3.7), and question 56) “The campus environment was welcoming” (3.6). The item with the lowest score was question 57) “I felt included in campus events and activities” (2.7). However, the mean score still shows that students somewhat agreed with this statement. There were no items with a mean score indicating disagreement with the statement. Additionally, questions 32) “Make new friends at YVCC” and 33) “Talk and socialize with students from other classes” had some of the highest average scores (1.7) among similar types of questions. The mean score of 1.7 indicates that students did these activities “Fairly Often.”

**Demographic and student record variables.** Of the 314 students in the population, 244 (77.7%) were female and 70 (22.3%) were male. There were 252 (80.3%) Hispanic students, 41 (13.1%) were White, non-Hispanic students and 21 (6.7%) identified with another ethnicity. Age distribution for the survey population was as follows: 64 (20.4%) were under 24 years, 134 (42.7%) were between 25 and 34 years, 71 (22.6%) were between 35 and 44 years, 31 (9.9%) were between 45 and 54 years, and 14 (4.5%) 55 years or older.

A total of 90 (28.7%) had transitioned into college classes while 22 (71.3%) did not transition. The number of students who did not enroll in any stacked classes was 177 (56.4%), while the number enrolled in one was 48 (15.3%), the number enrolled in two was 60 (19.1),
the number enrolled in three or four was 16 (5.1%) and the number enrolled in five, six, or seven was 13 (4.1%).

**Descriptive statistics.** The researcher summed the responses from each student to the questions that related to the three variables of “Use of Support Services,” “Orientation Activities,” and “Campus Climate.” The result was three composite scores on a ratio scale for each student.

The measures of central tendency for each of the composite variables are shown in Table 3. The mean for “Use of Support Services” was 15.8 (SD = 7.2) indicating a relatively infrequent use of support services since a score of 45 would have represented frequent use. Since the distribution of scores for “Orientation Activities” is skewed, the median of 10 (SD = 3.1) is the most accurate measure of central tendency. The median score indicates that the students surveyed participated in most of the orientation activities listed in the survey since a score of 12 would indicate that students participated in all the orientation activities. Similarly, the median of 47 (SD = 8.9) for “Campus Climate” is the best measure of central tendency.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Composite Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Mo</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use of Support Services</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orientation Activities</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Campus Climate</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N = 75. M = Mean. Mdn = Median. Mo = Mode. SD = Standard Deviation
because the distribution is skewed. A score of 53 would indicate that students perceived a perfect campus climate so the median score indicates that students held a very positive view of the campus climate.

**Refining the composite variables.** The researcher first conducted bivariate correlation and multiple regression analyses using the three composite variables. The correlation analysis indicated a positive correlation between the variable “Transitioned” and “Support Services” \( r = .32, p = .01 \) and “Orientation Activities” \( r = .36, p = .01 \) but no relationship with “Campus Climate.” However, a post hoc power analysis using G*Power software showed a power of .81 for the correlation with the variable “Support Services” and .90 for the variable “Orientation Activities.” Thus, there was not sufficient power in the tests to draw definitive conclusions.

The results of the multiple regression analysis were similar. The adjusted \( R^2 \) value for the model was .12 indicating that all the variables together explain 12% of the variability in the variable “Transitioned.” The only variable that entered into the model at a .05 significance level was “Orientation Activities.” But, a post hoc power analysis using G*Power software gave a power score of .69 for the test so, again, there was not sufficient power to yield any firm conclusions.

In an effort to refine the survey responses, the researcher conducted a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test comparing responses to each of the 56 survey questions used for analysis with the variable of “Transitioned.” With an alpha level set at .05, there was a difference in responses between students who transitioned and students who did not for only 11 survey questions. Of those questions, two addressed student perceptions of what services were most important to their success, four related to the support services used by students, four related to...
orientation activities and one related to campus climate. The results of the test are shown in Appendix K.

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U test, the researcher created two new composite variables. The first composite variable was labeled “Refined Use of Support Services” and was composed of summed responses to survey items 18, 19, 29, and 31. These items dealt with using the computer lab, meeting with the college counselor, completing a financial aid application, and obtaining a student identification card. The second variable was labeled “Refined Orientation Activities” and was composed of summed responses to survey items 35, 39, 40, and 46. These survey questions addressed how students learned how to apply for financial aid, learned how to apply for admission to the college, learned to take the college placement test and learned how to enroll in college classes. The researcher then conducted bivariate correlation and multiple regression analyses using the two new composite variables.

**Correlation.** Prior to conducting a correlation, the researcher reviewed the scores for the composite variables to see if they met the necessary assumptions for conducting parametric tests. The composite variables met the assumption of scale. When the values were plotted on a scatter plot the resultant pattern showed that the data predominantly met the assumption of linearity. While the distribution for the variable “Refined Use of Support Services” was fairly normal, the variable “Refined Orientation Activities” was skewed to the right. As a precautionary measure, the researcher conducted both a parametric Pearson's Product Moment bi-variate correlation test and a nonparametric Spearman's rho multiple correlation test. Nonparametric tests often give more accurate results than parametric tests when analyzing data sets that violate the assumptions required for parametric tests. However, the results from both tests were nearly the same. The
results of the Pearson's Product Moment test are shown here because they were more conservative and it is a more commonly understood test. The alpha level for the two-tailed test was set at .05.

The results of the correlation of the variable “Transitioned” with the composite variables from the 75 survey responses are shown in Table 4. The test showed a positive correlation between the variables of “Transitioned” and “Refined Use of Support Services” \((r = .58, p = .01)\) and “Refined Orientation Activities” \((r = .42, p = .01)\). The coefficient of determination for “Refined Use of Support Services” suggests that 34% of the variance in the variable “Transitioned” can be explained by “Refined Use of Support Services” while the coefficient of determination for “Refined Orientation Activities” suggests that it explains 18% of the variance in “Transitioned.” A post hoc power analysis using G*Power software showed a power of .999 for the correlation with the variable “Refined Use of Support Services” and .97 for the variable “Refined Orientation Activities.” Therefore, the researcher concluded that the results were most likely not the result of chance despite the low number of responses, but demonstrated a relationship between the variables and student transitioning.

Table 4

Pearson's r Correlation of Refined Survey Variables with Transitioned Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transitioned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Refined Use of St. Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Refined Orientation Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 75  
*p < .05. **p < .01.
A bivariate Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test with the demographic and academic history variables explored possible relationships between the variable of “Transitioned” and the variables of “Gender,” “Ethnicity,” “Age,” and “Stacked Classes.” This analysis was conducted with records from all 314 individuals in the population. It was also a two-tailed test with the alpha level set at .05. The results are shown in Table 5. The test showed a positive correlation between the variables of “Transitioned” and “Gender” ($r = .14, p = .05$) and “Stacked Classes” ($r = .36, p = .01$) but a negative correlation between the variables of “Transitioned” and “Age” ($r = -.15, p = .05$). The coefficient of determination for “Gender” and “Age” suggested that each explains 2% of the variance in the variable “Transitioned.” On the other hand, the coefficients of determination for the variables “Stacked Classes” indicated that 14% of the variability in “Transitioned” can be explained by “Stacked Classes.” A post hoc power analysis showed a power of .70 and .76 for the correlations with the variables of “Gender” and “Age.” While the correlation suggests that females and younger students are more likely to transition, the effect is very small and there was not sufficient power in the correlation to detect Table 5

Pearson's r Correlation of Demographic & Academic Variables with Transitioned Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transitioned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stacked Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 314
*p < .05. **p < .01.
such a small effect with certainty. However, the post hoc power analysis using G*Power software showed a power of .9999 for the correlation with “Stacked Classes.” These results indicate a relationship between students transitioning into college and the number of stacked classes in which they enrolled. The more stacked classes a student enrolled in, the higher the likelihood that the student transitioned.

**Regression.** Because of the skewed distributions of the variables “Orientation Activities” and “Campus Climate,” the researcher explored the use of both a parametric multiple regression test and a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test with the composite survey scores from the 75 survey respondents. As with the correlation test scores, the results were similar so the results of the parametric multiple regression test are shown here because the results were more conservative and readers will most likely be more familiar with this test. The alpha level was set at .05 and the analysis was conducted as a two-tailed test.

The results are shown in Table 6. Collinearity was not a concern for this test since Variance Inflationary Factor (VIF) values were all low. The adjusted R squared value for the model was .35 indicating that both variables together explained and predicted 35% of the variability in the variable “Transitioned.” The only variable that entered into the model at a .05 significance level was “Refined Use of Student Services.” The Standardized Beta score of .50 for “Refined Use of Student Services” indicates that with a one standard deviation change in “Refined Use of Student Services” scores, there would be a .50 of a standard deviation unit change in the same direction for “Transitioned” scores. A post hoc power analysis using G*Power software gives a power score of .999, leading the researcher to conclude that the test results were not merely a chance occurrence. Rather, student utilization of the services addressed
in the composite variable of “Refined Use of Student Services” appears to predict transitioning into college level courses.

Table 6
Regression Analysis for Refined Variables Predicting Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Standardized Beta</th>
<th>$p$ values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Refined Use of St. Services</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>$p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Refined Orientation Activities</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>$p = .095$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R squared = .35

Note. N = 75

The results of a multiple regression test using the demographic and academic history variables are shown in Table 7. This test utilized records from all 314 students in the population. Collinearity was again not a concern for this test since Variance Inflationary Factor (VIF) values were all low. The adjusted R squared value for the model was .17 indicating that all the variables together explained and predicted 17% of the variability in the variable “Transitioned.” The variables that entered into the model at a .05 significance level were “Gender,” “Age,” and “Stacked Classes.” Based on how the dichotomous variable of “Gender” was coded, the Standardized Beta score of .12 means that females are slightly more likely to transition than males. However, the effect size is small. The Standardized Beta score of -.18 indicated that as scores for “Age” increase by one standard deviation, scores for “Transitioned” will decrease by .18 of a standard deviation, another small effect size. In other words, older students are a little less likely to transition than younger students. The Standardized Beta value of .37 for the
variable “Stacked Classes” represented a moderate effect size and means that for a one standard deviation increase in the scores for “Stacked Classes,” there would be a .37 of a standard deviation increase in scores for “Transitioned.” Thus, the higher the number of stacked classes a student enrolls in, the more likely the student was to transition. A post hoc power analysis using G*Power software gives a score of .9999 for the power of the model meaning there is sufficient power to detect the differences indicated in the model.

Table 7

Regression Analysis for Demographic and Academic Variables Predicting Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Standardized Beta</th>
<th>p values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>p = .027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ethnicity</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>p = .168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Age</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>p = .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stacked classes</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>p = .000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R squared = .17

Note. N = 75

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Based on the results of the correlation and regression analyses showing the relationship between enrollment in stacked classes and transitioning, a one way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a difference in the number of students that transitioned based on the number of stacked classes they took. The test had an alpha level set at .05 and revealed that there was a difference between the groups based on the number of stacked classes they took, \( F(3, 309) = 20.23, p = 000 \). According to Levene's test for homogeneity of variance, which was conducted prior to the post hoc analysis, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. Therefore, the researcher conducted post hoc analyses using the Tukey
test that assumes homogeneity of variance and the Games-Howell test that does not assume homogeneity of variance. Both tests yielded the same result, showing a difference between scores for students who enrolled in two stacked classes and scores for students that enrolled in zero or one stacked class ($p = 0.000$). A post hoc power analysis using G*Power software showed that the ANOVA test had a power of .9999. Because the number of students represented in each category was unequal (see Appendix L), there is high risk that the finding was due to chance. However, the findings do indicate that students who enrolled in two stacked classes were most likely to transition to college whereas students who enrolled in zero, one, or more than two stacked classes were less likely to transition.

I-BEST analysis. Of the 90 students in the study's population that transitioned, 42 (46.7%) enrolled in an I-BEST program. Of the 29 students who responded to the survey that transitioned, nine (31%) enrolled in an I-BEST program. This study was designed to investigate elements of transition programs but not a complete transition program. However, since students enrolled in an I-BEST program composed such a large percentage of the transition population and this is an exploratory study, the researcher did conduct some statistical analyses to investigate the relationships between I-BEST enrollment and the other variables. Using academic history data ($n = 314$), he conducted a Pearson's Product Moment correlation and found that there was a correlation between enrolling in an I-BEST program and transitioning ($r = .62, p = .001$). He also conducted a regression analysis that resulted in an adjusted R squared value of .28 and a Standardized Beta score of .62 ($p = .000$). These results were not surprising since completion of an I-BEST program guarantees transitioning into college.
A Mann-Whitney U test compared responses to individual survey questions with enrollment in I-BEST. Only eight questions emerged as having a significant difference between responses of students who enrolled in an I-BEST program and students who did not. Interestingly, three of the questions dealt with campus climate. Items 49, 53 and 57 referred to students’ perceptions of others congratulating the student for his/her accomplishments, others expressing confidence in the student's abilities, and feeling included in campus events and activities. The researcher created a composite variable from these items and then conducted correlation and regression analyses. While the results were significant, there was not sufficient power to draw definitive conclusions. The results are tantalizing, however. The I-BEST programs at YVCC celebrate student achievements at the conclusion of the program and include staff members who work in a case management capacity to encourage and support students in the program. One of their roles is to act as a cheerleader for the student, expressing confidence in the students' abilities. These program features are not as prevalent in other YVCC transition efforts. Because of the additional support students receive in an I-BEST program, it is logical that they would rank campus climate more positively than other students.

Qualitative Results and Analysis

The researcher analyzed the focus group data using a simple qualitative coding analysis process. First, he conducted an initial review of the notes taken during each focus group and then, using the notes as a guide, he transcribed the majority of the focus groups from the video recording. He also paid attention to students' body language while viewing the video in order to better understand the context and meaning of statements made by the students. Second, he
tentatively identified codes and read through the data again to code it with the newly generated
codes. Third, he read through the data a third time to look for commonalities and group the data
by codes. Fourth, he reviewed the data in their groupings to check for consistency and alignment
of data. He also further refined the codes and regrouped data as needed. Ultimately, he ended up
coding data into nine different groupings.

**Student demographics and enrollment history.** The researcher conducted two focus
groups and three students attended each focus group session. The participants were all Hispanic.
One was male and the other five were female. They represented three of the age categories used
for this study. Two were in the 24 years or under category, two were in the 25 - 34 years
category and two were in the 35 - 44 years category.

The researcher hoped to have participants who had attended YVCC during each of the
academic years included in the study. One student transitioned into credit-bearing college
classes during the 2006-2007 academic year, one transitioned during the 2007-2008 academic
year, and two students transitioned during each of the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years.
All but one had enrolled in stacked classes. One student had enrolled in one stacked class while
three of them had enrolled in two stacked classes. The last had enrolled in three stacked classes.

The participants also pursued different academic degrees. One graduated with a general
Associate's degree, transferred to a nearby university and graduated with a Bachelor's degree.
The student graduated and, at the time of the focus group, was enrolled in a Master's program.
Another student graduated with an Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice and was
pursuing a Bachelor's degree at a private university. Three of the students had completed the I-
BEST Nursing Assisting Certified (NAC) program. One had not returned to college after
completing the NAC program, one was currently enrolled in prerequisite classes for the nursing program and the last was currently enrolled as well. She had just completed the requirements for her general Associate’s degree and was planning to transfer to another school to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education. The last was investigating different professional/technical degrees in the health care arena.

**Pushing students to succeed.** The students in the focus groups gave multiple examples of instructors pushing the students to succeed and expressing confidence in students' abilities to succeed. Interestingly, the students all used the word “push” in their descriptions. One student stated, in reference to a particular instructor, “He kept pushing me and was like, ‘Keep at it!’” Another student said the following about an instructor, “she was there to help you throughout the whole way and, I mean, she would really push you!” Another student named three different faculty members and stated, “They were big pushers. Those were constantly on me all the time, you know, ‘Do this!,’ and, ‘Do that!,’ or ‘How’s this?,’ and, ‘How’s that?’ So, they helped me big time!” Still another student stated, “It helped me a lot, the teachers. The first time that I came here, they push you. They see you like you can do it and they push you, ‘Yea, you can do it. I know you are smart, I know that you are good at this!’” The student went on to say, “I think the main thing for me was the teachers who push you hard, and you know, they made you that self-confidence and you feel, you know, you’re sure you can do it!”

While most of the faculty members identified by students were ABE faculty, they also referred to faculty teaching college level classes and counseling faculty member as pushing them. Students seemed to feel that the constant pushing and encouragement was a key component of their success.
**Personal connections.** Students gave multiple examples of how specific faculty and staff were friendly, welcoming and knew the students personally. In describing the interactions between students and a particular ABE faculty member, a student stated, “You know, it was a little bit more on a personal level.” Another student described a meeting she had with a staff person by saying, “For me, I felt very welcome because I met Mr. X (name omitted). So, he’s real friendly. It felt fine. It was not real scary.” The same student described her interactions with another staff person this way, “It was comfortable coming to talk to her and she knows me.” Another student stated, in reference to particular staff persons, “And they remember us by our names! She remembers it. I mean, she sees a whole bunch of students and, ‘Ok (student's first name), give me your (student ID) number.’” Still another student stated, “If I’m struggling or I felt down because, you know, whatever’s going on at home, they (the instructors) were always there. You could talk to them [and they made] you feel good.” Finally, another student said the following when expressing her appreciation for certain faculty and staff persons: “When someone shows you or gives you that extra minute . . . it’s like, Wow, they really care! I’m not just another student! She knows my name!” The student went on to say about a particular faculty member, “And so she really looked out for me and that meant a lot to me ‘cuz I knew that I was someone important and that she cared.”

Many of these comments seemed to reflect an underlying uneasiness or fear held by new students who were unsure of themselves in a new setting and may have lacked confidence in themselves. They also showed a deep appreciation for the faculty and staff members who took the time to know the students individually. Several students expressed amazement at how faculty or staff knew them by name. Interestingly, the students also referred to nearly all YVCC
employees by their first names rather than using the formal titles of Mr. or Ms., another possible indication of how personal the students viewed their relationships with college faculty and staff. While some students also related some experiences with college employees that were not so positive, the vast majority of the feedback was extremely positive. Several students attributed the majority of their success to the support they received from campus employees.

**Orientation to college activities.** Some students also discussed some of the ways they were oriented to college by learning skills that would help them succeed in college. The specific skills mentioned by students were time management, not procrastinating, taking notes, identifying key topics and concepts and how to get organized. A student talked about how a particular instructor taught the class about time management saying, “she was really good at just making sure and telling us that, ‘Hey, in order for you guys to get these assignments completed on time, you guys have got to make sure that you guys prioritize your time correctly because if not, you guys are going to be behind on a lot of your assignments.’” Another student explained that most of the skills she learned were in a study skills class. The student described how she came to understand the importance of note taking. She stated that at first she thought, “she’s (the instructor is) talking about this certain section of the book. I can go back later on and read it.” After a period of time she concluded, “I should be taking notes in class so that I can go through my notes . . . Now it makes more sense. It helps me study.”

**Support Services.** Students also identified key support services and activities they engaged. Most are listed in this section but two received sufficient attention that they are described in their own sections: academic advising, and goal setting.
Support services mentioned by students were the Student Support Services program, computing services with corresponding computer technical support, the Writing Center, the Math Center, financial aid services, and the admissions and receptionist services. In keeping with other comments made in the focus groups, when speaking about the support services, students referred to faculty and staff by their first names, thereby illustrating the individualized manner that services were delivered.

In describing computer related support services a student stated, “(Name of staff) was very, very, very good at helping me with the whole computer system and stuff just because I wasn’t too well with computers and had to look up certain stuff or had to get in there but he kind of guided me through it.” Another student said the following about the Writing Center: “She (employee) even helped me on her own time. Even if it was Sunday and it was due on Monday . . . she really helped a lot!” Similarly, another student said, “I wouldn’t have passed English, honestly, if it wasn’t for her (employee).” In reference to financial aid services, one student stated, “I always went to (employee) for financial aid because I know she’s going to do a good job. . . I want to make sure it is going to come out right.” Still another spoke about the receptionist staff stating, “If you have a small question, they can answer it.”

**Academic advising.** Several students spoke about the role of academic advising in their success as students. They seemed to appreciate advisors who took into consideration family and work commitments, course rotations, and degree requirements when helping students develop a schedule. One student, referring to her advisor, stated, “What I really liked about her was that she was two quarters always ahead of me.” Another student, in reference to another advisor, stated, “(Employee) just keeps me straight on schedule, ‘These are the classes you can take and if
you can’t make it through this one, you can keep going and try it again.” Still another student stated, “(Employee) just focuses on us and she has helped a lot with books and, just like, figuring out . . . what I should take and what I shouldn’t take.” Finally, a student described how her advisor would discuss the student's schedule by saying, “Maybe you shouldn’t take this class this time of year but take these classes.’ So, they help you and maybe you should take two classes instead of three because your workload.”

**Goal setting.** Students gave multiple examples of times when YVCC faculty or staff members expressed confidence in a student's abilities and encouraged the student to set educational goals that were higher than simply learning some English or earning a GED. One student related how her ABE teachers said, “This is not the end. You don’t have to stop right here.” A second student agreed and stated that, “They set you up (for college) and it was your choice whether or not you continue.” Another student related how a staff person stated, “I see something in you,” and how that comment, “made me do some introspective inside myself and say, ‘Hey, there is something that I can do and go on to the next level!’” The same student explained how a professor asked, “So what do you want to become?” Still another student explained how the instructor in her adult education class encouraged her. She states, “That teacher motivated me. She talked to me and said, ‘You know what? I think you can do it! . . . . You know more than this students. I will push you.’” Finally, one student summarized these activities quite nicely by summarizing her teacher who said, “this is the first stepping stone to the rest of your life.”

In all but one instance, each of the examples shared by students were interactions between students and faculty members. Furthermore, the faculty members identified in all but
one of these student/faculty interactions were ABE faculty. In the lone instance where it was not, the faculty member taught a college level course. For at least half of the students in the focus groups, the pushing and prodding from faculty were instrumental in helping the students to continue on with their studies into college.

**Campus climate.** Students made few remarks directly about the campus climate, but the remarks they did make were positive. A student stated, “I like it here. It’s small. It’s comfortable.” Another said that she was “Initially nervous, scared because it was new. . . but the people, the personnel here . . . are really nice and always welcome me and say, ‘Hi.’” Finally, one student stated, “I want to take all my classes here before I have to go to Yakima.”

**Support from other students.** The students in the focus groups recognized and appreciated the support and assistance they received from other students. One student stated, “the students helped me a lot if you had a question, if you had a problem. It really helped me a lot and especially this girl that was with me.” The student further explained how the girl helped with math homework and then stated, “it was more easy for me with her explaining that. It was a big help to me.” Another student explained how she and other students in her classes formed study groups. She stated, “For me it (help from other students) was really, really important, very, very important. We often met, a group of us at my house or we took turns or we met at the coffee shop.” She continued by describing encouragement a fellow student would give her by saying, “You can do it. Look, we’re almost done. Let’s go!” She described how the students pursuing the same degree ended up forming a cohort and the importance of that cohort. She stated, “it was kind of like every C[riminal] J[ustice] person went to the next class together so all
of us went through. I mean, I couldn’t have done it without them.” Still another student
described how she used other students in her classes as a resource. She related,

When you see someone from your class and, you know, they are studying and you
are studying and so you guys kind of get together and study together and they
understand your situation with the class and you just kind of help each other out
with what you know, like “Oh, this is due and don’t forget that’s due” and . . . it
alleviates some of the pressure. . . It’s just kind of reassuring.

Finally, another student talked about the example of other students by saying, “when you’re here
you start looking around and hearing the other students and think . . . I can see me doing this,
you know, it motivated you to go more and do more.”

**Family support.** Four of the six focus group participants had dependents and each of
them made reference to the importance of family. Most students spoke of family members as a
source of support and strength to them as students. One student talked about how her daughter
helped with homework, saying, “My daughter helped me . . . deal with the computer.” Another
student described her family's support by stating, “My mom, my family had always pushed me to
do it (go to school).” Yet another students related, “my uncles also reminded me. They’re like,
‘Hey, you wanted to come to work with me and you have to go back to school.’ And so I did.”
Another relates how, “I wasn’t going to be working so the kids . . . and I sat down and talked.”
Still another student described her interactions with her mother, “She (the mother) said, ‘Well, if
I can’t finish, I’ll be there for you, girl! So if you need anything, you go and I’ll take care of (the
child)’. . . We figured out childcare. We figured out how I was going to pay my expenses.”
Students also spoke about they were motivated by their families. One student stated, “I have a twelve year old and an eight year old and they look up to me a lot.” Another one said, “I am very proud of myself. My kids, um, seeing me as a single mother graduate and that’s a very hard to do, very hard with six kids.” She continued by saying, “Now when they come to me and say, ‘Well, I can’t do this,’ I say to them, ‘You can do it. If I went back after 18 years, you guys can do it!’”

Joining Quantitative and Qualitative Data

This study identified ten findings that related to increased student transitioning. Six are variables identified at the outset of the research project and examined through quantitative analysis. Another four emerged from the focus group and survey data and were distinct enough to be considered independent from the other six variables.

Support services. Student use of four specific support services emerged from the survey responses as correlated with and predictive of student transitioning. These were using the computer lab outside of class, meeting individually with the college counselor, receiving financial aid assistance, and obtaining or renewing a YVCC Identification Card. Additionally, students who transitioned were more likely to state that receiving financial aid assistance and completing a YVCC application to enroll in college level classes was important to their success at YVCC.

Student focus group data supported the findings from the survey. Students described the importance of computer lab and financial aid services as well as the Student Support Services (SSS) program. SSS is one of eight TRIO programs funded by the Office of Postsecondary
Education in the U.S. Department of Education. TRIO programs have the goal of helping individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds advance from middle school through college. SSS focuses on helping students in the program graduate from college. Participants tend to be low-income, first-generation and/or disabled college students (US Department of Education, 2011). At YVCC the SSS program requires students in the program to meet individually with college counselors on a regular basis. At least half of the students who attended the focus groups had been in the SSS program.

Additionally, students in the focus groups spoke about the importance of advising and setting lofty academic goals to their academic success. These activities could be done with a college counselor, which would show a close correspondence with the survey item of meeting with a college counselor. They could also be conducted with a teaching faculty member or certain college staff.

Students in the focus group also talked about using the Writing Center, Math Center and admission and receptionist services. However, the student comments about all of the services listed here with the exception of goal setting, referred to their time after they had transitioned into college. It was unclear from student focus group comments and from the survey responses how often students utilized any of the services before transitioning. Thus, one cannot determine if use of the services helped student transition or students who had already transitioned were more likely to use the services than those who did not transition.

**Orientation activities.** Four orientation activities listed in the survey correlated with student transitioning. Students who learned at YVCC how to apply for financial aid, how to apply for admission to college, how to take the COMPASS placement test, and how to enroll in
college classes were more likely to transition into college classes than students who did not learn those things at YVCC. Of the 13 questions on the survey related to the topic of orientation activities, these four topics are the ones that deal specifically with the process for enrolling in credit-bearing classes and outline the steps all adult education students must take to transition.

In the focus groups students made a few comments about learning certain skills that oriented them to college and helped them succeed. While they did not mention any of the four items identified as significant in the survey, they did speak about financial aid services and one student briefly mentioned admission services. Additionally, they spoke about learning skills to assist them in staying organized, managing their time, taking notes, and studying. The data shows that teaching students the steps of the admission process and specific study skills will assist them in the transition process.

Campus climate. Both the survey responses and focus group feedback described the climate of the YVCC Grandview Campus in very positive terms. The statistical tests did not show a difference between responses from students who transitioned and students who did not with one exception. Students who transitioned were more likely to state that they were congratulated for their accomplishments.

Stacked classes. Statistical tests using student enrollment data showed that adult education students who enrolled in stacked classes were more likely to transition into college classes than those who did not. Furthermore, students who enrolled in two stacked classes were more likely to transition than students who enrolled once or more than two times in stacked classes. This was not a topic of discussion in the focus groups and, therefore, there was no supporting data from the focus groups that emerged.
Gender. Statistical correlation and regression analysis of student demographic and enrollment data showed a relationship between gender and transitioning into college level classes. Female students were more likely to transition than males. However, even though the findings were statistically significant, the effect size was small bringing into question the practical significance of the finding. Furthermore, the finding is probably the result of two factors. First, since the vast majority of students in the population (77.7%) were female one would also expect more females than males to transition into college. Second, the most robust transition effort at the Grandview Campus is the Nursing Assisting Certified (NAC) I-BEST program, which tends to attract female students. These conclusions are reflected by the composition of students who participated in the focus groups. Five of the six participants were female and three had completed the NAC I-BEST program.

Age. Correlation and regression tests using student demographic and enrollment data showed a statistically significant negative relationship between age and transitioning. The higher a student's age, the less likely the student would transition into college classes. These results are not surprising as conventional wisdom states that younger adults are more likely to be open to pursuing a new profession. Older individuals may feel that the time and energy required to pursue additional education and training will yield sufficient benefits to justify the investment. Ages of participants in the focus groups were somewhat reflective of this finding with two students within each of the three youngest age categories and no participants with ages within the oldest two age categories.

Role of faculty. Students in the focus groups made repeated reference to the influence of specific faculty members on their success. Students gave multiple examples of faculty members
who expressed confidence in individual student's abilities and pushed them to set lofty educational goals that required students to enroll in college courses. Additionally, students spoke about how faculty members pushed them to succeed in their classes. Students also stressed the friendly and personable relationships they developed with faculty and the strong positive impression these relationships had on them. Finally, when students described learning those things that oriented them to college and gave them skills to succeed, most students spoke about learning these items from faculty in the classroom.

This finding is somewhat supported by a response to a survey question that shows a difference between students who transitioned and those who did not. Students who transitioned reported that they met individually with a college counselor more often than students who did not. At YVCC college counselors are part of the faculty ranks and often teach classes. Conversely, teaching faculty also conduct academic advising, one of the primary duties of counselors. Thus, students responding to the survey may not have distinguished the college counselor from other faculty.

Additionally, other survey responses from all students who responded to the survey reinforce the importance of faculty. Based on survey responses, students considered talking with teachers about their progress in class, career plans, and goals as some of the most important factors to their success at YVCC. Students also reported that they often talked with teachers and received encouragement. Furthermore, students reported on the survey that most of the material they learned that oriented them to college was in class from their teacher. Students learned study skills, where to go within YVCC to get help, how to set career goals, how their education would prepare them for future jobs, how to set goals for their studies, about additional
educational opportunities at YVCC, and how to take the COMPASS placement test primarily from their teachers. Together, the focus group and survey data emphasized the important role faculty members play in helping students transition into college.

**Individualized attention.** Student participants of the focus groups described at length the individualized, friendly and personal attention they received from both faculty and staff at the campus. Students were impressed that campus employees would put forth extra effort to help the students be successful and remembered individual students by name. Students also expressed gratitude for the high quality of service they received. The use of first names by students when referring to college faculty and staff also implied a certain level of familiarity. In addition, student comments about how faculty and staff expressed confidence in their abilities, pushed them to succeed, and pushed them to set lofty goals also implied a focused and personal relationship. Some of the focus group participants attributed much of their success to the support received from college employees.

Responses to one question on the survey may provide some support for the focus group data. Students who transitioned were more likely to report that they were congratulated by others for their accomplishments than students who did not transition. Such congratulations implied that the student had a meaningful relationship with a college employee who was providing focused and personalized support.

**Support from fellow students.** Five of the six students in the focus groups referenced the important influence of other students. Students spoke about how they would study with peers and would give and receive moral support from each other. Several were in formalized or de facto student cohort groups in which all members enrolled in the same classes, studied together,
motivated each other and provided support for one another. One student also described how the example of other students was a motivating factor for her to set higher educational goals and enroll in college level classes.

No survey responses specific to transition students supported the focus group feedback. However, survey responses from all students to items 32 and 33 provided some support. Students reported that they made new friends at YVCC and socialized with students from other classes fairly often.

**Family support.** Four of the six students who attended the focus groups had dependents. Each of these students spoke about the importance of family in motivating them to attend college, assist with homework and manage family responsibilities. Family members helped students manage such things as finances, transportation and child care. This item did not have corresponding support from survey response data.
Discussion of Transition Models

**College Transition Model.** Findings from this study support elements 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the College Transition Model explained in Chapter 2. The first element, “Quality Staff” described staff in successful transition programs as knowledgeable and understanding of the characteristics, needs and challenges of first-generation, non-traditional students. They are student centered and express confidence in students' abilities. Findings from the study regarding the role of faculty and individualized attention students received, painted a clear picture of college faculty and staff at the YVCC Grandview Campus who fit the description of Quality Staff.

“Career, Academic and Personal Counseling” is the fourth descriptor of the College Transition Model. The counseling services provided include academic advising, personal support, assistance with college procedures as well as helping students set and monitor goals. Each of these services was contained in the study's findings. The importance of advising and goal setting was contained in the finding of “Support Services.” The findings regarding the “Role of faculty” and “Individualized Attention” also described how students received personal support, met with counselors and received help with college procedures.

The fifth characteristic of the model, “Support Structures” contained three different support strategies, namely providing wraparound support services, offering financial aid assistance and forming student cohorts. The findings from this study related to “Support
Services” and “Support from Fellow Students” addresses all three of these strategies. Student use of a limited number of support services, including financial aid, was related to student transitioning. Furthermore, when participants in the focus groups described the support they received from fellow students, they talked about the positive impact participation in student cohorts had on their success.

The finding in this study that enrollment in stacked classes correlates with and predicts transitioning into college supports a portion of characteristic 6, “Quality Instruction.” A key component of this characteristic was the development of a clear curricular continuum leading from adult education into college programs. Offering stacked classes became a key strategy at YVCC for defining and implementing a curricular continuum from adult education into college.

Three of the four strategies contained in the seventh characteristic of “Introduction and Orientation to College” were supported by findings in this study. One strategy was to structure transition classes so they functioned similar to college classes. Offering stacked classes was one way to implement the strategy and this study found them to be an effective method for helping students transition. Another strategy was to offer workshops or classes that teach things such as study skills, time management, how to take the placement test and how to apply to college. The finding of “Orientation Activities” in this study showed that orientation activities related to applying for admission, taking the placement test, enrolling in classes and learning how to apply for financial aid were related to successful student transitioning. The finding also showed that learning study skills and time management techniques also helped students transition. A third strategy was to offer transition classes on campus and allow adult education students access to college resources and services. Adult education students of the study were served on the college
campus and the findings of “Support Services,” “Campus Climate,” and “Stacked Classes” illustrated how students positively viewed the campus and how access to campus services and classes helped them transition.

The eighth characteristic in the College Preparatory Model is “Data for Continuous Improvement.” The fact that YVCC was able to provide this researcher the necessary student demographic and enrollment data required for this study and provided the institutional support to complete the study showed an ability and willingness of the college to collect and track student data for the purposes of program improvement.

The ninth element of “Collaboration and Partnerships” referred to developing key partnerships both internally and externally. Internal collaborations included ensuring that adult education programs and transition efforts enjoyed access to administrative support, facilities and services equivalent to other programs at the college. Additionally, programs showed collaboration with developmental faculty and college offices such as admissions, financial aid, counseling and support services. The willingness of YVCC to support this research project showed administrative support and availability of services for adult education programming. The existence of stacked classes was evidence of collaboration between developmental and adult education faculty. The access adult education students enjoyed to college services was evidence of collaboration with college offices that provided various admission and support services. The findings of this study showing the positive impact of stacked classes, support services and individualized attention on student transitioning are evidence of the benefits of these collaborations.
Career Pathway Model. The I-BEST program at YVCC contains all elements of the Career Pathway model including the establishment of career pathways, contextualized learning, accelerated learning and partnerships with business. While this study did not investigate these elements of the I-BEST program, statistical analysis did show that student enrollment in the NAC I-BEST model is highly correlated with and strongly predicts transition into college.

Discussion of Student Persistence

Cross and barriers to persistence. As described in Chapter 2, Cross (1981) defined three categories of barriers to student persistence that she labeled situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers. While this study did not focus on barriers to student persistence, one finding from the study provides insight into the category of persistence barriers. Dispositional barriers referred to negative perceptions of self and one's ability to learn. Two elements of the finding of individualized attention related to dispositional barriers. First, the comments from students in the focus groups when describing the personal attention and support they received from college employees seemed to reflect an underlying uneasiness, fear, or lack of confidence they felt as new students who were unsure of themselves in an unfamiliar setting. Second, all of these students had transitioned into college and rather than acknowledging how their own hard work and dedication contributed to their success, several attributed much of their success to the support they received from college employees. This observation seemed to correspond with other research showing that dispositional barriers such as concerns students have about their ability to succeed are a significant challenge for adult education students (Cook & King, 2004;
Harrington, 2000). While this observation does not rise to the level of a finding, it is something that YVCC should note when designing and delivering services to adult education students.

**Tinto's integration model of persistence.** Findings from this study also lend support to the claims made by Tinto (1977, 1993) that integrating students both academically and socially within the institution will increase student persistence. Study findings of “Individualized Attention,” “Role of Faculty,” “Support Services,” “Stacked Classes,” “Orientation Activities” and “Campus Climate” all illustrated actions that enhanced academic integration. Additionally, they corresponded with recommendations made by Tinto to increase student-faculty interaction, provide financial assistance, develop an inclusive campus, implement proactive interventions, teach study skills, build a sense of community with students, and provide counseling and advising. Furthermore, the finding of this study regarding support from fellow students corresponds with Tinto’s call for social integration for students by developing classroom-based communities of students.

**Other persistence literature.** The findings of this study also reinforced research cited in Chapter 2 about practices that enhanced student persistence. Specifically, the findings from this study aligned with findings from other studies that counseling and advising, helping students set goals, comprehensive support services, financial aid, teaching students how to navigate the college system, teaching study and time management skills, and creating a campus that is welcoming to students all correspond with increased student persistence.
**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, there are six recommendations aimed to increase the number of students transitioning from adult education into college classes. While the recommendations are directly targeted to YVCC, they are applicable to any institution developing transition efforts.

**Recommendation 1.** YVCC should develop a consistent strategy for teaching transition students how to apply for financial aid. Student survey results reflected an inconsistent strategy for teaching transition students about financial aid. Because of the important role applying for and receiving financial aid have in relation to student persistence and transitioning, the college needs to develop and implement a clear strategy for teaching this to transition students.

**Recommendation 2.** YVCC needs to further develop the curricular continuum between adult education and college level courses. As it develops the continuum, the college should further refine and expand the use of stacked classes. Stacked classes should be strategically placed at appropriate spots within the continuum so students can fully transition into college after enrolling in a maximum of two stacked classes. The observation of this study that students enrolled in a varying number of stacked classes, from 0 to 7, shows a loose system allowing students to enroll multiple times. The finding that those who enrolled in two stacked classes were the most likely to transition supports the development of a more intentional and measured use of stacked classes.

**Recommendation 3.** YVCC should develop a consistent strategy for introducing transition students to key support services and require their use. The college should focus its
attention initially on teaching students about admission and registration services since students who learn about and use them are more likely to transition.

**Recommendation 4.** YVCC should develop and implement transition career pathways that lead into vocations attractive to male students. The results of this study showed that females are disproportionately represented in the overall population as well as amongst students who transition. One way to address this imbalance is through curricular offerings. While the NAC I-BEST program tends to serve a predominantly female audience, the college does not have a similar program attractive to males.

**Recommendation 5.** YVCC should investigate strategies that will encourage familial support of transitioning students. This study found that students who successfully transitioned and also had dependent children relied heavily upon family support. Any actions by the college to facilitate that support would be positive.

**Recommendation 6.** YVCC should develop and implement strategies for regularly recognizing the successes of transition students and including them in campus life. Students who transitioned were more likely to report that others congratulated them for their accomplishments while students who enrolled in an I-BEST program were more likely to report that they felt included in campus events and activities. Recognizing student accomplishments will help counter dispositional barriers students may have, is likely to help increase student persistence, and may help students feel more included in the campus.

**Recommendation 7.** YVCC should identify ways to develop and support cohorts of transition students. Feedback from the survey and student focus groups illustrates the important role students play in studying together as well as supporting and motivating each other. The
social integration that comes from a student cohort will help students persist and succeed in their studies.

**Recommendation 8.** YVCC should recognize, encourage, promote, and support the focused and individualized attention given to students by faculty and staff. The importance role of faculty both within and outside the classroom to advise, encourage, set goals with, and teach students cannot be overstated. Additionally, the individualized attention given by faculty and staff to students played a large role in students’ perceptions of their success.

**Further Research**

Following are seven recommendations regarding research methodology and topics that would benefit from further clarification.

**Research Recommendation 1.** Future research in this area should study as large a population as possible if the researcher seeks to solicit student feedback. Because the target population is highly mobile and not likely to respond to interview or survey requests, researchers should initially target a large population in order to ensure a high enough number of responses to give statistical tests the power needed to draw meaningful conclusions.

**Research Recommendation 2.** Researchers conducting survey research with this population should employ a mix of regular mail, telephone, email and face-to-face surveys. As this study demonstrated, all methods are necessary to ensure a sufficient survey return rate. Since one type of contact information may not be current, a researcher increases the chances of reaching the potential respondent by using multiple methods to administer the survey. Additionally, comments made by respondents when called on the telephone showed that mailing
out surveys and following up with phone calls reminded potential respondents to complete the survey and was an effective strategy for increasing return rates. Despite all these efforts researchers should be prepared to deal with low return rates.

**Research Recommendation 3.** The relationship between use of support services and transitioning bears further investigation and clarification. It is unclear whether the relationship between transitioning and use of support services was a result of students using the services before or after they transitioned. Clarification on this point would help colleges know how to design and deliver these services to transition students.

**Research Recommendation 4.** Further research of I-BEST programming could help identify successful strategies that make students feel more integrated into the campus. The survey feedback showed that students who enrolled in an I-BEST program were more likely than other students to report that they were congratulated for their accomplishments, felt included in campus events and activities and that others expressed confidence in their abilities. However, there was not sufficient statistical power to draw definite conclusions on this point.

**Research Recommendation 5.** Further research could investigate the different component parts of an I-BEST program in an attempt to identify strategies that could be utilized in other transition efforts. While the I-BEST model as a whole is effective in helping students transition into college it is unclear the impacts of the different components of a successful I-BEST program.

**Research Recommendation 6.** The impact of students learning study skills, time management and similar success skills could be investigated. While these topics were addressed in the survey of this study, there was insufficient power to draw definite conclusions.
Furthermore, while focus group feedback identified the benefit of learning these skills, further and more robust and focused research on this topic would help clarify what skills are most useful for transition students to learn.

**Research Recommendation 7.** Further research should investigate the persistence of transition students in college and their rates of completion. Ultimately, there is little benefit to transitioning into college if students do not persist and complete and earn some type of college credential. With the increased pressure of the Student Achievement Initiative from the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges as well as increased pressure at the federal level with President Obama's Community College Completion Initiative, this question of how to assist students to transition into credit-bearing college credits takes on increased significance and urgency. In addition, as colleges face additional financial cuts, they are beginning to make choices that restrict student access to higher education. Colleges will begin serving fewer students who are not likely to complete a college credential. Within this context it is important to identify, develop, implement, evaluate and highlight effective strategies for helping adult education students not only access college but also persist and earn a college credential.
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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

From: irb@wsu.edu [mailto:irb@wsu.edu]

Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2011 3:31 PM

To: Michele Acker-Hocevar

Subject: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 12209

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michele Acker-Hocevar and Bryce Humpherys,

FROM: Patrick Conner, Office of Research Assurances (3005)

DATE: 10/20/2011

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 12209

Based on the Application submitted for the study titled “Transitioning Adult Education Students into Community College,” and assigned IRB # 12209, the WSU Office of Research Assurances has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).
This study may be conducted according to the protocol described in the Application without further review by the IRB.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. You may not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Remove all statements of IRB Approval and IRB contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the ORA. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review (this Certification does not expire). If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the ORA for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes (The Request for Amendment form is available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/documents/forms/rtf/Amendment_Request.rtf).

Exempt certification does NOT relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

In accordance with WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), this Certification of Exemption, a copy of the Exemption Determination Application identified by this certification
and all materials related to data collection, analysis or reporting must be retained by the Principal Investigator for THREE (3) years following completion of the project (BPPM 90.01).

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

Review Type: New
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 10/7/2011
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency: N/A
APPENDIX B

Printed/Emailed Survey Cover Letter

November __, 2011

Dear <Student Name>

As a current or former student at the Grandview Campus of Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC), you are someone who can provide feedback that will help YVCC improve its services and support for students. You are one of a select number of former YVCC students who are invited to complete a short survey about your experiences as a YVCC student. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

This survey is part of a research project I am conducting as a doctoral student at Washington State University (WSU). I am also doing the project in partnership with YVCC. When I complete the project, I will make recommendations to YVCC about how it can improve its educational programs and services.

Please note that your participation in the survey is voluntary. If you decide to answer the survey, you may change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no penalty if you decide not to complete the survey. Your responses will remain confidential. While the research project will include an analysis of your survey results and the types of classes you took at YVCC, your name and student information will not be included in any reports. There are no
known risks to you associated with participating in this study and there are no direct benefits to you such as financial payments or course credit.

I would be happy to answer any questions regarding the study or your rights as a participant. Please feel free to contact me at 509-882-7049.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. You may return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope OR you can complete the survey online by going to http://surveys.yvcc.edu/surveys/Transition_Survey/transition_survey.html and typing in the following three digit access code that is also located on your survey. ACCESS CODE:___

Sincerely,

Bryce Humpherys
APPENDIX C

Telephone and Face-to-Face Survey Protocol

BEFORE CALLING, HAVE THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE SURVEY AVAILABLE AND THE ACCESS CODE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL YOU ARE CALLING.

Q1  Hello, may I speak with ____________?

Q2  Hello, __________, my name is Bryce Humpherys and I am conducting a research project as a doctoral student at Washington State University. Recently, I mailed you a survey about your experiences as a student at YVCC. Did you receive it?

   “YES” → CONTINUE TO Q3

   “NO” → SKIP Q3 AND GO TO Q4

Q3  Did you have a chance to complete the survey?

   “YES” → Did you mail it back?

   “YES” → Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey and return it. I will look for it in the mail. Thank you again and goodbye.

   “NO” → Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. I would appreciate it if you would put the survey in the self-
addressed envelope that came with it and mail it back to me.

Thanks again and have a good day. Goodbye.

“NO” → CONTINUE TO Q4

Q4 I am calling a select number of former YVCC students who attended classes at the YVCC Grandview Campus to ask them about their experiences as a student at YVCC. The results of this short survey will be used to make recommendations to YVCC about how it can improve its educational programs and services. Could I ask you some questions now over the phone? It will take about 15 minutes.

“YES” → Continue to Q5

“NO” → When could I call back to complete the survey with you over the phone?

RECORD NAME AND ARRANGE A DAY AND TIME TO CALL BACK

Q5 Before we begin, I need to let you know that your participation is voluntary. If you decide to answer the survey, you may change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no penalty if you decide not to complete the survey. Your responses will remain confidential. While the research project will include an analysis of your survey results and the types of classes you took at YVCC, your name and student information will not be included in any reports. There are no known risks to you associated with your participation in this study and there are no direct benefits to you such as financial payments or course credit. Do you have any questions before we begin?

In the first section please indicate whether each item is “Not Important,” “Somewhat Important,” “Very Important,” or “Did Not Apply to Me.”

How important was it to your success at YVCC that you ___

In the next section please indicate for each item if you “Never” did it, did it “Sometimes,” “Fairly Often,” or “Very Often.”

While attending YVCC how often did you ___

In the next section please indicate how you learned each item, was it “In class from my teacher,” “From a presentation,” “From college staff,” or you “Did not learn at YVCC.”

While attending YVCC how did you learn _____

For the last section please indicate if you “Strongly Disagree,” “Somewhat Disagree,” “Have No Opinion,” “Somewhat Agree,” or “Strongly Agree” with each statement.

While attending YVCC _____
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will help YVCC improve its services to students like you. Thanks again and have a good day. Good bye.
Support Services

How important was it to your success at YVCC that you did the following? (Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important, Did Not Apply to Me)

1) Used the YVCC computer lab outside of class.
2) Met individually with the college counselor.
3) Received tutoring assistance.
4) Talked with your teacher about your career plans.
5) Received advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities.
6) Talked with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes.
7) Used the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus.
8) Received help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies.
9) Talked with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC.
10) Received help with transportation to YVCC.
11) Received encouragement when you struggled in school.
12) Received financial aid assistance.
13) Completed a YVCC application to enroll in college level classes.
14) Obtained or renewed your YVCC Identification Card.
While attending YVCC how often did you do the following? (Very Often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Never)

18) Use the YVCC computer lab outside of class.
19) Meet individually with the college counselor.
20) Receive tutoring assistance.
21) Talk with your teacher about your career plans.
22) Receive advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities.
23) Talk with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes.
24) Use the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus.
25) Receive help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies.
26) Talk with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC.
27) Receive help with transportation to YVCC.
28) Receive encouragement when you struggled in school.
29) Receive financial aid assistance.
30) Complete college level classes.
31) Obtain or renew your YVCC Identification Card.

Orientation to College

While attending YVCC how did you learn: (In class from my teacher, From a presentation, From college staff, Did not learn at YVCC)
35) How to apply for financial aid.

36) How to manage your time outside of class.

37) How to balance family, work, and school responsibilities.

38) How to handle the stresses related to going to school.

39) How to apply for admission to college.

40) How to take the COMPASS placement test.

41) About additional educational opportunities at YVCC.

42) How your education at YVCC will prepare you for future jobs.

43) How to set goals for your studies at YVCC.

44) Study skills to help you succeed in your classes.

45) Where to go within YVCC to get the help you need as a student.

46) How to enroll in college classes.

47) How to set career goals.

**Campus Environment**

How important was it to your success at YVCC that you did the following? (Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important, Did Not Apply to Me)

15) Made new friends at YVCC.

16) Talked and socialized with students from other classes.

17) Participated in Grandview Student Council sponsored events.
While attending YVCC how often did you do the following? (Very Often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Never)

32) Make new friends at YVCC.
33) Talk and socialize with students from other classes.
34) Participate in Grandview Student Council sponsored events.

While attending YVCC: (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Have No Opinion, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

48) I was encouraged to continue my education.
49) Others congratulated me for my accomplishments.
50) I felt supported in my learning.
51) I felt that people at YVCC wanted me to succeed.
52) I had access to the resources I needed.
53) Others expressed confidence in me and my abilities.
54) I felt comfortable on the YVCC Grandview Campus.
55) Other students on the campus were friendly and supportive.
56) The campus environment was welcoming.
57) I felt included in campus events and activities.
58) I was treated with respect.
59) I received the help I needed to be a successful student.
APPENDIX E

Focus Group Telephone Invitation Protocol

Q1  Hello, may I speak with _____________?

Q2  Hello, __________. this is Bryce Humpherys. Recently you completed a survey I gave you about your experiences as a student at the YVCC Grandview Campus. Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your feedback was extremely valuable. As a follow-up to the survey, I am inviting a small group of students to attend a meeting at the YVCC Grandview Campus to discuss in more detail their experiences as students at YVCC. The meeting will be held on ________ at _______ p.m. The discussion will last about an hour and I will provide refreshments for the participants. Will you be able to attend?

“YES” → OK, great! Then I'll plan on seeing you at the Grandview Campus at ________ p.m on ____________. We will meet in the main building. Just come on in the front doors and I will be waiting for you there. See you then. Goodbye.

“NO” → I'm sorry to hear that but understand. Thank you for your time today and thanks again for completing the survey. Goodbye.
APPENDIX F

Focus Group Mailed Letter Invitation

November 30, 2011

Dear <Student Name>

You are one of a small number of current and former students at the Grandview Campus of Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) who I am inviting to attend a meeting at the YVCC Grandview Campus to discuss your experiences as a student at YVCC. I am meeting with groups of current and former students as a follow-up to a survey that I recently sent you. The survey and discussion meetings are part of a research project I am conducting as a doctoral student at Washington State University (WSU) and in partnership with YVCC. After completing my research, I will use your feedback to make recommendations to YVCC about how it can improve its educational programs and services.

Two meetings with students are scheduled. The first is on Monday, December 12 at 11:00 am and the second is on Wednesday, December 14 at 2:00 pm. Each will be held in room L115 in the main Grandview Campus building and last approximately 60-90 minutes. You are invited to attend either meeting and I will provide refreshments to those who attend. If you have not yet confirmed your attendance, please call 882-7049 to let me know which day you could attend or to ask any questions you may have.
If you have already completed and returned the survey, I would like to thank you for participating. Your feedback was extremely valuable. If you have not yet completed it, I would invite you to do so. You may fill out the printed form I mailed to you and return it in the self-addressed envelope included with the survey, OR you can complete it online by going to http://surveys.yvcc.edu/surveys/Transition_Survey/transition_survey.html and typing in your three digit access code: ____.

Sincerely,

Bryce Humpherys
APPENDIX G

Focus Group Informed Consent Letter

November __, 2011

Dear <Student Name>

As a former student at Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) who attended classes at the Grandview Campus, you are someone who can provide feedback that will help YVCC improve its services and support of students. You are one of a select number of current and former YVCC students who are invited to participate in a small group discussion about your experiences as a YVCC student. The discussion will last about an hour and refreshments are provided. The discussion will be videotaped to capture the entire conversation and make sure none of your input is lost.

This discussion is a follow up to a survey that you previously completed. Both the small group discussion and the survey are part of a dissertation research project I am conducting as a doctoral student at Washington State University (WSU). I am also conducting the project in partnership with YVCC and, at the conclusion of the project, I will make recommendations to the college about how it can improve its educational programs and services.

Please note that your participation in the small group discussion is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no
penalty if you decide not to participate in the discussion. Please note that your responses will remain confidential. While the research project will include an analysis of the feedback you and others give during the discussion as well as the types of classes you took at YVCC, your name and student information will not be included in any reports. There are no known risks to you associated with your participation in this study and the only direct benefit to you is partaking of the refreshments provided to those who participate in the discussion. There are no other payments, course credit, or other forms of incentives should you participate.

I would be happy to answer any questions regarding the study or your rights as a participant. Please feel free to contact me via email at bhumpherys@yvcc.edu or telephone at 509-882-7049.

Sincerely,

Bryce Humpherys
I would like to welcome each of you and thank you for accepting my invitation to come here today. During the brief time we are together today I hope to hear from each of you about your experiences as students at YVCC. I specifically am interested in learning about those things that helped you be successful as you transitioned from ABE classes into college classes. Before we begin I am going to pass out and read a paper that gives you some further background on this project. Finally, please note that I brought some refreshments. Feel free to enjoy them during our time together today.

PASS OUT INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND READ TO THE GROUP

Before going any further, I would like to establish three ground rules. First, I would ask each of you to make sure you participate in the conversation. You each have important experiences and opinions that I hope you will be willing to share. Second, I would ask us all to take turns speaking. When someone is speaking, please listen respectfully until they are done. Third, I would ask all of us to treat each other and our opinions with respect. Any questions? Ok, thank you and lets begin.
Q1 To begin I would like to go around the room and ask each of you to introduce yourself by
telling us your name and the reason why you first came to YVCC.

Prompts:

– What was your goal when you first came to YVCC?
– What did you want to learn?
– What did you want to accomplish?

Q2 Each of you ended up enrolling in college level classes. When did you decide that you
wanted to keep studying at YVCC after you left the ABE program? What things
influenced you to decide to enroll in college classes?

Q3 Please tell me about the influence of your ABE teachers in helping you succeed at YVCC.

Prompts:

– How often did your teacher talk with you about college? What did your teachers
  teach you about attending college?
– How did your teachers help you progress in your studies? How did they support,
  guide, encourage, and help you?
– How likely were you to speak individually with your instructor? What types of things
  did you talk about?
– How often would you talk about problems with school, home or work?
– Tell me about the goals you set with your teacher. What types of goals were they?
Q4 Let's talk about the strategies skills you learned while attending YVCC that helped you succeed in ABE and college level courses.

Prompts:

- What were some of the most important things you learned in your classes? How did those things help you in your life or career?
- How did your earlier classes help prepare you for harder classes?
- What key information about college did you learn that you really needed to know in order to be successful?
- What strategies did you learn for taking tests, managing stress, budgeting time, using an agenda, taking notes, preparing to take the COMPASS test, knowing what type of degree program to pursue, transferring to a university, applying for college admission, or applying for financial aid?
- Where did you learn these strategies - in a class, at home, with friends? From whom?
- What things were the most stressful and how did you deal with them?

Q5 Please talk to me about the relationships you had with other students? How often did you develop new friendships? What activities did you do with your friends? How did your friends help you succeed in your studies?

Q6 Now I would like to talk about the role of support services at the campus. What support services did you utilize - computer lab, counseling, test proctoring, computer lab,
tutoring, ID card, financial aid, and food service? How did each of these help you succeed?

Prompts:

- What services were most valuable to you?
- What other support services helped you?
- How many of you received support from an outside agency? What services did they provide?
- How many of you received support from another part of the college or a special college program? If so, what was the name of the program or college office?

Q7 Now let's talk about the overall campus environment. What are some of the things you liked most about the campus?

Prompts:

- Overall, how did you feel here – happy, sad, anxious, at ease, nervous?
- Did you feel welcome? Why or why not?
- Did you fit in? Why or why not?
- How were you treated by other students? By YVCC employees?
- How often did you mingle with other students outside of class?
- How was your relationship with college staff?
- How often did you attend social events with other students? How often did you attend GSC events?
- How did the overall campus environment help you succeed?
Q8 What are some of the things that motivated you to keep attending YVCC? What kept you attending when it was difficult and hard to keep coming? What did the college do to help you keep attending?

Q9 Some of you enrolled in classes that had a mix of ABE and college students. For those of you who were in those classes, how did they help you? How important were they in helping you progress into college level classes? What were important topics, strategies, skills, activities you learned in that class?

I would like to thank each of you for coming here today and sharing your thoughts and experiences. Don't forget to take some refreshments with you when you leave. Thank you once again and goodbye.
APPENDIX I

Survey Response Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Used the YVCC computer lab outside of class.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Met individually with the college counselor.</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Received tutoring assistance.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Talked with your teacher about your career plans.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Received advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities.</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Talked with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Used the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus.</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Received help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies.</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Talked with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Received help with transportation to YVCC.</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Received encouragement when you struggled in school.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Received financial aid assistance.</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Completed a YVCC application to enroll in college level classes.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Obtained or renewed your YVCC Identification Card.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Made new friends at YVCC.</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16) Talked and socialized with students from other classes. 2.29
17) Participated in Grandview Student Council sponsored events. 1.33
18) Use the YVCC computer lab outside of class. 1.57
19) Meet individually with the college counselor. 1.19
20) Receive tutoring assistance. 1.37
21) Talk with your teacher about your career plans. 1.61
22) Receive advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities. 0.95
23) Talk with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes. 2.07
24) Use the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus. 1.07
25) Receive help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies. 0.69
26) Talk with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC. 1.68
27) Receive help with transportation to YVCC. 0.36
28) Receive encouragement when you struggled in school. 1.87
29) Receive financial aid assistance. 1.13
30) Complete college level classes. 1.32
31) Obtain or renew your YVCC Identification Card. 1.56
32) Make new friends at YVCC. 1.71
33) Talk and socialize with students from other classes. 1.71
34) Participate in Grandview Student Council sponsored events. 0.6
35) How to apply for financial aid. 0.64
36) How to manage your time outside of class.  
37) How to balance family, work, and school responsibilities.  
38) How to handle the stresses related to going to school.  
39) How to apply for admission to college.  
40) How to take the COMPASS placement test.  
41) About additional educational opportunities at YVCC.  
42) How your education at YVCC will prepare you for future jobs.  
43) How to set goals for your studies at YVCC.  
44) Study skills to help you succeed in your classes.  
45) Where to go within YVCC to get the help you need as a student.  
46) How to enroll in college classes.  
47) How to set career goals.  
48) I was encouraged to continue my education.  
49) Others congratulated me for my accomplishments.  
50) I felt supported in my learning.  
51) I felt that people at YVCC wanted me to succeed.  
52) I had access to the resources I needed.  
53) Others expressed confidence in me and my abilities.  
54) I felt comfortable on the YVCC Grandview Campus.  
55) Other students on the campus were friendly and supportive.  
56) The campus environment was welcoming.  
57) I felt included in campus events and activities.
58) I was treated with respect. 3.72

59) I received the help I needed to be a successful student. 3.55
## Responses to Questions About Orientation Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: While attending YVCC how did you learn:</th>
<th>Answers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% from teacher</td>
<td>% from staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35) How to apply for financial aid.</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36) How to manage your time outside of class.</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37) How to balance family, work, and school responsibilities.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38) How to handle the stresses related to going to school.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39) How to apply for admission to college.</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40) How to take the COMPASS placement test.</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41) About additional educational opportunities at YVCC.</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42) How your education at YVCC will prepare you for future jobs.</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43) How to set goals for your studies at YVCC.</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44) Study skills to help you succeed in your classes.</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45) Where to go within YVCC to</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
get the help you need as a student.

46) How to enroll in college classes. 28.3 52.7 4.1 85.1 14.9

47) How to set career goals. 40 29.3 6.7 76 24

Note. N = 75 for questions 35, 42, 44 and 47. N = 74 for questions 36, 37, 39, 41 and 46. N = 73 for questions 40 and 45. N = 71 for question 43.
## APPENDIX K

### Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Used the YVCC computer lab outside of class.</td>
<td>551.5</td>
<td>$p = .165$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Met individually with the college counselor.</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>$p = .933$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Received tutoring assistance.</td>
<td>585.5</td>
<td>$p = .429$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Talked with your teacher about your career plans.</td>
<td>561.5</td>
<td>$p = .124$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Received advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities.</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>$p = .171$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Talked with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes.</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>$p = .280$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Used the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus.</td>
<td>588.5</td>
<td>$p = .375$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Received help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies.</td>
<td>658.5</td>
<td>$p = .921$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Talked with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC.</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>$p = .093$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Received help with transportation to YVCC.</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>$p = .646$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Received encouragement when you struggled in school.</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>$p = .125$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Received financial aid assistance.</td>
<td>381.5</td>
<td>$p = .000^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Completed a YVCC application to enroll in college level classes.</td>
<td>497.5</td>
<td>$p = .024^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Obtained or renewed your YVCC Identification Card.</td>
<td>597.5</td>
<td>$p = .397$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Made new friends at YVCC.</td>
<td>641.5</td>
<td>$p = .762$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16) Talked and socialized with students from other classes. 666.5  \( p = .995 \)

17) Participated in Grandview Student Council sponsored events. 640.5  \( p = .761 \)

18) Use the YVCC computer lab outside of class. 456  \( p = .017^* \)

19) Meet individually with the college counselor. 394  \( p = .002^* \)

20) Receive tutoring assistance. 623.5  \( p = .624 \)

21) Talk with your teacher about your career plans. 642.5  \( p = .780 \)

22) Receive advice about how to deal with your work and family responsibilities. 571.5  \( p = .268 \)

23) Talk with your teacher about the progress you made in your classes. 607.5  \( p = .491 \)

24) Use the food service on the YVCC Grandview Campus. 633  \( p = .694 \)

25) Receive help from an outside agency such as Employment Security to continue with your studies. 502  \( p = .086 \)

26) Talk with your teacher about your goals as a student at YVCC. 605.5  \( p = .486 \)

27) Receive help with transportation to YVCC. 554  \( p = .062 \)

28) Receive encouragement when you struggled in school. 575  \( p = .294 \)

29) Receive financial aid assistance. 159  \( p = .000^* \)

30) Complete college level classes. 184.5  \( p = .000^* \)

31) Obtain or renew your YVCC Identification Card. 451  \( p = .014^* \)

32) Make new friends at YVCC. 579.5  \( p = .316 \)

33) Talk and socialize with students from other classes. 622  \( p = .609 \)

34) Participate in Grandview Student Council sponsored events. 572  \( p = .237 \)

35) How to apply for financial aid. 500.5  \( p = .029^* \)
<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36) How to manage your time outside of class.</td>
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<td>44) Study skills to help you succeed in your classes.</td>
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<td>45) Where to go within YVCC to get the help you need as a student.</td>
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<td>46) How to enroll in college classes.</td>
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<td>48) I was encouraged to continue my education.</td>
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<td>54) I felt comfortable on the YVCC Grandview Campus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>55) Other students on the campus were friendly and supportive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56) The campus environment was welcoming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57) I felt included in campus events and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
58) I was treated with respect. 615  \( p = .427 \)

59) I received the help I needed to be a successful student. 569.5  \( p = .178 \)

*Note. N = 75
* Asymptotic significance at the .05 level
**APPENDIX L**

Groupings for ANOVA Analysis

Number of Times and Number of Students That Enrolled in “Stacked Classes”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Enrolled in a Stacked Class</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>