

College Success Curriculum: Helping Freshman Create New Habits

by

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ABSTRACT

Incoming freshman at East Los Angeles College were struggling with successfully completing their first semester, leading to low rates of course success and retention. Students reported struggles with adapting to the culture of college, particularly with behaving like a college student and managing time. The purpose of this action research study was to determine if embedding a College Success Curriculum (CSC) into a required class would help students more successfully navigate the first semester. The CSC was embedded into the action-researcher's freshman composition class and covered the following concepts: appropriate classroom behavior, communication, time management, and organization. Quantitative data included retrospective pre-intervention and post-intervention survey data. Qualitative data included the researcher's journal and student-written journal entries. Findings from this study indicated that students learned to communicate via email and to prioritize their time, however, the CSC did not have a measurable effect on students' behavior, time management, or organization. Course success and retention after receiving the CSC remained at previous years' rates. There continues to be a need to assist freshmen students in these critical college skills, and perhaps adapt some of the strategies used in this project for future iterations.

DEDICATION

For my daughters, Samantha and Sidney.

All the work I do is to build a better future for you.

For my mom, Pat Ryan, who inspired me to believe that women could achieve everything
they wanted to, even while raising a family

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I have been working at East Los Angeles College for 15 years, and I love the student body. Students at ELAC come from such diverse backgrounds and often share stories that reflect their struggles to make lives for themselves; I have been privileged to help many students to successfully start on their college path and to navigate systems that they are unfamiliar with. This project enabled me, on a larger scale, to address those parts of college life that new students often struggle with and that they often seek help privately for. This work allowed me to gain even greater insight into the needs of ELAC's new college students and to have a deeper understanding for how I can help freshman transition to higher education.

I was privileged to work under the direction of Erin Rotheram-Fuller, my dissertation chair. She was supportive of me both academically and personally. I am also appreciative of the support from Ray R. Buss and Veronica Jaramillo, my dissertation committee members. One conversation with Ray early in the program inspired the developed of this project; and each provided insight and asked questions that led me to dig deeper about the knowledge and skills I have gained.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
National Context	1
California Context	2
Local Context	3
Personal Context	6
2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH	12
The Hidden Curriculum	12
Behavior	14
Communication	17
Time Management	24
Organization	32
3 METHODS	35
Action Research	35
Setting	35
Participants	35
Role of the Researcher	37

CHAPTER	Page
	Research Questions 38
	Measures 38
	College Success Curriculum Intervention 41
	Data Analysis Plan 48
4	DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS 53
	RQ1 53
	Analysis of Qualitative Data 53
	Analysis of Quantitative Data 74
	RQ2 76
	RQ3 77
5	DISCUSSION 82
	Explanation of Results 82
	Implications for Future Practice and Research 95
	Limitations of the Study 97
	Conclusion 100
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX	
A	RETROSPECTIVE PRE-INTERVENTION SURVEY 109
B	POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY 118
C	LIST OF JOURNAL QUESTIONS 127
D	168 HOURS WORKSHEET 131

	Page
E	DIRECTED LEARNING ACTIVITY:
	VISITING INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS 133
F	CONSENT LETTER 138
G	INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL 140
H	CLASSROOM DYNAMICS GRAPHIC 143

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Brief overview of Actives and Measures by Week	39
2. Summary of Journal Completion	54
3. Projected Hours per Week of Study Time	57
4. Documented Hours of Social Media Time	58
5. Self-reported Hours per Week of Studying in Week Six	62
6. Retrospective Pre and Post-Intervention Scores	75
7. Comparison of Success and Retention Data	77
8. Attendance Patterns by Successful/Unsuccessful Students	78
9. Comparison of Hours Working an Outside Job between Successful and Unsuccessful Students	81

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. First Email with Student Name Removed	70
2. Eleventh Email with Student Name Removed	70
3. Additional Email with Student Name Removed	71

CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTION

In 2009, President Barack Obama called for an additional 5 million community college degrees and certificates by 2020. He advocated a goal of being the leader in education and in college graduates throughout the world. To aid that goal, he promoted free community college programs to encourage students to participate in post-secondary education and to better serve them. Although these goals were commendable, it was unclear what steps community colleges should have taken to help students meet them. The 6-year graduation rate for students who began their studies at community colleges in Fall 2011 was 37.5% compared to 64.7% for students who began their studies at a four-year public institution (Shapiro, et al., 2017, p. 13). Ask almost any community college instructor why it was so difficult for students to complete their studies and they were likely to tell you, “our students were *just* not prepared for college.”

National Context

At the national level, the picture appeared to be grim. Almost half of students who began at a two-year institution were no longer enrolled after six years, and only 14.7% went on to complete a degree at a four-year institution (Shapiro, et al, 2017). When disaggregated by gender and age, additional trends appeared. Female students were more successful than male students, and younger, traditional-age (18-19) and delayed entry (~20-24) students were more successful than non-traditional students (>24) (Shapiro, et al., 2017). When disaggregated by ethnicity, the trends were worrisome. People of Hispanic descent were the second-largest population in the United States

(United States Census Bureau, 2017), but there were significant gaps in college completion rates for this population. Almost 50% of Hispanics who sought a college education began at a two-year institution (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2017); however, after six years at a two-year institution, 23.3% of Hispanic students were still enrolled and only 6% had transferred and completed a degree at a four-year institution (Shapiro, et al., 2017 p. 27).

California Context

The state of California adopted a public scorecard as part of its Student Success Initiative for sharing education statistics for community colleges throughout the state's 114 two-year institutions. The data was collected on an annual basis from each institution and reflects a variety of metrics for six-year cohorts.

Statewide, the Student Success Scorecard indicated that 42.7% of students were Hispanic, and 42.4% were first-generation students. California tracked degree/transfer completion. For students who began in college-level courses, 70.8% went on to degree completion or transfer; however, only 40.8% of students who began in remedial courses did the same. As with the national data, the metrics for students of color were especially pronounced; while 87% of Hispanics began in remedial courses, only 36.6% made it to transfer or degree completion within six years.

To address these noted equity gaps, California undertook major systems changes. The Student Success Act of 2012 required that all students complete an Educational Plan and declare a major by the time they completed 15 units. California Assembly Bill 705, signed into law in November 2017 by Governor Brown, eliminated traditional placement

tests, known widely for their inequities, in favor of placement into transfer-level English and mathematics based on self-declared high school GPA. The California Community Colleges took on the Guided Pathways Project to create curricular pathways with integrated services to streamline the student's movement through the institution. Finally, Governor Brown changed the funding model for California Community Colleges, making 30% of the budget dependent on success, completion, and transfer rates.

Local Context

Located in Monterey Park, East Los Angeles College (ELAC) was the largest college in the nine-campus Los Angeles Community College District. ELAC boasted an enrollment of approximately 28,000. Like many community colleges in Los Angeles, it was an Hispanic-Serving Institution, with approximately 81% Hispanic students; additionally, 70.1% of its student body were first-generation students. Comparatively, the nearest local community colleges with similar sizes, Santa Monica College, Pasadena City College, and Mt. San Antonio College, had much smaller Hispanic and FGS populations, ranging from 35%-54% of the total student body (2017 Student Success Scorecard).

ELAC bordered two distinctly different socio-economic populations, with a middle-to-upper-middle class community on the north and a working and low-income community on the south. The southern community, comprised of East Los Angeles and Montebello, were home to some of the oldest and most disadvantaged high schools in Los Angeles; three of these high schools were the primary feeder schools for ELAC:

Schurr High School in Montebello, and Garfield High School and Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles.

All of these factors served to make ELAC's student population a unique one, suggesting that they had unique needs the student body population presented with the typical descriptors of first-generation students (FGS): most were working-class or low-income students of color from disadvantaged and under-served public K-12 institutions, and they faced similar challenges. Tinto (1993) found that FGS had more difficulty transitioning to college, and that drop-out rates in the first year were significantly increased in FGS populations, particularly when they were from low-income backgrounds. These hallmarks of FGS were typical struggles at ELAC even if the entire population was not FGS. At a conference that I attended in summer 2017 on accelerated instruction in English and mathematics, we looked at our numbers and calculated equity gaps. We requested assistance from the researcher present, and when she looked at our data, she commented, "your entire population is disadvantaged; your campus is an equity gap." While it might not be quite so bad as that, ELAC faced challenges with its incoming freshman population that did not exist to such great extent elsewhere.

To address the needs of ELAC's unique population, the Academic Senate developed a First Year Program (FYP) in 2012. This program specifically targeted disadvantaged, freshman college students. Under this umbrella are the following specific programs: the First Year Experience (FYE), which served full-time students in their first year of college, Adelante, which served part-time students in their first year of college, and the Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program, which

served full-time, mathematics/science students in their first year of college. FYE and Adelante were overseen by an Associate Dean, who led a team of two full-time college counselors, five Career Guidance Counselor Assistants (CGCAs), and seven program assistants who served the approximately 360 students who entered the program each fall. MESA was overseen by an Associate Dean, who led a team of two full-time counselors and four program assistants who served the approximately fifty students who entered the program each fall. The FYP had a dedicated tutoring and recreation space, dedicated tutoring support, a Peer Mentors program, and dedicated faculty.

For the general population at ELAC, the semester retention rate, defined as students completing the term and receiving a grade, was 84% and the passing rate was 68%. However, despite the considerable supports provided to the students in the FYP, the semester retention rate for fall term within the FYP was 62%, and the passing rate was 58%. Both Associate Deans anecdotally expressed frustration with their inability to increase the retention rate of students in the first semester. The first semester seemed to be when students needed the most support, yet the current support systems were not doing enough. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Advancement found that students in this program who completed the first semester were more likely – slightly above par with the general population – to complete the five-to-six-semester transfer curriculum and to successfully transfer to a four-year institution. The need to get freshman students to stick with college through their first semester was critical.

Personal Context

I had been teaching within the FYP for five years. I taught English 101: College Reading and Composition, and my primary population was students who were placed directly into the course. Because of the new legislation in California, which barred placement of students into remedial classes with few exceptions, beginning in Fall 2018, most students placed directly into English 101, so it was fitting to attempt an intervention in this require freshman course.

In my teaching experience, I had identified the same pattern in the fall: one-third or more of students who started in fall simply did not make it to the end. Why they did not is not clear; most made it to week thirteen, then vanished; a few made it all the way to the end of the term and did not show up for the final. The low success rate was not because students could not do the work or were not placed appropriately for the level and needed additional support; it was that they did not do the work because they could not seem to manage the workload. I had tried several approaches to shift that trend: a flipped classroom approach, few or no hard deadlines, contract-based grading, front-loading the content so that the majority of work was completed by week twelve. What I had also noticed was that the pattern did not exist in the spring term; I rarely lost students and success was much higher. Students who made it through fall semester generally persisted as students and successfully transferred. The 2012 inaugural FYP cohort already had students complete college degrees, which was impressive given that it took the average ELAC student four-to-five years to transfer.

In spring 2017, I undertook my Cycle 0 research, which involved interviewing seven faculty on campus, six of whom had regularly taught in the FYP, to find out their perspectives on student needs. All seven of the faculty made the same type of assertion: “our students don’t know how to be college students.” Additional probing revealed three areas of weakness: time management, organizational skills, and reading and writing skills. Five of the seven faculty had also been instructors at other local community colleges, so their interviews were filled with anecdotal comparisons of ELAC students to other community college students, highlighting the unique elements and needs of the ELAC student body.

With respect to time management, each of the faculty recognized the need to address this with students, and they did it in varying ways. One indicated:

First and foremost is scheduling their time, having an academic calendar. I always recommend they have a separate calendar with college dates, deadlines, days off and that they can track what they have coming due. Biggest problem I have with students is not keeping track of everything and not staying on top of their schedules and then complaining that everything hits at once. And they need to learn to prioritize.

Another faculty member took a different approach, explaining,

I approach it in my classroom as you have to be an adult. You have to learn adulting. I show them my Google calendar and show them that and they’re like sort of amazed. And I encourage them to get a planner or to use Google calendar or freakin’ use the calendar on their phone.

Another noted area of weakness was organizational skills. Probing indicated that this is a multi-faceted area, involving both having all the right supplies for engaging in the college classroom and completing college work and having the ability to organize those supplies. Although all seven complained that students take too long to get textbooks, other organization issues were related to simple things such as keeping work together. One faculty member complained, “They don’t know that you just go and get a folder and keep all the stuff for one class in a folder. They have to be *told* to do that.” Another faculty member explained, “I don’t know why they think we’re going to give them supplies. They don’t even come to class with paper and pens and they look shocked when we ask them to take notes.”

The skills noted above are “soft skills” which were considered critical for success in the classroom and in the workplace (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Robles, 2012; Schulz, 2008). These were skills that I felt could be addressed in the classroom, so in fall 2017, I undertook Cycle 1 of this research project, where I developed and assessed a curricular approach to embedding time management instruction into the classroom. Action research was a cyclical process wherein the researcher was also the educator (Mertler, 2017). The researcher’s investigation into theory as well as active practice informed the action research cycle. In the first cycle, I conducted a pilot of some elements of the College Success Skills curriculum. In the first cycle, assessing this curricular approach, students were given a pre-survey assessing their agreement with statements on time management; I then deployed an intervention consisting of regular, short lessons focused on time management skills, and I conducted a post-survey. The assessment, for multiple reasons,

was less than a success, and my retention and success rates were on par with the rest of the program.

However, I learned a tremendous amount from my informal observations and anecdotal experiences with those students. I led the class in an activity called “168 Hours,” in which students identified where their time went during the week. After completing this activity, many students came to see me to offer explanations for what they put on their “168 Hours” worksheet. For example, one female student who indicated she had “0” hours came to see me after the class and explained that she had calculated hers differently because she is a single mother. She had left the row for family blank until she calculated everything else, then put her remaining time there because she was the primary caregiver for her young child; she only had care for her child while she was in class. Five male students came to me individually and explained that they put “0” hours for work because they didn’t want their peers to know they had jobs, and they didn’t want the FYP to know they had jobs because the summer orientation had heavily stressed not working as being critical to student success. All of these students reported to me that they were working 25+ hours per week because they were expected, as an adult, to help support the family. This number of students who needed to work to contribute to their families was one factor that made ELAC students unique and in need of additional supports for college success.

Another activity involved helping the students utilize their syllabus schedules to build their planning calendars. The intervention covered how to input assignments for English 101 with the presumption that students could follow-through for their other

classes; however, that proved not to be the case. Many students came to me for individual help after that activity with understanding how to read the calendar for their other classes and to input assignments for those classes into their planners.

There were other skills that I noted students lacked: understanding of academic titles (which I recognize can vary in importance based on the institution) - it was week ten before I got the students to call me something other than “teacher”; basic organizational preparation for class, in doing homework and having basic supplies such as pens and writing paper; communication skills, particularly communication through technology. Additionally, there were behavioral aspects that I noted and called “professional” student behavior; these included developing protocols to guide students in what to do when they arrived late to class or how to excuse themselves to use the bathroom. The more attention I paid to my observations, the more I saw about what these students struggled with in their first-semester college experience.

Freshman college students needed support in developing the soft skills necessary for college success. Chief among these soft skills were time management and organizational skills, with communication skills, particularly with their instructors, being an additional factor that would help students be more successful.

Study purpose. This next cycle of research extended the earlier work to further refine and identify curricular activities that enable more students to complete their first semester of college by addressing the soft skills necessary to create academic success. These were soft skills that students were unfamiliar with because they have been subject to the “hidden curriculum” of the K-12 system. In particular, I hoped to determine if

making instruction in soft skill development overt rather than implicit increases retention and success of students throughout their first semester.

Specifically, this dissertation examined:

1. How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect freshman college students' comfort and mastery of the skills within the hidden behavioral curriculum of higher education?
2. How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect freshman college students' course success and retention in college courses?
3. What were the differences between successful and unsuccessful students?

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH
GUIDING THE ACTION-RESEARCH PROJECT

First, theoretical perspectives related to this project were discussed. Second, research relating to the problem of practice was reviewed. Third, implications for the research based on the theoretical perspectives and related research were presented.

The Hidden Curriculum

Phillip W. Jackson coined the phrase “the hidden curriculum” in his 1967 text *Life in Classrooms* where he shared the results of his years of qualitative research on students in their natural setting: the classroom. The “hidden curriculum” referred largely to the concept of the social interactions and behaviors necessary for academic success (Bergenhengouwen, 1987; P. W. Jackson, 1990; Sambell & McDowell, 1998). Jackson (1990) found that children entering school were innately curious and creative but that the hidden curriculum taught them to stifle that independence to suit the needs of the classroom. Chief among the hidden curriculum were social-behavioral concepts, many of which are known as “soft skills.”

Jackson indicated that it was necessary for students to become “school-wise” and “teacher-wise” (p. 35) so as to avoid unnecessary punishments and to meet the demands of the education system. One of the first lessons children learned was “how to comply with the wishes of others” (P. W. Jackson, 1990, p. 29). Children must respect the teacher and never lose sight of the teacher as the ultimate authority figure within the classroom (P. W. Jackson, 1990). It was the teacher who shaped and guided the day, who

set the rules, who determined what would be learned. Teachers were evaluators and assessors; they held the key to the right and wrong answers and behaviors. This mindset also applied to administration and staff at the school; children - and their families - learn that challenging the authority, whether it is the teacher, the counselor, or the principal, did not pay.

Vang (2006) indicated that parents need to become more aware of this hidden curriculum because it can have a long-term effect on children and young adults, particularly in minority, lower-income populations. This was significant because these populations were most likely to produce first-generation college students. The hidden curriculum affected whether students were placed into college-ready courses or were academically challenged in ways that adequately prepared young adults for college. Vang (2006) found that minority and immigrant parents often assumed that “good grades” meant that the student was doing well and did not ask about curricular approaches or levels; in fact, these parents might not have known to ask these questions or might not have felt comfortable doing so. Vang (2006) advocated for more transparency and intentional teaching to children and parents of the “hidden curriculum” to create greater equity and opportunity in education.

The hidden curriculum contained a set of social-behavioral skills that could be described as “soft skills.” Among these skills are the following four: professionalism, communication, time management, and organization (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Robles, 2012; Schulz, 2008). One question raised from this review of the research: if these soft skills were embedded into the K-12 hidden curriculum, why were students unable to

demonstrate these skills in higher education? In the following sections, I show how the hidden curriculum of the K-12 system affected the intentional use of these soft skills and affected the ability of incoming college freshman to utilize these skills for college success. Further, I explored research that offered solutions to creating transparency of these skills at the college level.

Behavior

In the K-12 system, the “professional” student was the model student. The primary outcome for children of the hidden curriculum was the “denial of desire” (P. W. Jackson, 1990, p. 15). This outcome was related to the most critical virtue of the hidden curriculum: patience, which was “more clearly determined by what a person does *not* do than by what he does” (P. W. Jackson, 1990, p. 18). Deeply embedded within the concept of patience was that of “obedience and docility” (p. 33) and the ability to be a “good worker” and a “model student” (p. 32). Creating the model student involved developing a set of behavioral standards that must be followed, a type of etiquette that is specific to the classroom. Those etiquette lessons were explicitly taught. Rules for behavior were posted on the walls, and publicly displayed reward-and-punishment systems were utilized to reinforce the standards.

However, as Jackson (1990) pointed out, the status quo for behavior in one classroom was not necessarily the status quo for behavior in another. Children developed the ability to code-switch based on the hidden curriculum of the classroom they found themselves in at that moment. Although “code-switching” was predominantly a field of linguistic study examining how speakers switch between multiple languages, the concept

was also applied to studies of social identity (Auer, 2007; Zimmerman, 1998). This form of social code-switching in the K-12 system was supported by the explicit behavioral instruction that teachers provide. Students learned that some teachers allow the hum of constant, soft chatter, although others required more or complete silence. Students switched their demeanor and behavior for these varying situations; they employed what Zimmerman (1998) had defined as “situational identities.” However, even these identities were scripted by what is allowed and defined by the teacher and the institution. Most students mastered this hidden curriculum; they became “docile scholars” (P. W. Jackson, 1990), p. 37). But their thirteen years of training in “obedience and docility” failed them when they were thrust into a system of education where the hidden curriculum mastered in the K-12 system did not always apply.

For first-time freshman college students, coming from a K-12 system where the “professionalism” standards were clearly defined to a higher education system where such standards were not apparent, there was the creation of culture shock (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Mcdaniel, 2016). Certainly, there were college instructors who prefer quiet, obedient classes and who do not challenge the status quo of the K-12 professional student behavior, but most college professors sought a different type of student, one more in keeping with the cultural norm towards developing independence (Stephens et al., 2012). Most college instructors sought students who were independent thinkers and who were motivated and confident, able to participate in Socratic discussions, and to ask questions that potentially challenged the instructor (Bergenhengouwen, 1987; Stephens et al., 2012). These changing behavioral standards were a sharp contrast from the “docile

scholar” behavior learned in the K-12 system and put first-time freshman students at a disadvantage. In focus groups conducted with freshman students at East Los Angeles College as part of annual improvement processes, one topic that emerged was a request from students to teach them how to behave. One student stated, “the teacher never said we could just blurt out answers,” and another student followed that with, “I’m never sure if I’m supposed to raise my hand or not.” These students recognized they were at a disadvantage, that they were not using the right “college etiquette” (student quote) and wanted direct instruction in how to behave as professional college students.

Potential solution. The Puente Project Program, run out of the University of California, Berkeley, developed a potential solution to this challenge, though it is not widely written about in the research literature. The Puente Program specifically targeted disadvantaged, first-generation college students at community colleges throughout California and created tremendous success in having the students complete the required curriculum for transfer within two years. A key component of the success of the program was the training received by the professors and counselors who served the Puente cohort. Stern (2014) explained that the Puente instructors were trained to specifically help students navigate the social-behavioral mores of higher education. Professor Carlos Centeno, the Puente English instructor at East Los Angeles College, explained that this begins with having the students define what it means to behave as college students. Centeno led his students through an exercise in the first week in which they collectively defined the standards of professionalism in the college classroom; he also talked with them about how to identify the standards their other instructors expect (personal

communication, 2018). This solution breaks past the barriers set by the hidden curriculum of the K-12 system by engaging new college students in the types of collaborative participation sought in the college classroom.

Communication

Closely related to the idea of professionalism was communication with instructors. This area has two facets: communication by title in the classroom and communication outside of the classroom either during office hours or through email.

Instructor titles. The first area related to instructor titles, which are far more diverse in higher education than in the K-12 system. Ellis and Travis (2007) indicated that the diversity of titles was confusing and often obscure, leading students to avoid addressing instructors by name out of fear of getting the title incorrect. In an earlier cycle of this research, I conducted interviews with seven faculty members on what skills they felt ELAC students needed. They often said, “they need to behave like college students” which was defined more specifically as: “I wish they would call me something other than ‘teacher’” and “how come they think it’s okay to just call me “Miss?”” Communicating with someone by name or appropriate title was the first step in establishing a relationship with someone (Wood & Kroger, 1991).

Potential solution. Although an obvious solution would be for instructors to tell students, early on, how they wish to be addressed, Ellis and Travis (2007) indicated it is not quite that simple. The title that instructors opted to use had an affective impact on students, which instructors working primarily with incoming freshman should be aware of because that title may impact student performance. In their study, Ellis and Travis

found that use of “Ms./Mr” or “Dr.” to be the titles students considered to be the most open and friendly and to demonstrate the least wielding of power; the title “Dean” was ranked after that, and the title “Professor” was perceived to be the least friendly but to have the most amount of power. Ellis and Travis suggested that not only do instructors clearly state, both in the classroom and on the syllabus “this is what I want to be called,” but that they consider their chosen title carefully with respect to the type of relationship they wish to establish with students.

Email communication. Email communication has been another area of weakness for students, and this should not be a surprise given it was not a skill that most students developed in the K-12 system. Because K-12 students are not adults, their direct interaction with teachers was often limited to classroom instruction; when it came to asking questions about progress or indicating a need for help, an adult family member has always been engaged in the conversation. College students needed to step up to the responsibility of engaging in this type of communication, yet they were poorly prepared to do so.

First, students needed to engage in email communication with their instructors because it enabled them to reach those instructors outside of regularly scheduled office hours. Increased communication with instructors was shown to be beneficial to student engagement and success (Bolkan & Holmgren, 2012; K. K. Stephens, Houser, & Cowan, 2009; Wang, 2014). Second, students needed to engage in email communication because it was good practice for a skill desired in the workplace.

But there was a disconnect between instructors and students on what defines an appropriate email communication, and this harkens back to the hidden curriculum where students were not been provided with any explicit instruction in engaging in such communication; it was a communication form that is, largely, barred to students in the K-12 system. K. K. Stephens, et al. (2009) indicated that students willingly engaged in email communication, but viewed it as much like a text, using abbreviated and short-cut language (such as “RU” for “are you”), which instructors perceived as disrespectful and annoying. In their study, K. K. Stephens et al. (2009) found that instructors judged the trustworthiness, credibility, and ethics of students based on the quality and formality of their email communications, which informed the attitude of the response to the student, up to and including the instructor choosing to ignore the email. Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) found that instructor response to student email was affected by the formal structure and politeness inherent in the email.

Potential solution. Like other writing skills, sending an email was a learned skill that must be practiced and developed. Huffman and Huffman (2012) indicated students must become accustomed to using such technology as part of their communication skills. This assertion, particularly with a technology-driven generation, seems almost silly, particularly when every incoming freshman seemed to have a smartphone in their pocket. Junco (2014) pointed out, however, that most forms of technology communication that young adults use were banned in the K-12 system. This ban may have been even more prevalent in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, where access to technology was poor. As a result, students were not given any instruction or training in when to use the

varying forms of communication that were available to them and may have found the freedom to communicate in this manner with their college instructors to be daunting. Given the opportunity, students communicated with instructors in a way that instructors interpret as peer-to-peer rather than peer-to-authority (Baron & Ling, 2011; Junco, 2014).

To bridge this gap, instruction must occur with respect to the appropriate structure of an email and in the content that goes into the email. Such training involves examining a poorly written email, identifying the standards of appropriately written email, and practicing the techniques (Burgess, Jackson, & Edwards, 2005; Portwood-Stacer, 2016). Additionally, instructors needed to recognize that the formality inherent in the first email communication was not necessarily the formality that should always be employed. This form of code-switching needed to be included in the instruction of sending emails. Language use changed with the onset of more “instant” forms of communication such as instant-message, Tweeting, and text-messaging; nonetheless, instructors had an obligation to remind young adults that Standard English still exists and needs to be utilized in appropriate ways (Baron, 2005; Baron & Ling, 2011).

Office hours communication. As technological forms of communication have risen between instructors and students, the incident of student visits to office hours decreased (Jackson & Knupsky, 2015). Despite the decrease, office hours still served a critical function in developing relationships between instructors and students. Office hours were a time when more individualized instruction was provided between instructor and student; it was also a place where the instructor and student got to know each other more personally, thus developing a more mentor-like relationship (Jackson & Knupsky,

2015). Working in this personal way with instructors was a way for college students to identify the distinctions in expectations for academic work and classroom behavior (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Despite the benefits of attending office hours, incoming freshman students were more likely to seek help from peers rather than instructors (Morales, 2012).

This has been yet another example of the hidden curriculum of the K-12 system that poorly prepared incoming freshman for the transition to college; the paradigm of personally visiting an instructor, outside of the classroom, did not exist in the K-12 system. It was unclear to freshman what the benefits of visiting the instructor during office hours were because they lacked the anecdotal experiences on those benefits (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Freshman, in particular, needed training to help them understand the purpose of office hours and how they could best take advantage of that time with their instructors.

Bandura and Walters (1977) indicated, “new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others” (p. 2). These concepts were the cornerstones of Social Learning Theory (SLT). In its most basic form, experience teaches us through reward and punishment (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Through this approach, we have developed the ability to regulate our actions based on consequences, positive or negative, that we have experienced.

Fortunately, learning has not been based solely on personal experiences, but also on the observations of others. For example, children learned to not touch a hot pan by observing their parent’s reaction to getting burned. This type of observation engages

multiple senses: a child saw the action and heard their father's response. Emotions were involved as well because the child did not want to see the parent hurt. These stimuli increased how children retained the experience, which helped in the transfer of that knowledge to other experiences (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Following the observation, children likely engaged in verbally coding of the experience. Bandura and Walters (1977) asserted, "most of the cognitive processes that regulate behavior are primarily verbal" (p. 7). In children, this was relatively easy to observe: with respect to the hot pan incident, children may have asked repeatedly about the incident until the sequence of events and consequences was clear.

Additionally, just observing the model was not sufficient for individuals to duplicate the behavior, particularly when higher-order behaviors were involved; the observers must have "acquired the component skills" (Bandura & Walters, 1977, p. 8) needed for completing the action. Bandura and Walters (1977) explained, "in most everyday learning, people usually achieve rough approximations of new patterns of behavior by modeling and refine them through self-corrective adjustments on the basis of informative feedback from performance" (p. 8). In education, whether the situation arose in a kindergarten classroom or a college seminar, scaffolding was used to assist students through this process. In the college setting, students learned "college behavior" from observing each other, particularly when no guide within their family existed for this paradigm. In a learning community, where the students were frequently all in the same position as freshman, the modeling that occurred may – to use an admittedly crude analogy – be like the "blind leading the blind." To mitigate this, some schools engaged

in using Peer Mentor programs, where a student who had already successfully completed one or two years of college served as the model for the incoming freshman.

Potential solution. The use of peer mentors was considered a high-impact practice for learning communities (Bonin 2013; Brawer 1996; Plaskett, Bali, Nakkula, & Harris, 2018; Terrion & Leonard 2007). However, Dawson (2014) found the definition of a peer mentor varied widely, ranging from a formally-trained peer mentor to a Supplemental Instruction (SI) leader to a peer tutor. Students in these roles demonstrated model-student behavior and served as a guidepost for incoming freshman. Nevertheless, unless they are formally trained to be mentors, they often lacked the appropriate skills to be mentors and did not know how to manage concepts such as setting appropriate boundaries and communicating appropriate messages (Dawson, 2014; Stout & McDaniel, 2006). Despite the potential pitfalls of these relationships, research showed that having an SI leader in the class increased success and retention, particularly for freshman students (Arendale, 1998; Carver, et al., 2017; Frischmann & Moor, 2017).

As part of the potential solution, an SI leader was assigned to the class where the CSC was being used. Dawson, van der Meer, Skalicky, and Cowley (2014) indicated in a literature review on the SI model that frequently the definition of what an SI leader did varied. In this case, the SI leader was trained by the original University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) standards, which held that SI leaders facilitated study sessions. The SI leader was additionally a student who had taken the class a semester earlier and earned a high grade, making the SI leader a “near peer” (International Center for Supplemental Instruction, 2019). The role of the SI leader was to attend all classes, to

demonstrate model student behavior, and to lead supplemental study sessions that were created by the instructor each week.

Directed Learning Activities (DLAs) were scripted group tutoring sessions where the faculty members supplied the activity that the SI leader used in the supplemental session. DLAs were a relatively new tutoring approach combining self-directed learning worksheets used in a group tutoring setting. Because it was new, little research existed on the practice and its effectiveness. A DLA on “How to Visit Your Instructor” was developed and was used in one of the supplemental sessions. The SI leader engaged with the students and provided formative and summative feedback as well as their own experience visiting instructors throughout the activity. The SI leader modeled the desired behavior during the DLA, allowing students to observe and practice the behavior.

Time Management

Another aspect of the hidden curriculum that contributed to the docility of the student was the institution and teacher as timekeeper (Jackson, 1990). The K-12 institution structured the day of the students; it determined the length of learning periods, length of allowed breaks, length of the learning day. It dictated the amount of time spent on homework outside of the learning day. The institution took responsibility for the classes in which students were placed; all these aspects of timekeeping and scheduling were controlled for the student.

Additionally, the K-12 teacher was responsible for ensuring that students adhered to the prescribed structure. Jackson (1990) explained, “school is place where things often happen not because students wants them to, but because it is time for them to occur” (p.

13). The student was not allowed to make decisions about when to begin, switch, or end tasks; the teacher controlled the daily schedule, even down to when students could go to the bathroom.

The timekeeping transition to higher education posed yet another culture shock for incoming freshman. The average K-12 student attended school thirty-five to thirty-eight hours per week, with perhaps an additional two-to-four hours of homework per day to be completed outside of class. This highly scripted system had clear start and end points; there was little guesswork to this system. Once in college, students' time suddenly became their own; they had the freedom and ability to pick and choose their classes, including in what format and when they want to take them. Students had the option of one-, two-, or four-day-a-week classes, which could start as early as 6:00am or as late as 7:50pm. They enrolled in classes in any combination of these options. Moreover, class time did not account for all study and work time; instead, time spent in class accounted for only one-third of the time needed to study and do homework. This was a sharp difference from the K-12 system, and one for which students were not prepared.

One high impact practice utilized with incoming freshman students was a "learning community" model. In a learning community, students have been co-enrolled in a series of courses where the times were prescribed. For instance, students in a learning community were assigned a schedule of four classes rather than choosing classes for themselves, and they attended the classes in a group. Tinto (2003) indicated learning communities were a critical form of support early in higher education. Although Tinto's

focus was on how learning communities created “shared knowledge,” “shared knowing,” and “shared responsibility,” (p. 2), the timekeeping aspects of the learning community was a hidden benefit. The institute placed the students in the same type of timekeeping structure to which they were previously conditioned. They were given a schedule and told where to go and when to be there; they traveled into and between these classes with the same set of people, mimicking the K-12 experience, but to a limited extent such that the new college students could still manage the rest of their time.

There has been, though, a critical difference: periods of learning, defined as time-in-class, now only accounted for twelve-to-fifteen hours of a student’s week; the remaining time necessary for study and practice - approximately thirty hours – was to be accomplished out-of-class. The amount of time dedicated to learning and study every week had not shifted drastically from the 35 to 40 hours expected of a K-12 student, but the structure of timekeeping altered dramatically.

Given the shift from the hidden curriculum of the K-12 system where the timekeeping was scripted to a system where it is far less so, it was not surprising that effective time management has been associated with student success (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990; Mastrianni, 2015; Morales, 2012; Thibodeaux et al., 2016a; Toker & Avci, 2015; Whannell, et al. 2012). Studies around the globe duplicated essentially the same relationship: decreased time on academic tasks was associated with decreased academic success (Costabile et al., 2013; Fukuzawa, Joho, & Maeshiro, 2015). In some studies, time management was shown to be the critical factor in academic success, even when students otherwise had strong study skills, such as regular note-taking

during lectures, completing homework, or organizing information effectively (Bulent, Hakan, & Aydin, 2015; Costabile et al., 2013).

Time management was also described as a critical factor in success by freshman students at ELAC. One student explained during the regularly held focus groups, “I didn’t figure out until the end of the first semester that I had to double the amount of time I expected everything to take.” Another student wished that “professors would emphasize how much time homework will take.” Yet a third stated, the “responsibility of managing a scheduling and getting stuff done out of class was really hard.” There was a recognition that they did not know what to expect for the workload and that they needed help managing it.

Interestingly, the amount of time students dedicated to studying out of class has been on the decline since 1961, from 24 hours per week to 14 hours per week (Babcock & Marks, 2010). One suggested explanation for this decline was that more students were working while attending college because the number of full-time students who also work increased from 25% to 55%. Matched comparisons (for example, a student working 20 hours per week in the 1970s compared to a student working 20 hours per week in the late 1990s) showed the increase in students working only accounted for a small decrease in study time.

Another explanation was that technology played a role in decreased study time since access to information has been substantially increased, but Babcock and Marks (2010) found the greatest decline occurred between 1961 and 1981, before the boom in technology to which students have access today. It was interesting to note that Babcock

and Marks' analysis was of data collected between 1961 and 2004, ending just before Mark Zuckerberg's 2004 launch of Facebook and the social media revolution. Indeed, with the ability to have an entire social life on the internet, a follow-up student using data collected since 2004 might shed new light on the effect of technology on study time.

Even if the increased accessibility to technology and social media accounted for the substantial decrease in the number of hours that students needed to study, the fact remained that students struggled with managing study time. Additionally, few studies considered the role that the hidden curriculum played in study time, particularly for incoming freshman. In an earlier Cycle of this action-research study, students were asked in week two of the semester to list the formula for study time in college. Only two of the twenty-one students articulated the formula: two-to-three hours outside of class for every hour inside of class. This lack of knowledge of how the structure of school time changed from high school to college accounted for some of the decreases that students spend on study time.

Even if students were familiar with the formula, it was less clear if they applied it in a meaningful way. In Collier and Morgan's (2008) study, students "based their ideas about what was an 'appropriate' amount of work to put into a class, on the amount of time they felt they had available, rather than on any sense of how much time might actually be needed to master the material" (p. 435). Byrd and MacDonald (2005) examined the concept of "college readiness" for first-generation, non-traditional students and attempted to identify the strengths and deficits with which those students dealt. Byrd and MacDonald found four problem areas: academic skills, time management, goal focus,

and self-advocacy. Morales (2012) conducted a qualitative evaluation of 15 freshman in “real time” by working with the students throughout their first term to see how students were processing and dealing with the college experience. Morales’ focus was on students who were first-generation and freshman; however, the demographics of their participants matched those of incoming freshman at East Los Angeles College. Morales found that freshman struggled with active help-seeking, managing free time, underestimating academic rigor, and early diligence. Students who set a schedule and stuck to it did better than those students who did not.

There has been yet another complication to the issue of time management that has been specific to freshman: family expectations. A common lament from freshman has been that their families do not understand the amount of time that college takes (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Morales, 2012; ELAC Focus Groups 2018). In the ELAC focus groups, one student related, “my family doesn’t get that like just cause like I’m not in class doesn’t mean I don’t like have homework. They think I should be working if I’m not like in class.” Other participants agreed with this statement. The expectation that the student will contribute to the family in financial ways becomes much stronger when the family gets the impression the student was now only committed for twelve-to-fifteen hours per week. Freshman often struggled to bridge that gap in knowledge with their families; they took on jobs or family responsibilities that then interfered with their college success. In Cycle 1 of this research, 16 of 21 students reported on the pre-survey that they were working more than 20 hours per week while also attempting their first semester in

college. Freshman needed to create the kind of transparency for their families about the time commitment of going to college that was apparent throughout the K-12 experience.

Potential solutions. The approach to teaching time management at ELAC was an optional workshop for students, usually a 60-to-90 minute workshop in which the development of a schedule is covered. This workshop was provided by any number of entities on a campus. At ELAC, time management workshops have been offered by the Counseling Department, the Welcome Center, the Transfer Center, the Career Center, the First Year Program, the Writing Center, the Learning Center, and the Professional Development Office. Despite the frequency of offering, these workshops were poorly attended, and there was no evidence they created any effect on student success. The ELAC focus group participants, which ranged from five-to-eight students in each and which had participants attend five of the offered sessions, were blunt that “workshops don't work.”

Research showed promise in a variety of other approaches to time management instruction. Toker and Avci (2015) conducted a study in which 16 students were enrolled in an eight-session workshop where cognitive-behavioral therapy methods were used to provide time management instruction, specifically how to set goals and how to avoid procrastination. Participants reported increased success in goal achievement throughout and after the series of sessions. Whannell, et al., (2012) developed a six-session “bridging program” (p. 45) comprised of academic skills instruction that supplemented students’ first term in the college. The program addressed skills such as “social behaviours,” “organisation,” and “behaviour responsibility.” Through the experience,

Whannell et al., (2012) found that the younger the incoming student was, the more he or she lacked confidence in these areas. Moreover, they also found instruction in these skills led to increased confidence and academic success of the participants. In Toker and Avci's (2015) and Whannel, et al.'s (2012) studies, students were instructed in the time management skills for only a portion of the semester before the students were left to apply the skills without supervision; Mastrianni's (2015) study took a more extended approach to the instruction of these skills.

Mastrianni (2015) developed an approach to time management instruction, specifically addressing "study skills, time management, and self-management" (p. 2), wherein it was integrated into the classrooms of those instructors she team-taught with as part of a learning community. As part of her study, the team of four instructors built a common Blackboard site with a common calendar and approach to course announcements. Additionally, Mastrianni (2015) engaged in time management instruction in her class, including having the students assess where their time was spent and how to better utilize their time. Students tracked by Mastrianni into the second semester in the learning community reported decreased levels of stress and worry related to time management and their ability to cope with an academic workload. The critical factor to these attempts to address time management was that they provided instruction in time management over several weeks, thus making it more real-time for the students.

Organization

As any parent of a K-12 student can attest, the weeks prior to the start of the academic school year are filled with “back to school” shopping and sales. Schools released lists of required supplies, such as binders, notebooks, post-its, folders, papers, types of pens, and pencils ahead of time and expect students to bring them to school for organization and use early in the school year. Teachers developed and helped students set-up complex systems of binder organization, complete with color-coded or labeled folders for tracking notes, homework, and projects for the various subjects the students will encounter. Such systems have been considered pedagogical best practices as part of classroom management (Marzano, 2007; Marzano, Gaddy, & Foseid, 2005; McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover, 2003).

Jackson (1990) pointed out that these administrative systems help teachers to manage the work of students and to simplify classroom life. Marzano et al., (2005) and McLeod et al., (2003) indicated that such organizational filing systems also create structure and routine. Few studies looked at the link between filing systems for students and academic success, but those few found a connection (Molenhouse, Petsas, Somers, Spiller, & Thomas, 2000; Monahan, Ognibene, & Torrisi, 2000). Monahan et al., (2000) determined that by overtly teaching an organizational system, the students improved their rates of returning homework assignments, thus strengthening their grades.

Perhaps because such an emphasis was placed on these organizational binder systems in the K-12 system, it has been assumed that college students will transfer those skills to college with little struggle. The lack of research in this area suggests this may be

the case. Unfortunately, that assumption underscores the strength of the hidden curriculum. The students have been conditioned, for 13 years, to follow the lead and directions of another, even with respect to organizing schoolwork and homework.

Potential solutions. Organizational skills were described as one of the important “soft skills” sought by employers (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Robles, 2012).

Organizational skills were also described as “self-management” and “project management” skills; these were often developed through self-training, that is, figuring it out on one’s own through trial-and-error (Schulz, 2008). Although this was an effective approach, it is time consuming and can lead to errors that can create poor outcomes for young adults who do not have the time to learn these skills before failing in school.

Instead, Schulz (2008) recommended a more overt approach to training in the soft skills, beginning with open discussions of what those skills are and how they can be developed.

Many California community colleges eliminated the “student success” courses that used to be offered in abundance on college campuses not only because of declining enrollment in those courses but also because their effectiveness could not be proved (Dembo & Seli, 2004). The Los Angeles Community College District eliminated those courses in 2014, shifting the emphasis of the “student success” courses taught by counselors to “career development.” Aside from the workshops offered by varying offices on campus that addressed some of these skills (professionalism, communication, time management, and organization), there has been little support for students to develop skills that are critical to their success. Additionally, these skills should not be taught in a vacuum, but should be integrated overtly into the college experience, enabling freshman,

in particular, the ability to practice these skills and improve them just as they would the other academic skills they develop throughout the college experience.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Action Research

The goal of this classroom-embedded College Success Skills Intervention curriculum action research study was four-fold: to help freshman college students develop their professionalism; to improve freshman college students communication with instructors, to support freshman college students time management, and organizational needs, and to improve success and retention.

Setting

This study used a classroom-based intervention to assist freshman college students in developing the soft skills (professionalism, communication, time management, organization) necessary for academic success. The research took place at East Los Angeles College (ELAC), an Hispanic-Serving Institution located in Monterey Park, California and part of the Los Angeles Community College District. Approximately 81% of the population at ELAC were Hispanic, and 13% were Asian/Pacific Islander. There was a 60/40 split between female/male, and 61% of our students were between 18-24 years old. Moreover, 70.1% were first-generation students, and 68% were employed at least part-time while attending school.

Participants

Students in an English 101: College Reading and Writing I course were invited to participate in the study. Historically, there were approximately 45 students in these courses, with the semester retention rate, meaning that students completed the course and

received a grade, at approximately 84% and course pass rate at 61%. These rates were consistent for several years. The section for this study was scheduled as part of the First Year Experience Program, which served all incoming freshman students in a cohort-based, learning-community model. Students were co-enrolled in four classes for their first semester: an English class, a Mathematics class, a career development class, and one general education class. For the past five years, the semester retention rate was 62% and the pass rate was 58% for students who were in this special program, a decrease from what was seen in the general population.

All students in the course were eligible to participate. The intervention changed the curriculum of the class, so that all students were exposed to the intervention. However, only the data of those students who agreed to participate in the study and signed consent were used in the analysis of this project. Demographic information was supplied to me by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Advancement based on standard fields and included: gender, ethnicity, age, and employment status and hours working.

In fall 2018, 48 students were enrolled in my English 101. Consent letters were distributed on the first day of class and collected on the second day of class. Per the IRB-approved protocol, the consent letters were not reviewed until after grades for the course were posted. Upon review, I found that 40 students had consented to have their data used in the analysis of this project.

Of the 40 students who consented to participate, 100% indicated they were Latinx, and 100% were between the ages of 18-19; 19 students identified as male, and 21 students identified as female.

Role of the Researcher

In addition to being the researcher, I was a participant/observer in the study because I was the English 101 instructor. I designed the College Success Skills Intervention curriculum that was utilized within the class and that was measured for effect and success over the course of the study. As the instructor, I had authority over these participants in the grading process but assured all students that their participation was voluntary and would not affect their grade within the course. I was also aware of my bias as their instructor and how this interfered with the implementation of the intervention and measurement of student success. I triangulated students' responses in their journal entries with their actual performance in the course to ensure that I was including the students' beliefs and perspectives.

Studies indicated that creating transparency and practice in areas of professionalism and communication, and regular, habit-inducing practice in time management and organization activities increase student proficiency in using these techniques (Bulent et al., 2015; Burgess et al., 2005; Costabile, et al., 2013; Ellis & Travis, 2007; Fukuzawa et al., 2015; Mastrianni, 2015; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Mcdaniel, 2016; Morales, 2012; Stern, 2014; Thibodeaux, et al., 2016).

Research Questions

The specific research questions that were explored in this cycle of the research project included:

1. How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect freshman college students' comfort and mastery of the skills within the hidden behavioral curriculum of higher education?
2. How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect freshman college students' course grades and retention in college courses?
3. What were the differences between successful and unsuccessful students?

Measures

This study was a mixed method action research (MMAR) study because it involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data; the data types were collected simultaneously. The qualitative data consisted of:

- Nine journal entries written by students between weeks one and fifteen of the semester. These journal entries helped to answer RQ1 and RQ3.
- An email communication assignment. This assignment helped to answer RQ 1.
- A Directed Learning Activity. This assignment helped to answer RQ 1.
- Researcher's observation journal, written weekly by the researcher between weeks one and sixteen of the semester. These observation journal entries helped to answer RQ1 and RQ3.

The quantitative data consisted of:

- a post-intervention and retrospective pre-intervention assessments on four constructs related to the main aspects of the College Success Skills curriculum: behavior, communication, time management, and organization. For the time management construct, there were three sub-constructs: planning, prioritizing, and daily/weekly time management. For all main and sub constructs students responded to five to six statements about each on a Likert-scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The survey served as quantitative data that helped determine the value-added of the intervention conducted throughout the semester and helped to answer RQ1.
- Retention and success rates for the class, which helped to answer RQ2.

Table 1: Brief Overview of Activities and Measures by Week

When Occurs	Activity	Measure
Week One	Behavior Discussion	Journal 1: Describe how you think a college student is supposed to behave. How does a successful college student act?
Week Two	Overview of Time Management	College Success Skills Pre-Survey 168 Hours Worksheet Journal 2: What did you learn today that surprised you? What did you learn about where your time goes? How do you think that time management will affect you as a student?
Week Three	Getting Organized	Journal 3A: What is your current system for organizing school work?

		Do you think that system will work for you in college?
		Journal 3B: Based on the different models you have seen, what do you think will work for you? What adaptations will you make to your current system to keep your schoolwork organized?
	Communication – Instructor Office Hours	Directed Learning Activity: Instructor Office Hours
Week Four	Communication – Email	Email assignment: Send a practice email to the instructor asking a question about the class.
Week Five	Building Action Triggers The Rule of Three Discussion	Journal 4A: Define your action trigger. What are you going to do to trigger the action?
Week Six	Predicting Time on Task & The Pomodoro Technique	
Week Seven	Action Triggers Check-In	Journal 4B: Have you utilized your action trigger as part of managing your time? Why or why not?
Week Eight	The Rule of Three Check-In	
Week Twelve	Check-in on all areas	Journal 8: As we approach the end of the term, how are you feeling about managing the workload this semester. How's your time management going? Are you keeping your work for your classes organized? What's working? What techniques are you using? What isn't working? What do you need help with?

Week Fifteen	Check-in on all areas	College Success Skills Post-Survey
		Journal 9: Over the semester, we have worked on several skills to manage the college experience. Which do you think has been most helpful and why?
		College Success Skills Retrospective Pre-Survey

College Success Curriculum Intervention

The intervention consisted of eight lessons; all eight of the lessons were completed prior to week eight of the semester, but qualitative assessments (student-written journal entries) continued throughout the semester. The curriculum was embedded into an English composition course, where there was already an established written word count that students had to achieve; the journal entries that students wrote were counted towards the required expectations. Additionally, this curriculum intervention utilized a Write-to-Learn pedagogy. Emig (1977) advocated this approach to learning. Writing about a process reinforces that process (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004; Emig 1977). Moreover, the Writing-to-Learn pedagogical approach has been acknowledged to help students learn in content-heavy courses (Herrington, 1981). The act of writing required that students utilize executive functions of planning, monitoring, and modifying to create clarity and meaning. Thus, writing about the college success skills that needed development also supported the cognitive growth of the students.

Behavior: defining college behavior (Week 1). This lesson addressed professionalism as a component of the College Success Skills Intervention. As Stern (2014) indicated, first-generation college students often struggled with how to behave as college students. Definitions of “professional” college behavior have not been clearly stated; it was assumed that students would figure out how to behave from observation. When most students in a learning community were incoming, first-time freshman, the ability to learn ways of behaving from others was substantially diminished; therefore, students developed bad patterns of behavior. The concept of “how to behave” in a college class was introduced on day one, when students were asked to write Journal Entry 1: Describe how you think a college student is supposed to behave. How does a successful college student act?

I used the responses in these journal entries to script the discussion on day two when the class worked together to set the guidelines for professional behavior in the college classroom. These guidelines addressed such behavioral areas as going to the bathroom, arriving late, use (or not) of raised hands during discussion, and use of cell phones. As a class, we created the behavioral guidelines; throughout the semester, I wrote in a Teaching Journal that tracked adherence to these behavioral guidelines in addition to observations about the other areas of curriculum.

Time management: 168 hours (Week 2). This lesson addressed time management as a key component of college success. Students participated in an activity-based overview of time management and building habits for success. In this activity, students worked to answer the following questions:

- What is time management?
- What needs to be tracked for effective time management?
- How much time is there in a week?
- Where does their time go?

Students completed a worksheet called “168 Hours” (Appendix C). This was a new approach to time management developed by the researcher. In the workbook used in ELAC’s Time Management Workshop, students were led in filling out a calendar and color-coding for different activities. Instead, this curriculum was based on the idea that students have inherent knowledge in how to use a calendar, but that they lacked a true understanding of how much time they had to work with and a consideration for how that time was divided. On the worksheet, students were asked to identify how much time goes to sleep, work, family, class, and studying followed by how much time goes to a variety of extracurricular activities. Additionally, students wrote Journal Two as part of the activity. This activity took eighty-five minutes to complete.

As part of this lesson, students were also overtly exposed to the concept of the hidden curriculum, particularly with respect to the “soft skills” students need for being successful in college.

Following the activity, students wrote Journal 2: What did you learn today that surprised you? What did you learn about where your time goes? How do you think that time management will affect you as a student?

Organizing (Week 3). This lesson addressed organization as a component of the College Success Curriculum. The activity began by having students complete Journal

Entry 3A: What is your current system for organizing school work? Do you think that system will work for you in college?

Students were shown three different models for organizing their schoolwork. They were shown a traditional binder with dividers for each class; a traditional binder with folders for each class, and a folder-based system where the folders for each class are kept loosely. Students volunteered which system they preferred and why. This lesson, with both journal entries, took 30 minutes. Finally, they completed Journal Entry 3B: Based on the different models you have seen, what do you think will work for you? What adaptations will you make to your current system to keep your schoolwork organized?

Throughout the semester, I made entries in my Teacher Journal to track students' abilities with respect to organization, such as coming prepared for class with the appropriate materials, being able to find and access the required work.

Communication: office hours (Week 3). This lesson addressed communication as a component of the College Success Curriculum. According to the 2017 LACCD Student Survey, although 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “my instructors are approachable,” only 55% agreed or strongly agreed that they visit instructors during office hours. Working with instructors outside of class time was important for building social networks, but many freshman found the idea to be a threatening one. During Week 3, students completed a Directed Learning Activity (DLA) with the class's Supplemental Instructor, who held two regularly scheduled study sessions every week with the students, although it was optional for the students to attend. The DLA walked students through why they should visit during office hours and how to make the most of that visit. The

Supplemental Instructor tracked participants, and I tracked those students who followed-through on making a visit.

Communication: sending email (Week 4). This lesson addressed communication as a component of the College Success Curriculum. Being able to send emails had been a critical component of building relationships with instructors and communicating successfully in the field of academia (Corrigan & McNabb, 2015; Filippone & Survinski, 2016; Portwood-Stacer, 2016). In the 2017 Los Angeles Community College District student survey, 49.2% of students indicated that they “often” used “email, social media, or text messaging to communicate with an instructor.” The broadness of this statement, and the inclusion of social media and text messaging, does not underscore the fact that less than 50% of the students use these forms of communication. Burgess, et al., (2005) indicated that email usage had been widespread to the point where it is invisible, and it has been assumed that people knew how to appropriately communicate through email; however, that had not been the case. Providing training in how to send an email had been as necessary as teaching students to write a letter or address an envelope.

Students were taken to a computer lab and were taught how to access their school email. Then, students were asked to read through, with a partner, the template created by Portwood-Stacer (2016). Time to ask questions was also provided. Then, students were asked to write a practice email. This lesson took forty-five minutes. Additional emails throughout the semester were tracked and analyzed for adherence to these basic

principles. Email Assignment: Send the instructor a practice email asking a question about the class that you can't find the answer to.

Time Management: building action triggers (Week 4). This lesson addressed time management as a component of the College Success Curriculum. Based on research by Gollwitzer (1999), students learned about “action triggers,” which set the intention to complete an activity. Gollwitzer’s research indicated that if a decision to take action was made in advance, it was more likely for the action to occur. The action desired was that students develop the habit of checking and updating their calendars daily. I provided a model action-trigger, then I asked the class to brainstorm several additional models, which were placed on the board. Students were then asked to develop an action trigger for checking and modifying their to-do list. This lesson took approximately twenty-five minutes. Students wrote Journal Entry 4A: Define your action trigger. What are you going to do to trigger the action?

Time management: Pomodoro Technique and accurately predicting time on task (Week 5). This lesson addressed time management as a component of the College Success Skills Intervention. Francesco Cirillo developed the “pomodoro” technique in the 1980s; it was a widely used technique in software programming to break down tasks and to determine how long a programming activity took. The technique involved setting a timer for 25 minutes and committing to the task, followed by a five-minute break, and an additional 25-minute commitment to the task. It took ten minutes to give the overview of the “pomodoro” technique. After that, students practiced the task during a 60-minute in-

class activity involving watching a TedX Talk, taking notes, and completing a short-write assignment.

Time management: The rule of three (Week 6). This lesson addressed time management as a component of the College Success Skills Intervention. Students learned about prioritizing through the “rule of three:” to identify the three most critical tasks that they must accomplish that day and the three most critical tasks that they must accomplish that week. This is a business management technique loosely based on the Pareto Principle for identifying critical tasks that require action. The “rule of three” concept has also been embedded into K-12 curriculum for teaching students’ organizational principles (Anday-Porter, Henne, & Horan, 2000; Kelley, 1999; Stallings, 1984). In a fifteen-minute lesson, students were presented with the “Rule of Three” concept.

As a follow-up to this lesson in Week 8, students were given a one-week calendar page and asked to list and prioritize on that calendar page all homework assignments and tests due that week. Then, students wrote Journal Entry 6, which included two parts: 1) How much time are you spending on this class each week, and 2) About a week ago, we discussed the rule of three as a way to prioritize. Have you used the Rule of Three to prioritize the work that needs to be done? What time management skills are you struggling with?

This concluded the sequence of lessons to be presented as part of the College Success Skills Intervention; additional qualitative and quantitative data were collected after week eight to help measure the success and effectiveness of the intervention.

Data Analysis Plan

The following is a brief description about how the data were analyzed to answer the research questions.

RQ1: How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect first generation college students' comfort and mastery of the skills within the hidden behavioral curriculum of higher education? Analysis for this question was broken into the four areas of the curriculum: behavior, communication, time management, and organization. In my analysis process for the qualitative data sources, I read each journal entry and identified key words and concepts related to that specific CSC lesson; I tracked each key word or concept on a chart, noting how many times each key word or concept appeared. From those key words and concepts, I developed broader topics that helped answer RQ1. I used the same approach for analysis of my Teacher Journal.

Behavior. The guidelines for behavior developed by the students and the instructor in the first week of class were tracked through the observational journal. This aspect of the journal was coded from a macro-to-micro process, with the macro topics reflected by the key words and concepts that were developed. ***Communication.*** Sources of evidence:

- Accurate completion of the Email Assignment
- Any or additional emails sent by students who consented to participate
- Completion of the Directed Learning Activity on “How to Visit an Instructor”

- Teaching Journal
- Descriptive statistics analysis on the communication construct in the College Success Skills survey

It is important to note that the Email Assignment and the Directed Learning Activity were optional assignments for the students to complete. Completion of these assignments was tracked via in-class participation and through the SI leader's attendance log. All emails and office hour visits were tracked; once the list of consented participants was known, data from non-consented students were removed from the tracking spreadsheet or were destroyed. The Teaching Journal included a section dedicated to communication; analysis of the Teaching Journal was moved from micro-to-macro topics.

Time Management. Sources of data:

- 168 Hours worksheet
- Student written Journal Entries 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8
- Teacher Journal
- Descriptive statistics analysis on the time management construct in the College Success Curriculum survey

The 168 Hours worksheet was analyzed for patterns of time use; hours of employment as reported on the 168 Hours worksheet were compared to hours of employment reported on the post-intervention survey to determine if there was consistency in reporting.

The journal entries, student-written and the researcher's, were coded topically, moving from small to larger concepts for evidence of developing mastery of time management skills as well as comfort with this aspect of the hidden curriculum.

All data sources were triangulated and compared to determine whether students mastered the skills of time management or developed comfort with this aspect of the hidden curriculum.

Organization. Sources of data:

- Student-written Journal Entries 3A, 3B, 7, and 8
- Teaching Journal
- Descriptive statistics analysis on the organization construct in the College Success Curriculum survey

The journal entries, student-written and the researcher's, were coded topically, moving from small to larger concepts for evidence of developing mastery of organizational skills as well as comfort with this aspect of the hidden curriculum. In the Teacher's Journal, examples of concepts of organization that could be demonstrated in class were noted, such as having the right supplies, knowing where homework was, and being able to find files quickly.

All data sources were triangulated and compared to determine whether students mastered the skills of organization or developed comfort with this aspect of the hidden curriculum.

RQ2: How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skills curriculum affect first generation college students' course success and retention in college courses? The following sources of data contributed to an exploration of RQ2:

- Data on retention, defined as students completing the first semester and enrolling in their second semester, and success, defined as passing the class with a “C”, were compared to data for the entire First Year Program (both in the semester of the research study and to data for the previous 2017-2018 cohort).

The students' qualitative assessments of their success skill acquisition over the semester were compared to teacher observations of their success skill acquisition and their actual retention and performance in class.

RQ3: What were the differences between successful and unsuccessful students?

The following sources of data contributed to answering RQ3:

- Student-written Journal Entries 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. These journal entries were analyzed a second time from a longitudinal perspective based on whether students were or were not successful in the class. They were analyzed to determine whether students who were successful in the class reported skills that students who were not successful did not report.
- Comparative analysis of successful vs. non-successful students on the post-intervention data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data analysis and results from this study are presented in three sections, with one section for each of the three research questions.

RQ1: How and to what extent did implementations of a College Success Skill curriculum affect freshman college students' comfort with and mastery of the skills within the hidden social-behavioral curriculum of higher education?

To aid in answering this question utilized both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data included a series of Journal Entries written after each curricular piece between weeks 1 and 15 of the semester. The first journal entry aimed to capture student perceptions about the socio-behavioral aspects of college; journal entries 2 through 6 were written in response to specific lessons of the College Success Curriculum (CSC), and journal entries 7 and 8 were meant to gauge if students' perceptions had changed as well as to capture what skills they had learned from the CSC. Students also completed two optional assignments directly related to the CSC in Week 3 and 4. Additionally, I kept a Teacher Journal, written in every week, that reflected my perceptions of how the curriculum lessons were going, how well the students responded to the lessons, and what I observed with respect to them utilizing the CSC.

Analysis of qualitative data. Not all participants completed the journal entries; table three, below, displays how many of the 40 student participants completed each journal entry or optional assignment.

Table 2.

Summary of Journal Completion

Journal Number	Students Completed
Journal Entry 1: Behavior	38
Journal Entry 2: Time Management	40
Journal Entry 3: Organization	38
Email Assignment	38
Directed Learning Activity	26
Journal Entry 4: Action Triggers	35
Journal Entry 5: Prioritizing	37
Journal Entry 6: Planning	37
Journal Entry 7: Check-In	27
Journal Entry 8: Check-In	27

Each set of student journal entries was thematically coded from an interpretive phenomenological approach, moving from the micro to the macro for evidence of developing comfort with the hidden curriculum of college and mastery of the College Success Curriculum. I looked first for small patterns in the responses, then extrapolated those out to larger topics. The topics that emerged were compared with the observations in the Teacher Journal to build a comprehensive picture of the student experiences as they related to RQ1.

In the analysis below, the qualitative data has been broken down by the different lessons provided, behavior, time management communication, and organization. Quoted material has been taken directly from the student journal entries or my Teacher Journal and reflects language and grammar evident in informal writing.

Behavior. In the first week of class, students wrote Journal Entry One, identifying their perceptions on what it meant to behave as a college student. Two topics emerged: *acknowledging accepted classroom behaviors* and *pervasiveness of a hidden curriculum*.

For the topic *acknowledging accepted classroom behaviors*, I identified two groups of root words: the first group consisted of the words “mature,” “responsible” and “adult,” and the second group consisted of the word “respect.” The first set of root words were used 33 times in 40 journal entries. Students’ use of these words was straightforward with statements such as, “I need to act like an adult” or “I need to behave responsibly” or “College students should be mature.” The use of these words did not include specific examples of what it meant to behave in these ways, nevertheless, these words indicated the students understood accepted classroom behaviors. This topic extended to the second root word; the word “respect,” was used 18 times in 40 journal entries. Student comments that included the root “respect,” included specific examples to define what the student meant, most often with manners-based behaviors. One student wrote, “College students need to be respectful and not use my cell phone in class.” Another student wrote, “College students should respect the professor by giving undivided attention.” A third student indicated, “College students should not use inappropriate language and they should respect the professor.” The specificity of behaviors associated with “respect” support the idea that students understand typical classroom behavior.

The second topic that emerged from the first journal reflected the *pervasiveness of the high school hidden curriculum*. Two supported this topic: staying silent and not asking questions. One student wrote, “the student should not be loud and wild but calm and quiet while in class.” Another student wrote, “college students in general should behave as they would at a church or library, silent as a mouse.” A third student indicated,

“we should be silent unless told otherwise.” The comments about silence extended their training in the hidden curriculum into student self-advocacy, or asking questions. One student stated, “don’t ask questions out loud or you will be scolded.” Another student wrote, “students should respect their teacher by not asking questions and interrupting or disturbing the class.” A third student wrote, “In a classroom, students must be quiet and not ask for help.” These remarks reflected a hidden curriculum mindset that was deeply rooted in the students’ understanding of how to behave in a classroom. I noted in my journal for this week, “This class is really big and really quiet. I can’t tell if the students are really shy or if they are nervous. I tried talking to a few today as I walked around class and they didn’t answer me and wouldn’t look at me.” The students seemed to be projecting onto college behaviors the things that they learned to do to be successful in high school and were not yet prepared for the type of behavioral code-switching they would need to cope with the hidden curriculum of college behavior.

Time Management. Four lessons on time management were provided over the semester, beginning in Week 2. These lessons introduced the concept of time management, then focused specifically on planning and prioritizing.

The first lesson on time management involved the students completing a worksheet called “168 Hours” on which they identified where their time was being spent. Students were provided with the traditional formula for calculating study time in college, that is, one-hour of class time should equal two-three hours of homework/study time. All of the students were full-time students, enrolled in 13 units.

As shown in Table 3, student estimates in how many hours they projected for college studying varied widely.

Table 3.

Projected Hours per Week of Study Time (n = 40)

Hours per Week	Students
0	4
1 to 4	4
5 to 9	11
10 to 14	9
15 to 19	2
20 to 24	5
25 to 29	4
30 to 35	1

Note: Median = 10; St.Dev = 8.82

I noted in my journal after watching them complete this worksheet that, “I watched and in most cases, [studying] was what they filled in last, and it seemed to be after they plugged in everything they wanted to do.” Additionally, I noted, “I went over the calculation for how many hours they should study about three times, and I showed them that for the 12-15 units they were taking, they should be studying 24-30 hours, but some of them still put 0.”

At the conclusion of the exercise, students were asked to write a journal entry on what they learned about time management through the lesson and what surprised them. Two topics emerged from the coding of these journal entries: *surprise at the time required for college work* and *surprise at the time spent on social media activities*.

The *surprise at the time required for college work* was mentioned 19 times in 40 journal entries. One student wrote, “I didn’t know that although class time is shorter our workload does not decrease.” Another student scribed, “I didn’t realize how much time

needs to be dedicated to studying and doing homework.” A third student indicated, “one thing that surprised me was the hours a college student has to do outside of class.” There are considerable differences between the time management requirements of high school and college, and students were struggling to bridge those changing expectations. I noted in my journal, after having a visit with three students to my office, “they are genuinely surprised at having to do work outside of class. One told me, ‘high school wasn’t like this, miss. We didn’t have to do stuff if we weren’t in class.’” The genuine surprise students showed may have accounted for the responses of “0” or “1-4” hours of studying for the week because they truly did not understand that college would require work outside of the classroom.

The *surprise at time spent on social media activities* was mentioned 31 times in 40 journal entries. In my journal, I noted that during the lesson, the students showed me the amount of time they used their phones each week, including a breakdown of where the time was going. This indicated to me that the numbers they reported were relatively accurate. In Table 4, I have presented the hours students reported they spent on social media.

Table 4.

Documented Hours of Social Media Time (N = 39)

Hours per Week	Students
2-12	5
12-22	15
22-32	2
32-41	9
42-52	7
62-70	1

Note: Data were grouped by 10s based on initial hours of reporting.

One student wrote, “I learned a lot of my time is wasted on my phone.” Another student indicated, “I learned I spend too much time on video games and not enough towards education.” A third student wrote, “I learned I have more than 10 hours that I should be using for something other than ‘phone/free’ time.” Although students were clearly aware that their phones could track hours of usage over various categories of app, it seemed that few of them had ever looked at how much time they were spending.

Another time management lesson, in week four, was devoted to teaching the students about action triggers to encourage them to fill out and update their planners on a regular basis. Students were given a template to respond to; students were meant to develop an action trigger following the format, “when X happens, I will do Y.” The model given was, “while I eat breakfast, I will update my to-do list for the day.” Despite practicing this template with several variations as a group in class, 26 of 35 students did not complete the journal accurately; these individual responses included such statements as, “I will prioritize my homework and spent less time with my friends.” Another student wrote, “I will write in my planner and follow it.” A third student wrote, “I want to official use a daily planner/weekly/monthly planner.” These responses were as generic and flat as those in their first journal entry about behaving maturely; responses read as if the students knew they needed to write something but were not paying much attention. I wrote in my journal, “This was a short lesson and the students were openly derisive of it and said things like, ‘how is this going to help’ and ‘why are you making us learn this?’” However, I also noted that “few students speak up in class, and I can’t tell if the ones with attitude are really speaking on behalf of the class.” At the end of this week, when I

met with the SI Leader assigned to my section, I got the first indication that students were not applying any of the time management lessons. The SI leader was a student who had successfully completed English 101 in spring 2018 and who was trained in the supplemental instruction tutoring approach; this meant that the SI leader attended the class and participated in class activities as a “model” student, then met with me and developed two optional, one-hour study sessions for students to attend that would target skills with which students were struggling. For instance, the SI leader led the DLA on Visiting Instructors in Office Hours as a supplemental activity; the SI leader also led more content-related sessions, such as on how to integrate evidence. Because the SI leader was a “model” student and peer, the SI leader became a first-line of inquiry person for the students in the class. I noted in my journal, “they went to A (the SI leader) and complained that I’m giving them too much and not reminding them enough of when things are due.” These responses suggested that despite the design of the curriculum to help students manage the college workload independently, it was not working successfully, and students were still looking for significant outside support to manage their tasks.

The fifth lesson presented students with a method for prioritizing their work. As part of the lesson and subsequent journal, students were asked to a) identify their priorities for the week, b) identify how they would manage their priorities. Although the students were asked to list specifics for their priorities, such as “finish math problems 12 – 27” or “draft outline for PD assignment,” only nine of 37 students took that approach. Most students’ responses were broad and lacked specific detail. In the coding, the topic

that emerged was *students lack attention to detail when prioritizing*. For instance, one student indicated, “my priority for this week is to finish any assignments.” Another student wrote, “my priority this week is to catch up on my english and geometry class.” A third student scribed, “This week the priorities I have are to finish my school work and get everything in order for weeks to come.” These journal entries represented the majority response, whereas few had specific responses, such as:

“Priorities:

1. Revise summary 1
2. Finish my FASA application
3. Take notes on Bad Science.”

The lack of detail extended to their perceptions of how they would manage their priorities, with one student writing, “I will cancel everything out and actually on focus on the work.” Another student wrote, “I will take it day by day in order for me to not strain myself.” A third student wrote, “take time and don’t let distractions get in the way.” None of these spoke to the specificity of prioritizing that was covered in the lesson plans.

The sixth, and final lesson related to time management, discussed future planning and adapting to changing needs. . Of the 37 responses, 35 students completed parts one and two, but only 26 students answered the final question.

Table 5 shows the number of hours per week students reported they were putting towards their English class, a 3-unit class, that week.

Table 5.

Self-reported Hours per Week of Studying in Week Six

Hours per Week	Students
0	0
1 - 3	8
4 - 6	19
7 - 9	6
10+	2

n = 35

Per the traditional calculation, the students should have been spending 6 to 9 hours per week on the class, yet the majority were spending far less. My journal for the week supported the same idea in saying that, “Class is not going well this week.... Only 6 students passed the reading quiz today because they elected to study for math rather than to read.” Their responses to the journal questions reflected two topics: *failure to understand real time management*. Student responses were contradictory and made statements such as the one from one student who wrote, “I’m okay with my time management, I still need to improve in making time for work for many classes. I need more help in planning and organizing a work schedule.” Another student wrote, “It’s going good but I feel if I don’t have enough time. I stopped working out and spending time with my family.” A third student indicated, “My time management is going good only my math class isn’t working I need to spend more time.” Each response that was coded into this topic reflected two contradictory aspects: the student felt their time was being managed well, yet, the student then revealed a key problem with their use of time.

To better support the students after reading through these journal responses, I contacted every student with a personal email that specifically reflected something they

had shared. For instance, one of my responses was, “I noticed you said you’re not working out or spending time with your family. Don’t forget that kind of time is healthy. Please drop by to see me so we can talk about working that into your schedule.” Each of the emails included offers of individual help or invited the students to attend an additional workshop on time management. Of the 37 emails that I sent, only seven students responded, and I noted in my journal, “six of the students who responded are the stellar students. The seventh is a student who has literally done no work since week five.” I brought my concerns to the class the following week, and I was met with what I labeled as “resentful silence.” I also noted that later that day, “my students went to my SI leader and begged her to beg me to stop talking about time management, that they’re tired of hearing it, that I’m just nagging them at this point.” I subsequently found out that the counselor for the cohort was also using my curriculum, but at a more rapid pace, so the students were experiencing information redundancy. This evidence indicates that the curriculum was not working to help students at that point.

The final two journal entries, completed in weeks 12 (Journal Entry 7) and 15 (Journal Entry 8), were meant to offer a check-in for students and to capture what skills they had learned that they were using. Students were asked twice to reflect on, “How’s your time management going? Are you keeping your work for your classes organized? What’s working? What techniques are you using? What isn’t working? What do you need help with?”

Responses for Journal Entry 7 reflected that students were struggling with managing their academic commitments. One major topic that emerged from these

journal entries was: *it's not going well and there's room for improvement*. This topic was mentioned 22 times in 27 journal entries. One student wrote, "I don't divide my time well. I know that." A second student noted, "I do everything one day and nothing the next and that's not working." A third student wrote, "I know I'm not spending my time wisely." A fourth student indicated, "I haven't used any of the techniques I said I was going to use." Despite the reflection of the topic and the clear acknowledgement from the students that time management was an ongoing struggle, the journal entries lacked specific plans to make improvements.

Journal Entry 8 was the final journal, written the same day that students were also asked to complete the Retrospective Pre-Intervention Survey. The key topic that emerged was: *time management did not occur*. This journal revealed that most students did not follow-through on what they intended to do with respect to time management. In fact, only three of 27 journal entries had a positive response to time management, with one student responding, "I managed my work load pretty well because I was able to turn in all my assignments on time without having to worry...In order to manage everything I set up reminder on my phone to remind me things throughout the week." The remaining 24 journal entries were largely negative about their ability to manage the workload of college and to manage their time. One student comment was, "I need to keep track of things in a planner." Another student wrote, "A technique that I thought would work would be finishing all work on the weekends but I realized that wasn't enough." A third student noted, "I underrated the amount of time needed for college." Most telling was a

final comment from a student who indicated, “I’ll get an agenda and put things I need to do and really remember what Romo said.”

In these journal entries there was a clear acknowledgement that despite the lessons on time management provided throughout the semester, students still struggled to adopt the techniques, which resulted in the second topic that emerged: *the college experience was more challenging than students expected*. This topic was categorized by the use of the word “stress” throughout these journal entries. The root word “stress” appeared 21 times in 27 journal entries. One student wrote, “My first semester of college was ridiculously stressful. I tried my best to manage my time but sometimes the work is more than you expected and the time you planned to spend working on these assignments is not enough.” Another student wrote, “I was too stressed to be comfortable with my professor.” A third student wrote, “For my first semester in college I was incredibly stressed. Unfortunately, I was not successful at managing everything due to the fact that I have to attend SI, work, do homework, go to therapy, and attend class.” Students felt high stress, yet they used few of the time management techniques.

The final journal entry also reflected an earlier topic, seen in the second journal: *surprise at the amount of time required for college work*. This topic appeared in students’ comments such as “sometimes the work is more than you expected” and “I have to attend SI, work, do homework, go to therapy, and attend class.” However, this topic also emerged in comments such as the one from this student, “This workload by my English 101 teacher was too much she expected us to be able to work like flash giving us heavy assignment to due [sic] even if we only had her class with short period of times.”

These comments suggested that despite repeatedly being advised of the traditional formula required to complete college work, students did not apply that formula to the work assigned.

This topic played out in a disturbing way in the final weeks of the semester when a cheating incident occurred that caused 14 students to fail the class. Students had submitted research essays in Week 12, and I returned those essays at the start of Week 13 with comments for revision and guidelines for accurately citing evidence; in fact, I identified instances of plagiarized material in the essays and indicated to students that those instances would need to be accurately cited. The students were then given until the end of Week 15 to make revisions and corrections. In Weeks 13 and 14, I covered how to accurately cite evidence twice and had the SI leader also do two workshops on citing evidence correctly. During this time, I changed the final project, scaling it back, to allow students time to make the necessary revisions and correction; these changes included bringing the students to a computer lab, where each pulled the assignment up in Turnitin and could see the problems. Given how I attempted to help the students be successful, when 14 students turned in the same essay they had initially submitted with no changes, I was concerned. Because of that, I called each to my office to discuss the matter and to ask why they had not made corrections. The response from 13 of 14 students was “they hadn’t had enough time” and “they just didn’t think I’d really check [the revision].” In my journal, I noted their responses because many reflected that time management was a big part of their failure to keep up and be successful. Several indicated that they had “prioritized” by deciding which of their classes they could pass and focused their

energies on that one because they did not know how to split their time up for multiple tasks. Admittedly, by prioritizing their mathematics class over their English class, the students may have benefitted themselves; they were taking two, 8-week compressed mathematics classes during the semester, and failing the second mathematics class would have resulted in having to repeat the class in a 16-week format, thus putting them an entire semester behind in their education plan. By failing English, students had the option of repeating it during the 5-week winter session and staying on track; thus their priorities were not totally misplaced. However, the intervention was designed to help the students balance their time so that they were successful in all their fall courses. This situation showed that students were struggling to utilize the tools with which they were being provided..

Communication. Another aspect of the College Success Curriculum targeted the students' abilities to communicate personally and electronically with their instructors. Subsequent to the lessons being presented, students were asked to optionally complete two assignments: a Directed Learning Activity (DLA) on Visiting Professors in Office Hours and an Email assignment.

The DLA was offered by the class's SI leader in Week 3 of the semester. The DLA consisted of reading a short article, authored by a professor, on what office hours are and how and why to utilize them to connect with professors. This was followed by a question-and-answer activity lead by the SI leader in which she, as a successful, experienced student, was supposed to share her experiences with visiting professors.

Finally, students were to draft questions to ask me and to decide when they would visit me.

Of the 40 participants, 26 students attended the SI sessions that week and engaged in that activity. Seven of those students visited me at some point during the semester without being specifically asked to do so, and three students became somewhat regular visitors, defined as dropping by at least once every ten days just to say hello or ask a quick question. One of those students became a true regular and moved beyond coming to office hours to discuss the class and started developing a more personal relationship with me, crossing into questions about my academic path and discussing her personal and academic concerns with me. An additional six students scheduled appointments to meet with me but never showed up.

Most of the students treated the SI leader assigned to the class as an intermediary between us and went to her rather than to me with concerns and complaints. If the students had been going to the SI leader with questions about how to perform better in the class, I might consider those interactions the equivalent to office hours; however, the tenor of their interactions with the SI leader was far less positive. I noted seven times in my journal that students went to the SI leader about something and expected that she would come to me for an answer and then go back to them. For instance, I wrote in Week 4: “They’ve had the nerve to complain to [the SI leader] that I’m not helping them enough with their work.” Another example of this occurred in week seven, where I wrote, “They go to talk to [the SI leader]. She reports things to me, and I reach out to the students, but they still ignore me. They want my help through her.” In three cases where

this occurred, there was nothing the SI leader could do to help the student, the student would have needed direct interaction with me to solve the problem but failed to go beyond the interaction with the student. Additionally, I have a final indication of this in Week 11, where I put at the very end of my journal, “[The SI] told me they’re mad at me and think I’m unfair and holding them to unreasonable standards. She’s not sure what to tell them.” Although having SI leader support in a class of 48 students was helpful, it also set-up a communication barrier between the students and me that did not help them practice the critical skill of communicating directly with their professor.

The second aspect of this curriculum was designed to teach students how to write an email to a professor. For this activity, I took the class to a computer lab and showed them how to access their school email account. They then read an article entitled “How to Email Your Professor without being Annoying AF” (Portwood-Stacer, 2016). This article identified 13-conventions of a well-written email, provided advice for students, and offered a template for students to use in sending email. Students were given the option of sending me a practice email utilizing the template. All 40 participants sent the practice email and used the template accurately. Then, I tracked additional emails I was sent by students for use of the conventions named in the article. I received 108 emails from participating students between when this lesson was conducted in Week 4 and the end of the semester. Of those, 99 emails followed most of the conventions identified in the article. The conventions most often dropped were “meaningless nicety” and “reminder of how they know you.”

A closer examination of the emails from the eight students who emailed me most frequently showed a pattern of behavior. The first three or four emails from those students utilized the template strictly, including the “reminder of how they know you” with the phrase such as “I am in your English 101, which meets T/Th from 9:00am-10:25am.” Then, the emails became less rigid with respect to the template, but still followed many of the conventions named in the article. For instance, the first email from the same student read:

Dear Professor Ryan-Romo,

Good morning.

I'm in your English 101 class which meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9am. How can I know if I will earn an A in the class? I've looked in the syllabus and at my notes from class and online and I asked someone else from the class, and I think completing all my work and attending each SI session will work, but I'm still not sure. I would like you to share any other tips or guidance in succeeding in your class.

Thank you,

Figure 1. Email from student participant with name removed.

And the 11th email from the same student read:

Good Afternoon Professor,
When will this assignment be available for submission? I will be leaving on the MESA north cal trip Friday morning at 5:30 am and would like to be able to submit it today.
Thank you again.

Figure 2. Email from student participant with name removed.

These particular students demonstrated an ability to code-switch based on developing an understanding of the conventions. They developed the fluidity of knowing when to follow a formal structure and when they had established enough of a relationship to leave behind some of the manners-based conventions.

Of the nine emails I received that did not follow the conventions, each was sent by one of four students. Most were a variation on this specific one:

Not feeling well today. Won't make it to class. Sorry.

Figure 3. Email from student participant with name removed.

Although these students demonstrated proficiency in their initial use of the template, it was unclear why these students did not continue to utilize the template for subsequent emails.

There was a distinction between the emails I received at my faculty email address and the “conversations” I received through Canvas, our campus Learning Management System. Though designed to look like an email page, the Canvas tool is called “Conversations” and students treated it a little more like a text-messaging system. The conventions most often dropped in this communication medium were: “salutation,” “meaningless nicety,” and “reminder of how they know you.” That said, of the 65 “conversations” I received through Canvas, all followed the other conventions of the email template.

Except for the four students who only used the template once, these results suggested that templates provide the kind of regular structure that students need to

develop new skills. Around Week 9 of the semester, in a meeting with the other two instructors for this cohort of students, one of them commented, “Did you teach them how to do emails? I’ve gotten some nice emails this semester.” This comment indicated that the lesson on email communication transferred as a skill beyond their interactions with me. Of the curricular aspects presented to students, teaching them to send an email to a professor seemed to be the biggest success.

Organization. The last aspect of the curriculum dealt with organizing school work. In Week 3, students were shown three methods for organizing all the paperwork associated with their college classes. These were binder/folder systems for keeping track of everything. Students were then asked to explain their current system for organizing and to identify what changes they might make based on what they were shown. For this journal entry, 23 students misinterpreted the questions. Rather than writing about the physical organization of materials that was presented in the lesson, responses included, “organizing is not working for me I’m going to have to buy a planner so I can be more organized.” Another student wrote, “I’m organizing by memorizing my homework and schedules.” A third student wrote, “I’m organizing my reminders on my phone.” Given that the lesson presented was on physical organization of materials, student responses reflected time management concepts, such as setting reminders about work, and indicated that the students did not understand the organizational lesson presented. In comparison, some students did respond about physical organization of materials, including statements such as, “I have a binder with dividers for each class. I don’t lose my work” and “I color-code everything the way my high school physics teacher taught me.” These responses

reflected the core of the lesson that was offered: how to use binder/folder systems to keep track of school paperwork. Although it is unclear why so many students misinterpreted the question, organization of physical materials did not present itself as a problem in this class. I did not note any issues with organization in my journal throughout the semester.

Personal impressions through the semester. My journal encompassed what was going on in the class with respect to the action-research project. This was a journal I committed to writing in at least one time per week, but as the weeks went on, I recorded more entries each week. This journal captured what I did and did not do in the curriculum; it also captured my observations of students developing comfort with the hidden curriculum of higher education. Often, the latter was reflected in my feelings about how the semester was going and how well students were handling their first semester in college.

Chief among the emotions reflected in my journal was frustration. This was evidenced by my comment in Week 4, “I was quite irritated at the end of class because I’m getting the feeling that they aren’t taking much of this seriously. They’ve already had the nerve to complain to [the class SI leader] that I’m not helping them enough with their work and I’m not reminding them enough when things are due.” In Week 6, when doing the lesson on prioritizing, I noted: “Almost no one had their calendar or planner with them. The class largely treated the exercise [on prioritizing] like a joke. I noticed that very few of them wrote anything down or took any notes.” This was immediately followed by my comment that opened my week seven journal entry of, “Class is not going well this week. The students are taking a compressed mathematics course and the

final is this week. As a result, they ‘prioritized’ mathematics by not coming to English.... Only six students passed the reading quiz today because they elected to study for mathematics rather than to read.” I made a second entry for Week 7 in which I indicated, “the intervention isn’t working because I’ve seen exactly this pattern before. They don’t attempt to balance anything until it’s too late.” I could not get a sense from my observations as to why few students were applying the curriculum to help them manage their workload; there was a persistent feeling throughout the class that they were simply overwhelmed by their first semester in college.

That sense manifested in the plagiarism incident that occurred late in the semester. My journal was filled with the myriad excuses that students offered for why they cheated, most of which reflected their inability to manage their time effectively, but some of which also reflected a gap in understanding between high school and college expectations. For instance, one student told me they had “copied work all throughout high school and it wasn’t a big deal then, so I don’t get why it’s a big deal now.” Three other students shared with me the same sentiment: “if they submitted something, it would be enough because they’d tried.” These responses showed that despite my attention throughout the action-research project to discussing the hidden curriculum of college expectations and behaviors, students were still struggling to master the concepts.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data used for analysis of the results for RQ1 included scores from the Retrospective Pre-Intervention Survey, given in week fifteen, and the Post-Intervention Survey, given in week thirteen. In analysis, the data were reverse-coded so

that the higher score indicated greater likelihood that the student utilized the behaviors. Although the study included 40 students, only 22 students completed both the Retrospective Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Survey; data from students who had completed one or the other survey was discarded in the analysis for RQ1.

Using SPSS, a paired-samples t-test was run for each construct to determine if there was a change between retrospective pre and post-intervention scores. A preliminary analysis showed there were not significant differences for the following constructs: communication, planning, and time management, and the sample size for organization was too small to report. However, participant pre-test scores on prioritizing abilities were significantly lower ($M= 21.92, SD = 3.60$) than post-test scores ($M= 23.38, SD= 3.40, 3.01t(11)p =.012$). Table 6 below presented the results from the paired samples t-test for all constructs.

Table 6.

<i>Retrospective Pre and Post-Intervention Scores</i>					
Construct	Retrospective Pre- Intervention		Post-Intervention		Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	
Communication (n = 12)	3.51	4.03	3.52	3.56	.95
Planning (n = 13)	3.56	4.63	3.29	4.54	.22
Time Management (n = 15)	3.22	4.01	3.56	3.56	.28
Prioritizing (n = 12) (n = 22)	3.65	3.60	3.89	3.40	.01

With respect to RQ1, there were mixed results on how the College Success Skills curriculum had influenced students develop changes in the hidden curriculum of higher education.

RQ2: How and to what extent did implementation of a College Success Skill curriculum affect freshman college students' course success and retention in college courses?

Data and analysis to answer RQ2 is quantitative data supplied by the college's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and is in the form of retention and success data for this cohort of students and the larger 2018 First-Year Experience cohort.

In fall 2017, retention for the First Year Experience program (n=363) was 69% and success, defined as completion of the course with a grade of "C" or better, was 58%. In my specific section in Fall 2017 (n=27), retention was 86% and success was 66%. The college average was 84% for retention and 73% for success.

Retention for the fall 2018 First Year Experience program (n=342) was 83% and success was 52%, excluding my section. In my specific section (n=40), where the action-research study was conducted, retention was 100% and success was 45%. It is important to note that retention and success are not correlated; students can fail courses in fall and return in spring and be counted towards retention.

The success data poses yet another challenge for the analysis. I initially calculated success only for those students who consented to participate in the study and who completed the class (n=37), and found it to be 45%. Given that this is lower than the rates for the larger FYE cohort, as well as previous cohorts, this suggested the College

Success Curriculum was not a factor in increasing success in college classes. However, I then considered the cheating incident from the end of the semester, resulting in 14 of the participants failing the class. Factoring in students who would have passed if they had not cheated, which increased those passing the class from 17 students to 30 students, the success rate for the section would have been 81%.

Table 7.

Comparison of Success and Retention Data

	Success	Retention
Fall 2017 FYE Cohort	58%	69%
Fall 2018 FYE Cohort	52%	83%*
2018 CSC Section	45%	100%*
2018 CSC Section, corrected for cheating	81%	-

RQ3: What were the differences between successful and unsuccessful students?

Data for the analysis to answer RQ3 comes from a longitudinal analysis of the qualitative data collected from the students and in my journal.

Of the 17 students who were successful in the class, 16 students completed eight journal entries; the 17th student completed seven journal entries. Their completion of all or almost all of the journal entries speaks to the fact that these students were generally present in class; further analysis of my attendance records showed that within this group of successful students, only six of them ever missed class, and only one of those missed more than once. Comparatively, only three students in the unsuccessful group never missed class, and most students in the unsuccessful group missed their “allowed” two

class periods. Such data suggests that the successful students were more often present in the class than students who were not successful. Table 8 shows the attendance patterns for successful and unsuccessful students.

Table 8.

Attendance Patterns by Successful/Unsuccessful Students

	Missed No Classes	Missed 1 Class	Missed 2 Classes	Missed 3+ Classes
Successful Students (N = 17)	11	5	1	0
Unsuccessful Students (n = 20)	3	3	9	5

As the earlier analysis on RQ 1 indicated, the prompts for the journal entries on prioritizing, planning, and organization, were often misinterpreted. However, that was not the case with this group of 17 students. For the journal entries on prioritizing and planning, only nine students answered each journal entry following the accurate format, and all nine of those students were in this group of successful students. For the journal entry on organization, 15 students answered the question by writing about physical organization of school work, and 12 of those students were in this group of successful students.

Additionally, all 17 successful students completed the DLA on Visiting Professors and the Email assignment. These successful students were also responsible for 67% of the emails sent to me, with a range of two-to-five emails sent from each to

me, with one successful student as an outlier with 11 emails sent over the course of the semester. Of the seven students who visited me in office hours following the DLA exercise, four of those students were successful students. Successful students demonstrated more facility with communication skills than unsuccessful students throughout the semester.

In their journal entries, successful students repeatedly reported: *technology can be used as effective time management support*. One student reported in journal six, “I’m using my phone to help me keep track of things.” This same student reported in journal eight: “In order to manage everything I set up reminder on my phone to remind me things throughout the week.” Another student reported in journal six, “I set alarms on my phone for everything I need to do every day.” A third student also commented, “I’m using an app our professor recommended to us for keeping a list of what I need to do.” In journal five, one student wrote, “I put a list on my phone every day to know what I need to get done.” Although many students indicated in journal two that their phone use was an issue, these students utilized their phones in effective ways to support their college success.

Additionally, these students reflected an *ability to adapt* to changes in the college experience throughout the semester. For example, one student indicated in journal three: “I review Canvas and emails every day. I email to-do lists when I feel overwhelmed.” This same student reported in journal six: “Email wasn’t working and what does is setting alerts to remind me of what’s due.” Another student indicated in journal two that they would: “memorize every assignment that was due,” and in journal seven indicated, “I had

to learn to write stuff down every day.” These students adapted their process to cope with changes throughout the semester and to find better ways of accomplishing the workload. This same ability to adapt was seen in ten other students in the successful group. Students in the unsuccessful group did not reflect such types of changes in their journal entries.

Finally, I looked at demographic factors reported on the Post-Intervention Survey to determine if there was a distinction between successful and unsuccessful students. In particular, I focused on how many hours students reported they were working at an outside job Table 9 below shows the results:

Table 9.

Comparison of hours working an outside job between successful and unsuccessful students

Hours Working per week	Successful Students	Unsuccessful Students
0 hours per week (n=13)	6	7
1 to 10 hours per week (n=5)	4	1
11 to 20 hours per week (n=8)	5	3
21 to 30 hours per week (n=5)	2	3
31 to 40 hours per week (n=0)	0	0
41+ hours per week (n=2)	0	2
<hr/>		
<i>(n = 33)</i>		

Although it is unsurprising that the two students working over 40 hours a week were not successful, in the other categories, the amount of time working was not a factor in students' ability to be successful. I conducted a Chi-square test on this data, comparing hours worked as a variable in students being successful and unsuccessful, but there was no significant difference between the two groups.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this action-research study was to determine whether integrating a College Success Curriculum (CSC) into a required first-semester college class would help incoming freshman transition to the new experiences of college life. It was also an attempt to increase success and retention of these students in their first semester of classes by providing them with training in a variety of “soft-skills.” The CSC was developed to help students understand and master the socio-behavioral aspects of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1990). In particular, it was designed to help students understand how to behave as college students, to organize their schoolwork, to communicate with instructors, and to manage their time effectively. These were all skills identified by previous cohorts of freshman as critical reasons why they struggled in their first semester in college. Presented in this section is information about lessons learned, limitations of the study, implications for future practice and research, and conclusions.

Explanation of Results.

The hidden curriculum conditioned students to behave in specific ways so as to enable teachers to do their job (Jackson 1990). Examples of such conditioning included students learning to adhere to a routinized schedule created for them, to sit quietly in class, and to not ask questions so as to avoid disturbing teachers. Additionally, students were continually provided with instructions on how to organize and arrange their work so that the management of that work is easier on the teacher. Finally, students learned that

they cannot communicate with their teachers directly; most communication about struggles a student had went through a parent or guardian (Jackson 1990). To some extent, this happened because K-12 students are minors and there was a need to protect them. Additionally, adults were the decision-makers for childrens' education, so communication about education was teacher-to-parent, not teacher-to-student.

The development of this "classroom management" system was predicated on Thorndike's (1898) law of effect, which posited that rewarding good behaviors and punishing bad behaviors would ultimately result in only good behaviors being displayed. This approach to classroom management was in effect for many years, with numerous guides available on how to create an orderly classroom, built around the concept of reward-and-punishment systems.

Although this behavioral conditioning was designed to create a classroom that runs smoothly and allows for learning, it had long-term consequences for the students. Jackson (1990) indicated this conditioning was so strong that, "By the time students reach the middle grades the common rules of classroom conduct are so well understood that a slight shake of the teacher's head or a click of his fingers is enough to bring a violator back in line" (p. 104). When students made the transition to college, where there was a different socio-behavioral standard, they struggled to make the change and to break the conditioning they had previously experienced. At ELAC, where this action-research study was conducted, freshman regularly reported that their struggles with time management, organization of work, and communication with instructors were a barrier to their retention and success. Since these skills were previously handled by their secondary

institution, which told them where to be, when to be there, how to behave, and what to do, it should not be a surprise that freshman then struggled to transition to a system where they almost immediately needed to take ownership and responsibility over those decisions.

The CSC was designed to help students recognize the transition they were making and to provide them with an inventory of skills to help them cope with that transition. The CSC occupied approximately seven hours of the first six weeks of the semester. Students first defined what it meant to behave as a college student, then moved through a progression of lessons on time management, planning, prioritizing, organizing work, and communicating with the instructor both via email and during office hours. The introductory lesson on time management took eighty-five minutes, and the lesson on communication took forty-five minutes; the remainder of the lessons were designed to take no more than twenty minutes of each class period, including time for journal writing. The lessons were based on effective practices noted in studies conducted around the globe. For instance, studies on teaching time management to college students indicated that students needed regular exposure to the concepts and to use those concepts *in situ* (Costabile et al., 2017; Mastrianni, 2015; Toker & Avci, 2015; Whannell, et al., 2012;). Thus, students were taught a skill such as creating action triggers (Gollwitzer, 1999) and asked to practice the skill. The format of the lessons was a combination of teacher-led and student-centered, with most time in the lessons dedicated to the students actively practicing the skills. Once the set of lessons was completed, students were asked to write

and reflect on their progress in using the skills provided during weeks seven-through-fifteen.

Overall, the CSC did not accomplish all the aims it intended to accomplish. To examine why this occurred, the two aspects of the curriculum that were successful will first be examined, and then reasons for why the CSC did not work more broadly will be considered.

One noted success of the curriculum was that students learned to communicate via email with their instructors. This success was identified not only by me, as their instructor, but also by the two other instructors teaching this cohort of students. As part of the lesson, students were provided with a clear template to follow for how to format and write the email. Additionally, they went to a computer lab, and they were guided through the process of accessing their campus email and utilizing the template with supervision and guidance. In many ways, the template “held their hand” just as the hidden curriculum taught them teachers should do, which likely led to the success of the lesson. The template was relatively foolproof; all the students had to do was put their particular circumstances or question in and sign their name. Graff, Birkenstein, and Durst (2009) indicated that providing students with a template for writing helps them develop confidence and mastery. Students were, over the course of the semester, able to take the template and change it to suit their own needs and have their own voice. Moreover, they applied the skill in communicating with me and with other instructors, demonstrating that they transferred mastery of the skill beyond the classroom in which it was taught.

A second success in the CSC was the students demonstrating their ability to prioritize later in the week after the lesson was given. This result showed not only in my Teacher's Journal and their journal entries but also in the comparison between the retrospective pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, where a significant difference in scores was identified. Students prioritized studying for a high-stakes mathematics test over studying for a low-value reading quiz. The lesson on prioritizing covered making decisions about what was most important, and the students made the accurate choice, and that lesson was reflected in three sources of data. This lesson happened at the right time of the semester, coming just when students needed to make a choice where prioritizing was necessary.

The question of why those particular lessons were effective led to questions of why the other aspects of the CSC were not. The lessons were all explicitly taught with an emphasis on student-centered learning; for instance, in the lesson on creating action triggers (Gollwitzer, 1999), students were asked to write their own action triggers in the class with support. Students, however, did not overtly transfer most of the CSC lessons to their academic lives outside of class; that transfer was not seen in either the qualitative or quantitative data for behavior, time management, planning, or organizing.

Unfortunately, there was a dearth of information connecting these socio-behavioral aspects of the hidden curriculum to the transition students undergo when they enter college. Most literature about the hidden curriculum approached it from the perspective of academic and social capital but not from ways of behaving. As a result, explanations

beyond the hidden curriculum research were examined to identify two theories why the CSC was not as effective as anticipated.

Breaking conditioning was more challenging than was anticipated. Change theory helped to explain why students did not utilize the skills the CSC covered. Kotter (2012) indicated that there needs to be a feeling of urgency in order to start a change; Heath and Heath (2010) argued that people need to “see” and “feel” a need for change. Although the language of these change theorists was different, both suggested that there needs to be compelling impetus for change. In the case of this intervention, the impetus for change occurred when the students were put under pressure: they had a high-stakes mathematics test the same Thursday that there was a quiz on a 25-page chapter they were to have read for English class. Not only did the majority of participants fail the quiz, but also they openly admitted that they had prioritized studying for the test. Although this was certainly a good example of the students’ prioritizing skills – a lesson that had been given that Tuesday – it was also a big cue that students were struggling with balancing their academic loads. Students admitted in their journal entries early in week seven that they were struggling. They were ready for change. Both Kotter (2012) and Heath and Heath (2010) indicated that only once the need to change was felt could the mechanism for change be given. At the point where the students admitted they needed help and were likely ready to change, the curriculum had already been presented. It might have been helpful if the CSC was more solution-oriented, presenting the hidden curriculum lessons as students demonstrated the problems rather than front-loading those lessons before they felt the need to change.

The cohort structure and size created unintended behavioral consequences.

Effective practices in building successful cohorts indicated that they should be no larger than 30 students and have thematic linkages (Astin, 1984; Jaffee, 2007; Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood, & Wright-Porter, 2011; Lichtenstein, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In the most successful cohort programs, faculty planned together and deliberately worked to build communities of knowledge and practice (Jaffee, 2007; Lichtenstein, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Writing courses were typically paired with social or behavior science courses so that students learned to transfer content knowledge and skills between courses (Jaffee, 2007).

Although students in the FYE program at ELAC were placed in cohorts and took the same classes together, that is where the effective practices largely ended. Students were placed into cohorts where they took a minimum of three classes together: freshman composition, mathematics, and career counseling. In most cases, the instructors did not know each other and did not work together to create any kind of cohesive experience. I knew the two other instructors because I was doing this action-research project and was required to explain the project to them. I was also the person who initiated additional communication with them; we otherwise were not overtly encouraged to talk with each other. If there had been greater cohesion between the three of us, we may have mitigated some of the struggles students experienced, such as when they felt the need to prioritize preparing for one class as opposed to another. Although it might not be realistic for students to expect that kind of coordination across courses, that kind of cohesion was considered an effective practice for supporting freshman students, likely because it

mimics elements of the hidden curriculum long enough for student to adapt to college life. In this instance, students utilized prioritizing skills and prioritized correctly by preparing for a test over a quiz; however, the end result was that it put my entire section behind in our coursework, which was a drawback to the learning community.

Although lack of cohesion between the instructors was one issue that created unintended consequences for this action-research project, the number of enrolled students created other negative effects. This cohort had 48 students enrolled, which was 17 students larger than the rest of the FYE cohorts, which averaged 31 students. Since the CSC was embedded into my class and all students were exposed to it, I considered how the size of the class affected my ability to effectively deploy the curriculum. Although I asked the college administration, there was no explanation given for why this cohort was so much larger than any of the others.

One foundation for the CSC was to establish rapport with the students early on through discussions of college behavior and the effect of the hidden curriculum. Given the large size of the class, it was challenging to create the rapport needed to break through those barriers. The research around the effect of class size on success was mixed, with much focus placed on perceptions of the effect of class size. Some research found that students and instructors perceived that classes of 70 or more students led to worse outcomes and decreased learning (Borland, Howsen, & Trawick, 2005; Chapman & Ludlow, 2010; Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, & Willms, 2001). However, other research indicated that class size could be balanced with activities designed to create the feeling of a smaller group in the classroom (Cooper & Robinson, 2000; Lynch & Pappas,

2017; Mulryan-Kyne, 2010; Whisenhunt, et al., 2019). Statistical research conducted at ELAC showed no difference in success level between small (<30) and large (>40) class sizes.

However, few studies specifically considered the effect of class size on freshman populations or on the way instructor-student relationships are created. Beattie and Thiele (2015) found that the larger the class size, the less likely the student was to establish a relationship with the instructor and to develop “academic social capital” to help with navigating a higher education system; this was especially true for students of color, which were all of my students. Cooper and Robinson (2000) and Lynch and Pappas (2017) each suggested teaching approaches, such as sending personalized emails and utilizing group work, as a way to build closer relationships with students in larger classes. Phillips and Ahrenhoerster (2018) found that the larger the class, the more likely the instructor was to change class activities and pedagogical approaches.

The size of the class had a direct effect on how the curriculum was taught. The curriculum was designed with a cohort of approximately 30 students in mind. Most lessons were meant to be no more than 20 minutes in length to fit into the other curriculum content; in that 20 minutes was about four-to-six minutes of direct instruction, two-to-three minutes of practice, six minutes of group time for reflection, clarification, and share-out, and five minutes of journal writing. The group aspect was designed for approximately six groups of students, with four-five students in each group. The aim was for me to spend about one minute talking with each group. Instead, there were 10-12 groups, each with four-six students, and insufficient time to get to all the groups.

Because of the class size, I altered my pedagogical approach and could not connect with all the students in the class; instead, I connected with the students who I perceived were the most engaged in the lessons. Weaver and Qi (2005) found that when faculty failed to interact regularly with each student, students were more likely to distance themselves from the curriculum. Since I was unable to make those connections, it likely had a negative effect on my relationship with the students and with their connection to the material and their willingness to try the concepts.

Additionally, because the class was so large, an SI leader was assigned to the class to provide additional support to me and to the students. The SI leader was a student just one-year ahead of the students in this cohort and who had been successful in the FYE the year before; she was present to be a classroom assistant, to lead study sessions outside of the class, and to model what being a successful student looked like. Although the inclusion of an SI leader to support such a large class helped in the classroom, it also created a barrier between the students and me. Because the SI leader was a peer, the students turned to her and sometimes discounted the experiences and instruction that I provided. This relationship was evident in comments throughout my teacher journal noting that students would go to the SI leader with problems relating to time management and success issues; she reported these issues to me, but we were not successful in getting students to come directly to me. To some extent, this occurred because the SI leader did not have sufficient training as a mentor to make the needed connections. Dawson (2014) indicated that SI leaders, in particular because they are in the classroom as model students, tread a fine line when acting as mentors. Deaton and Deaton (2012) found that

SI leaders benefitted from training to be mentors because that training helped them grow as leaders and to understand their relationship as a mentor. Because neither the SI leader nor I were well-versed in this aspect of their job, I did not anticipate the effects of having an SI leader in the class. As a result, the relationship the SI leader created with the students caused me to struggle to connect on a one-to-one level with many of the students.

The final issue that likely affected this project was the way the cohort was put together. Generally, peer-based cohorts helped to create academic success and increased retention for students because they help to build communities which increase active learning and student motivation (Jaffee, 2007; Lei, et al., 2011; McKinney, 2006; Tinto 2003). These were positive consequences of freshman cohorts that created positive outcomes, in particular for students of color. Astin (1993) indicated that these positive outcomes are the result of the development of a peer group as part of the cohort-experience. This assumes that the peer group formed after the cohort was enrolled and did not take into consideration what happened when the cohort was made up of already formed peer groups, as was typically the case in cohorts in the FYE.

Jaffee (2007) indicated that some homogeneity in a cohort was necessary to build the social bonds and inclusiveness; generally, enrolling students of similar academic backgrounds and ages in the cohort created this homogeneity. At ELAC, the homogeneity extended to enrolling cohorts largely based on the high school from which the students had graduated. Ostensibly, this was meant to create a larger “safe zone”

because the students knew each other and had greater familiarity with each other; however, the unintended consequence was that this approach perpetuated a high school mentality and reinforced high school behavior and relationships, notably, adherence to the behavioral standards of the hidden curriculum for high school.

Within this class, there were four distinct cliques of students from local feeder high schools. Students were open about what high schools they came from, especially given that two of the cliques were from rival schools. These cliques identified as being from “High School A” or “High School B.” I noted more than once in my Teacher Journal that the cliques were challenging to separate, even when I assigned them to groups. One clique was small, with only five students in it; the others each had eight-to-nine students in them. These cliques accounted for approximately 62% of the class; in them were students who had long-standing friendship bonds, identified by the “in-jokes” that were mentioned in class and also by the students openly sharing how long they had known each other. I additionally identified five pairs: sets of friends who had signed up for the cohort together and who were tangentially attached to one of the larger cliques through familiarity if not friendship. There was also a handful of individual students from the local private, magnet, and charter high schools.

Jaffee’s (2007) research into the formation of successful cohorts suggested that student groups such as the ones I encountered in my class would have “primary group interactions,” characterized and driven by personal relationships that take precedence over the learning environment. Over six years of study of freshman learning communities, Jaffee (2007) found that these types of cohorts were most likely to have

instructor-student conflict and learning resistance. Other research into cohort construction found that too much homogeneity, particularly in large classes, caused students to behave in inappropriate ways and to disregard codes of conduct (Carbone, 1999; Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott, 2001). This resistance explained some of the students' behavior during the CSC lessons, laughing or asking repeatedly how the lesson would help or making fun of examples.

Another way the conflict and resistance appeared was in the students' relationship with the SI leader for the class. The SI leader held two optional one-hour study sessions each week for the students, and starting in approximately week four, when we met to plan the sessions, she regularly reported to me the number of complaints that she was fielding for me about the content of the class and about the CSC. At one point, the SI leader told me the students were tired of me "nagging" them about time management. I reflected, over the semester, a growing frustration with the class and with the "me-vs.-them" mentality that they regularly displayed.

One bright spot that emerged from the analysis of this research project was identifying the qualities of the successful students through the longitudinal analysis of their journal entries as well as comparative analysis of data on work and attendance trends. The successful students were the most openly communicative with me via email, with 67% of the emails I received coming from students in that group. The analysis of their journal entries showed that the successful students quickly picked up on using technology to support their academic progress, either by using the calendar on their phone or adopting an app to track what they needed to accomplish. More than that, the

successful students changed what they were doing if they found it did not work; several of their journal entries over the semester indicated, “I tried X, but it didn’t work, so then I tried Y.” Another quality that stood out was their attendance record; the successful students showed up. Although these were good qualities to identify to share with future cohorts, the research project did not enable me to dig deeper into what made those students behave in ways that led them to be more successful.

Implications for future practice and research

Action-research cycles are meant to be ongoing; often, one cycle leads to questions that drive another cycle. In the case of this action-research study, the implications for future practice are entwined with implications for future research and will be discussed together.

Start the College Success Curriculum (CSC) later in the semester. The CSC covered four different areas of college life: behavior, communication, time management, and organization. The lesson on communication, presented in week three, seemed to have been appropriately timed and generally successful. However, the other three aspects of the curriculum were, perhaps, ill-timed because they did not target student needs when the students needed it. Students seemed to “coast” through the first six weeks, not reflecting stress about the college experience until week six. By that point, all the lessons of the CSC had been offered. By moving the lessons on behavior, time management, and organization to a later start date, the CSC then would have the ability to provide students with the tools they need when they need them.

Integrate technology into the curriculum. One idea that emerged in the analysis of this study was that successful students utilized technology to support their success. This result manifested in journal entries of the successful students which were examined longitudinally for patterns. Throughout the CSC, students were shown the apps they could use to help themselves manage their time and tasks efficiently, but using an app was only covered superficially, and the CSC instead focused more on pen-and-paper to-do lists and time management concepts. However, the analysis of the successful students' journal entries showed that they gravitated towards technological tools and used them, even adapting them, to stay on task. In future iterations, technology could become a more dominant aspect of the CSC, aiming to teach students to use their smart phones in two different ways: 1) by using the calendar as a way of providing students with reminders about due dates, and 2) by having the students use a common, free app to track their tasks and time. More apps could be integrated into the LMS so that they could provide students with more initial support in using the app as a means of creating time management success. Additionally, it would be helpful to modify the survey to explore technological forms of time management.

Limitations of the study

Limitations of a study are defined as factors that decrease confidence in the validity or reliability of the study. In this study, limitations include: 1) social desirability bias, 2) history, and 3) the researcher's role.

The first limitation of this study was social desirability bias, which is when students over-report engaging in desirable behaviors because they would be considered positive attributes (Bowman and Hill, 2011). Although social desirability bias was often discussed with relationship to survey responses, it can also be applied to qualitative research, such as student-written journal entries collected by the instructor. There was an inherent power-differential in the instructor-student relationship, and Jackson (1990) suggested that the hidden curriculum creates the "model student," it also leads to students who cultivate "special favor" (p. 32) through "fawning, false compliments, and other forms of social dishonesty (p. 32). Students learned to give socially desirable responses in order to cope within the system. Although each journal was framed with "be honest when you write this response," the journal entries invited social desirability bias, as students knew that they would be read by the instructor.

Students reported the desired response: that they were understanding and engaging in the concepts about time management, planning, and prioritizing. However, the bias was obvious in the disconnect between what they were writing in those journal entries and what was observed and tracked in the teacher journal. What students were writing and what was seen were two different things. Social desirability bias in the journal entries lasted through the first six weeks of the term, at which point students

collectively reported their struggles, which were observed. After that point, what they reported and what was witnessed generally matched. Initial journal entries were then given less weight in the analyses, when compared to observed behavior, because they did not seem to represent an accurate picture of how the CSC was actually affecting students.

The second limitation of this study was the threat of history. When specific events occurred outside of the independent variable and affected the dependent variable, this is considered the threat of history. In this case, several outside events affected the reliability of the study. The original design of this study assumed that the action-researcher would solely address retention through the CSC. I had a commitment from the Associate Dean of the FYE that no one would interfere with the project and that I would identify successful elements for scale up in future FYE cohorts. However, since retention had been so low in the FYE, the college made last-minute decisions to invest in several additional approaches to retention. I did not learn about these changes until just a few days before the semester started, and I had no way, at that point, of changing my action-research project to compensate for the additional supports FYE provided. Thus, students benefitted from several additional services specifically designed to increase retention, including mandatory meetings with an educational counselor, regular outreach from Retention Specialists, and access to a peer mentor. Unfortunately, there was no coordination between the different people that students were getting this information and outreach from, so it is difficult to know exactly what was done by each outreach effort. Although there were few improvements in the targeted areas across this semester, these outside variables make it challenging to determine the role of the CSC in the changes that

were noted, or if the results were a combined product of the many efforts of the college all together.

The final limitation of this study relates to the threat of history and my role as an action-researcher and faculty member in the campus community. My role as a faculty member, at the bottom of the chain of command, directly interfered with my ability to ensure validity and reliability in my study. For instance, I did not know I would have an SI leader until ten days before the semester started, and I did not anticipate how that might affect the study. I did not have a say in the matter; I was simply told that would happen. Additionally, there were other interferences in the study that I could not have controlled for nor predicted. I followed campus policy in presenting my project and the CSC curriculum to the FYE instructor team I would be working with, but I did not anticipate that the counselor for the program would then decide to use my same curriculum in the Career Counseling class, which the same students were also required to take. The counselor presented some aspects of the CSC before I presented them, leading students to express a feeling of being “nagged” in my class, when they had already been exposed to the content. Thus, it was unclear whether the counselor’s use of the curriculum or my use of the curriculum effected the students.

Although the threat of social desirability bias could be lessened by triangulation of data between surveys and observations, the threats regarding history and my role within the campus could not be controlled.

Conclusion

More research needed to be done into how the routines students were conditioned to follow in the K-12 system impacted their early successes or failures in higher education. That there was a dearth of information on this subject was surprising; students' struggle to adapt to a new system of education was clear in the behaviors they demonstrated throughout the study. Students were challenged not only by managing fundamental behavioral changes, such as planning and prioritizing on their own, but by cultural changes, such as standards regarding cheating.

Results from this study indicate that some of these skills can be taught. Students learned email communication skills through the use of a template that provided little room for error. Students developed prioritization skills when they had no choice but to make decisions. Additionally, some students demonstrated that integrating technology into the instruction of these skills could be helpful. These outcomes suggested that these types of approaches to teaching the social-behavior skills of college could be grown. It is clear from this study that freshman in college need more support in developing ways of behaving successful in college, and this study has presented some initial suggestions for moving forward.

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APPENDIX A
RETROSPECTIVE PRE-INTERVENTION SURVEY

Retrospective, Pre-Intervention College Success Skills Survey - Copy

Start of Block: Welcome

W As a new college student, you likely faced many opportunities and challenges in organizing and managing your time in your first semester. To help you navigate those opportunities and challenges, curriculum was developed and embedded into your English 101 course. The curriculum was designed to make communication, organization, and time management a real-world task rather than something abstract or something you have to figure out on your own.

In the survey below, we would like you to think back to your skills in these areas at the start of the semester. This survey asks you to reflect on your skills before you took the English 101 course.

We ask that you be honest in your responses - the goal of this survey is to help determine if the curriculum was successful.

End of Block: Welcome

Start of Block: Tell Us About Yourself

Q1

This survey be given in weeks fourteen and fifteen. For research purposes - to see if the curriculum we created works - we need a way to match those responses. Your SID will only be used to match those responses.

Please list your Student ID (SID) number:

Q2 What gender do you identify with?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Decline to state (3)
-

Q3 What ethnicity do you identify with?

- African-American/Black (1)
 - Asian/Pacific-Islander (2)
 - Caucasian/White (3)
 - Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx (4)
 - Multi-ethnic (5)
 - Native American/Alaskan Native (6)
 - Decline to state (7)
-

Q4 What is your age?

- 18-19 (1)
 - 20-21 (2)
 - 22-24 (3)
 - 25-30 (4)
 - 31+ (5)
-

Q5 How many hours per week do you work?

- 0 (1)
 - 1-10 (2)
 - 11-20 (3)
 - 21-30 (4)
 - 31-40 (5)
 - 41+ (6)
-

Q6 I am the first person in my family to attend college. [Check "yes" even if brothers or sisters have attended.]

- Yes (1)
- No (2)






End of Block: Tell Us About Yourself

Start of Block: Communication

Q13 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement described you *at the start of the semester*.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5

I regularly access my LACCD email. ()	
I am comfortable using my LACCD email to communicate with my instructors. ()	
I know how to send an appropriately formatted email to my instructor. ()	
I know why instructors hold office hours. ()	
I'm comfortable visiting my instructors during office hours. ()	







End of Block: Communication

Start of Block: Planning

Q9 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement described you *at the start of the semester*.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5

I have a calendar or planner. ()	
I create a weekly study schedule to follow. ()	
I set-up a master schedule of regular monthly activities (academic and personal). ()	
I write out short-term academic goals. ()	
I set deadlines for myself ()	
I try to predict how much time an assignment will take before I start it. ()	






End of Block: Planning

Start of Block: Daily/Weekly Time Management

Q10 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement described you *at the start of the semester*.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5

I use a calendar, to-do list, or assignment list to organize what I need to do each day. ()	
I review class syllabi once a week to make sure I know upcoming assignment due dates. ()	
I break big assignments into smaller parts to make the assignment easier to manage. ()	
I plan weekly study time based on the rule for how many hours I should be studying for each class. ()	
I have ample time to accomplish everything on my schedule during the week. ()	







End of Block: Daily/Weekly Time Management

Start of Block: Prioritizing

Q11 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement described you *at the start of the semester*.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5

When I have multiple assignments due for different classes, I actively decide what tasks or assignments should come first, second, third, etc. ()	
I make plans and set aside time for assignments, but I don't use that time as planned. ()	
People and situations (small children, partner, parents, work) often interfere with what I've set out to do. ()	
I plan time to relax and be with family or friends in my weekly schedule. ()	
I am able to meet deadlines without rushing at the last minute. ()	
I say "no" to social activities when I have studying to do. ()	






End of Block: Prioritizing

Start of Block: Organizational Skills

Q14 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement described you *at the start of the semester*.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

0 1 2 3 4 5

I have all of the supplies (textbooks, paper, pens, pencils) that I need to be successful in college. ()	
I have a system for organizing notes and other physical papers/assignments for my different classes. ()	
I use the class syllabus to help me organize my papers and assignments (physical or electronic) ()	
I have a system for organizing electronic files for my different classes. ()	
I've never lost work (paperwork or electronic files). ()	

Q13 Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions: How are you feeling about managing the workload in your college classes this semester? Were you successful at managing everything? What techniques did you use to manage everything? What worked? What didn't work? What do you feel you still need help with?

End of Block: Organizational Skills

APPENDIX B
POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY

Post-Intervention College Success Skills Survey

Start of Block: Welcome

W As a new college student, you likely faced many opportunities and challenges in organizing and managing your time in your first semester. To help you navigate those opportunities and challenges, curriculum was developed and embedded into your English 101 course. The curriculum was designed to make communication, organization, and time management a real-world task rather than something abstract or something you have to figure out on your own.

The survey below will help your instructor assess your current skills for student success. We ask that you be honest in your responses - the goal of this survey is to help determine if the curriculum was successful.

End of Block: Welcome

Start of Block: Tell Us About Yourself

Q1

This survey be given in weeks fourteen and fifteen. For research purposes - to see if the curriculum we created works - we need a way to match those responses. Your SID will only be used to match those responses.

Please list your Student ID (SID) number:

Q2 What gender do you identify with?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Decline to state (3)
-

Q3 What ethnicity do you identify with?

- African-American/Black (1)
 - Asian/Pacific-Islander (2)
 - Caucasian/White (3)
 - Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx (4)
 - Multi-ethnic (5)
 - Native American/Alaskan Native (6)
 - Decline to state (7)
-

Q4 What is your age?

- 18-19 (1)
 - 20-21 (2)
 - 22-24 (3)
 - 25-30 (4)
 - 31+ (5)
-

Q5 How many hours per week do you work?

- 0 (1)
 - 1-10 (2)
 - 11-20 (3)
 - 21-30 (4)
 - 31-40 (5)
 - 41+ (6)
-






Q6 I am the first person in my family to attend college. [Check "yes" even if brothers or sisters have attended.]

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Tell Us About Yourself

Start of Block: Communication

Q13 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement describes you.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	3	4 5
I regularly access my LACCD email. ()					
I am comfortable using my LACCD email to communicate with my instructors. ()					
I know how to send an appropriately formatted email to my instructor. ()					
I know why instructors hold office hours. ()					
I'm comfortable visiting my instructors during office hours. ()					







End of Block: Communication

Start of Block: Planning

Q9 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement describes you.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5






I have a calendar or planner. ()	
I create a weekly study schedule to follow. ()	
I set-up a master schedule of regular monthly activities (academic and personal). ()	
I write out short-term academic goals. ()	
I set deadlines for myself ()	
I try to predict how much time an assignment will take before I start it. ()	

End of Block: Planning

Start of Block: Daily/Weekly Time Management

Q10 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement describes you.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

I use a calendar, to-do list, or assignment list to organize what I need to do each day. ()	
I review class syllabi once a week to make sure I know upcoming assignment due dates. ()	
I break big assignments into smaller parts to make the assignment easier to manage. ()	
I plan weekly study time based on the rule for how many hours I should be studying for each class. ()	
I have ample time to accomplish everything on my schedule during the week. ()	







End of Block: Daily/Weekly Time Management

Start of Block: Prioritizing

Q11 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement describes you.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 3 4 5

When I have multiple assignments due for different classes, I actively decide what tasks or assignments should come first, second, third, etc. ()	
I make plans and set aside time for assignments, but I don't use that time as planned. ()	
People and situations (small children, partner, parents, work) often interfere with what I've set out to do. ()	
I plan time to relax and be with family or friends in my weekly schedule. ()	
I am able to meet deadlines without rushing at the last minute. ()	
I say "no" to social activities when I have studying to do. ()	






End of Block: Prioritizing

Start of Block: Organizational Skills

Q14 For each of the following statements, indicate how strongly you agree the statement describes you.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

0 1 2 3 4 5

<p>I have all of the supplies (textbooks, paper, pens, pencils) that I need to be successful in college. ()</p>	
<p>I have a system for organizing notes and other physical papers/assignments for my different classes. ()</p>	
<p>I use the class syllabus to help me organize my papers and assignments (physical or electronic) ()</p>	
<p>I have a system for organizing electronic files for my different classes. ()</p>	
<p>I've never lost work (paperwork or electronic files). ()</p>	

End of Block: Organizational Skills

APPENDIX C
LIST OF JOURNAL QUESTIONS

When Occurs	Activity	Measure
Week One	Behavior Discussion	Journal 1: Describe how you think a college student is supposed to behave. How does a successful college student act?
Week Two		College Success Skills Pre-Survey
	Overview of Time Management	168 Hours Worksheet Journal 2: What did you learn today that surprised you? What did you learn about where your time goes? How do you think that time management will affect you as a student?
Week Three	Getting Organized	Journal 3A: What is your current system for organizing school work? Do you think that system will work for you in college? Journal 3B: Based on the different models you have seen, what do you think will work for you? What adaptations will you make to your current system to keep your schoolwork organized?
	Communication – Instructor Office Hours	Directed Learning Activity: Instructor Office Hours
Week Four	Communication – Email	Email assignment: Send a practice email to the instructor apologizing for missing class and asking if it's possible to submit a late assignment. Attach one of the summaries we've written.
Week Five	Building Action Triggers	Journal 4A: Define your action trigger. What are you going to do to trigger the action?
	The Rule of Three Discussion	
Week Six	Predicting Time on Task & The Pomodoro Technique	

Week Eight	The Rule of Three Check-In	Journal 6: About a week ago, we discussed The Rule of Three as a way to prioritize. Did you use the “rule of three” to prioritize the work you had to do last week in this class and others? Why or why not?
Week Nine	Check-in on all areas	Journal 7: We’ve done a lot of work towards managing the different aspects of school. How’s your time management going? Are you keeping your work for your classes organized? What’s working? What techniques are you using? What isn’t working? What do you need help with?
Week Twelve	Check-in on all areas	Journal 8: As we approach the end of the term, how are you feeling about managing the workload this semester. How’s your time management going? Are you keeping your work for your classes organized? What’s working? What techniques are you using? What isn’t working? What do you need help with?
Week Fifteen	Check-in on all areas	Journal 9: Over the semester, we have worked on several skills to manage the college experience. How are you feeling about managing the workload in your college classes this semester? Were you successful at managing everything? What techniques did you use to manage everything? What worked? What didn't work? What do you feel you still need help with?
		College Success Skills Post-Survey

APPENDIX D

168 HOURS WORKSHEET

168 Hours
Where Does Your Time Go?

	Hours Per Day	Days Per Week	168 Hours
1. Sleep		x7	
2. Family (chores, time spent, etc.)			
3. Go to class			
4. Study			
5. Work			
Subtotal (add the totals in 1-5)			
Subtract your subtotal from 168			
6. Exercise			
7. Commute			
8. Watch TV/movies			
9. Computer/Phone "free" time			
10. Prepare & Eat Meals			
11. Socialize			
Subtotal (add the totals in 6-11)			
Subtract your remaining hours from your total above			

Journal 2: What did you learn today that surprised you? What did you learn about where your time goes? How do you think that time management will affect you as a student?

APPENDIX E

DIRECTED LEARNING ACTIVITY: VISITING INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS

HOW TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTOR CONFERENCE

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will understand how to effectively visit an instructor during office hours.

Read Schiller’s (2016) “Taking Advantage of Office Hours”

STEP 1 – Answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of instructor office hours?
- How do you find out when your instructor’s office hours are?
- What should you NOT do when you visit an instructor during office hours?
- What should you do before you visit an instructor during office hours? (Be specific about what you would do for different types of classes.)

STEP 2 – Choose a class and write questions you would ask or problems you would take to visit the instructor during office hours.

Taking Advantage of Office Hours *By Emily Schiller*

“This is the first time I’ve come to an office hour.” “You’re the first professor I’ve ever met with one- on-one.” How many times have I heard this from students . . . from graduating seniors! They’d spent four or five years at the university and not once taken advantage of one of the most valuable learning tools we offer. Certainly some of those students were just too busy with complicated class/work/family schedules. Others felt shy about going to a professor’s office hours, worrying that they would be “bothering” a busy man or woman. Of course there were always a few, concerned about getting enough letters of recommendation for graduate school, who would drop in constantly with little or no preparation as though the office hour were a kind of “happy hour” without the booze. But most students met with professors and/or TAs only if conferencing was mandatory.

Office Hours are the posted days and times a professor can be expected to be in his/her office available to students. This is a job requirement for all instructors. In effect, students pay for those hours and, therefore, should feel free to use them. However this is not a social open house. Most professors expect that students who show up for those hours have specific questions or concerns related to the class they are taking. If the conversation becomes more casual over time, great. But the purpose of office hours is to give busy students access to busy teachers.

Big lecture classes where TAs teach discussion sections present more options. It is not feasible for the professor to handle meetings with 300+ students, but TAs are usually responsible for two sections of 25 students each and have more time to offer. So if you are having trouble with the work and need further help, maybe more detailed explanations, go to the TA’s hours first. Their job, in part, is to help students with the lecture material. If you find that you need more time and personal attention, think about looking into your school’s tutoring program. It’s usually free, and you can probably schedule weekly appointments.

Although it is tempting to use an office hour visit as a kind of confessional moment, declaring yourself hopelessly lost and incapable of saving yourself, this is not the best approach. Your professor will then need to spend precious time trying to find out exactly what is confusing you and why. By the time he/she has figured out which concepts you understand and which you don’t, your time’s up and nothing has been accomplished. The same goes for getting help with papers. Showing up empty- handed saying “I don’t know what to write about,” gives the professor nothing to work with. It also gives a very poor impression. Are you saying that you don’t know the material well enough to come up with ideas? Or are you admitting that you haven’t done any work yet and time is running short?

Worse yet, are you declaring, “I don’t really want to spend the time myself, so I’d prefer

you do my thinking and writing for me”? None of these may be true, but if you come in unprepared you leave the impression that they are.

Professors and TAs have time limitations and other students waiting to see them, so the more prepared you are when you go to an office hour, the more you will get done. Here are some suggestions:

Begin any appointment prepared with a pen and paper, ready to take notes. Always, always, ALWAYS take notes. Students worry that they are being rude, but, remember, this is not a social occasion. There is no way you can remember everything (or even anything) from these meetings. This means there will be periods of silence while you are writing things down. That’s OK. You are not there to be entertaining. You are there to get help with your work.

If you are confused by a math or science class, arrive with a written representative list of problems and concepts (but don’t include everything on the syllabus!). Take time to isolate significant problem areas and concrete examples. This lets the instructor see exactly where your troubles lie and gives him/her something specific to work with right away to illustrate the ideas involved. You may then follow-up with other questions as they arise. Be sure to leave room on the page under each question to take notes on the help and answers you receive.

If you are having trouble writing a paper, try to come equipped with some concrete ideas written out and even some free-writing exercises based on the assignment. The best approach is to compose a few possible theses. And, if you can, it would be great to rough out a brief topic sentence outline for each thesis. Don’t worry about bringing in even the sketchiest of ideas. It’s not unusual for me to locate a really great thesis somewhere in a student’s outline or free-writing. So the more you bring in, the more the instructor has to work with. You might leave the office hour with an entirely new approach, but it will be based on work you’ve already begun.

Don’t waste time with small talk. Other students may be waiting, so be sure that you get right to your most important questions early. This is another reason to prepare your office hour visit in writing. List your concerns in order of importance and relevance, so you can begin at the top and not have to take up time trying to remember what you wanted to ask.

Using office hours to let your professors get to know you in order to secure letters of recommendation later isn’t entirely illegitimate. However, you need to combine the visit with real classroom needs. If you are not all that engaged with the class material or if you don’t honestly need help with the work, believe me, it will show. You may think you are being charming when, in reality, you are only being irritating. This will not result in a good letter. If you find yourself truly interested in the class and have honest questions, then, by all means, take advantage of an office hour. It will certainly help you with letters later on as well as with your work now.

In my experience, most professors understand that students have schedules that often conflict with posted office hours, so usually there's a "and by appointment" note following the regular days and times. Please don't be shy about asking for an appointment. If you need to meet with the professor, talk to him/her after class or e-mail and briefly explain your predicament. Then offer a range of days and times when you'd be available, having already made sure that none of them conflicts with the professor's other classes.

There's no reason for any student to stay mired in confusion because of a difficult class. Just don't wait until just before an exam or due date for a paper. Prepare early, identify what your problems are, write out your questions, and meet with the TA or professor. You'll be surprised how much your work improves as well as how much more connected you'll feel to your college experience.

APPENDIX F
CONSENT LETTER

College Success Skills Curriculum

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Erin Rotheram-Fuller in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to determine if curriculum addressing college success skills helps students successfully complete their first semester in college.

The College Success Skill curriculum has been embedded into our English 101 class, so all students in the class will participate in the curriculum and complete all the activities. Throughout the semester, there will be 9 in-class activities where you will journal about your experiences, and I will keep notes on the lessons I teach, and how the class likes the activities. Additionally, there will be two surveys given at the end of the course (in weeks 14 and 15). I would like your consent to use the information that you provide in your journals when completing the activities and your responses to the surveys to analyze whether the curriculum is effective.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty; for example, it will not affect your grade. All you will need to do is let me know that you do not want me to use your journals or survey responses in my analysis. Please note that you must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

Because all students in the class will be participating in the activities, you may benefit from developing the skills that the curriculum teaches, and your feedback will help me to improve this curriculum for future students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential; all names will be removed from anything that you submit to me. All materials for this study will be destroyed at the end of three years. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but no names will ever be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Erin Rotheram-Fuller, erin.rotheram-fuller@asu.edu or Amanda Ryan-Romo, 323-265-8957 or romoar@elac.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below, you DO allow your survey results and classwork to be used in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Erin Rotheram-Fuller
 Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
 -
 Erin.Rotheram-Fuller@asu.edu

Dear Erin Rotheram-Fuller:

On 8/27/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	College Success Skills Intervention Curriculum
Investigator:	Erin Rotheram-Fuller
IRB ID:	STUDY00008602
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent Letter, Category: Consent Form; • Success Skills Student Journal Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • 168 Hour Time Management Worksheet, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • College Success Curriculum Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Teacher Journal Template, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Retrospective, Pre-Intervention Assessment Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Post-Intervention Assessment Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 8/27/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Amanda Ryan Romo
Amanda Ryan Romo

APPENDIX H

CLASSROOM DYNAMICS GRAPHIC

Classroom Dynamics

