Theses and Dissertations

2015

Academic/Success Coaching: A Description of an Emerging Field in Higher Education

Claire E. Robinson
University of South Carolina - Columbia

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd

Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons

Academic/Success Coaching: A Description of an Emerging Field in Higher Education

by

Claire E. Robinson

Bachelor of Arts
Ohio Wesleyan University, 2004

Master of Education
University of South Carolina, 2007

_____

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Educational Administration

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2015

Accepted by:

Katherine Chaddock, Major Professor

Jennifer L. Bloom, Co-chair Committee Member

Dan Friedman, Committee Member

Robert Johnson, Committee Member

Lacy Ford, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

Designed as exploratory and descriptive research, this study aims to understand the purpose, content, and the perceived effectiveness of academic/success coaching programs in higher education. The research provides a quantitative analysis of 160 coaching programs from 39 states designed to assist undergraduate students in their academic and collegiate success. Because "academic coaching" or "success coaching" is a relatively new concept on college campuses, little empirical evidence exists to support this role and differentiate it from other campus services such as academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. In order to capture the current roles and responsibilities of coaches, a survey was conducted to describe current coaching programs and practices at colleges and universities in the United States. Four variables were evaluated including reasons for creating coaching programs, defining characteristics, institution variety, and assessment. From this descriptive analysis, themes and trends provide an aspirational definition for current and future practices of collegiate-level coaching.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, a new role emerged in higher education: the academic success coach. Adapted from the business model of talent planning, life coaching, and executive coaching, the role of a coach in higher education is purportedly different and innovative compared to other traditionally established collegiate roles. Coaching initially entered the world of higher education in 2000 when a company, InsideTrack, offered services to colleges and universities seeking to increase their student retention rates (Bettinger & Baker, 2011). Subsequently, hundreds of institutions created their own in-house coaching services, and the number of coaching programs nationally has proliferated since that time. Whereas other more traditional roles on campus such as academic advisors, counselors, faculty, mentors, and tutors have been conceptually defined, academic/success coaching is a new phenomenon and fairly ambiguous. Today hundreds of higher education institutions have implemented coaching models that vary greatly in their purpose, infrastructure, and framework.

A vast amount of research in higher education literature demonstrates the importance of interaction between undergraduate students and "representatives" of the university or college. The literature reveals that students' relationships with faculty and staff is a reliable predictor of student success (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012;

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As Kuh (2005) indicated, one of the most important

environmental factors related to students' persistence in college is their ability to make

meaningful connections with at least one member of the university community. Perhaps

the most robust retention literature on individual support focuses on interaction

between faculty and students outside of the classroom (Kim & Sax, 2007; Cotton &

Wilson, 2006; Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Pascarella, 1980). In addition, academic advising

is attributed as a significant and impactful collegiate experience (Gordon & Habley,

2000). Tutoring, counseling, and mentoring are also extremely common services in

higher education. Among these representatives, academic/success coaching appears to

be a new student service with similar goals. Therefore, understanding the nature of the

student-coach relationship and examining the effect of coaching on college students will

specify the purpose and potential impact.

Statement of Problem

To date, very little empirical research exists on academic success coaching in

higher education[1]. Most publications are practitioner opinion and anecdotal

testimonials describing the effectiveness of coaching programs. Furthermore,

academic/success coaching does not appear to be well defined nor clearly differentiated

from other roles on campus. While hundreds of institutions have implemented coaching

programs to help with retention and student success, few coaching programs fit into a

clear model or have been empirically evaluated. While the literature clearly states that

making a connection with a faculty member, peer, or advisor on campus is a positive

---

[1] InsideTrack outsourced coaching program appears to be the most widely referenced, empirical research
published to date (Bettinger & Baker, 2011).

indicator of undergraduate student success (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, 2006), the impact of academic/success coaching is a lot less clear.

In order for the college coaching profession to be sustainable, there must be a distinct differentiation between coaches, academic advisors, and other similar roles on campus. Without this clarification, terminology is confusing and students are uncertain as to whom they should go to for assistance. Furthermore, higher education institutions can ill afford to offer duplicative services. If indeed colleges aim to implement coaching programs as a retention initiative, it is important to demonstrate effectiveness through empirical evidence. Given that coaching programs have been implemented across the country, this study aims to describe the nature of coaching programs on college campuses and their perceived impact on undergraduate student success.

The present study addresses a clear gap in the literature by offering a descriptive study and analysis of current coaching practices. A descriptive survey is an essential first step in researching academic/success coaching because (1) no national study has been conducted to date, (2) the coaching roles and service models appear highly diverse and lack definition, and (3) the literature lacks a macro-level empirical analysis of coaching programs/positions linked to student outcomes. Based on a preliminary review of current coaching programs, a descriptive survey is predicted to obtain a variety of outcomes, including employment types, student utilization techniques, conversation content, assessment practices, and theory use. In addition, coaching programs themselves are predicated to vary within and between institution types. After collecting and analyzing survey results, current coaching practices were compared and contrasted

3

with four comparable roles: advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. The

implications and recommendations of this research will offer readers a clearer

definition, role differentiation, and framework for implementation.

Background/Rationale

Because academic/success coaching is a new service in higher education, it is

advantageous to empirically evaluate its role and perceived purpose. College students

enter higher education institutions expecting they will perform well academically, adjust

socially, and successfully graduate. Similarly, higher education institutions expect the

students they admit to have the capability to earn a degree. Yet reality often collides

with these expectations. Despite students and institutions having similar goals, the six-

year national graduation rate hovers at 57% for students in four-year institutions and at

27% for students who initially matriculate at two-year public institutions (Aud et al.,

2011). As Kuh et. al. (2006) stated, "Whatever the reasons many students do not

achieve their postsecondary educational goals or benefit at optimal levels from the

college experience, the waste of human talent and potential is unconscionable" (p. 3).

The stakes are high for both students and society. When students complete

their degrees, the monetary and non-monetary benefits are substantial (Habley, Bloom,

and Robbins, 2012). McMahon (2009) stated that individuals with bachelor's degrees

not only make one to two million dollars over the course of their careers, they also

accrue a multitude of non-monetary benefits including living longer, having a healthier

lifestyle, raising healthier children, and having more professional mobility. Similarly, the

2013 College Board report revealed society benefits economically from awarding

degrees because college graduates pay more in taxes, are more productive, are less

likely to commit crimes, are more engaged in civic and volunteer activities, and are not

as reliant on public financial support (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). As such, a college

education "provides tools that help people live healthier and more satisfying lives, to

participate actively in civil society, and to create opportunities for their children" (Baum,

Ma, & Payea, 2013).

In addition to individual detriments, society suffers when students drop out of

college. The American Institutes for Research (2010) reported the cost to state and

federal governments as a result of first-year student attrition. The study evaluated

students who dropped out of college over five years, between years 2003-2008.

- Students who did not persist into their second year cost states appropriations almost $6.2 billion.
- States gave over $1.4 billion to support students who did not return to their college or university for a second year.
- The Federal government gave over $1.5 billion in grants to support students who did not return for a second year (Schneider, p. 5).

Clearly the financial loss is substantial and an important motivator for finding cures for

student attrition.

Given that increasing student retention rates is an economic priority for

students, colleges, states, and the federal government, institutions of higher education

seek to implement new, innovative, and successful retention initiatives. One strategy is

pursuing best practices. For example, in 2000 the company InsideTrack began providing

"success coaching" services to institutions seeking to increase their student retention

rates. InsideTrack's Success Coaching is a phone-based service that pairs a coach with a

student and provides regular contact. After the arrival of InsideTrack, new coaching

programs began springing up on college campuses throughout the country. Marketing claims referenced significant increases in retention rates at institutions like Chapman University (Brahm, 2006). While some institutions had the financial means to outsource such a service, others began piloting their own internal coaching programs in hopes that such efforts would lead to increased student persistence.

In sum, "college student retention" is the epicenter of today's higher education culture, providing background and rationale for the current study. Recent emphasis on retention-focused initiatives is both an economic and ethical priority. Programs designed for this purpose should be researched and evaluated. While the present study will not provide a direct measure of retention as it relates to coaching, it is hypothesized that retention is a major "purpose" or catalyst for institutions to create such programs. In addition, the survey respondents were asked to provide their current methods and measures of effectiveness by describing grade point average (GPA) and/or other academic gains. Finally, the nature of coaching and one-on-one support is heavily rooted in the retention literature which is described in chapter 2.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study aims to help define and identify key features of academic/success coaching programs and positions on college campuses. Through a literature review, analysis of position descriptions and websites, and a survey of various higher education institutions, the study aims to help describe academic/success coaching in higher education by identifying national themes. Example themes will include number and types of coaches employed, primary emphases of appointments, student populations

served, mandated versus volunteer student utilization, conceptual frameworks used, assessment, and perceived uniqueness of coaching role. Results of this exploratory study will outline current intra-institutional (i.e. not outsourced) coaching programs in the higher education institutions.

This research design describes current academic/success coaching practices, while also assessing the perceived effectiveness of coaching programs. Using quantitative methods, current coaching models are identified, tallied, compared, and contrasted. Furthermore, the study evaluates the perception that coaching leads to increased student persistence/retention through theoretical concepts such as inputs-environment-outcomes (Astin, 1993). If coaching influences college student retention, it is important to reveal how and why this impact occurs through quantitative measures. This descriptive study is an exploratory design using frequencies and cross tabulations. Survey participants are asked to describe their intended outcomes and current measures of effectiveness. Furthermore, it is the hope of the researcher that results of this study will inform institutions developing and/or refining their coaching programs through the generalizability afforded by quantitative studies. By identifying the types of coaching programs offered and their perceived effectiveness, the present study provides institutions with empirical information for implementation. Finally, results will add to the current literature on one-on-one support of undergraduate students, strengthen the identity of academic/success coaching, identify defining characteristics of coaching as a unique profession, and expand the research base of coaching.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to understand the concept of academic/success coaching models and their impact on students, the present exploratory study aims to answer the following four research questions:

1. Why do colleges and universities **create** academic coaching programs?

2. What are the **defining characteristics** of institutionally supported (i.e. not outsourced) academic coaching programs and positions on college campuses?

3. How do academic coaching programs and positions vary by **institution type**?

4. How are academic coaching programs currently **assessed**? What measures are coaching programs using to demonstrate effectiveness?

Research question #1 (i.e. variable CREATE) addressed the initial rationale or catalyst for an institution creating an academic coaching program. The survey aimed to identify variables such as (1) the factors that initially motivated colleges and universities to create an academic coaching program, (2) the types of student populations coaching programs were designed to support and, (3) how long the academic coaching program has been in existence.

Research question #2 (i.e. variable PROGRAM) aimed to identify defining characteristics of institutionally supported academic coaching programs. As such, the national survey asked respondents questions related to various programmatic themes including, 1) What are institutions naming their academic coaching programs?, 2) Are students required to meet with an academic coach? If yes, which students and how often are they expected to meet with an academic coach? 3) How are students assigned

8

to academic coaches? (4) What is the typical length of an academic coaching appointment? (5) Does the academic coaching program apply a theoretical framework for delivering coaching services? (6) What is the intended content and focus of academic coaching conversations with students? (7) How is the academic coaching position similar to or different from other roles on campus such as tutoring, counseling, advising, and faculty-student interaction? and, (8) What are the official titles of academic coaches?

Research question #3 (i.e. variable INSTITUTION) aimed to identify how coaching programs and positions vary by institutional type including two-year public, two-year private, four-year public, and four-year private. In addition, institution size was categorized. Results were identified and cross-tabulated to identify and describe themes based on program demographics and institutional type.

Research question #4 (i.e. variable ASSESS) aimed to identify how coaching programs and positions are currently evaluated. Measures asked of participants included (1) intended outcomes of coaching programs, (2) current assessment practices of institutional coaching programs, and (3) assessment findings. In particular this variable aimed to identify differences between coaching programs that are assessed versus those that are not. Participants were also asked to provide information assessing the impact of coaching programs on student retention rates and GPAs.

The alignment between these research questions, variables, and the survey instrument are outlined in Appendix C.

HYPOTHESES

Via a survey of academic/success coaching programs, a descriptive analysis provides readers an overview of current collegiate coaching models. Based on a preliminary review of websites, articles, conference presentations, and anecdotal evidence, it is the belief of the researcher that coaching programs will vary in purpose. Coaching titles alone vary tremendously. Examples of titles include academic coach, academic success coach, college coach, retention coach, graduation coach, achievement coach, and leadership coach (list retrieved from various conference presentations, listserv postings, and institution websites. For the purposes of this study, the terms "academic/success coach," and "coach" are used interchangeably as these labels appear to be the most commonly used.

After survey results provide an overview of current coaching practices and coaching program characteristics, outcomes are analyzed to understand how institutions are defining, differentiating, and assessing the role. Given the research demonstrating the positive effects of one-on-one interactions between students and representatives of the university (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, 2006), it is hypothesized that academic coaching will have a positive impact on students' academic success as measured by GPA and retention rates. Participants were asked to describe their current measures of effectiveness and assessment.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

- **_Academic Advising (or "Advising")_**: Academic advising integrates students' academic and career goals by providing individualized, accurate information on majors, courses, general education, degree requirements, out-of-class activities, institutional policies/procedures, and appropriate referral to academic and non-academic resources.[2]

- **A_cademically deficient_**: A student who is placed on academic probation from the college or university due to not meeting academic standards; typically a cumulative GPA below a 2.0.

- **_Academic recovery_**_:_ a student who increases his/her GPA, is taken off of academic probation, and is able to progress to the next semester.

- **_Academic Recovery Programs_**_:_ "a set of mandatory interventions, either programmatic or individual, for academically underperforming first-year students whose underperformance is evidenced by being placed on academic warning or probation" (Trumpy, 2006, p. 5).

- **_Academic/Success Coach (or "Coach")_**: Terms are used interchangeably to encompass "academic coach," "academic success coach" and "success coach". Initially, this role may involve a representative of the university who meets one-on-one with a student focusing on an academic and/or overall collegiate student experience. Coaching in this context does not refer to anything related to athletics. As explained in the purpose statement, one intention of current study is to help define and differentiate this role.

---

[2] Definition based on the work of Smith and Allen (2006) identifying the essential functions of academic advising.

- *Counseling*: "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas, and Gladding, 2014).

- *Retention*: when a student progresses from one academic year to another.

- *Representative of the University (or "Representatives")*: Individuals employed by a college or university, who are not student peers/undergraduates, seen by the student as "representative" of teaching and/or administration and are part of the university culture.

- *Mentoring*: "a situation in which a more-experienced member of an organization maintains a relationship with a less-experienced, often new member to the organization and provides information, support, and guidance so as to enhance the less-experienced member's chances of success in the organization and beyond" (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). Mentoring is often characterized as an informal process, requires a mutually agreed upon one-to-one relationship, develops a learning alliance, and is reciprocal in nature.

- *Tutoring: "*a person employed to instruct another in some branch or branches of learning, especially a private instructor" (dictionary.com).

Assumptions, Limitations and Scope

Assumptions of the study include the expectation that undergraduate students are in need of personal support. This assumption does not take into account the various other factors outside of academics such as personal crisis, judicial sanctions, or other competing influences. In addition, the study assumes that coaching is educational in

nature and does not take into account the nuances of the coaches' style, technique, questioning, approach, etc. Coaching, like other helping professions, varies depending on conceptual framework and training. However, for the purposes of this study, we assume that coaching has a positive influence on students. Finally, the study does not take into account the various other factors that may lead to students' academic success and/or retention.

The survey is limited in scope due to the sample size. While the researcher made an extensive attempt to include a comprehensive list of current coaching programs established in the United States, assuredly several were omitted. In addition, the survey results are only based on respondents. Non-respondents were not included in the results, thus introducing error and limited representativeness of the population.

The outcomes assessment, as measured by the survey, does not factor in multiple variables such as student motivation and participation in other resources. The study assumes that coaching is the primary help or support students received. Certainly there are many other resources available to students. In addition, some students who seek coaching help may be more highly motivated and thus achieve a higher GPA.

SIGNIFICANCE/CONTRIBUTIONS

The present study aims to fill a gap in the literature examining the current status of institutional coaching programs in higher education. Little is known about the true nature of this role. Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the effect of coaching on students who are academically deficient and/or at-risk of leaving the institution. While a handful of studies have evaluated academic coaching in higher education using

qualitative methods (Brock, 2008; Vansickel-Peterson, 2010), very few have evaluated coaching using quantitative measures (Bettinger & Baker, 2011).

Previous research has affirmed and reaffirmed the importance of faculty-student interaction as it relates to student satisfaction, graduation, academic achievement, and other measures of success (Kim & Sax, 2007; Cotton & Wilson, 2006; Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Pascarella, 1980). In addition, given their history and long-standing establishment on college campuses, roles such as advising, counseling, and tutoring have been thoroughly researched and defined (Barbuto, et. al., 2011; Lee, et.al., 2009; Gordon & Habley, 2000). Given the emergence of new coaching programs, the practice of coaching in college inherently seems to be an impactful approach to student success. The present study aims to critically and quantitatively analyze this perception.

The implications for such a study can help inform colleges of national trends. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, " Approximately 50 percent of all undergraduate student attrition occurs during the first year of college" (Aud, et. al. 2011). The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDs) tracks attrition rates across all colleges and universities that receive state and federal appropriations. Between 2003 and 2008, states appropriated approximately $6.2 billion to colleges and universities "to help pay for the education of students who did not return for a second year" (Aud, 2011 p. 1). Each student's subsidy approaches $10,000 per year, nationwide. Given this financial burden on both the state and federal government, finding new, effective student retention programming can significantly contribute to our nation's graduation goals and help reduce financial waste.

Colleges and Universities are ranked on their performance based on a series of metrics. *U.S. News and World Report* (Burnsed, 2011) identifies 16 performance indicators, including retention rate and graduation rates. These rankings often lead to increased financial support. As Trumpy (2006) recommended, "Coupled with the predominance of undergraduate attrition occurring during the freshman year of college, institutions would be wise to employ programs and strategies likely to positively impact rates of first-year retention, GPA, and credits earned, simultaneously" (p. 2). If academic coaching supports students' persistence by providing effective strategies to help students rebound from academic deficiency, the implications may be profound. Imagine a collegiate environment where every student on probation has the opportunity to meet with an academic coach. The coach engages the student in a high-impact, meaningful conversation that leads to the student feeling that someone at the institution cares and is available to help access campus resources. If indeed college graduation is a national priority, the significance of such support may provide a venue for students on the cusp of leaving college to be retained and eventually receive their degree.

CONCLUSION

Academic/success coaching in higher education is a new and growing concept. Increasingly, colleges and universities across the country are developing coaching programs with the goal of increasing student retention and graduation rates. However, there is currently not a clear understanding of the specific roles that academic coaches fulfill. Although the research on the impact of academic/success coaching programs is

not robust, initial data indicates that coaching can have a significant impact on student success (Bettinger & Baker, 2011; Asghar, 2010). In order to empirically investigate if and how coaching can benefit college students, further research is needed.

The goal of this study is to help define current practices of coaching in a collegiate setting, while also gaining understanding of coaching's impact through current assessment efforts. Furthermore, the field lacks an understanding as to why and how colleges and universities create coaching programs.   In addition to a national description, this survey data will suggest conclusions about trends, future directions of coaching programs, and possible best practices. To date, very limited quantitative research exists evaluating campus owned academic/success coaching programs in higher education. The present study aims to fill this gap.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on college student retention states that one of the best predictors of student success and persistence is meaningful interaction with a member of the college (Cox, McIntosh, & Terenzini, 2010; Drake, 2011; Kuh, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977). Traditional roles on campus – such as advisors, counselors, tutors, mentors, and faculty – have decades of research on the positive impact their positions have on students (Barbuto Jr., Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; Lee, 2009; Metzner, 1989). In order to evaluate the effectiveness of academic/success coaching on college student retention, the coaching role must also be situated in the literature.

In order to identify relevant literature related to academic/success coaching, the researcher evaluated current roles on campus that provide one-on-one support for students and the relationship of these roles to student retention. This foundational information is especially important in an exploratory study. Baseline evidence is needed to provide context for further evaluation.

To provide context for the present study, it is important to consider how and why academic/success coaching is similar to and/or different from other roles on campus. When reviewing the literature on tutoring, counseling, mentoring, and advising, nearly every publication mentioned a persistent lack of agreement on a true, standardized definition of these individual fields. Yet despite a consensus on one

17

definition, the longevity of these four fields has presented considerable research on their history and purpose. For example, the counseling profession originated in the 1800's with the advent of modern psychology and interest in the human condition (Neukrug, 2007). Today, an internet search of the word "counseling" yields over 147 million results and a scholarly search of counseling (including peer-reviewed publications, dissertations and theses, scholarly journals, and reports) yields 660,375 publications.[3]   Formal mentoring approaches date back to 1931 which focused on apprenticeships and protégés (Garcia, 2012). Today, an internet word search of "mentoring" yields over 51 million results and a scholarly search of mentoring yields 142,085 publications. College-level tutoring has been in existence in the United States since 1636 when Harvard students needed instruction in Latin (Dvorak, 2000). Today, an internet word search of "tutoring" yields over 65 million results and a scholarly search yields 133,652 publications. Finally, faculty members have served as academic advisors since the beginnings of American higher education. Gordon and Habley (2000) noted, "Beginning with the earliest colleges and universities in the United States, faculty members have advised students about their course of study" (p. 3). A present day internet word search of "academic advising" yields approximately 7.5 million results and a scholarly search yields 95,839 publications.

In order to compare the current trend of coaching with these roles, searches were conducted on three types of coaching. Searching "academic success coaching"

---

[3] Internet searches were conducted using Google search engine. Scholarly searches were conducted using ProQuest search engine. ProQuest includes peer-reviewed publications, dissertations and theses, scholarly journals, historical newspapers, and published reports. Comparison searches were conducted March 8th, 2015.

yields 6,110 internet results and eight scholarly publications, "academic coaching" yields

235,000 internet results and 406 scholarly publications, and "success coaching" yields

397,000 internet results and 171 scholarly publications. To further research coaching,

several search engines were used including ERIC, JSTOR, Web of Knowledge, ProQuest,

Chronicle of Higher Education, PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, and the library

catalog where used to identify scholarly research. Searching "academic coaching" in

ERIC of June 2013 yielded 63 results. When searching ProQuest dissertations and thesis,

and longitudinal database provided the following record of publication: between the

years 1970-1999 there were two records, between 2000-2009 a total of 77 related

records, and between 2010-2013 a total of 126 records. The majority of results

stemmed from K-12 education research. Narrowing the focus, a search was conducted

using the terms "academic coaching, higher education, college, and first-year students."

As of March 29, 2013 this search yielded 27 results from between the years 2002 and

2013. See Table 2.1 for a summary of these findings in order of frequency by scholarly

publications.

Table 2.1
Comparison Searches: Date of origin, internet pages, and publications.

	Originated	General Internet Search (# via Google)	Scholarly Publications (# via ProQuest)
Counseling	1800's[4]	147 million	660,375
Mentoring	1931[5]	51 million	142,085
Tutoring	1630's[6]	65 million	133,652
Academic Advising	1820's[7]	7.5 million	95,839
Academic Coaching	Unknown	235,000	406
Success Coaching	2000	397,000	171
Academic Success Coaching	Unknown	6,110	8

To situate academic/success coaching into existing research, this literature review is organized into the following categories: (1) a brief overview of one-on-one support in higher education and the various traditional roles on campus, (2) how and why one-on-one support is related to retention, (3) an overview of coaching as a comprehensive support model, (4) current models of academic coaching in college, (5) application of Astin (1993) theoretical framework of Inputs-Environment-Outcomes.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT AND RELATED ROLES ON CAMPUS

Historically, students have communicated one-on-one with university representatives outside of class for a variety of reasons. Common examples include meeting a professor during office hours, attending a counseling session, seeking help from a tutor, or working with an academic advisor to discuss course requirements.

---

[4] Neukrug, 2007.
[5] Garcia, 2012.
[6] American tutoring began with the opening of Harvard. (Dvorak, 2000).
[7] Kenyon College introduced the first known formal system of advising (Cook, 1999).

Several studies demonstrate that "personalized support and advising bridge students'

informational gaps and help students complete tasks they might not otherwise

complete" (Bettinger & Baker, 2011, p. 2). As a result, colleges and universities have

established various roles on campus in order to support students' progression to degree

completion. Today faculty and student affairs professionals are available to provide

students an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with a representative of the

college. The following is a brief overview of several currently established roles in higher

education. Specifically, the literature review highlights one-on-one interactions between

students and common roles on campus: academic advisors, counselors, tutors, and

mentors.

Academic Advising

Like most helping professions, academic advising has multiple models and

definitions. The National Academic Advising Association (2015) posts more than 20

definitions on its website, similar to the following:

> Academic Advising is a developmental process which assists students in the
> clarification of their life/career goals and in the development of educational
> plans for the realization of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which
> students realize their maximum educational potential through communication
> and information exchanges with an advisor; it is ongoing, multifaceted, and the
> responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor serves as a facilitator of
> communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through course and
> career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other
> campus agencies as necessary (nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse).

While no single definition is mutually agreed upon, some reoccurring themes exist. For

example, most definitions of academic advising includes the words "process,"(n=14)

"goal setting/clarification," (n=9) "decision making," (n=7) and "planning" (n=4). In

addition, "teaching" is a central concept referenced. However, the majority of

definitions appear abstract and encompass a variety of global objectives. Emphasis

solely on advising processes, rather than on functions and outcomes, leaves most

definitions vague and cyclical.

Smith and Allen (2006) defined and measured 12 essential advising functions

aligned with five operationalized constructs, all rooted in the most prominent advising

literature. In their quantitative study, Smith and Allen (2006) researched and connected

these functions to students' perception of worth. A survey of 2,193 undergraduates

measured importance and satisfaction of twelve advising functions that included both

developmental and prescriptive approaches. The top rated advising functions students

desired from advisors included providing accurate information, connecting information

to the major, explaining how things work at the university, and helping to make general

connection to students' academic, career, and life goals. The bottom rated functions

included referral to non-academic resources and out-of-class connections. This pivotal

research provides clarity to both student and advisor perceptions of purpose, primary

emphases, and effectiveness of academic advising. Using this study as a guide, the

author offers the following definition of academic advising based on the primary

functions identified by Smith and Allen (2006).

> Academic advising connects students' academic and career goals by providing
> individualized, accurate information on majors, courses, general education,
> degree requirements, beyond-the-classroom activities, institutional
> policies/procedures, and appropriate referral to academic and non-academic
> resources. The advising process offers students an opportunity to explore their
> interests and accept responsibility for their academic progression through goal
> clarification, decision making, and educational planning (Robinson, 2015).

In addition to functions and intended outcomes, common academic advising frameworks include developmental advising, intrusive advising, prescriptive advising, and appreciative advising. Schreiner and Anderson (2005) argued that developmental and prescriptive approaches are often implemented from a deficient standpoint, i.e. identifying what is wrong with the student and how to fix a problem. Their study cites Gallup Poll findings that, "individuals who focus on their weaknesses and remediate them are only able to achieve average performance at best; they are able to gain far more – and even to reach levels of excellence – when they expend comparable effort to build on their talents" (p. 23). This approach helps to capitalize on student motivation. Talent, strength, and personal success plans are emphasized, which may also be a key component of good academic/success coaching.

Jayne Drake, past president of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), highlighted the importance of Academic Advising on student success and retention (2011). In her commentary, Drake suggested, "Students who are the happiest and academically the most successful have developed a solid relationship with an academic advisor, a faculty member, or an administrator who can help them navigate the academic and social shoals of the academy" (p. 10). She argued that advising should focus on teaching students skills, helping them connect to the university, and building a personal relationship that goes beyond just paperwork and registering for classes. Drake stated, "Advisors help students get connected and stay engaged in their college experience and, thus, persist to reach their academic goals and their career and personal aspirations" (p. 11).

Metzner's (1989) quantitative study focused on the perceived quality of academic advising and its effect on attrition. Students received a questionnaire to evaluate their perceptions of good advising, poor advising, overall satisfaction, opportunity to transfer, and intent to leave. Results indicated good advising was negatively correlated with attrition, whereas poor advising was positively correlated with attrition, with a difference of 7% in between the mean rates of withdrawal. Metzner's sample consisted of 1,033 first-year students at a commuter public university. Good advising had a significant direct effect on satisfaction, utility, intent to leave, and GPA and significant indirect effects on dropout. Poor advising did not yield significant results. However, no advising has the greatest effect size (.07) and the highest correlation with student dropout.

In another study, Barbuto et al. (2011) found that quality advising related to student satisfaction, morale, retention, academic success, career selection, and achievement of maximum potential. In this quantitative study, 407 student advisees were sampled from a land-grant university in the Midwest. Student participants were given a questionnaire to evaluate advisor styles and approaches. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between "passive management" and advisor effectiveness, advisee's extra effort, and satisfaction with the advisor. Students rated transformational advising behaviors highly effective on several categories. While these results are not surprising, they do speak to the fact that some advising models are better than others. Thus, not all one-on-one approaches are created equal and need to be empirically tested for effectiveness.

Much of the research linking academic advising to college retention focused on the quality of the service as perceived by students (Barbuto, 2011; Metzner, 1989). Methods of these studies usually involve interviews, surveys, and case studies. Regardless of a student's experiences, course grades ultimately determine persistence or withdrawal. And, given that "quality" of advising is a subjective measure, it varies depending on the student perception.

Although academic coaching and academic advising may appear similar, there are several anticipated differences between these roles. In her dissertation, Brock (2008) differentiated coaching from advising citing the largest professional coaching organization, the International Coaching Federation. Brock argued "coaches do not advise clients" (p. 2). Furthermore, in a practitioner publication, the University of Minnesota Rochester revealed that "the Student Success Coach model deemphasizes the need for students to receive permission from the coach (as an advisor) to enroll, or change courses, and instead creates a relationship that provides guidance and support at multiple interactions, both formal and informal" (Neuhauser & Weber, 2011, p. 48). Given that both academic coaching and academic advising are individualized, have the word "academic" as a descriptor, and focus on general concepts such as goal setting and planning, further study is needed to differentiate these positions.

Counseling

While no universal definition of counseling exists, Kaplan, Tarvydas, and Gladding (2014) provided a "consensus definition" endorsed by 29 major counseling organizations. In their study, the primary goal was to "craft a succinct yet

comprehensive definition of counseling" (p. 371). They defined counseling as "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas, & Gladding, 2014). Using the Delphi method, current counselors identified words and connotations they believed to be most relevant to their profession. The five most frequently occurring words included "wellness, empower, professional, lifespan, and relationship" (p. 368). Neukrug (2007) described counseling as "short-term, facilitative, here-and-now, change, problem-solving, being heard, and awareness" (p.3). Neukrug (2007, p.22) further posited that the counseling professional identity is

> based on a specific body of knowledge unique to our profession. By knowing who we are, we also have a clear sense of who we are not. It is by having a strong sense of our identity that we are able to define our limits, know when it is appropriate to consult with colleagues, and recognize when we should refer clients to other professionals.

 Finally, Neukrug distinguished counseling from guidance and psychotherapy and argued the counseling profession must include ethics, accreditation, and credentialing/licensure.

Counseling centers and services are a common resource for students on thousands of college campuses nationwide. Often triggered by psychological stressors, college students meet with a counselor to discuss emotional and social problems that may interfere with their academics (Lee, et. al, 2009). Furthermore, according to the National College Health Association (2012), seven of the top ten impediments to college students' academic success are health-related.

In a quantitative study evaluating the effects of college counseling on academic performance, researchers evaluated 10,009 college freshmen and transfer students from a large public university (Lee et al., 2009). Variables included counseling experience, precollege academic performance, service types, total number of sessions, college academic performance, and student retention. Data was obtained from the university's registrar office and the counseling center and analyzed using regression analyses. Results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation and prediction between number of counseling sessions and cumulative GPA [F(3, 365, $p<.05$). However, given the lack of a strong correlation, precollege academic performance is said to be a better predictor than counseling (Lee et al., 2009).

As Lee (2009) stated, "freshmen and transfer students are more likely to experience personal, social, and academic adjustment difficulties than other students" and some studies reveal "freshmen who receive counseling services had higher attrition rates than first-year students who did not" (p. 307) . Lee et al. (2009) also asserted that few studies have evaluated the effects of counseling on measures of academic success and the link between personal issues and academic performance. In addition, much of the research evaluating counseling and retention focuses on a dichotomous dependent variable of withdrawal or persistence. The proposed study will instead use GPA to help determine the magnitude of influence.

When comparing coaching to counseling, there are some anticipated fundamental differences. Counselors require years of training, certification, and licensure in order to be authorized to provide psychological support. Most definitions of

coaching exclude addressing mental health concerns (Brock, 2008). So, while these roles

may appear to have some similarities, it is important for students to realize that most

coaches are not able to provide psychological support in the same manner as college

counselors.

Mentoring

Clifford (2009) defined mentoring as a "relationship between a senior, more

experienced individual in an organization and a junior, less experienced colleague" (p.

2). Defining characteristics of mentoring include establishing a longstanding

relationship (quantified as six months to five years), expectation sharing, and guidance

provided by the mentor to the protégé. Reciprocity is also a primary function of

mentoring, signifying that both the mentor and protégé believe they will benefit from

the experience.

A supporting definition was researched by Haggerty (2011, p.2) in her

phenomenological study of mentoring relationships.

> Campbell and Campbell (2000) define mentoring as: a situation in which a more-
> experienced member of an organization maintains a relationship with a less-
> experienced, often new member to the organization and provides information,
> support, and guidance so as to enhance the less-experienced member's chances
> of success in the organization and beyond…When the mentor is a faculty or staff
> employee of the university and the mentee is a student, the goal of the
> mentoring relationship is to enhance the student's academic success and to
> facilitate the progression to post-graduate plans – either graduate study or a
> career in the workplace. [para. 3].

Haggerty affirmed open communication and reciprocal benefits are integral to good

mentoring relationships. She noted, "Mentors can learn more about themselves and

their work while also being reminded of how important and fulfilling interpersonal

relationships can be" (p. 31). Ramierz (2009) and Garcia (2012) endorsed this depiction

and noted additional characteristics of mentoring include establishing mutual

agreement, developing a learning alliance, and focusing on development. Finally,

mentoring is often characterized as an informal interaction (McWilliams & Beam, 2013).

Mentoring & Faculty-Student Interaction

Perhaps the most robust literature on mentoring in college stems from research

on faculty-student interaction (Kim & Sax, 2007; Cotton & Wilson, 2006; Astin, 1993;

Tinto, 1993; Pascarella, 1980). Hundreds of studies link faculty-student interaction with

college success. Kim and Sax (2007) posited, "College impact research has continually

demonstrated a positive relationship between student-faculty interaction and a broad

range of student educational outcomes, including academic achievement, educational

aspirations, intellectual growth, and academic satisfaction" (p. 2). These experiences

enhance students' self-efficacy, sense of purpose, and emotional well-being (Kim & Sax,

2007). Tinto (1975) also argued that, "interaction with faculty not only increases social

integration and therefore institutional commitment but also increases the individual's

academic integration" (p. 109). Students who have more informal interactions with

faculty are significantly more likely to graduate than those who did not interact with

faculty. Thus, making a personal connection with a member of the academy is likely to

enhance a student's commitment to their degree completion. And, while institutions

cannot completely control for pre-college attributes or individual student commitment

levels, colleges can shape environmental factors to aid students in both their social and

academic integration.

In addition to faculty mentoring, Pascarella (1980) discussed student interaction with any college representative as a key part of defining the interpersonal environment of the institution. He noted, "Within such organizations, student behaviors, attitudes, and educational outcomes are influenced not only by the institution's structural factors (e.g. organizational size, living arrangements, administrative polices, academic curriculum), but also through interactions with the important agents of socialization (peers, faculty, administration)" (p. 546). In sum, faculty mentoring is a reliable predictor of student satisfaction, integration, and persistence. However, colleges may not always have the ability to afford frequent interaction opportunities to the entire student body. What is less clear is how other roles on campus can supplement the faculty role and/or provide additional interaction opportunities. The methodologies in the above-mentioned studies focused their sample in large, public research institutions thus limiting generalizability. Despite this limitation, a breadth of research indicates that interaction is important in college. Much can be learned about student interaction with other "representatives" of the university, such as academic/success coaches.

Identifying clear distinctions between mentoring and coaching presents several challenges. As cited, the unique benefits of faculty mentorship have been verified and validated across institution types. However, general mentoring opportunities – such as peer mentors, resident mentors, staff mentors, and alumni mentors – all encompass a wide range of functions and outcomes. As table 2.1 shows, mentoring has a significant research base with over 142,000 peer reviewed publications. Considering input characteristics, it is unclear exactly how students opt-in to mentoring opportunities.

Based on a brief interpretation of this vast literature base, perhaps the clearest defining

characteristics of mentoring environments includes trust, seniority, reciprocity, and

longevity. How these functions are similar to or different from academic/success

coaching is yet to be determined.

Tutoring

Tutoring is often considered a service aimed at assisting first- and second-year

students taking high enrollment lecture courses. These courses are also often

considered high risk due to high failure or withdrawal rates (Dvorak, 2000). Dvorak

(2000, p.7) defined Peer Tutoring as,

> "a method of individual or small group teaching by tutors to tutees
> (students). Tutors in this setting are college students who have passed
> the course they tutor with an A or a B or have equivalent academic
> credentials, and have a junior standing or above. Tutees are college
> students being tutored in this program for courses in which they are
> enrolled.

However, not all tutoring is provided by peers. Professional tutors and graduate-level

tutors often provide educational services to undergraduate students. A more basic

definition of tutoring is "a person employed to instruct another in some branch or

branches of learning, especially a private instructor" (dictionary.com).

Considering the intended outcomes, two primary goals of tutoring are "academic

gain for the learners" (Cohen, 1986 as cited by Quinn, 1996) and fostering independent

learning (MacDonald, 1994). Academic gain may be accomplished by achieving a

passing grade in a course or increasing GPA. Independent learning enables students to

understand their own learning processes and not rely on others for answers. Quinn goes

on to say that the tutoring environment is often defined by "instruction, questioning,

31

and giving directions" and monitoring progress (1996, p. 11). Finally, Pugh (2005)

argued that,

> The main difference between teaching and tutoring is focus. Teachers
> must teach an entire curriculum to an entire class. Tutors focus on
> specific areas of learning, the problem areas experienced by their tutees.
> Tutoring complements and supplements classroom teaching, reaching
> the struggling student in ways that classroom teaching cannot. This is
> especially helpful for consistently academically unsuccessful or
> challenged students. (p.11-12)

In her dissertation, Dvorak (2000) conducted extensive qualitative research on

the tutoring environment by evaluating both students and tutors participating in "the

college tutoring experience." Dvorak concluded that effective tutors serve as role

models, show sensitivity, build rapport, and help students master learning material. In

her case study, she defined tutoring as a "method" of working with students primarily

attending due to lack of understanding course material. Results indicated that "tutoring

processes" or functions included motivating students, setting expectations, building self-

confidence, developing rapport, making a connection to campus, and mentoring.

"Tutoring techniques" included study strategies, reading the textbook, time

management, organization, and questioning. While Dvorak's study presented detailed

and comprehensive information on peer tutoring, her study is limited in that it focused

on a single institution and almost exclusively included "outstanding" tutors as

participants.

Tutoring and coaching appear to share concepts such as study skill development,

metacognition, and academic gain. Inputs of tutoring usage appear to be mostly opt-in

and/or referral. Historically, research shows that students take advantage of tutoring

when course material presents challenges. Finally, various definitions reveal that the tutoring environment is frequently identified as a "method" of working with students. This description varies from advising (often referred to as a "process") and counseling (often referred to as a "relationship").

<div align="center">**INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT AND COLLEGE RETENTION**</div>

All of the abovementioned services – academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring - are traditionally held in one-on-one environment. For the purposes of this study, it is important to situate the research evaluating one-on-one support and student retention within the national data. Trumpy (2006) explained, "Retention is primarily defined as the percent of incoming fall, first-year students, who persist to enrolling in the following fall term" (p. 1). The National Center on Educational Statistics (2011) noted the national average freshman to sophomore retention rate between 1983 and 2006 ranged from 66.4% to 70% for public four-year colleges. In addition, the current six-year national graduation rate for students at four-year institutions is approximately 57% (Aud et al., 2011). The National Center on Educational Statistics 2011 report revealed that 57% of first-time students enrolled in four-year colleges completed a bachelor's degree within six years beginning in Fall 2002. These national trends leave much room for colleges to improve their students' rate of persistence and degree completion.

Astin (1993) and Tinto (1993, 1988, 1982) argued that "personal interactions" are linked to higher retention rates and degree attainment. However, a problem arises when looking at when and how students are able to interact one-on-one with

representatives of the university. As Pascarella (1980) pointed out, "student-faculty contact is largely restricted to formalized, somewhat structured situations such as the lecture, laboratory, or discussion section" (p. 547). Studies show that few students converse regularly with faculty outside of class, and this interaction is especially sparse at large, public universities. Cotton and Wilson (2006) affirmed this gap in the literature by stating "while existing quantitative studies have made it clear that the role of faculty beyond the classroom is significant, it is less clear where and under what circumstances this role is most important" (p. 490).

If in fact individualized interaction is a key indicator of student success, satisfaction, connectedness, and ultimately helps students graduate college, it is worthwhile to explore ways universities initiate these opportunities. As such, academic/success coaching is purportedly an initiative aimed at fostering these meaningful conversations and individual interactions with students.

COACHING AS A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT MODEL

To frame the global research on coaching, it is helpful to briefly explore coaching models outside of higher education. Several definitions exist to capture the roles and reasons for coaching. Perhaps the most common use of the word "coach" has been in association with athletics. However, aside from athletics, coaching has been adapted in various venues including career, executive, K-12 education, tutoring, leadership, and several other fields. The following section presents (1) global definitions of coaching, (2) history of coaching as a support service, and (3) a brief overview of the International Coaching Federation.

Global Definitions of Coaching

The word "coach" holds several meanings. In 1849 the verb referred to "to prepare someone" (www.etymonline.com). In the field of business, coaching is defined as "a partnering of two people, one client and one coach, who together create an alliance which is designed to deepen the client's learning of themselves and supports them in forwarding their learning to action" (Vansickel-Peterson, 2010, p. 1). *Executive coaching* is defined as "a facilitative one-on-one, mutually designed relationship between a professional coach and a key organizational contributor" and focuses on skill building, performance enhancement, and career development (Kappenberg, 2008). Brock's (2008) dissertation on the *history and emergence of coaching* used a definition by Cavanagh & Grant stating "a goal-directed, results-oriented, systematic process in which one person facilitates sustained change in another individual or group through fostering the self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee" (2006, p. 147). The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defined *professional coaching* as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (ICF, 2012). *Reciprocal peer coaching* (RPC) is defined as "a form of co-operative or peer-assisted learning that encourages individual students in small groups to coach each other in turn so that the outcome of the process is a more rounded understanding and a more skillful execution of the task in hand than if the student was learning in isolation" (Asghar, 2010, p. 403). Self-reflection, accountability, developing meaningful goals, asking good questions, and a non-judgmental approach all appear to be staples of the coaching/student

relationship. The concept of coaching focuses on outcomes and emphasizes self-directed learning, goal setting, and action planning (ICF, 2012). Generally speaking, coaching is intended to result in improved performance in various venues such as business, management, and education.

While these ideas are helpful in providing a global definition, there is still ambiguity in how and what differentiates coaches from other roles specifically on a college campus.

History of Coaching as a Support Service

In his dissertation on executive coaching, Kappenberg's (2008) research revealed coaching began in the 1940's as a form of developmental counseling. Psychology is deemed as having the greatest influence on coaching, adapting many of the tools and models as a framework (Brock, 2008). In the business arena, Kappenberg discussed the initial negative connotation associated with coaching. He argued, "Coaching historically was more often reserved for executives whose performance was failing, as a last ditch effort to salvage their career" (Kappenberg, 2008, p. 6). However, he also stated that the perception has changed and today coaching has a much more positive connotation.

Perhaps the most comprehensive literature on the history and emergence of coaching as a profession stems from a dissertation written by Vikki Brock (2008). Brock asserted "Coaching found its place in history, and most recently in the business world, when it exploded into the corporate environment in the 1990s" (Williams, 2004, p. 1, as cited by Brock, p. 3). In her research, Brock found the first peer-reviewed article on

coaching was published in 1955 in the *Harvard Business Review*. Coaching themes in this

original article surrounded performance improvement and management development.

While Brock (2008) provided one of the most comprehensive research studies on

the history and emergence of coaching (i.e. a 513-page dissertation), the study leaves

the reader without a sense of precision as to exactly what coaching entails. The study's

strength lies in the grounded theory of the profession. However, as with other studies, it

fails to provide a solid, clear definition of coaching that could apply to higher education.

International Coaching Federation

Established in 1995, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) is a global

organization whose aim is to advance the practice of professional coaching (ICF website,

2013). ICF proclaimed that coaching is a distinguished profession separate from other

service professions such as therapy, consulting, mentoring, training, and athletic

development. ICF currently certifies over 21,000 members spanning over 100 countries

in a variety of areas such as Executive Coaching, Life Coaching, Leadership Coaching,

Relationship Coaching, and Career Coaching. As stated on their website:

> ICF, the world's largest coaching organization, remains successful in its core
> purpose: to advance the coaching profession. According to the *ICF 2012 Global
> Coaching Study*, approximately 47,500 professional coaches are now in business
> worldwide (bringing cumulative annual revenue close to $2 billion) as compared
> to 2,100 professional coaches in 1999.

Clearly the role of coaching reaches far beyond the realm of higher education. Only

recently (i.e. approximately year 2000) have colleges adopted this position as a means

to aid in student success.

ACADEMIC/SUCCESS COACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Various academic/success coaching models exist within higher education. For example, the Education Advisory Board (EAB) provided a "customized research brief" on three different college coaching models including success coaches, academic-success hybrid coaches, and life coaches (Barnhart & LeMaster, 2013). Profiling five institutions, the research brief defined *success coaching* as providing "general plans for academic and non-academic improvement," defined *academic-success coaching hybrid* as "general development plans" that "incorporate additional academic support elements, such as effective study practices and test preparation exercises" and defined *life coaching* as "semester-long group coaching session for no more than 10 undergraduate students" that "ask students to identify a singular goal to focus on the entire semester" (Barnhart & LeMaster, 2013, p. 4). Key observations of these three models included (1) coaches possessed at least a bachelor's degree, (2) undergraduate students sought coaching services for time management, self-confidence, and general academic support, (3) most center directors trained coaches internally, (4) coaches marketed services to at-risk, first-generation, out-of-state, and high-financial aid recipient students, (5) coaches possess limited access to formal student records, and (6) students who receive coaching graduate with higher GPAs and at higher rates than students who do not receive coaching. The research brief also revealed that coaches are often trained in "basic counseling" techniques and/or complement academic advising structures. Although only five institutions are highlighted, this research hints at the disparity of coaching roles.

The following is an extended overview of some of the most common models currently

applied in colleges and universities.

InsideTrack

InsideTrack is the leading success coaching outsourcing company in higher education

(insidetrack.com). According to their website, the company has coached over 350,000

college students and works with over 100 institutions. As defined by Bettinger and Baker

(2011), "InsideTrack is an independent provider of coaching services that incorporates a

combination of methologies, curricula, and technologies" (p. 2). InsideTrack's asserted

their coaches provide "personalized support and that advising might bridge students'

informational gaps and help students complete tasks they might not otherwise

complete" (Bettinger & Baker, 2011, p.2).

Farrell (2007) provided an overview of the InsideTrack coaching program at Our

Lady of the Lake University. Through a $1-million grant, the college was able to offer

personal coaching services to all 264 first-year and transfer students through

InsideTrack. Farrell (2007) found,

> The coaches motivate and counsel students, many of whom need more than
> positive reinforcement and time-management tips. Coaches also help students
> navigate the public welfare system for sick relatives, or explain to parents why
> they should go into debt to complete their degrees. (pp. 44-45)

In this practitioner publication, the coaching program is said to help students counteract

self-doubt, ease the transition from high school to college, and co-develop action plans

through goal setting. Farrell (2007) argued coaching is comprehensive and not content

specific. Coaches answer questions, provide resources, make referrals, and serve a

different kind of role on campus. Other studies confirmed this role differentiation:

"Coaching's inquiry approach has also been contrasted with didactic, curriculum-driven models that focus on tutoring and/or strategy instruction" (Parker & Boutelle, 2009, p.205). Furthermore, if students are intimidated to ask questions of professors and university administrators, academic coaches provide students with another avenue for help and advice. After one semester, the Our Lady of the Lake saw a five percent increase in first-year retention and administrators hope this will translate into a greater graduation rate.

The most seminal quantitative study to date on academic coaching in higher education was conducted in 2011 at Stanford University on the effectiveness of InsideTrack's Coaching service (Bettinger & Baker, 2011). The researchers led a randomized experiment evaluating 13,555 students across eight different colleges tracking coached versus non-coached students' persistence over two years. The premise of the study was that students may lack key information about how to be successful and/or fail to act due to lack of motivation. Participant schools included public, private, and proprietary institutions. Through random selection, some students received InsideTrack's coaching service. Coaching sessions consisted of goal setting, skill building, self-advocacy, and study skills. Results of the study yielded statistically significant differences in retention and completion rates; coached students were five percentage points more likely to persist than non-coached students. Interestingly, the results of the study demonstrated a significant difference in gender, with male students having a higher receptivity to coaching and greater persistence than females.

Perhaps the strongest criticism of InsideTrack and the associated research is the manner through which coaching is provided. InsideTrack is an outsourcing company that charges a fee to students and/or colleges for their services. Based in San Francisco, all InsideTrack coaching is provided to students over the phone. A natural separation exists when a conversation is not held face-to-face. Facial expressions and mannerisms cannot be seen which may make it harder to authentically interact. Phone conversations have a different dynamic than an in-person interaction, and therefore it may be harder for the student and coach to have an open and honest conversation. Furthermore, InsideTrack coaches cannot be considered true campus staff members or "representatives," as they are not directly hired, trained, and supervised by the institution.

While the Stanford University study yielded impressive results, it does not explore in-house coaching programs owned and operated by the colleges themselves. The present study aims to evaluate university-created coaching programs and current measures of effectiveness.

ADD/ADHD Executive Function coaching

Students who self-identify in one or both of the categories Attention Deficient Disorder or Attention Hyperactivity Disorder (i.e. ADD or ADHD) constitute over half of the entire population of registered students with disabilities (Brinckerhoff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002). Furthermore, schools and colleges have seen a sharp increase in students reporting ADD/ADHD over the last decade (Parker & Boutelle, 2009). Parker and Boutelle's (2009) study at Landmark College, focused on enrolling and assisting students with learning disorders. The authors examined perceptions of 54 undergraduates with

ADHD and/or a learning disability who received coaching. Three full-time coaches

provided executive function coaching to these students and were ICF certified. In this

study, "Coaches use specific types of questions that model reflective thinking and

prompt students' ability to plan and carry out their goals"(Parker & Boutelle, 2009,

p.205). Students were evaluated on their demographic information, their scores on the

Self-Determination Student Scale, and one hour interviews. Concepts such as self-

regulation (behavior) and executive functions (cognitions) were evaluated. One

interesting distinction was made by the students who commented on the uniqueness of

their coach. "In this study, students described coaching as fundamentally different from

traditional services such as academic advising, counseling, and tutoring. They noted that

the coaching was unique in its focus on their development of better executive function

skills" (p. 212). Throughout the study, several attempts were made to distinguish

coaching from therapy. However, the concepts ADD coaches discussed, such as self-

directedness, self-awareness, skill development, and goal-attainment, are all arguably

hallmarks of the counseling session. Furthermore, the findings were self-reported and

based on students' perceptions of the value of coaching.

Reciprocal Peer Coaching

Reciprocal Peer Coaching (RPC) applies formative assessment techniques that

employ "knowledge of results is used as an instruction for further learning" (2010, p.

404). In her qualitative study, Asghar (2010) interviewed 12 first-year students to elicit

perceptions of the effectiveness of RPC using a phenomenological approach. In order to

situate RPC, Asghar argues there is a clear difference between peer assessment (i.e.

peers employed to give each other grades) versus peer feedback (i.e. dialogue and accountability), with RPC focusing on feedback. Findings included three main themes: students who participated in RPC had increased motivated learning (including time and emotional pressures), learning as part of a group (accountability and establishing a mutually interdependent goal), and contextualized learning (getting the students to understand the true value of the content for future careers).   Contrasted with another peer group, student indicated they valued tutor feedback more than their peer group as "tutors were ultimately seen as clinicians who have the knowledge and authority to say what is right or wrong" (p. 110). It is unclear how, why, or to what extent tutoring feedback is different than coaching feedback.

Student Success Coach, University of Minnesota Rochester

At the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR) a position called a Student Success Coach was created for an undergraduate degree program in Health Sciences (Neuhauser & Weber, 2011). In their description of their program, the authors asserted that "Student Success Coaches serve as the link between the academic and student affairs sides of the campus" (p. 43). The coaching framework is based on pedagogical theory and complements a new faculty model aimed at providing students on-going support outside of the classroom. Second, the coaches provide students with both academic and personal support and serve as a liaison between students and faculty. Third, UMR focuses on learning outcomes and coaches help students achieve these outcomes through a mapping process. It is unclear why UMR used the term "Success Coach," which is another purpose of the national survey proposed in this present study.

Parker and Boutelle (2009) compared/contrasted the academic coach role to other traditional services on campus. Students self-described coaching as "a personalized, self-directed service that promoted their self-determination" (p. 208). The research revealed that the role of a coach could be integrated into nearly any other role on campus. In addition, very little is known about the "type" of student who may benefit the most from a coaching session. While all the above mentioned studies include sound approaches and methodologies, they do not provide readers with students' perceptions of their disability or concerns and difficulties. It would strengthen the research to evaluate the students beyond just their ADD or class status. In order to determine how students benefit from coaching (not just outlining the coaching methods), and the relationship to GPA, post-coaching student outcomes should be taken into consideration.

Academic Success Coach, University of South Carolina

Beginning in 2005, the University of South Carolina hosts one of the longest-standing, institutionally-supported academic coaching programs that has been nationally recognized. The Academic Coaching & Engagement (ACE) program won the 2009 Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) Bronze award in academic support (NASPA, 2010) and is College Reading and Learning Association Level III certified. Coaching staff include three full time coaches and 15-20 graduate coaches working with over 1600 students per year. As explained in Robinson and Gahagan's (2010) article,

Academic coaching can be a crucial step in helping students transition to college. Coaches work with students to be strategic in establishing and achieving their academic goals as well as becoming engaged on campus. At the University of South Carolina, academic coaching is defined as a one-on-one interaction with a student focusing on strengths, goals, study skills, engagement, academic planning, and performance. The coach encourages students to reflect on strengths related to their academics and works with the student to try new study strategies. Finally, the coach serves as a constant resource for the student to reconnect with throughout college. (p. 27)

In addition to hosting an established coaching program, ACE has eight years of data measuring impact on GPA increases, qualitative feedback from students who have used the program, and measurements of learning outcomes. First-year students on academic probation appear to have the greatest gains when meeting with a coach multiple times (Robinson & Gahagan, 2010). While this model appears to encompass a comprehensive approach to student academic success and engagement, more research is needed to evaluate how and why such a program is considered effective.

NACADA Coaching Interest Group Survey

At the 2013 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) annual conference, a survey was conducted to capture connections between academic advising and academic coaching (Smith & Martorana, 2013). Eighteen participants shared information about their coaching program including student populations served, outcomes, challenges, theoretical support, assessment, training, and connection to advising. Results were disparate. Some coaching programs served all students (n = 7) and others served only special student populations (n=11). Half of the programs did not employ assessment techniques, while the other half used study skill inventories, student satisfaction information, retention and/or GPA data. Interestingly, several different

45

views were shared explain the role of coaching with advising on their campus. Examples

included, "there is no formal connection," "coaching at the top, advising at the bottom,"

"coaching after advising," "complements and supplements" and "working to use

coaching strategies in advising appointments." While the primary limitation of the

NACADA interest group survey is small sample size, these coaching concepts and

measures parallel the present research study.

Inputs-Environment-Outcomes of Coaching

Alexander Astin's seminal assessment model uses the conceptual framework of

inputs, environment, and outcomes (IEO) to frame higher education practice (1993).

Astin argued, "any educational assessment project is incomplete unless it includes data

on student inputs, student outcomes, and the educational environment in which the

student is exposed" (p. 18). Given the novelty of coaching in higher education, the IEO

model is an ideal framework for the present study. Academic/Success coaching is

designed to provide students with a certain environment that may or may not be

differentiated from academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring

environments. Astin (1993) defined an environment as "the student's actual

experiences during an educational program" (p. 18). To date, there is no comprehensive

understanding of students experience in coaching.

When evaluating coaching practices, we must consider the various inputs (e.g.

student populations using coaching services, student utilization techniques, etc.), the

coaching environment itself (e.g. employment types, primary emphases in coaching

conversations, session length, etc.), and coaching outcomes (e.g. intended objectives,

measures of effectiveness, etc.). Astin posited that educators directly control items included in the environment in order to foster a student's talents. As such, the IEO model is used to guide questions posed in the national survey. Finally, the IEO framework is used to present results and structure discussion.

SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE

Students' relationships with "representatives of the college" have been extensively researched and deemed a top predictor of whether or not a student persists or departs an institution. From a student perspective, Chickering (2006) stated a "critical ingredient for sustained energy and solid learning is prompt, detailed, and personalized feedback on strengths and weaknesses of varied products and performances, accompanied by specific suggestions for improvement or next steps" (Chickering, 2006, p. 2). From an institutional perspective, Kuh et al. (2005) argued that institutions should "fashion policies, programs, and practices that encourage students to participate in educationally purposeful activities – so that a greater number of students may achieve their potential" (p.10).

Much of the literature on coaching focuses on qualitative analysis (Brock, 2008; Kappenberg, 2008). Very few empirical studies focus on academic coaching and/or coaching in a higher education setting. The researcher could only locate a few studies using quantitative analysis of academic coaching in higher education, with the Bettinger and Baker (2011) Stanford University article assessing the coaching company InsideTrack being the most compelling. Bettinger and Baker (2011) correctly asserted "Student coaching may be a way for universities to reach out to students who may not otherwise

be connected to their respective institutions" (p. 5). Given this emphasis on qualitative

analysis of coaching, it would enhance the field if the role was evaluated using

quantitative measures. Further still, statistical measures provide an objective evaluation

of perceived effectiveness (Kirk, 2011). And, given the general lack of research on

coaching in college, more information is needed to justify how and why this new role is

important to student success. Understanding the nature and impact of coach-student

interactions will specify and quantify this new role within the field of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The present study aims to provide an overview of current coaching programs in

higher education via an exploratory, descriptive study and to develop a macro-level

analysis of academic/success coaching purpose, defining characteristics, institutional

variety, and measures of effectiveness. In order to comprehensively evaluate coaching

in higher education, this exploratory study utilized a national survey of current college

coaching programs. Results of this study provided an overview of key components that

make up current institutionally supported (i.e. not outsourced) academic/success

coaching programs. Intended student outcomes are also assessed. Astin's (1993) Inputs,

Environment, and Outcomes (IEO) theoretical framework was used to guide the survey

questions, organize results, and frame discussion.

Survey Design

Given a void in national research on coaching in higher education, a survey was

conducted to capture the spectrum of current programs in colleges and universities (See

Appendix A). Themes identified included student utilization techniques, topical areas

that are the focus of the coaching session (i.e. personal issues, academic issues, study

skills, etc.) and current retention/persistence data collected by coaching programs. As

such, the research questions lend themselves to a quantitative approach by identifying

large-scale themes/trends in coaching using descriptive statistics.

The survey was designed using Astin's Inputs-Environment-Outcomes (IEO) theoretical framework of assessment. To begin, the researcher designed questions capturing basic information about coaching programs such as titles used, personnel hired, and year of origination. These data simply serve as a baseline information to set the stage for further analysis. Second, three questions were designed to collect information on student inputs. Specifically, the researcher wanted to know how students used coaching services (i.e. utilization techniques that included mandates, referrals, or opt-in), and the scope of availability to students (i.e. available to entire student body versus limited availability to only special student populations). Third, defining characteristics were explored in the coaching environment. Intended content, primary emphases, training, and resource development were all considered components of an educational coaching environment. Finally, outcomes were measured via three survey questions on intended objectives, methods of assessment, and measures of effectiveness. Collectively, the IEO model provides a sound structure for descriptive survey design.

Research Design and Approach

Using descriptive statistics, a main objective of the present study is to 1) identify national trends in coaching programs and 2) determine how coaching is linked to various student outcomes. Considering the limited research available on coaching in higher education, and the inherent confusion over role differentiation between coaching, academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, it is beneficial to evaluate the factors that most likely lead to enhanced student outcomes. Results of the

survey helped to distinguish coaching from similar roles and are discussed in the

analysis. Furthermore, if coaching is indeed a viable retention strategy for colleges and

universities, research is justified to focus on academic coaching effectiveness such as

persistence rates and potential factors that lead to upward movement in GPA.

Setting and Sample

For the descriptive study, the setting is two-year and four-year colleges with an

established coaching program. The sample was created from a review of relevant

listservs, conference presentations, practitioner publications, personal contacts, and a

review of websites. A running list of coaching programs, contact information, and

general information was kept to establish a sampling frame. The unit of analysis to be

measured is *coaching programs*. Specifically, intended survey respondents are program

directors, coordinators, or coaches themselves. The researcher identified approximately

65 institutions that fit the intended setting.

Instrumentation, Pilot, and Dissemination

To pilot the survey, the researcher identified three separate coaching programs

and asked six participants to complete the survey. After an electronic version of the

survey was emailed to the pilot group, the researcher conducted three separate follow-

up conversations with respondents. During these conversations, the pilot group

provided feedback on clarity of questions, missing information, and ease of use. After

conducting follow-up conversations with the pilot respondents, several edits were made

to strengthen the survey.

Officially, the survey was distributed electronically via Campus Labs software system. The researcher used the sampling frame mentioned above, and all surveys were distributed electronically via email. Specifically, five relevant, national listservs were used to target potential respondents. Listservs included the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) listserv on "academic coaching," the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) listserv on "Learning Assistance," and the First-Year Experience listserv which has received several postings over the past five years on inquiring about academic coaching practices. The number of individual email addresses receiving the survey posting totaled over 6,500. However, not all listserv subscribers fit the intended audience, thus entering error into the sampling frame.

In addition to listservs, over an eight-year period, the researcher kept a running list of people and programs across the country who contacted her inquiring about developing a coaching program. To date, this list included 106 contacts. In addition, the researcher created a list of institutional websites linked to established coaching programs. A review of these websites provided basic information as well as specific contacts for the programs (e.g. directors, coordinators, and coaches). Finally, the researcher identified various presenters at relevant conferences such as NACADA, First-Year Experience, National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA), College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), ACPA, NASPA, and the Retention Symposium. In sum, target groups of respondents were those who have current coaching programs established on campus.

The survey was distributed via two methods: individual invitation and listserv

distribution. First, 190 individuals were identified as holding positions directly related to

a coaching program within their college or university. These individuals were sent a

personal invitation inviting them to participate in the survey. Second, the survey was

distributed over five listservs including the College Reading and Learning Association

(1774 subscribers), Appreciative Education (1260 subscribers), First-Year Experience

(3515 subscribers), Student Personal Association Alumni (unknown subscribers), and the

National Academic Advising Association Academic Coaching Interest group (unknown

subscribers). After the initial invitation email, two additional reminders were sent to

increase response rate. The survey was open for a one month period during October

2014. As a small incentive, respondents were offered an opportunity to receive a

summary of results. Because of this distribution method and lack of a national database

of coaching programs, the survey response rate is unknown and the true population is

undefined.

Limitation: Sampling Design

The sampling design is limited in scope due to the fact that only institutions with

"active" coaching programs are targeted to take the survey. The sample was generated

from listserv postings, conference presentations, and other venues through which

participants expressed explicit interest in the topic. Coaching programs not involved in

the national conversation may not have been included in the survey distribution list.

Given that the sample is retrieved from listservs, conferences, practitioner publications,

etc. comprise of "established coaching programs" the sample is not representative of all

institutions. Only those programs that have been active in the national coaching

conversation were identified to receive the survey link.

In addition, one institution might have multiple coaching programs (i.e. Career

Coaching, Academic Coaching, Success Coaching, etc.) This sampling design may lead to

some duplication in responses. As such, results may be skewed. In addition, self-

selection influences results of any survey. Only respondents who chose to participate in

the survey have their coaching program included in the present study.

Finally, the methodology limited the forth research question pertaining to

assessment. Survey items within this fourth variable rely on "self-reported"

effectiveness. There is certainly wide variation in the level and type of assessment

conducted within the coaching programs. However, despite this limitation, the results of

such questions certainly advance the field, considering no such study has taken place on

a macro-level to date.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics comprised of frequencies, cross-tabulations, and chi-square

tests were used to analyze the survey results. As the research questions postulate, the

present research ultimately aims to evaluate the effect of academic coaching on

undergraduate student success.

Confidentiality

In order to protect individual responses, all names and personally identifiable

information are kept confidential and anonymous. In the analysis of this research, no

personal names were associated with quotations and/or information about

respondents'' respective coaching program. Furthermore, the researcher assured

confidentiality standards as required by the Institutional Review Board at the University

of South Carolina (see Appendix D).

Summary

In sum, this study synthesizes findings from a national survey of coaching

programs. Nationally, coaching programs are likely to vary in infrastructure and

effectiveness. By conducting a survey, the field will benefit from an analysis of the

current roles and responsibilities provided by academic/success coaches.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter highlights the results of a national survey on coaching programs and

presents findings to four research questions: (1) why do colleges and universities **create**

coaching programs? (2) what are the **defining characteristics** of institutionally

supported coaching programs? (3) how do coaching programs and positions vary by

institution type? and (4) how are coaching programs **assessed**? The purpose of this

study aims to further define academic/success coaching by identifying key features of

programs on college campuses. This research presents a first attempt at providing a

national overview of the design, employment, emphases, and objectives of coaching

programs. This information will hopefully serve as a platform for future research to

explore the impact and uniqueness of coaching, thus allowing institutions to make

effective and efficient use of resources. In addition, role clarification will enable

students to better understand the purpose of a coach and therefore seek and receive

the assistance they need.

Final results of the survey yielded 160 total respondents representing 101

individual colleges and universities. Forty-four respondents remained anonymous and

seven institutions had multiple entries. Thirty-nine states were included in the survey,

along with five colleges outside the United States. The following is a list of participating states and the number of responses received within each state.

Alabama (2)	Kentucky (1)	Ohio (11)
Arizona (2)	Louisiana (1)	Oklahoma (2)
Arkansas (2)	Maryland (2)	Oregon (1)
California (3)	Massachusetts (4)	Pennsylvania (1)
Colorado (5)	Michigan (2)	South Carolina (5)
Connecticut (6)	Minnesota (3)	South Dakota (1)
Florida (6)	Missouri (4)	Tennessee (4)
Georgia (1)	Montana (1)	Texas (3)
Hawaii (1)	Nebraska (1)	Vermont (2)
Idaho (1)	New Jersey (1)	Virginia (2)
Illinois (3)	New Mexico (1)	Washington (1)
Indiana (2)	New York (7)	West Virginia (1)
Kansas (2)	North Carolina (3)	Wisconsin (2)

The eleven non-participating (or non-identified) states included Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, five colleges outside the United States participated, including the College of North Atlantic Qatar, Faith University (Turkey), Cape Breton University, University of Waterloo, and Seneca College (Canada). Institutions were also asked some basic profile questions. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the results of the size of student body and institution type, respectively.

Table 4.1
Size of Student Body

Size of Student Body	Category	Frequency	Percent
10,000 or more	Large	59	37.0
5000-9999	Midsize	22	14.0
1000-4999	Small	38	24.0
Fewer than 1,000	Small	3	2.0
Anonymous	-	38	24.0
Total	-	160	100

Table 4.2
Type of Institution

Institution Type	Frequency	Percent
4 year public	63	39.0
4 year private	38	24.0
2 year public	20	13.0
2 year private	1	1.0
Anonymous	38	24.0

Table 4.1 reveals that 51 percent of respondents represent an institution with a student body size greater than 5,000. In addition, 63 percent of respondents are from a four-year institution. Unfortunately, a large proportion of respondents remained anonymous. Given these were questions 19 and 20, this lack of response may be due in part to survey fatigue. Table 4.2 reveals that 63 percent of all respondents are from a four-year institution, while only 14 percent represent a two-year institution.

In addition to analyzing the institution as a whole, participants were asked *In which division/unit/department is your coaching program held? (Check all that apply).* The distribution is represented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Division/Unit/Department Coaching Program is Housed

Division/Unit/Department (Check all that apply)	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n=190)
Student Success Cntr/Learning Assist/Academic Support	52	27.4
Academic Affairs	51	26.8
Student Affairs	38	20
Athletics	3	1.6
Other (Please specify)	11	5.8
Non-Response	35	18.4
Total	190	100

The selection "athletics" was defined in the survey as "an educational coaching program that supports athletes exclusively." Examples of "Other Specified" include First-Year Experience, Office of the President, Workforce Solutions, University College, HR, University College, Not sure, College of Adult and Professional Studies, and Campus Life.

Finally, in order to capture respondent profiles, participants were asked *What is your role on campus? (Please select the description that most closely aligns with your position.)* Table 4.4 presents a distribution of results.

Table 4.4
Respondent Role on Campus

Respondent Role on Campus	Frequency	Percent Total Respondents (n= 160)
Director/Assistant Director/Coordinator	59	36.9
Department Head	30	18.8
Coach	21	13.1
Other	12	7.5
Non-Response	38	23.8
Total	160	100

Thirteen percent of respondents identified their role as a "coach" defined in the survey as "working directly with/coaching students." The largest proportion of respondents included director, assistant director, or coordinators of a coaching program (defined in the survey as oversight of coaching program and supervision of coaches), followed by department heads. Eight percent stated their role fell outside these traditional options, with specified examples including OD& T Manager, Student Support/Wellness Counselor, Academic Advisor, faculty, Learning Specialist, Research Consultant, Vice

President of Student Affairs, and Director of Advising and Co-Facilitator of the Coaching

Program.

<div align="center">**Creation of Coaching Programs**</div>

The predominant reason institutions established coaching programs was to

increase retention, work with academically deficient students, and provide a unique or

specialized service on campus. Table 4.5 presents these catalysts in order of frequency.

Participants were asked to indicate the top three reasons their coaching program was

established. Results were organized by total respondents/participants in the survey

(n=160) and total responses to selections provided (n=372).

Table 4.5
Catalyst for Creating Coaching Program as Indicated by Top Three Reasons

Reason Established	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n=372)	Percent Total Respondents (n=160)
Increase Retention	89	23.9	55.6
Academic Deficient students	60	16.1	37.5
Unique Service (please specify)	52	14.0	32.5
New Service	46	12.4	28.7
Special Student Population (please specify)	45	12.1	28.1
Enhance Academic Advising	33	8.9	20.6
Current Service (please specify)	22	5.9	13.7
Replace Old Title	10	2.7	6.3
Other #1	15	4.0	9.4
Total	372	100	-

Over 55 percent of individual respondents indicated their coaching program was created

to increase retention, accounting for 23 percent of the overall responses. In addition, 28

percent of total responses revealed intent to serve special populations and/or

academically deficient students. Twenty-six percent revealed intent to provide a unique

service and/or provide a new service on campus. Eighteen percent revealed intent to

expand a current service, and/or expand academic advising, and/or replace an old title.

Finally, three of the answer choices (including provide specialized/unique service, work

with special student population, and expand a current service) offered participants

open-ended responses to further specify their selection. These explanations are

described below.

Specialized/Unique Service

Fifty-two respondents indicated that one of the top three reasons their coaching

program was established was to "to provide students with a specialized/unique service."

When selecting this option, respondents were asked to describe the specialized service

via open-ended response. Of those who explained their service, study skill development

seemed to be the predominant intention (n=10). Other specialized services included

motivation, content-specific support, goal setting, individualized support, support

student transition to college/retention, and major selection. See table 4.6 for a

distribution of open-ended response.

Table 4.6
"Specialized Service" Catalyst Explained via Open-ended Response

Specialized/Unique Service	Frequency	Percent
Indicated Specialized Service, but not described	16	30.7
Study Skills	10	19.2
Content Specific (math, financial literacy, healthcare, writing)	4	7.6
Serve a Special Population (not learning disabilities)	3	5.8
Support Students with Learning Disabilities/ADD/ADHD	3	5.8
Provide Students "Individualized Support"	2	3.8
Support Student Transition to College/Retention	2	3.8
Goal Setting	2	3.8
Motivation	2	3.8
Major Selection	1	1.9
Isolated Response	7	13.5
Total	52	100

When asked to further explain the specialized service their coaches provide, several responses centered on "holistic" coaching. One institution wanted "a coaching opportunity that would be available to ANY student on campus, not just those affiliated with specific groups" (Peer Academic Coach, large four-year public[8]). Another stated, "Coaching is available to all undergrad students that wish to improve their academics and work towards specified goals" (Academic Coach, anonymous institution).

A second specialized service focused on providing students individual attention. Examples include self-awareness, motivation, individualized academic-strategy development, individualized focus on student's adoption of academic and student success strategies, individualized ongoing support, and learning assessment and support. One respondent stated, "students were needing more intense one-on-one

---

[8] Quote citation includes the name of the coaching program (not necessarily the respondent's title) along with the size and type of institution.

sessions about academic skills that tutors and SI [Supplemental Instruction] Leaders didn't have time for in sessions" (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Several respondents explained the specialization of coaching as inherently different from mentoring. One respondent stated, "This university has a LOT of mentorship resources focusing on content-specific support from others within certain colleges or majors. The Peer Success Coaching program fosters academic success by coaching the whole student (academic, social, personal, etc.) regardless of area of study" (Peer Success Coach, large four-year public). Another responded, "We have plenty of 'mentors' on campus. We wanted to utilize coaches to establish the assistance portion" (Success Coach, large four-year public).

Finally, one respondent explained her perception of the coaching role as a unique method of working with students. "The realization that I was already 'coaching' and not just giving students the standard study tips, etc. I understood that they were generally going through more than just time management needs and I wanted to expand my reach to students" (Academic Coach, midsize four-year private). This explanation differed from others by defining coaching as a technique, rather than a service itself.

Current Service Expansion

Fourteen percent of all responses (n=22) indicated their coaching program was established to expand an existing student service on their campus. When selecting this response, respondents were asked to specify the name of the program. The distribution resulted in tutoring/supplemental instruction/learning assistance (n=8), courses

63

focusing on study skills or academic recovery (n=2), academic recovery programs (n=2), and "isolated response" defined as a current service not listed by any other participant (n=7). Of the coaching programs that were started for this purpose, the majority aimed to enhance tutoring and supplemental instruction. One participant indicated their coaching program is "changing SI to more specialized academic support" (Math 101 Coach, small four-year private). Two respondents indicated their coaching program intended to expand a course. As explained, "Our coaching is required as part of our study skills course, our model is 'course connected coaching'" (Academic Success Coach, large four-year public). Finally, other isolated answers included previously established services such as the counseling center, intrusive advisement, and academic support services.

Special Student Populations

Twenty-eight percent of all responses (n=45) indicated their coaching program was first established to provide a service to a special student population. In order to decipher the various populations indicated, the researcher organized responses into single categories listed below. Because there is considerable overlap in populations provided via the open-ended response, these descriptors are not necessarily exclusive (e.g. first-year, at risk).

Table 4.7
"Special Population" Catalyst Explained via Open-ended Response

Special Student Population	Frequency (Total times referenced)	Percent
First-year students/First time in College	10	18.2
At-Risk	7	12.7
Conditional Admits	7	12.7
Academic Probation/Academically Deficient	4	7.2
Developmental Education	4	7.2
Athletes, Honors, Scholarship	4	7.5
Minority	4	7.5
Undecided/Exploratory Majors	3	5.5
Disability	3	5.5
Other - Demographic Specified	9	16.4
Total	55	100
Two Populations or More	7	12.7

For those institutions that established a coaching program to serve a special student population, results indicated that the top two populations are first-year students and at-risk students. Other student populations included conditional admits, students on academic probation, and exploratory or undecided. Reported via an "other" option, some specific demographics were mentioned such as "African American males," "minority males," "low income and foster youth," "rural," "title 3," "under-represented," and "TRIO and Gear-up." One respondent stated her coaching program focused on, "Students on the lower end of the admissions index and Academic Warning freshmen" (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Student Populations Served

To further explore the various target users of coaching programs, participants were asked *What types of student populations were coaching programs designed to support? (Check all that apply).* Table 4.8 presents a distribution of responses.

Table 4.8
Student Populations Served

Student Populations	Total Count	Percent Total	Exclusive Count	Percent Exclusive
All Undergraduates (First-yr through Sr)	68	26.7	-	-
First-Year students	73	28.6	52	61.9
First and Second-year	-	-	16	19.0
Juniors	26	10.2	1	1.2
Seniors	10	3.9	0	0
Academically Deficient Undergraduate Students	58	2.7	3	3.6
Graduate Students	12	4.7	1	1.2
Special Population** (please specify)	43	16.8	11	13.1
Total	255	100	84	100

In order to fully identify student populations, responses were organized by total count and exclusive count. Total count tallied the total number of times a population was referenced. For example, 29 percent (n= 73) of all respondents indicated their coaching program served first-year students as either the sole or part of their intended clientele. Exclusive count represents populations that do not overlap with other populations. For example, 62 percent (n=52) of respondents indicated that their coaching program *only* serves first-year students. In sum, results of the survey show that over 97 percent of all coaching programs served first-year, second-year, academically deficient, and/or special student populations.

As shown, approximately 17 percent (n=43) of all respondents indicated their

coaching program serves a special student population and 13 percent (n=11) indicated

this is the only type of student coached. Examples of special populations specified in this

survey question include students with a learning disability, depressed and/or anxious,

professional students (e.g., medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine), TRIO & GEAR UP

first-year students, honors students, adult students, student athletes,

faculty/staff/employees, high school grades 8-12, international students, transitional

studies, and gateway courses. Given this reoccurrence in two separate survey questions

measuring intended clientele, serving "special student populations" appears to be a

signature reason for creating a coaching program.

Year Established

As the title of the present study postulates, the concept of coaching is a recent

trend in higher education. Results of the survey confirmed this novelty by identifying the

year the institution established their coaching program. Approximately 83 percent of

participating institutions indicated their coaching program was established after year

2005. Table 4.9 shows a frequency distribution based on condensed years.

Table 4.9
Year (Condensed) Coaching Program Established

Year Established	Frequency	Percent
1999 and prior	4	2.5
2000-2004	10	6.3
2005-2009	22	13.8
2010-2014	113	70.6
No Response	11	6.8
Total	160	100

Coaching programs appear to have been established primarily within the last two decades. In order to identify themes, a cross-tabulation between "year established" and "reason established" is presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10
Cross-tabulation of Year Established and Reason Established

	1999 & prior (n=4)	2000-2004 (n=10)	2005-2009 (n=22)	2010-2014 (n=113)	No Year Response (n=11)	Totals
Increase Retention	1	2	16	69	1	89
Academic Deficient Students	2	4	7	43	4	60
Unique Service	2	8	8	32	2	52
New Service	0	4	7	34	1	46
Special Population	1	1	7	34	2	45
Enhance Advising	0	1	5	25	2	33
Current Service	2	2	3	12	3	22
Replace Old Title	1	2	2	5	0	10
Other 1	0	1	1	10	3	15

Considering the dramatic increase of coaching programs after 2010, it is difficult to conclude any distinguishing catalysts based solely on year of established. However, it can be assumed that the 2008 College Completion Agenda likely spurred interest in any new retention-based initiatives (Hughes, 2012). According to the 2012 College Board Progress Report, the College Completion Agenda's primary goal is to "increase the proportion of 25 to 34-year-olds who hold an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by the year 2025 in order to make America the leader in education attainment in the world" (Hughes, p.2). As such, establishing coaching programs may be due in part to this call to action.

Defining Characteristics

The second research question aimed to identify the defining characteristics of institutionally supported coaching programs and positions on college campuses. The first characteristic simply identified the names of coaching programs. Participants were asked *What is the name of your coaching program/your coaches' title?* Table 4.11 reveals the most commonly used titles.

Table 4.11
Names of Coaching Programs

Name	Frequency	Percent
Academic Coach	71	44.4
Academic Success Coach	24	15.0
Success Coach	26	16.3
Other Coach title	39	24.4
Total	160	100

Approximately 75 percent of programs use the name Academic Coach, Academic Success Coach, or Success Coach. However, the word "coach" is used in various other ways to describe programs, services, and initiatives. Respondents were given an opportunity to fill in the blank under "other title" which yielded 39 results. Name variations included academic advising coach, college and career coach, college life coach, collegiate success coach, completion coach, honors coach, freshman success coach, study skills coach, learning enrichment coach, major exploration coach, math 101 coach, peer academic coach, peer coach, peer financial coach, peer success coach, personal development coach, pre-core math coach, reading coach, and wellbeing peer coach.

Although the survey instructions explicitly asked for programs and titles only using the word "coach," 22 respondents completed the survey despite not meeting this criterion. Examples of non-coach responses include academic counselor, academic mentor, academic success practitioner, appreciative advisers, back-on-track mentor, connect 4 success, intervention specialist, learning consultants, learning specialist, mentor, peer academic leaders, start center advisor, retention specialist, student success advisor, student success coordinator, organizational tutors, student success specialists, and Year One instructor. It can be assumed that these participants completed the survey to describe a similar role they believed related to coaching. However, given that the intent of the research was to focus exclusively on programs using "coach" as a label, all non-coach responses were omitted and not included in the final count of 160.

Student Utilization

Two other defining characteristics include typical length of coaching session and student utilization methods. Participants were asked *How do students utilize your coaching service? (Please indicate the primary reason)*. Responses were limited to three selections including drop-in/schedule appointment, referred, and required. Table 4.12 presents the findings in order of frequency.

Table 4.12
Student Utilization of Coaching Program

Student Utilization	Frequency	Percent
Students drop-in/Schedule their own appointments	56	35.0
Students are referred (but not required) to attend	40	25.0
Students are required/mandated to attend by a policy, etc.	35	22.0
No Response	29	18.0
Total	160	100

Student utilization of coaching programs appears to be evenly spread across the

three main categories, with the majority of programs allowing students to drop-in or

schedule their own appointments. As such, this utilization technique can be contrasted

with other roles on campus such as Academic Advising (a service often

required/mandated) and tutoring (a service often referred).

In addition to utilization techniques, coaching programs also vary in length of

session. As shown in Table 4.13, results indicated that 75 percent of coaching programs

had an average appointment length between 16 and 60 minutes.

Table 4.13
Average Length of Coaching Session

Average Length	Frequency	Percent
15 minutes or less	6	3.8
16-30 minutes	43	26.9
31-60 minutes	77	48.1
61 minutes or more	5	3.1
No Response	29	18.1
Total	160	100

To gauge the breadth of coaching program usage, participants were asked

Approximately how many students does your coaching program serve in one year (i.e.,

within the last 12 months)? Results are presented in table 4.14.

71

Table 4.14
Number of Students Served in Coaching Program Within the Last Year

Number of students served	Frequency	Percent
10 or Fewer	5	3.12
11-50	22	13.8
51-100	27	16.9
101-200	15	9.4
201-500	29	18.1
501-1000	17	10.6
1001-2000	8	5.0
2001-3000	6	3.8
3001 or more	2	1.3
No Response	29	18.1
Total	160	100

Approximately 72 percent of coaching programs surveyed met with 1,000 or fewer

students and 61 percent of programs met with 500 or fewer students. However, these

frequencies do not take into account the overall institutional size or student enrollment.

In addition, a cross-tabulation of year established and students served yielded

significant results ($\chi2$ = 57.66, p= .012, 36df, n=160).

Table 4.15
Year Established and Number of Student Served

	1999 or prior	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	No year response	Total
10 or Fewer	0	0	0	5	0	5
11-50	0	0	1	21	0	22
51-100	1	1	2	20	3	27
101-200	0	1	2	10	2	15
201-500	0	2	7	19	1	29
501-1000	2	4	1	10	0	17
1001-2000	0	0	2	6	0	8
2001-3000	0	1	4	1	0	6
3000 or More	0	0	0	2	0	2
No Response	1	1	3	19	5	29
Total	4	10	22	113	11	160

Employment Type

Participants were asked to indicate the type of coach they employ along with the number of people serving in the role. To identify FTE positions devoted solely to coaching, two employment terms were defined in the survey question. A *full-time professional coach* was defined as "the sole responsibility of coach role is working directly with/coaching students." This role was differentiated from a *partial full-time professional coach* defined as "the coaching role is part of another full-time position on campus such as advising, teaching, administration, etc.). Table 4.16 outlines frequencies reported for each employment type.

Table 4.16
Coach Employment Type and Frequency of Hire

Employment Type	1-5	6-10	11-20	21 or more	Totals	Percent
Full-time Professional Coach	41	7	3	0	51	23.7
"Partial" Full-time Professional Coach	43	4	4	2	53	24.7
Graduate Student	30	13	2	1	46	21.4
Undergraduate Student	12	16	10	6	44	20.5
Volunteer	6	1	1	6	14	6.5
Other Specified	6	1	0	0	7	3.3
Total Responses	138	42	20	15	215	-
Percent	64.2	19.5	9.3	6.9	-	100

The top two types of coach positions were full-time professional coaches and partial full-time professional coaches equaling nearly half of all responses. For institutions hosting graduate programs, several appear to incorporate coaching into a graduate student role. Finally 20.5 percent (n=44) of respondents indicated using undergraduate students to coach their peers. However, undergraduate students seem to be one of the

more infrequent coach types, as many institutions devote FTE resources to their coaching programs.

In addition, 6.5 percent (n=14) of respondents indicated that they used volunteer coaches. When asked to specify this employment type, respondents provided examples such as full-time and part-time employees of the college, graduate and undergraduate students, community partners, and retired faculty/staff. Other specific types included volunteers from Residence Life and Career Services, Student Life Professionals, and AmeriCorps.

Other specified employment types included grant-funded "post- docs," part-time professional coaches, "full-time faculty teaching a half time load and coaching the remaining half," and "part-time, masters-level coaches." One respondent indicated the coaching role was a "full-time position and responsibilities split approximately 75 percent directly coaching students, 25 percent program development and broader university retention efforts" (Collegiate Success Coach, anonymous institution). Other employment themes included relationship to mentor programs, descriptions of credentials, organizational structure, and graduate students. Employment is further analyzed below.

Mentor Programs

Of the 58 participants who chose to further explain their employment model, four mentioned their coaching program complemented a mentor program. Three example employment models were described as (1) "two full-time coaches, one part-time coach , and six peer mentors" (Academic Coach, anonymous institution), (2) "three

full-time professional academic success coaches, one current graduate assistant for the

program (future will be 8), and eight current Peer Mentors for the program (future will

be up to 24)" (Academic Success Coach, midsize four-year public), and (3) "75

undergraduate peer coaches are volunteers, eight peer coach leaders, experienced

students who mentor a small group of peer coaches, are paid" (Peer Coach, small four-

year private).   Notably, some institutions align their coaching model to mentorship

programs, although it is not clear how these programs are distinguished.

Varied Responsibilities

Additional descriptions of employment reveal a variety of coaching roles. For

example, one participant stated,

> We are in the process of getting everyone hired. We have 3 professional staff
> member coaches, 1 GA, and 8 peer mentors. By the spring term, each
> professional coach will have 2 GA's and 4 peer mentors assigned to them. In the
> spring, we will be working with freshmen who end up on academic probation.
> Our program is in the process of being created and we would love to get the
> results of this survey (Academic Success Coach, midsize four-year public).

Another respondent explained her undergraduate hiring process by stating, "we hire

students that have previously held positions in the First Year Experience/Persistence &

Retention department. For example orientation leaders, welcome leaders, learning

community peer mentors, family ambassadors, or any peer mentor position through our

office" (Student Success Coach, midsize four-year private). Finally, another respondent

stated "The Collegiate Success Coach does a lot of outreach and support for other

retention initiatives in addition to the coaching" (Collegiate Success Coach, large four-

year public).

Credentials

Several programs' (n=10) coach credentials required a Master's degree and/or current enrollment in a graduate program. Examples of credentials include (1) "All of our coaches have a Master's degree. Three of our coaches hold professional certifications," and (2) "Full-Time Salaried Staff Positions – Minimum Educational Requirement is a Master's Degree. At least 2-3 years of counseling, advising, retention higher educational experience." For those that employ undergraduate students, credentials appear to vary. For example, one respondent stated, "Freshman Success Coaches attend a Freshman Seminar course a week. Then, for an hour after class, they provide coaching for students as well as additional support throughout the semester" (Freshman Success Coach, Unknown Institution). Another program mentioned only hiring undergraduate students who have successfully completed pre-determined courses.

Organizational Structure

Several participants referenced their organizational structure, including job titles, reporting structures, office names, and caseloads. One participant stated,

> I have been leading the Personal Development Coaching program for seven years. My title is Director of Personal Development and Quality Coaching at [Sic] University. This is my full time job. I have a cadre of nearly 150 volunteer coaches coach [Sic] University students who may opt to obtain a coach (Personal Development Coach, midsize four-year private).

Other examples included a description of a halftime counselor/halftime coach, one-year grant funds, and a part-time faculty member. One respondent stated,

All of the 'partial' employed staff members who serve as academic coaches are full time employees of the Student Success Center. Our staff member coaches are asked to have 2 hours a week available to meet with students as part of the coaching program. One graduate student working with the coaching program holds two of her 20 hours per week to serve as a coach. Another graduate student academic coach holds up to her full 20 hours a week for academic coaching, serving a specific audience of students diagnosed with ADD/ADHD (Academic Coach, large four-year private).

Coaching programs appear to encompass various organizational structures both inside and outside of academic affairs, learning centers, etc. Survey respondent reporting structures are further explored in table 4.20.

Graduate students

Finally, 21 percent (n=41) indicated they hire graduate students to serve as coaches. Most appear to be enrolled in a higher education or counseling Master's degree program. Sample descriptions are provided below.

Graduate students are trained. Training includes Appreciative Advising. Graduate students also receive practicum credit in their graduate program (Academic Coach, midsize four-year private).

I have 10 graduate assistants who coach and an additional two graduate students who are fulfilling practicum/internship hours through the Counseling Program (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Our Academic Coaches are graduate student interns, so they are not paid for their work, however, they receive course credit upon completion of the semester (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Our coaches are graduate students in either the Higher Education Program or the Student Affairs Counseling program in our School of Education. They are completing their internship requirements through working in our program (Success Coach, small four-year private).

Theoretical and/or Conceptual Framework

Participants were asked if their coaching program employs a theoretical

framework for delivering coaching services. Results indicated that 48 percent (n=76) of

coaching programs reveal that no theory is used. Conversely, 35 percent (n=56) of

institutions/respondents use a theoretical framework in their coaching sessions.

Table 4.17
Use of Theory/Conceptual Framework in Coaching Program

Use of Theory in Coaching Program	Frequency	Percent
No Theory Used	76	47.5
Theory Used	56	35.0
No Response	28	17.5
Total	160	100

Of the 56 institutions that indicated a theory is used for service delivery, 68 different

frameworks were cited. Twenty-three percent (n=13) coaching programs stated they

use two or more theories. Table 4.17 reveals a wide distribution of frameworks

employed.

Of note, the word "theory" in this setting may be considered a misnomer.

Defined as an abstraction of reality than can be tested, a formal theory is validated by

research and is "needed to ascertain whether individuals' perceptions hold for the

persons with whom they work and the situations in which they find themselves" (Evans,

Forney, & Guido-Dibrito, 1998, p. 16). In contrast, most survey responses appear to

describe a conceptual framework rather than an authentic theory. Many responses are

not about reality and/or reality testing. Rather, they are frameworks used to improve

reality. Henceforth, this construct is referred to as a "conceptual framework" or simply

"framework."

Table 4.18
Type of Conceptual Frameworks Used for Service Delivery

Framework	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n= 68)	Percent Total Respondents (n=56)
Appreciative Advising/Inquiry	19	27.9	33.9
Intrusive/Proactive Advising	7	10.3	12.5
Student Development Theory	4	5.9	7.1
Motivational Interviewing/Models	3	4.4	5.4
Bloom's Taxonomy	2	2.9	3.6
GROW Coaching Model	2	2.9	3.6
Self-Regulated Learning	2	2.9	3.6
Life Coaching/Life Bound	2	2.9	3.6
Developing Own	2	2.9	3.6
Isolated Response – Coach Specific	4	5.9	7.1
Isolated Response- Non Coach Specific	21	30.9	37.5
Total	68		
Multiple (Program employs two or more frameworks)	13	-	23.2

As shown, the leading conceptual framework used in coaching sessions appears to be

Appreciative Advising (Bloom, Hutson, & Ye, 2008). Other frequently referenced

frameworks relate to academic advising or learning models. The GROW coaching model

was referenced by two different institutions, which represents the framework "goal,

current reality, options, will."

In order to further illustrate the variety of frameworks used, the researcher

coded open-ended responses by identifying themes and frequencies. "Isolated

responses" refer to frameworks cited only once, by one institution. These isolated

frameworks were organized by those that are directly related to coaching (i.e. rooted in

the coaching literature) versus those that are applied to other disciplines. Coach-specific

frameworks referenced (n=6) include SPARCK (Story, Purpose, Aspirations, Reflection,

Connection, Kick-Start), Solutions-Based Brief Coaching, Bill Johnson UNCG,

International Coaching Federation (ICF) core competencies, strengths based coaching,

and SURGE Coaching (Self-awareness, Understanding, Reinvention, Guarantee,

Evaluation). Examples of isolated response, non-coaching specific theories referenced

(n=11) included Brene' Brown, Marilee Adams, and Nevitt Sanford, Holland Person-

Environment, Carl Rogers Client-centered approach, Carol Dweck's Effort Effect, Sian

Beilock's Anxiety Performance, and Duhigg's Power of Habit, Choice Theory, CRLA

certified tutor training, Gibbs communication model, The Model of Strategic Learning,

Trait and Factor Theory, Transtheoretical Model of Change, Vygotsky theory of

scaffolding, Kolb's learning styles, and Seligmans' positive psychology. One respondent

indicated, "This depends on the coach. They are from counseling backgrounds and

utilize counseling theories that fit their students" (Academic Coach, large four-year

public).   Clearly, a large variety of frameworks are used to underpin coaching models.

This inconsistency of frameworks, or the total void altogether, further illustrates the

novelty and perhaps ambiguity of purpose.

Intended Content & Primary Emphases

A fifth defining characteristic of coaching programs is the intended content of

the coaching sessions. Participants were asked to select from a list the top three primary

emphases that are the focus of coaching conversations. Table 4.19 presents those

findings in order of highest frequency.

Table 4.19
Primary Emphases of Coaching Sessions Indicated by Top 3 Selections

Primary Emphases	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n=440)	Percent Total Respondents (n=160)
Study Skills	103	23.4	64.4
Goal Setting	88	20.0	55.0
Academic Recovery	62	14.1	38.8
Academic Planning	47	10.7	25.6
Personal Concerns	22	5.0	13.8
Engagement Planning/Involvement	17	3.8	10.6
Career Planning/Development/Exploration	15	3.4	9.4
Stress Management	10	2.3	6.3
Professional Development	9	2.0	5.6
Course Selection	9	2.0	5.6
Course Specific Support	9	2.0	5.6
Leadership Skills	8	1.9	5.0
Disability Services	3	0.1	1.9
Executive Function/ADD and ADHD support	3	0.1	1.9
Writing (Writing Coaches only)	3	0.1	1.9
Job/Internship (Career Coaches only)	2	0.1	1.3
Course Registration	2	0.1	1.3
Other Option 1 (specified)	25	5.7	15.6
Other Option 2	2	0.1	1.3
Other Option 3	1	0.1	0.6
Total	440	100	-

Twenty-five respondents chose to enter their own descriptions when explaining

the primary emphases of coaching conversations. "Other 1" responses included, "To

provide coaching rather than tutoring in writing. In other words, we try to help" (Writing

Coach, midsize two-year public). Examples also included advising special cohorts (e.g.,

undeclared, provisional admits, opportunity program), time management/prioritizing

(n=2), working on the soft skills/ preparing for college, motivation and accountability

(n=3), assessment, first-year experience, specific academic policies (e.g. retroactive

withdrawal, dismissal appeal), deep learning, life strategies, life skill development,

referrals to campus resources, work life balance, intrusive advising, adapting to college

and learning college expectations, general FTIC assistance, and overall well-being.

"Other option 2" example responses were "meet with students outside of class on a bi-

weekly basis to assess problem areas and make the right referrals" (Academic Coach,

large two-year public) and "to help navigate campus resources and serve as a guide to

the resources available on campus" (Freshmen Success Coach, anonymous institution).

Finally, one respondent answered Other Option 3 by simply stating "to advocate for the

needs of students" (Academic Coach, large two-year public). Arguably, this final answer

is not an actual emphasis of the coaching conversation, but rather an intended

outcome.

Primary Emphases Explained

In order to further explore the content of coaching conversations, participants

were asked to comment on the primary emphases of their coaching program. The

survey question stated *What topics are discussed in coaching sessions? What resources

are used? What questions are asked?* Table 4.20 provides a list of open-ended

responses explained by participants in their own words.

Table 4.20: Primary Emphases explained via open-Ended Response

Academic Concerns	Personal Concerns	Institution Focus	Techniques	
Academic Goals	Acclamation	Academic Policies	Contracts	Referrals
Academic Recovery	Accomplishments	Academic Standards	Cooperative Learning	Relationship Building
Academic Strengths	Accountability	Advising	Activities	Self-assessment
Academic Struggles	ADHD Screening	Awareness of campus	Deep Listening	Self-awareness
Academic Success	Adjustment	resources	Encouragement	Self-management
Academic Support	Balance	Campus Technology	Four-year Graduation	Self-regulation
Avoiding Academic	Barriers	Class Registration	Planning	SMART Goals
Pitfalls	Behavior Intervention	Communication with Professors	Goal Setting	Solutions-focused
Class Preparation	Budgeting	Community Needs	Holistic Support	Intervention
College Level Reading	Building Rapport	Degree Audits	Hopes and Fears	Staying on Track
Concentration	Career & Personal	Faculty Interaction	Individual Plan for Success	Strengths
Course Content	Exploration	FAFSA	Intake Information	Strong Interest Inventory
Courses	Check-ins	Internships	Interests	Student Progress
Drop-in Content Tutoring	Clarity of Purpose	Involvement on Campus	Internet Resources	Student-led Agenda
GPA Projection	Distractions	Major Exploration	Inventories	Support and Challenge
Grades	Financial Literacy	Making the Most Out	Metacognition	Support through
LASSI	Future Direction	of College	Motivational Interviewing	graduation
Learning How to Study	Independent Living Skills	Mapworks	Navigating Campus	SWOT Analysis
Learning Styles	Life Planning	Needs Outside the Classroom	Needs Assessment	Talents
Midterm Grades	Managing Life Issues	Preparation for Advising	New Views	Thinking Bigger and
Mock Tests	Motivation	Sense of Belonging	Online Models	Broader
Needs in the Classroom	Obstacles	Scholarships	Open-ended Questions	Time Management
Review Sessions	Personal Concerns	Study Abroad	Options	To-do Lists
Study Plans	Personal Growth	Transition to College	Organization	Tools and Tips
Study Skills	Personal Issues (e.g. loss of a	University Engagement	Planning	Values
Support in Class Learning	family member)		Props (e.g. emotiocards,	VARK
Syllabus Mapping	Preparation for Life After		mini-metaphors, poems)	Weekly Planning
Test Assessment	College		Providing Student's Campus	Who, What, When,
Test Taking	Professional Development		Contact	Where, Why, How
	Self-confidence			Will Power
				Workload Management

As displayed 4.20, over 130 unique responses were provided to further explaining

coaches' primary emphases. Reviewing this list, one can easily see how vast and

inconsistent coaching roles are across campuses. However, one of the most repeated

emphases noted was intent to tailor the session to the individual student. Several

responses resembled "topics are dependent on the individual needs of the student"

(Academic Coach, small four-year private). Individualization is a trend also described in

Table 4.6 exploring coaching as a specialized service. This tailored approach may help

explain, in part, the wide variety presented in Table 4.20 and provide some context as to

why coaches emphasize so many different topics in their sessions.

Role Differentiation

A central objective of the present study is to differentiate coaching from other

roles on campus. Respondents were asked one open-ended question regarding the

uniqueness of coaching, of which 105 answers were provided. The survey question

stated, *What do you perceive to be the unique roles of coaches on your campus? (i.e., Do*

coaches provide a service that no other office/position does on campus?) Specifically,

please differentiate your Coaching program/roles from Counseling, Tutoring, Advising,

Mentoring, and/or other positions on campus. In order to interpret these open field

responses, the researcher conducted a themes analysis by identifying the most

frequently referenced categories of work. A word count was also conducted in the

open-ended response and organized by frequency. Table 4.21 presents a distribution of

repeated words used when explaining a coach's role.

Table 4.21
Word used to Differentiate Coaching

Word used in description	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n=489)	Percent Total Respondents (n=160)
Academic	101	20.6	63.1
Resource	46	9.4	28.8
Study/Learning skills	42	8.6	26.3
Goal/Goal setting	36	7.4	23.0
Bridge	33	6.7	20.6
Support	32	6.5	20.0
Learn	28	5.7	18.0
Strategy (ies)	23	4.7	14.8
Referral(s)	23	4.7	14.8
Plan/Planning	17	3.5	10.6
Connect	15	3.1	9.4
Individual	14	2.9	8.8
Engage(ment)	14	2.9	8.8
Peer	12	2.5	8.0
Accountable/Accountability	11	2.2	6.9
Teach	8	1.6	5.0
General	7	1.4	4.4
Specialized	7	1.4	4.4
Strength	6	1.2	2.8
Holistic	6	1.2	2.8
Intrusive	4	0.8	2.4
Advocate	2	0.4	1.3
Skill(s)	2	0.4	1.3
Total	489	100	-

As shown, 63 percent of all participants used the word "academic" to differentiate the coaching role from other roles on campus. Other common descriptors included "resource," "study/learning skills," and "goal setting." These four words account for 45 percent of all responses. One respondent replied, "Coaches coach towards objectives and goals. Tutors address content. Advising plans course structure. Counseling solves emotional issues" (Academic Coach, anonymous institution). These simple definitions

scratch the surface of differentiation; however, discussion of objectives and goals is likely to be covered in tutoring, advising, and counseling as well. Beyond study skills, goal setting, and academic support, the role of a coach remains somewhat unclear. This role differentiation is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Variety by Institution Type

The third research question aimed to uncover similarities and differences between and among coaching programs established at different institution types. As such, respondent information was analyzed and compared. The survey yielded 160 total respondents representing 101 individual colleges and universities. Forty-four responses remained anonymous and seven institutions had multiple entries. See Appendix E for a list of participating institutions.

In order to evaluate differences between institution type, cross-tabulations and chi-square test for independence were calculated to determine if proportion differences were statistically significant. Analyses revealed only one statistically significant difference between college types.

First, name variations were proportionally different dependent on institution type ($\chi2$ = 19.91, p= .003, 6df, n=122). In order to conduct this analysis, two-year publics (n=20) and two-year privates (n=1) were combined and anonymous institution types were omitted. Results revealed that four-year schools prefer the title Academic Coach or Academic Success Coach, while two-year schools appear to use variations on the coaching title such as Collegiate Success Coach, Retention Coach, and Graduation Coach. Table 4.22 presents these results.

Table 4.22
Institution Type and Coach Title

	Two-Year Combined	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
Academic Coach	2	31	22	55
Academic Success Coach	3	13	3	19
Success Coach	6	7	7	20
Other Coach Title	10	12	6	28
Total	21	63	38	122

Second, a cross-tabulation between institution size and coach title, yield yielded no

statistically significant association ($\chi2$ = 13.75, p= .132, 9df, n=122).

Table 4.23
Institution Enrollment by Coach Title

	Fewer than 1,000	1,000 to 4,999	5,000 to 9,999	10,000 or more	Total
Academic Coach	2	19	5	29	55
Academic Success Coach	0	8	7	4	19
Success Coach	0	5	5	10	20
Other Coach Title	1	6	5	16	28
Total	3	38	22	59	122

Third, no significant difference existed when evaluating institution type and year the

coaching program was established ($\chi2$ =7.68 p= .262, 6df, n=117).

Table 4.24
Institution Type and Year Coaching Program was Established

	Two-Year Combined	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
1999 and prior	0	2	1	3
2000-2004	0	6	2	8
2005-2009	3	13	2	18
2010-2014	16	41	31	88
Totals	19	62	36	117

Finally, when removing anonymous institutions and looking at theory use within the various coaching programs, there was not a statistically significant difference between two-year schools, four-year publics, and four-year privates ($\chi2$ =1.55, p=.461, 2df, n=122).

Table 4.25
Institution type and Theory/Conceptual Framework Usage

	Two-Year Combined	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
Theory	7	27	19	53
No Theory	14	36	19	69
Total	21	63	38	122

In sum, current survey results did not show any significant differences in institution type, other than coaching title used.

Assessment of Coaching Programs

The fourth research question aimed to identify how coaching programs are currently assessed and what measures institutions are using to demonstrate effectiveness. Three variables were explored to answer this question: intended outcomes, methods, and measures. The survey asked participants, *What are the intended objectives and/or outcomes of your coaching program? (Check all that apply).* A list of possible choices was provided while also allowing participants an open-ended response. Table 4.26 outlines the intended objectives/outcomes in order of highest frequency.

Table 4.26

Intended Objectives and/or Outcomes of Coaching Programs

Intended objectives and/or outcomes (Multiple response)	Frequency	Percent Total Responses (n=762)	Percent Total Respondents (n=160)
Improve Retention	111	14.6	69.4
Provide Academic Assistance	92	12.1	57.5
Promote Self-Awareness	84	11.0	52.5
Provide Institutional Resources	81	10.6	50.6
Improve Student Engagement	73	9.6	45.6
Develop Student-Institutional Connection	61	8.0	38.1
Improve Student Satisfaction	61	8.0	38.1
Develop Connection to Faculty/Staff	54	7.1	33.8
Promote Critical Thinking	48	6.3	30.0
Develop Leadership Skills	19	2.5	11.9
Assist in Selection of Major	16	2.1	1.0
Improve Oral Communication Skills	16	2.1	1.0
Improve Written Communication Skills	16	2.1	1.0
Career Preparation	15	1.9	9.4
Other (please specify)	15	1.9	9.4
Total Responses	762	100	-

Approximately 70 percent (n=111) of respondents indicated that one of the top objectives of coaching programs is to improve retention. This result parallels the trend presented in the "create" variable (table 4.1) outlining the catalyst for creating a coaching program. Other intentions included academic assistance, promoting self-awareness, and providing institutional resources.

Outside of the selections provided, other specified reasons coaching programs were created included improve decision making skills, improve student self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and grit, improve full-time enrollment and employment, and help students return to good academic standing. One respondent stated, "The needs of each student vary, I try to help students understand their needs and how to fulfill them"

89

(Academic Success Coach, small two-year public). A second respondent stated that students need to take "ownership of learning, metacognitive skills, alignment of motivation and values, self-confidence" (Academic Skills Coach, midsize four-year private). Finally, a third respondent stated the main objective of her coaching program was to, "To better connect to the community in which we serve. Many of our students test into developmental education. This program helps to transition students from developmental education to college level courses at a much greater speed" (Success Coach, large two-year public).

Methods and Measures

After the intended objectives were identified, survey participants were asked to consider methods of assessing their coaching programs. The survey question stated, *How do you measure the intended outcomes of your coaching program? (Check all that apply and briefly describe your assessment method.)* Table 4.27 shows frequency of each method used, in order of popularity.

Table 4.27
Method used to Assess Coaching Program

Assessment Method Used	Frequency	Percent
Surveys of Students using Coaching	88	26.7
Retention/Persistence Rates of Students using Coaching	77	23.3
GPA Data	62	18.8
Surveys of Coaches	42	12.7
Other (specified)	23	6.9
Focus Groups	19	5.7
We do not currently assess our coaching program	19	5.7
Total Responses	330	100

Student Surveys

As shown in Table 4.27, the most frequently used method of evaluating coach effectiveness was student surveys. To further analyze this approach, the researcher organized open-ended responses into categories: satisfaction, timing, process, and proprietary. The most common explanation focused on the timing of the survey (n=19). Responses resembled, "We send brief surveys to students following each academic coaching appointment" (Academic Coach, small four-year private).

Most surveys evaluate student satisfaction (n=13) and are designed to capture perception of the value of their coaching experience. Outside of student satisfaction, five respondents used proprietary surveys such as the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and the On-Course Self-Assessment published by Skip Downing. Pre- and post-tests were also referenced.

Finally, four responses simply explained the process through which they administer the survey, such as "we do an online survey following the coaching visit" (Academic Coach, large four-year public). One respondent stated, "I do this at the end of each meeting, by verbally asking each student what they're walking away with and to rate how helpful the coaching session was" (Collegiate Success Coach, large four-year public).

Retention/Persistence Data

The second most frequently used method of evaluating the effectiveness of coaching programs was utilizing retention and persistence data (n=77). Fifteen respondents reviewed fall to spring and/or fall to fall retention rates of coached

students. Other coaching programs that target students on academic probation focused

their assessment on subsequent academic standing. Finally, several coaching programs

used GPA data, retention rates, and academic standing differentiating coached versus

non-coached students. Some unique assessment methods included using a case

management approach, use of the product MapWorks, student survey feedback, using a

cohort model, and conducting a census every year. One participant explained her cohort

model:

> Academic coaches work with a cohort of students that are enrolled in a [Sic]
> Program. This cohort of students takes the same courses in year one and
> choose their concentration in year two therefore splitting up the cohort,
> although the academic coach will continue to meet with the students outside of
> class. We look at student enrollment after the drop/add period and again at the
> end of the semester (Academic Coach, large two-year public).

Another participant explained her cohort, "At Census every year (4th week of the fall

semester when cohorts and enrollment are confirmed) we compare

retention/graduation rates to University rates as well as other support programs across

campus who do not use coaching" (Student Success Coach, large four-year public).

GPA Data

The third most frequently used method of assessing coaching programs was

grade point average (GPA) data. A common response was, "All students going through

coaching are assessed with their beginning GPA and the GPA at the end of coaching"

(Academic Coach, midsize four-year private). Others looked at GPA over time such as

semester to semester or year to year. A third strategy was evaluating correlations

between GPA and frequency of coaching sessions. As one participant stated, "We collect

end of the semester GPAs and also look at how many sessions the students attended.

Generally we find much higher GPAs when students attend 10 or more sessions"

(Academic Coach, large four-year public).   Finally, perhaps the most common use of

GPA is comparison data between coached versus non-coached students. As stated,

"From the 100 students we identified, we plan to compare the students that used the

service to the students who did not participate. We will also compare to our whole first-

year class" (Academic Coach, anonymous institution).

Results

Evaluating both fixed-choice and open-ended response, the researcher identified

six different types of methods used, including pre- and post-tests, exit surveys, coach

surveys, focus groups, frequencies of sessions/usage data, and student self-report. After

methods were identified, measures and results were captured. Survey participants were

also asked the follow-up question, *If you assess your coaching program, please describe*

your results: i.e., What measures do you use? What data have emerged? Eighty-three

people responded to this question. Table 4.28 provides a summary view of the various

methods and measures described in the forced choice and open-ended answers

combined.

Table: 4.28
Example Methods and Measures used to Evaluate Coaching Effectiveness.

Example Methods	Example Measures
Census	Comparison data evaluating retention/graduation rates of coached vs. non-coached students; grades; DFW rates.
Cohort	Students enroll in courses together and are assigned a coach. Cohorts are measured for progress on persistence against non-cohort students. Measures include course completion, grades, and overall DFW rates.
Exit surveys	Taken at the end of coaching session to evaluate topics discussed; students rating coaches.
Frequency of sessions	GPA differences related to frequency of coaching sessions; comparison data between usage of coaching and usage of related services such as tutoring, SI, workshops, etc.
Institutional Data	GPA comparisons; academic standing post-coaching appointment; retention and persistence of academically deficient students; population-specific measures (such as probation students), gender differences.
Pre-test/Post-test	Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI).
Student Self-Report	Topics discussed in coaching session.
Student Surveys	Satisfaction; sense of belonging to institution; perception of usefulness of topics discussed; frequent concerns; likelihood of using strategies shared; relationship development.

For institutions that assess their program, nearly every comment resulted in one of two themes: 1) positive results or 2) unclear or no results. The following quotes highlight four different institution types and the respondent's perception of the impact coaching has had on their campus.

> Students who seek out Academic Coaching have an improved retention and course completions rate 15.5% higher than those who do not seek out the service" (Academic Coach, large two-year public).

> One group we assess most regularly [includes] those who are required to participate in academic coaching as a result of being on academic probation. 81-86% of the students who successfully complete this intervention show improvements in their GPA (Academic Success Coach, midsize four-year public).

Over the past two years, we've seen improvements in GPA and academic standing for students who've met with a coach at least twice during a semester (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Our retention rate has increased by 10-13% since the implementation of the Academic Coaching model (Academic Coach, small four-year private).

In sum, survey results reveal that there are a variety of assessment methods and measures used to assess effectiveness of coaching programs. Some institutions appear to have more sophisticated means of analysis, beyond usage and satisfaction. And, nearly six percent of respondents indicated they do not currently assess their coaching program. A variety of assessment techniques are used and there is no singular method or measure established for coaching program assessment.

Unclear Assessment

Thirty-one respondents (19.4%) acknowledged their assessments were too new and/or unclear. Eleven coaching programs have not yet yielded results due to being in their pilot year and/or due to the novelty of their program. Example responses included, "As this is our first semester, we do not yet have any data to report," (Peer Success Coach, large four-year public) "this is the first year for program," (Peer Success Coach, large four-year public), "This is the first year therefore data analysis is not complete," (Academic Coach, large, two-year public), "pilot this year," (Academic Coach, small four-year public), and "too new!" (Academic Success Coach, small two-year public). Several other responses revealed little or no valid measures of intended outcomes. Themes emerged such as measures "in progress," unclear results, and anecdotal evidence (n=17). Example statements implying their assessment was in progress (n=7) included,

"just started assessing last year, too early to make any conclusions, but initial data does seem to show effectiveness" (Academic Success Coach, large four-year public). Another respondent stated, "Our assessment surveys are currently in the pilot phase. We are in the process of collecting data but have not yet analyzed the results" (Academic Coach, large four-year public). Second, many responses indicated their coaching program had unclear outcomes (n=5). One respondent stated, "We are still struggling with understanding the results" (Success Coach, large four-year public). Third, some measures were subjective (n=4) such as, "Unfortunately, this has been mostly anecdotal and informal to date" (Academic Coach, small four-year private) and "we have not yet been able to capture specific data" (Academic Coach, small four-year private). Given this gap in consistent measurement, there appears to be room to establish best practice for assessing coaching programs.

Summary of Findings

The recent onset of hundreds of college coaching programs across the country spurs national interest and calls into question their purpose, utilization, content, and effectiveness. In order to explore this trend, a national survey of 160 coaching positions across 39 states revealed that coaching is mostly designed to increase retention, assist academically deficient students, and provide a new and unique service on campus. Eighty-five percent of coaching programs surveyed were established after 2005. Employment types are fairly evenly spread across four categories including full-time, partial-time, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Finally, assessment of

coaching effectiveness is mostly accomplished through student surveys and institutional data.

Most programs appear to use the title Academic Coach, Academic Success Coach, or Success Coach. The primary content of coaching sessions includes study skills, goal setting, and academic recovery. Although the implementation of these topics is inconsistent, many coaching programs claim their content is individualized based on student need. If in fact the services are defined by the student, this individualized attention may be one reason the coaching profession lacks a true, distinguished definition. In addition, approximately 48 percent of coaching programs surveyed do not use a theory or conceptual framework to guide their approach. Of the 35 percent that employed a framework, Appreciative Advising is predominant. There are varying levels of clarity when attempting to define and differentiate coaching from other roles on campus such as advising, counseling, tutoring, and mentoring. This differentiation is explored further in chapter five.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Given its novelty, the college coaching profession is an evolving and emerging

service in higher education. Coaching on a national level appears disparate both within

and between institution types. No one theme tied all coaching programs together

uniformly nor provided clear distinction or role differentiation. It is unclear if and how

coaching is truly unique from advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, or the

degree coaching simply overlays functions included in these traditional roles. This

disparity is not a criticism, but rather leaves room for further analysis and justification.

This chapter summarizes and discusses key findings of the 2014 national survey

on academic/success coaching. The purpose of this study was to investigate current

coaching models across colleges and universities in hopes of providing foundational data

for current practice and future research. Guiding research questions focused on four

essential components of coaching programs: reasons for creating programs, defining

characteristics, institutional variety, and assessment techniques. Using quantitative

measures, coaching was analyzed for purpose, effectiveness, and uniqueness. Primary

emphases and role differentiation are presented to further distinguish coaching from

similar roles on campus.

Key Findings

Ten major findings of this study are discussed. These include the recent onset of

programs, titles, catalysts, student populations, utilization methods, primary emphases,

employment types, conceptual frameworks, assessment practices, and institutional

variety. These findings are organized by first presenting general information and then

using Astin (1993) assessment model of inputs, environments, and outcomes.

> General information
> 1. confirming the recent **onset** of coaching in higher education,
> 2. presenting a variety of **titles** used,
> 3. identifying **catalysts** for creating coaching programs,
>
> Inputs
> 4. identifying **student populations** served,
> 5. identifying student **utilization** methods,
>
> Environment
> 6. revealing wide-spread lack of agreement on **primary emphases**,
> 7. revealing current **employment** types, uncovering **conceptual frameworks** used for service delivery,
>
> Outcomes
> 8. presenting current **assessment** practices,
> 9. analyzing **variety** both within and between institution types.

Each key finding is summarized and discussed and later tied into larger interpretation of

academic/success coaching in higher education. This interpretation is presented from

two perspectives that emerged from survey data: "what coaching is" and "what

coaching is not." Then, coaching is compared and contrasted with similar roles on

campus including academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. Finally, the

researcher consolidates survey results, literature review, participant testimonials, and

national data to propose a model of academic/success coaching.

Emergence, Titles, and Purpose

First, national survey data confirmed that the vast majority of coaching programs emerged after 2005 (83%) with 70 percent of survey respondents establishing their coaching program after 2010. As a result, ambiguity and numerous interpretations of intended purpose, role differentiation, and primary emphases accompany this program novelty. It is clear that academic/success coaching is a recent trend, gaining in popularity, and thus is worthy of investigation.

Second, a variety of titles are associated with coaching in higher education. Labeling coaches vary from Academic Coach (44%), Academic Success Coach (15%), Success Coach (16%), and a wide-range of other adjectives (24%) such as Graduation Coach, Collegiate Success Coach, and Study Skills Coach. These various descriptors appear to be somewhat organic. It is unclear why institutions adopted a specific title over another.

Third, the majority of institutions establish coaching programs to increase retention (55.6%). The recent onset of coaching programs after 2005 coincides with the national College Completion Agenda aimed at increasing the proportion of college graduates (Hughes, 2012). Following retention, the second most frequently referenced catalyst for coaching is to assist academically deficient students. Interestingly, these top two reasons do not appear to have significant overlap. Table 5.1 reveals each of these factors are fairly distinct reasons for establishing a coaching program ($\chi2$ =8.04, p=.005, 1df, n=160).

Table 5.1
Cross-tabulation of Retention and Academically Deficient

		"Assist Academically Deficient Students" as primary catalyst		
		No	Yes	Total
"Increase Retention" as primary catalyst	No	53	18	71
	Yes	47	42	89
	Total	100	60	160

These results may be counter-intuitive, given that many institutions fund programs aimed at academic recovery (Trumpy, 2006).

"Providing a unique service" is the third most frequently referenced reason for creating a coaching program (33%), yielding a wide-range of explanations and substantial uncertainty. Over 30 percent of respondents who indicated that coaching is a specialized service failed to explain why or how. The leading answer, study skills, only accounted for 19 percent of responses. This variety and lack of consistency between these top three catalysts demonstrate a disparate range of intentions behind funding academic/success coaching. Presumably, institutions view the program's purpose differently depending on their perspective of coaching intent.

Student Populations Served (Inputs)

Fourth, there is great variety in the types of students coaching programs accommodate. Some programs are limited to pockets such as TRIO or students on academic probation.   As table 4.8 shows, first-year students are among the most common student population served, as 62 percent of coaching programs serve only first-year students accounting for 73 percent of overall responses. Academically

deficient students, students with disabilities, conditionally admitted students, and

minorities are all examples of target demographics for coaching services.

In contrast, some coaching programs are university-wide. Sixty-eight percent of

total respondents indicated their coaching program is available to all undergraduates.

One respondent stated,

> Our coaching program's distinction is that it's available to any student on
> campus (although demand far outstrips supply) as opposed to the many
> coaching-type programs provided to specific 'retention' groups (e.g., at-
> risk students, academic probation students, etc.) (Peer Academic Success
> Coach, large four-year public).

It is unclear why some coaching programs are designed only for special student

populations. However, one speculation is funding limitations. Or, perhaps coaching

programs were designed to meet a specific student need.

Fifth, there does not appear to be a dominant way students utilize coaching

services. Drop-in (35%), referral (25%), and mandates (22%) are fairly evenly distributed.

In addition, the majority of coaching programs host an average length session length

between 31-60 minutes (48%). This utilization technique differs from traditional

referrals and mandates to Academic Advising and opt-in to tutoring.

Defining Characteristics (Environment)

Sixth, perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this study exposed a

lack of wide-spread agreement on intended content and primary emphases of coaching

sessions. The most agreed upon primary emphasis is study skill development (64%)

followed by goal setting (55%). However, a deeper look into this content revealed over

132 different coaching methods, strategies, and approaches ranging from degree audits

to financial literacy. Clear role differentiation also appears to challenge the uniqueness of coaching and is further explored later in this chapter.

Seventh, employment types vary from program to program. Survey results revealed that most coaching programs employ full-time staff (48%) or graduate assistants (21%). However, some programs employ undergraduate students (21%) and/or volunteer coaches (6.5%). It is important to consider how the coaching environment may be altered depending on the people serving in the coaching role. For example, peer coaching and professional coaching are likely to have innate variations. The similarities and differences between these roles are unclear and allow room for further study.

Eighth, there is little consistency in usage of theoretical and/or conceptual framework to underpin coaching models. Survey results revealed that 48 percent of coaching programs currently do not use a theory. Of the 35 percent that do employ a framework, there is very little agreement or consistency. This void may present current and future challenges to the coaching profession, as "Student affairs practice without a theoretical base is not effective or efficient" (Evans, Forney, & Guido-Dibrito, 1998, p. 19). Consider two parallel examples. First, counselors are educated and/or trained in various theories when working with clients, such as behaviorism or client-centered therapy. These example frameworks may be adopted by a counselor to describe, explain, predict, and guide the questions they ask and the responses they give. Second, the academic advising profession has established models such as appreciative advising,

developmental advising, intrusive advising, and prescriptive advising. The same emphasis on theoretical infrastructures should be held true for coaching.

By identifying researched and tested theoretical underpinnings, the coaching profession becomes a more credible field and begins to distinguishing itself from other helping professions. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks provide an essential foundation and help ensure that academic/success coaching is sustainable. Lack of role clarity coupled with a void of theoretical infrastructure and/or conceptual frameworks (48%) further confirms the novelty, ambiguity, and room for continued empirical study of academic/success coaching.

Assessment and Institutional Variety (Outcomes)

Ninth, no standardized assessment process exists to measure the effectiveness of coaching programs. Methods and measures vary in implementation, intent, and usefulness. Most coaching programs relied on student survey data (26%), retention/persistence rates data (23%), and GPA data (19%). In addition, 26 percent of respondents either indicated they do not currently assess their coaching program or they have unclear results.

Finally, the tenth key result revealed a variety of coaching services which vary across institutions. Depending on this institution's view of coaching, intended purpose, resource allocation, etc. coaching may be a service provided to all students or restricted to special student populations. Some institutions provide coaching to all students (68%) while others are limited to special student populations (13%). Special student populations often include first-year students, at-risk students, and/or conditional

104

admits. In addition, two-year colleges tend to prefer name variations or unique coaching

labels, while four year colleges tend to prefer the words academic or success in their

coaching titles.

Given the novelty of coaching and a lack of a substantive, consistent definition,

the current interpretations of academic/success coaching are inconsistent. When

participants were asked to differentiate their coaching role from similar roles on

campus, two main types of responses were shared: those that explained what coaching

"is" versus what it "is not." The following analysis presents themes and quotes to begin

distinguishing it from other roles.

What Coaching is…

*"Coaches provide 360⁰ support for students, serving as a single point of contact and a
primary support person in mitigating barriers to success" (Career Coach, large two-year
public).*

Using a review of the literature and the results of the national survey, the

following is an attempt to consolidate and explain the defining characteristics of

academic/success coaching. In addition, the author offers a definition of coaching that

incorporates proposed processes, primary functions, intended outcomes, measures of

effectiveness.

Coaching is Skill Development. As McWilliams and Beam (2013) stated,

"Coaches seek to elicit solutions and strategies from clients themselves, as well as to

nurture the skills and resources that a client already possesses" (p. 2). They went on to

say that "Academic Coaching refers to skills-oriented learning relationships" helping

students to "improve in areas such as goal setting, time management, and study skills"

105

(p. 2). Survey data confirmed this defining characteristic. As shown in Table 4.19, the

most common primary emphasis in coaching programs is study skills. One respondent

stated, "Our Academic Coaches focus on the learning strategies students need to be

successful students regardless of content knowledge or in addition to content

knowledge" (Academic Coach, midsize four-year public). A second respondent stated,

"Our coach provides study skill development, referrals to other campus offices as

needed, and serves as an accountability partner to the student. No other office

currently offers all of those services in a one-stop setting" (Academic Coach, small four-

year private).

While study skills may be one of the more frequent primary emphases, it is by no

means standard practice. Interestingly, programs that use a different descriptor (i.e.

Collegiate Coach, Retention Coach, etc.) tend to focus on other types of skill

development. Table 5.2 reveals that study skills are not one of the primary emphasis for

coaching programs that use an "other" title (χ2 = 20.37, p= .00, 3df, n=160).

Table 5.2
Cross-tabulation of Study Skill Emphasis by Coach Title

	Study Skills	No Study Skills	Total
Academic Coach	55	16	71
Academic Success Coach	18	6	24
Success Coach	16	10	26
Other Coach Title	14	25	39
Total	103	57	160

As such, while study skills (e.g. time management, note-taking, reading comprehension,

etc.) may be one of the most frequently referenced topics in academic/success

106

coaching, different types of skills are emphasized in other coaching models. Examples

provided in the "other coach title" category included leadership skills, communication

skills, and coping skills. Therefore, traditional study skills are not necessarily a defining

characteristic of all coaching programs. However, in general "skill development" appears

to be a universal focus.

   Coaching is Performance Improvement. As referenced in chapter two, several

coaching definitions outside of higher education include concepts such as growth,

results, and improved performance. This emphasis was mirrored in survey results.

Respondents indicated a primary goal was to help students set and achieve their goals

(55%) and to provide academic assistance (58%). Academic recovery was a third

relevant theme (39%). In addition, performance can also be measured outside of class,

such as increased engagement on campus. One respondent stated, "We look at student

persistence in the major and overall academic/ co-curricular performance for the period

[the student] was involved with coaching (Academic Coach, small, four-year private).

Finally, consider the top two reasons why institutions create coaching program (i.e.

"increase retention" and "assist academically deficient students") as performance

measures. Both of these catalysts are easily assessed, quantitative, and can be linked to

overall institutional performance.

   Coaching is questioning, planning, and goal setting. Given the one-on-one

nature of coaching sessions, students are often afforded an opportunity to reflect during

their sessions. This reflection appears to be initiated by the types of questions coaches

ask students. The most frequently referenced framework is Appreciative Advising (34%).

Defined by Bloom, Hutson, and He (2008) as "the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials", Appreciative Advising appears to be an ideal infrastructure for many coaching programs.

Planning also appears to be a central focus and purpose of coaching. When asked to describe coaching, over 10 percent of respondents mentioned planning as an essential component of their conversation. Plans appear to take several forms, both formal and informal. Some programs use tangible planning documents (e.g. "individual success plans" or "academic plans"), while others discussed plans more casually.

Finally, goal setting was mentioned multiple times in the survey results. Table 4.6 indicates goal setting is seen as a specialized service; table 4.19 lists goal setting as the second most popular primary emphasis (55%); and table 4.21 lists goal setting as the fourth most popular term to differentiate coaching (23%). To further explore the purpose of goal setting, a cross-tabulation was calculated on coach title and use of goal setting in sessions. Table 5.3 presents those results.

Table 5.3
Cross-tabulation of Goal Setting emphasis by Coach Title

	No Goal Setting	Goal Setting	Total
Academic Coach	26	45	71
Academic Success Coach	10	14	24
Success Coach	11	15	26
Other Coach Title	25	14	39
Total	72	88	160

As shown, there is a fairly even distribution between coaching programs that implement

goal setting as part of their primary emphases versus those that do not. One respondent

stated,

> Our Success Coaches are here to help you define, clarify, and achieve your personal and academic goals! Your appointments with a Success Coach are tailored to YOU: your interests, grades, goals, and talents. Whether you're tackling current academic struggles or seeking ways to enhance your learning experiences, your Success Coach will help you maximize your options. Success Coaches are here to help you make the most of your college experience. Working with your Success Coach, you will create a personalized plan that can include any of the following: Managing your time, meeting new people, study habits, setting personal and academic goals, organizing your weekly/monthly/semester assignments, planning your class schedule, eliminating barriers to success, balancing your academic and social lives, improving course performance, and getting involved (Success Coach, small four-year private).

Finally, another respondent referenced reflection, planning, and goal setting as a four-
step process.

> The coaches meeting with the students four times: 1) Planning for success - identifying energy drains and making a study schedule, 2) Identifying success - students describe successes in their life as well as goals to feel more successful, 3) Aligning goals and values - students complete a meaningful work statement and a value sort to see if the major they are working towards aligns with their personal values and interests, 4) Planning for the future - students work on making a large goal and then breaking that into smaller attainable goals that can help them feel successful along the path to their academic recovery (Academic Coach, large four-year private).

While questioning, planning, and goal setting are techniques used by other services such

as advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, they appear to be a central theme to

coaching as well. Figure 5.1 attempts to visualize the connectedness between these

three techniques.

Coaching is Navigation. A central theme in publications, research, and survey responses defined coaching as hub of information and referral agent. The words "bridge," "connect," and "referral," were all used to describe and differentiate coaching from other roles on campus (see Table 4.21). One respondent stated, "Bridging the area between tutoring, advising, and counseling, we tend to work with the students to establish where issues reside, address those within our parameter, and refer them to other campus resources if needed" (Academic Coach, large two-year public). Another respondent compared her undergraduate coaches to effective role modeling. "Peer coaches, in particular, provide a trusted perspective; provide models of successful academic and professional habits, and support students through periods of transition" (Success Coach, midsize four-year public).   Finally, a third survey respondent stated, "Quite simply, given the needs of today's students, and in particular those that we serve, it's hard to imagine when they [coaches] weren't on campus, which was only a few years ago. On a structural level, they truly serve as a key bridge between the curricular and co-curricular student experiences at the college" (Academic Coach, small four-year private).

While referrals appeared to be a central concept in coaching, referral alone is not a distinguishing feature. As displayed in Table 5.4, referrals are key components of several similar roles. However, perhaps what can be a defining characteristic is "navigation" of these resources. For example, coaches can help students develop questions to bring with them to an appointment, fully understand what utilizing resource will entail, identify specific people the student can talk to, and develop a plan

for follow-up after using the service. Navigation goes beyond simple referral. Instead, Academic/Success Coaches can demystify related offices and help students make the most of the opportunities available.

Coaching is individualized and ongoing support. Dozens of survey respondents indicated an essential component of their coaching program was personalized, individual, consistent support that resulted in accountability. This individualized approach allows each coaching session an opportunity to "customize" the conversation to the student. Whereas other services also provide students a one-on-one support, the content of advising and tutoring conversations is often prescribed. Coaching appears to be more idiosyncratic. In addition, several programs mentioned using an intrusive or proactive approach to reach students. Others mentioned regular meetings such as hosting sessions once per week, once every two weeks, once per month, etc. Sample survey quotes describing coaching include:

> Coaches provide a consistent link through regular meetings in person or over the phone (Academic Success Coach, midsize two-year public).

> The coach encourages student engagement in many aspects of their academic career. The coach uses techniques and tools geared towards the individual's development such as using a learning style inventory. The coach meets on a consistent basis with the student and tracks their progress. [The coach] holds students accountable for what goals they set out and if they stuck to their academic plan (Academic Coach, midsize four-year public).

> Communication with these students is once per week [sic]. It's a very individualized approach and mandated frequent contact (College Coach, large four-year public)

> No other office offers this service. Focus is on academic skills and habits, with referrals to other department for other issues (counseling, advising). Students are asked to commit to returning at least once to report on progress, so that they can be held accountable (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Our coaching program is unique in that it more intrusively follows the coaches weekly and individualizes their strategies and plans in a more personal way (Academic Success Coach, large four-year public).

Peer coaches have the ability and the responsibility to act as accountability partners to the students, and check in with them during the week on a regular basis. This is unique in that regular check-ins allow the student to troubleshoot a problem before it becomes unmanageable (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

The coaches give the individual students help with whatever the need is when they come in, track what is working well, what is not, work completed, upcoming assignments, help reaching out to faculty, etc. (Academic Coach, small four-year private).

In addition to individual attention, the concept of accountability was also referenced as part of a coach's role. Table 4.21 also shows "accountability" was referenced by seven percent of respondents.

As cited in Chapter 2, one-on-one support by representatives of the university is directly linked with student satisfaction and retention. Individualized engagement between a student and coach can provide the support a student needs to stay motivated and persist.   As such, personalized feedback and one-on-one guidance is a vital component of academic/success coaching. Survey results revealed that coaching content is inconsistent among programs because topics are tailored to student need. As a result, providing students such idiosyncratic, personal attention may be the leading reason why coaching is so hard to define.

What coaching is not...

"Coaches coach towards objectives and goals. Tutors address content. Advising plans course structure. Counseling solves emotional issues" (Academic Coach, Unknown institution).

One interesting finding revealed respondents' expressing more explanation of what coaching isn't versus what it is. For example, several explanations of coaching's unique service on campus yielded interpretations of other like-roles on campus. Sample responses are included below.

> It's not advising and it's not counseling. It's someone to help students develop a plan of attack for their academic work" (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> Academic coaches do not counsel students or advise students, the coaches will make referrals to other departments if that is needed. Our coaches are not mentors because we do not primarily focus on connecting students to social clubs or activities. Our Academic Coaches focus on time management, note-taking, study skills, test-taking skills, test anxiety, and goal setting (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> Academic coaches provided individualized assistance with students' development of effective learning and motivation strategies. Unlike tutors, coaches do not provide subject-specific explanations of content or assistance with homework. Unlike advisors, coaches do not help students choose majors or select courses. Coaches provide a unique service of helping students learn and apply strategies to improve areas of academic need (e.g., note taking, active reading, exam preparation, test anxiety, test taking, self-efficacy, time management/procrastination) (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> We provide a service no one else on our campus does. We do not counsel our students in past experiences and dig up their emotions (counseling). We may however ask questions about past experiences for context. We do not tutor in any subjects, we do not create academic plans, we do not plan course selections and scheduling (advising), and we do not meet with our students outside of our office hours nor off campus (mentoring). We meet with our students every 2 weeks and enjoy the journey with them through life. They do the work, we just ask the questions that empowers them and help them realize that they are the keepers of their own success (College Life Coach, large four-year public).

In addition, the term "coaching" appears to be used interchangeably with other like-roles on campus. In the quest to further define coaching, we must consider if it is a strategy, model, framework, service, field, technique, or everything aforementioned.

For example, Williams and Beam (2013) referred to advising, counseling, coaching, and

mentoring purely as strategies, rather than models, dedicated positions, or a stand-

alone field. They stated, "These strategies [advising, coaching, counseling, and

mentoring] have either operated in isolation from one another or have been used

interchangeably without a full understanding of the unique uses and goals appropriate

to each" (p. 1).   The literature confirms this interchangeability by using these words

within their various definitions (e.g. "Coaches advise and counsel students" while

"tutors mentor and coach students".)

Coaching versus Advising

As referenced in chapter 2, the author interprets academic advising as

connecting students' academic and career goals by providing individualized, accurate

information on majors, courses, general education, degree requirements, beyond-the-

classroom activities, institutional policies/procedures, and appropriate referral to

academic and non-academic resources. The advising process offers students an

opportunity to explore their interests and accept responsibility for their academic

progression through goal clarification, decision making, and educational planning

(Robinson, 2015). When comparing and contrasting coaching with academic advising,

some programs appear fully separated, while others are integrated or have considerable

overlap.

> Coaches are similar to academic advisors but there is a more social aspect to
> coaching... sharing meals, meeting in the cafe, meeting in the residential hall"
> (Academic Coach, Unknown Institution).

Our coaching program is uniquely in our Academic Advising office. Our Academic Advisors serve as Academic Success Coaches as well" (Academic Success Coach, small four-year public).

Success Coaches are uniquely different from Academic Advisers because coaches focus on goal setting, academic recovery, and success strategies solely (Success Coach, large four-year public).

We distinguish coaching from advising (we help students generate or refine academic planning questions for their advisors, but we do not consult students on curriculum or course choices; instead, we help them succeed in those courses) (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

The inputs of academic advising and coaching are likely to differ. Traditionally, academic advising is a requirement for all students prior to course registration. Based on survey results, many coaching programs are limited to special student populations and/or only serve a portion of the undergraduate study body. The environments of coaching and advising appear to parallel each other in some ways and differ in others.

Coaching and academic advising provide students with enhanced perceptions of inclusivity and support. As Kuh (2006) stated, "The quality of academic advising is the single most powerful predictor of satisfaction with the campus environment for students at four-year schools" (p. 60). If advising and coaching both provide one-on-one support, this individualized approach may be one of the most influential outcomes of such services.

Coaching versus Counseling

Counseling is defined as "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas, and Gladding, 2014). As presented in Chapter 2,

counseling is recognized as a defined field with specified licensure requirements. In

addition, defining characteristics of counseling include multiple inputs (i.e. clients can

opt-in, be referred, or mandated to see a counselor) and sessions hosted either one-on-

one or in groups. As stated in the definition, counselors focus on mental health,

wellness, education and career. Several survey respondents chose to explicitly

differentiate academic/success coaching from counseling. Sample responses are listed

below.

> Coaching sits at the intersection of several support services. It does not hold the stigma of therapy, yet it provides comprehensive assessment of the whole student experience which includes environmental, psychological, and skills based concerns" (Academic Skills Coach, midsize four-year private).

> [A coach's] primary focus is on student's needs. If they [students] present a psychosocial problem, (e.g. relationships) then that is what's addressed. If they don't present us with any personal concern, then the appointment focuses on the topic that was addressed in class that particular week (e.g. time management, note taking, academic resources).   There are resources we have developed for the coaching sessions. For example, there is a 'guide' that is keyed to each topic in class that provides possible questions. Then we have developed 'tools' that can guide a conversation related to a topic (e.g. priorities, values, managing emotions) and 'tip' sheets that reinforce particular student success topics in a rack card like form.   All campus resources are partners and we refer students to resources and take them as needed. We do transport students who identify as risk for self-harm to counseling.   The guides have the questions. The first is always a numerical check-in (from 1 to 5, how are you doing?). (Academic Success Coach, large four-year public).
> We also distinguish coaching from counseling, as we make referrals to the counseling center for that. We ask questions that try to identify needs both in and out of the classroom. Outside of the classroom, we ask general questions (How is it going here, how are you adjusting, how are you liking it, what do you like best, etc.). Inside of the classroom, we ask them to take us through your entire schedule (each class), how you're doing in there, are you attending class, have you spoken with your instructor, etc. (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

Coaching programs that differentiate themselves from counseling primarily focused on the lack of discussion on mental health concerns. But interestingly, the responses and explanations provided in the survey do not appear to substantially differentiate coaching from counseling. Specifically, sole emphasis on a "comprehensive assessment" and "student needs" do not adequately distinguish these two roles. Furthermore, as seen in Table 4.19 "personal concerns" were listed at the fifth most referenced primary emphasis included in coaching sessions (14%).

Coaching versus Mentoring

Mentoring is defined as "a situation in which a more-experienced member of an organization maintains a relationship with a less-experienced, often new member to the organization and provides information, support, and guidance so as to enhance the less-experienced member's chances of success in the organization and beyond" (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). Mentoring is often characterized as an informal process, requires a mutually agreed upon one-to-one relationship, develops a learning alliance, and is reciprocal in nature. According to the International Coaching Federation (ICF), "A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counseling, and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and reaching their own objectives" (2015, ICF website).When comparing and contrasting mentoring to coaching, one survey respondent described coaching as "non-subject specific peer mentoring" (Academic Coach, small four-year private) while

117

another described it as "mentoring and study skills" (Academic Coach, small four-year

private). Additional sample responses are stated below.

> Our coaches are not mentors because we do not primarily focus on connecting
> students to social clubs or activities (Academic Coach, large four-year public)

> "Although we do have peer mentors, the work they do is solely with first year
> students. Academic coaches go much deeper in the learning process and teach
> students how to learn" (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> Peer to peer mentoring/coaching is our focus. There is an effort to combine
> training that would encompass various departments (Leadership Coach, small
> four-year private).

> We have dedicated and unique faculty, staff and employees that work with our
> students on a one on one basis without additional compensation to ensure
> student success. Students are assigned a mentor/coach randomly and the
> relationships that develop are phenomenal. Some students have presented with
> me at the American Association of Community Colleges on the impact of the
> program in their academic life (Success Coach, large two-year public).

Main distinguishing themes include level of formality (coaching appears more "formal"

than mentoring), level of complexity (coaches purportedly go more in-depth into certain

material), and knowledge source (mentors use personal experience, while coaches

employ trained experience.) Considering formality, perhaps mentoring occurs

organically and does not requiring a scheduling system, note-taking system, intake

forms, etc. often required by tutoring and advising. For example, students may drop-in

to a faculty mentors office hours or have coffee with a peer mentor. Considering the

level of complexity, mentoring topics may not be prescribed by a program, whereas

coaching programs may have certain expectations of coaching content. Finally, mentors

supposedly rely on their personal experience when working with a student, while

coaches appear to have training and resources available. Unfortunately, none of these

definitions appears to truly separate the roles of coaches and isolate uniquely different roles from that of mentors. The true nature of role distinction is still fairly unclear.

Coaching versus Tutoring

Tutoring is defined as *"a person employed to instruct another in some branch or branches of learning, especially a private instructor"* (dictionary.com). Survey respondents who chose to differentiate their coaching program from tutoring focused on study skills, metacognition, and individualized approaches. Sample comments are below.

> Coaches are the only group on campus that will work with students on generalized study skills regardless of the classes they enroll in. Tutoring on our campus is subject specific, so if tutoring is not offered for that particular class, students can still get help with reading, thinking, test prep, note taking, etc., from coaches" (Academic Coach, midsize four-year public).

> Academic coaches go much deeper in the learning process and teach students how to learn" (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> Our coaches are tutors. However, they are unique because each meeting is unique. Students come in with a variety of concerns and our coaches are able to quickly determine the importance of each concern, based on the work the students have provided. From there, we are able to determine a specific course of action to take in a finite time-frame, while ensuring that all of the students' concerns are legitimate. We provide judgement-free assistance and are able to switch gears quickly, depending on the level of ability displayed by each student (Writing Coach, small two-year public).

> The Academic Coaches work individually with students, whereas other tutoring services rely on more of a drop-in schedule. The Academic Coaches receive training on working with students with learning disabilities as part of their mandatory training (Academic Coach, large four-year public).

> Coaches help students develop the skills to be successful academically, rather than skills for a specific course, like tutoring" (Success Coach, large four-year public).

Differences between tutoring and coaching include content focus (coaching does not yet appear to have defined content), use of peer tutoring models (coaching appears to be mostly professional or graduate staff), and "role modeling." While role modeling is mentioned several times in tutoring literature, it does not appear in the coaching literature nor was referenced in the survey's 160 descriptors. In addition, only 6 percent of respondents indicated that "course content" was one of the top three primary emphases of their coaching program.

Avoiding a "Garbage Can" of Nouns and Verbs

As presented in this chapter, the definitions of coaching, advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring are often indistinguishable. In addition, there are numerous interpretations of these labels and discrepancy of use. Some argue these labels are nouns (i.e. titles of positions or programs) while others employ them as verbs (i.e. strategies and techniques used to work with students). Both the literature review and survey results demonstrated this lack of consistency. Survey respondents' open-ended comments explained coaching practices commensurate with other roles. Consider the following: *Can tutors coach? Can advisors counsel? Can coaches mentor?* Most would say yes, but herein lays the problem. If coaches, tutors, advisors, counselors, and mentors duplicate each other's work, then ambiguity and lack of role differentiation is confusing for students and administrators alike. Furthermore, unclear titles and lack of identifiable inputs, environments, and outcomes, make each program's true purpose invisible.

As Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) explained, organizational choice often becomes a "garbage can" of preferences and fluid participation. They stated that "situations of decision making under goal ambiguity are common in complex organizations" and when decisions are made under inconsistent and ill-defined preferences they are "as a loose collection of ideas rather than as a coherent structure" (p. 1). The authors went on to say that university decision making very often does not resolve problems, but rather is a result of unclear goals and sensitivity to increases in load.

In order for coaches and like-roles to avoid becoming a university garbage can, there needs to be clarity of purpose. Indeed, colleges and universities are complex organisms. Financial transactions, course registration, living arrangements, course selection, behavioral and mental concerns, parental involvement, and hundreds of other policies, procedures, and practices both support and hinder a student from progressing to graduation. As a result, interactions with academic affairs, student affairs, bursar, registrar, housing, conduct, and dozens of offices are all part of a college experience. In order to organize these various interactions, institutions hire specific people for specific services. As Bolman and Deal (2003) pointed out, organizations cope with complexity and ambiguity two ways. First, they "break complexity into smaller pieces and assign chucks to specialized individuals or unit" and they "hire or develop sophisticated professionals with skills in handling specific segments of environmental complexity" (pp. 20-31). In many responses provided by the 160 survey participants, coaching was referenced as a gap filler, navigator, or connector to these offices. In turn, this

interpretation leads to controversy over if coaching should or should not have a "specialization."

I-E-O of Academic/Success Coaching & Similar Roles

One way to compare and contrast coaching, advising, mentoring, counseling, and tutoring is to consider the various inputs, environments, and outcomes for each of these services (Astin, 1993). First, for comparison proposes, the only macro-level input characteristic considered for this application include undergraduate students. Three types of student utilization methods are included as the primary inputs: opt-in, referral, or mandate.

Next, distinguished environments and outcomes are arguably the two least understood (and therefore questioned) components of each of these services. Table 5.4 presents a good-faith effort at organizing each role researched as a comparison/contrast to coaching in college. With these selections, three critical points must be made. First, each selection is based on two sources of information: relevant literature and/or national survey data on current coaching programs. Second, the selections made only reflect *primary* emphases. (i.e. not secondary or tertiary). Therefore, some functions may indeed appear in other roles, but if it is not considered a primary or essential function, it was not indicated as such. Third, different interpretations may exist for what constitutes an environment versus an outcome. Outcomes were selected primarily as (1) an intended product of the environment, and (2) their ability to be measured. Certainly, perceived gains and student outcomes vary from service to service.

Table 5.4. Comparison Chart of Essential/Primary Emphases between Academic/Success Coaching and Similar Collegiate

Essential/Primary Functions	Academic Advising	Counseling	Mentoring	Tutoring	A/S Coaching[9]
Student Utilization **Inputs**					
Opt-in		X	X	X	X
Referred		X		X	X
Mandated	X	X			X
Primary **Environment**[10]					
Academic Planning	X				X
Career Planning	X	X	X		
Content - Objective/impartial/factual	X			X	X
Content - Subjective/idiosyncratic content		X	X		X
Course Material				X	
Credentials/Pre-requirements to Practice		X		X	
Goal Setting	X	X	X	X	X
Initial Information Source = Position	X[11]		X	X	X
Initial Information Source = Student		X	X		X
Instruction/Teaching	X			X	
Major Connect/Course Choice	X				
Major Exploration/Major Progression	X				
Psychological Stressors		X			
Referral	X	X	X	X	X
Study Skills/Skill Development				X	X
Intended **Outcomes**					
Academic Gains (e.g. Increased GPA/grades)				X	X
Accurate Information	X			X	X
Mastery of Course Material				X	
Ongoing, Informal/Un-prescribed Relationship[12]			X		X
Reciprocity			X		
Self-Regulated Learning/Responsibility	X	X		X	X
Skill Development		X		X	X

---

[9] Based on academic/success coaching survey data.

[10] Environments are considered essential/primary functions of each role as cited in literature, mentioned in definition, or identified in current coaching survey.

[11] Smith, C.L. & Allen, J.M. (2006). *Essential functions of Academic Advising: What students want and get*. NACADA Journal, Volume 26(1).

[12] Counselors may host regular meetings with a client, but these are considered formal in nature. Tutors ultimately hope to foster independent learning.

Astin's IEO conceptual framework allows for analysis of three kinds of data. He explained that a fundamental purpose of assessment and evaluation is "to learn as much as possible about how to structure educational environments so to maximize talent development" (Astin, 1993, p. 18). When comparing and contrasting coaching with similar roles, several standardized techniques are used in all five services. Advising, Counseling, Mentoring, Tutoring, and Coaching all appear to implement goal setting, reflection, questioning, collaboration, and referrals in order to elicit student motivation. These approaches are "individualized" in the sense that all five take into account the students unique circumstance, and they all have one-on-one service delivery models.

Aspirational Definition of Coaching

As reflected in the literature review, survey results, and primary emphasis (Table 5.3), the unique roles and responsibilities of coaching vary greatly depending on the nature of the program, interpretation of language, student inputs, designed environments, and intended outcomes. In addition, topics discussed in coaching sessions are dependent on the needs of the student and the institution. Perhaps this disparity of need is why coaching is so hard to define and lacks consistency between institutions. No one theme tied together the coaching role. Coupled with the fact that 48 percent of programs do not use a theory or conceptual framework to guide their work, the disparity of coaching programs is prevalent.

Perhaps coaching exists to fill the gaps in other roles. For example, if advising does not meet all student reflection needs, or tutoring leaves study skill needs, counseling holds a "stigma," and mentoring is seen as too informal, one must consider if

coaching is truly different and specialized, or simply serves as a "gap-filler." This argument does not downplay the coaching's niche and the importance of filling gaps in college. Rather, serving as an effective referral agent, or "bridge" to other services is an essential service in-of-itself. However, every college is certain to have their own, unique gaps that vary both within and between colleges. If coaching programs aim to meet those missing needs, then certainly coaching will be tailored to each institution once again leading to disparity. In this way, the college coaching field may be putting form before function; creating a program first and later determining its function.

Coaching can be considered "uniquely integrative" of lacking elements of traditional roles. As revealed in survey results and the literature review, example functions of a coaching environment (i.e. content) include questioning that promotes student reflection and motivation, self-assessment(s), and strategy sharing. Self-assessment can be formal (i.e. inventories) or informal (questioning). In addition, planning is referenced as a central technique often implemented through "individual success plans" (Table 4.19). The primary intended outcomes of these functions include navigation of resources and increased persistence/retention. Skill development is listed both a strategy employed during the session and an intended outcome (Table 4.6 and 4.19). And, finally performance improvement is perhaps the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of coaching. Performance improvement may be measured via institutional measures such as academic standing, GPA, and retention or individual measures such as student usage of new skills, success in a new major, or articulation of strengths.

Synthesizing results of the study, the literature review, and personal experience

with academic/success coaching, the author proposes the following aspirational

definition.

> Academic Success Coaching is the individualized practice of asking reflective,
> motivation-based questions, providing opportunities for formal self-assessment,
> sharing effective strategies, and co-creating a tangible plan. The coaching
> process offers students an opportunity to identify their strengths, actively
> practice new skills, and effectively navigate appropriate resources that ultimately
> results in skill development, performance improvement, and increased
> persistence.

In addition, the author postulates that two distinguishing characteristics of coaching

include skill development and performance improvement. Therefore, if a program

label's itself "coaching," then ultimately results should yield development of new or

improved skills and demonstrated/assessed performance improvement. Otherwise,

another label may be more appropriate.

Limitations

Several limitations are noted in the present study. Perhaps the most pertinent

limitation is the lack of a consistent and defined practitioner population. Specifically,

because no national database of coaching programs exists, the general population

cannot be inferred. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of coaches are dispersed

among other similar roles on campus that may not use the title "coach." This fact was

shown in the initial survey results when non-coach positions completed the survey.

In addition, results of the present study are skewed to represent four-year

colleges and a single-person response. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated

their answers represented a four-year institution, compared to 14 percent

126

representation by two-year schools. Consequently, results may be skewed to favor

four-year schools, influencing interpretations such as creating coaching programs to

"increase retention." There were also anonymous responses throughout the survey

(approximately 24%), thus leaving some of the results incomplete. In addition, only one

person from the institution responded per coaching program, per institution. Therefore,

the description of the coaching program is based on a single perspective. Other

respondents may have described the program differently thus altering the primary

emphases, uniqueness, perceived effectiveness, and other subjective measures. Fowler

(2009) defined survey bias as a systematic difference between the sample and the

population. In the present study, results may be biased due to self-selection and lack of

a true population.

In sum, this national survey attempted to provide readers an initial "lay of the

land" of current coaching practices. However, much more investigation is needed to

validate the proposed model and/or present new evidence that coaching is an effective

use of institutional resources.

Implications for future Research

Given the newness of academic/success coaching in higher education, there is

plenty of room for further investigation. The following set of ideas only scratches the

surface of future study.

Further research is needed to differentiate coaching models. Titles themselves

vary greatly and additional research could investigate how and when a particular model

adopts a certain title. For example, what is implied by College Life Coach that is different

from an Academic Success Coach? How do the positions logistically differ? Does success coaching emphasize different content than academic coaching? Perhaps a future study could simply ask participants to provide their own institutional definition of coaching. Results would allow an analysis of the uniqueness (or lack-thereof) and institutional gap-filling occurring on each campus.

Second, assessment of coaching currently takes many different forms. In order for coaching to be a viable retention strategy, a sound method of measuring effectiveness must be established. This void in best practices leaves room for future researchers to establish a model of assessing coaching programs. Rigorous assessment and evaluation is essential to sustaining the coaching field.

Third, future research could investigate connections between coaching inside and outside of higher education. For example, what models are adopted in K-12 education that are similar to or different from college coaching. Likewise, further exploration could evaluate executive coaching, ICF coaching, and other career-related coaching models. The concept of "Life Coaching" in college appears to be gaining interest, as seen by the University of Southern Florida's extensive "Collegiate Life Coaching" model.

Finally, considering special student populations are a wide-spread theme in several coaching programs, it would be interesting to investigate implications for limiting the service to only certain demographics. Research could investigate if coaching techniques differ or if the fundamental coaching environment is altered by these specified inputs.

Conclusion

Kuh, et. al, (2006) stated "On balance, student persistence and success are related to the extent to which students interact with supportive adults on campus, both inside and outside the classroom" (p. 41). Perhaps a primary role of an academic/success coach is fostering the student's sense of mattering while also providing an institutional method of academic and social integration. From a student perspective, academic/success coaches provide a venue of personal, non-directive support. As Evans et al. (1998) discusses, students in a collegiate environment who do not experience individual support may be more prone to leave college. Certainly, even if no standard model exists, at a minimum academic/success coaches can take it upon themselves to express care and interest to the students they serve. Furthermore, perhaps to the coaches benefit, they are not necessarily bound by directives or factual content prescribed by other roles such as academic advising (often bound by course selection and educational plans) and tutoring (often bound by learning course content).

From an institutional perspective, colleges and universities should consider ways to provide venues of academic and social integration. Tinto's (1974) academic and social integration model has been a hallmark theory for explaining student departure. Tinto argued these two institutional experiences will ultimately determine decisions of student departure. Furthermore, the theory posited that as integration increases, a student's institutional commitment increases. Inclusive institutional environments lead to enhanced student learning and student satisfaction. Kuh, et. al. (2006) stated, "The single best predictor of student satisfaction with college is the degree to which they

perceive the college environment to be supportive of their academic and social needs"

(p. 40). This perception of academic and social integration can, in part, be shaped with

the institution's programs and services. One such program may include

academic/success coaching. In sum, the concept of student satisfaction is highly

correlated with feelings of mattering and integration in a collegiate environment. As

such, coaching programs are ideally created, implemented, and assessed to meet these

student needs.

Schreiner et. al. (2011) revealed coaching-related themes through interviews

about faculty/staff who had the greatest impact on high-risk students. These included

an authentic, personal connection, important timing, expression of care, and

genuineness. The authors stated, "Regardless of position, the primary behaviors of staff

that were described by students as making a difference were that they cared about the

students, helped them meet their needs and get their questions answered, knew them

by name, encouraged them, and spent time with them" (p. 332). It is clear from the

present study that coaches across the country are doing remarkable, innovative things

to help students succeed. Hundreds of coaching programs have already been

established and hundreds more are on the horizon. Given that academic/success

coaching is in its infancy, it is important to root the field in research, consider desired

inputs, environments, and outcomes, and establish a clear sense of purpose.

References

Asghar, A. (2010). *Reciprocal Peer Coaching and Its Use as a Formative Assessment Strategy for First-Year Students*. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 35(4), 403-417.

Astin, A. (1993). Assessment for Excellence: The Philospophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. American Council on Education. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Tahan, K. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2011-033). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Barbuto, J. E., Story, J. S., Fritz, S. M., & Schinstock, J. L. (2011). *Full Range Advising: Transforming the Advisor–Advisee Experience*. Journal of College Student Development, *52*(6), 15.

Barnhart, J. & LeMaster, J. (2013). *Developing a Success Coaching Center*. Custom Research Brief, Student Affairs Forum. Education Advisory Board.

Baum, S., Ma, J, & Payea, K. (2013). *Education Pays 2013: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. Trends in Higher Education Series. The College Board.

Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. (2011). *The Effects of Student Coaching in College: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Mentoring*. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Working Paper Series. Retrieved August 2011 from http://www.nber.org/papers/w16881.pdf

Bloom, J., Hutson, B. & He, Y. (2008). *The Appreciative Advising Revolution*. Champaign, IL. Stipes Publishing.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. (2003). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brahm, G. (2006). *Students with staying power*. National Association of Colleges and University Business Officers.

Brinckerhoff, L. C., McGuire, J.M., & Shaw, S.F. (2002). *Postsecondary education and transition for students with learning disabilities*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Brock, V.G. (2008). *Grounded Theory of the Roots and Emergence of Coaching*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Burnsed, B. (2011). Liberal arts colleges with lowest student-faculty ratios. *U.S. News*.

Campbell, D. E., & Campbell, T. A. (2000). The mentoring relationship: Differing perceptions of benefits. *The College Student Journal, 34*, 516-523.

Chickering, A. W. (2006). Every Student Can Learn-If... *About Campus,* 9-15.

Clifford, M. W. (2009). *Exploring mentoring experiences in college student affairs: A Q methodology study.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Cohen, M.D., March, J.G. & Olsen, J.P. (1972). *A Garbage Can Model of Organizational*

   Choice. Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 17, No1. Cornell University: Sage

   Publications, Inc.

Cook, S. (1999). *A Chronology of Academic Advising in America*. National Academic

   Advising Association (NACADA) Region 9 Conference. Los Angeles, CA.

Cotton, S. R., & Wilson, B. (2006). Student-faculty interactions: Dynamics and

   determinants. *Journal of Higher Education, 51*(4), 487-516.

Cox, B. E., McIntosh, K. L., Terenzini, P. T., Reason, R. D., & Lutovsky Quaye, B. R. (2010).

   Pedagogical Signals of Faculty Approachability: Factors Shaping Faculty–Student

   Interaction Outside the Classroom. *Research in Higher Education, 51*(8), 767-788.

Drake, J. K. (2011). The Role of Academic Advising in Student Retention and Persistence.

   About Campus, 16, 8-12.

Dvorak, J. J. K. (2000). *The college tutoring experience.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved

   from ProQuest database. (No. 9964946).

Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student Development in College.*

   Theory, Research, and Practice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Farrell, E. F. (2007). Some Colleges Provide Success Coaches for Students. *Education*

   Digest, 73(3), 44-47.

Fowler, F. (2009). Survey research methods (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

   Publications.

Garcia, N. D. (2012). *Mentoring unfolded: The evolution of an emerging discipline*.

   (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Gordon, V. N., & Habley, W. R. (2000). *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Habley, W. R., Bloom, J. L., & Robbins, S. (2012). *Increasing Persistence: Research -based strategies for college student success*. San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Haggerty, J. L. (2011). *Exploring mentoring relationships: A phenomenological study of four women's Experiences*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Hughes, K. (2012). The College Completion Agenda 2012 Progress Report. College Board Advocacy and Policy Center. Retrieved from completionagenda.collegeboard.org

International Coach Federation (ICF). http://www.coachfederation.org/

Kaplan, D. M., Tarvydas, V. M., & Gladding, S. T. (2014). *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling: The New Consensus Definition of Counseling*. Journal of Counseling & Development, 92(3), 366-372.

Kappenberg, E. S. (2008). *A model of executive coaching: Key factors in coaching success.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Kim, Y. K., & Sax, L. J. (2007). Different Patterns of Student-Faculty Interaction in Research Universities: An Analysis by Student Gender, Race, SES, and First-Generation Status. *Center for Studies in Higher Education, CSHE.10.07*, 1-20.

Kirk, R.E. (2011). *Statistics: An Introduction*.(5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth Corperation.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J.A., Bridges, B.K., & Kayek, J.C. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. National Symposium Education Cooperative.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E. J., & Associates (2005). *Student Success in College*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lee, D., Olson, E. A., Locke, B., Michelson, S. T. & Odes, E. (2009). The Effects of College Counseling Services on Academic Performance and Retention. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(3), 305-319.

MacDonald, R.B. (1994). *The master tutor: A guidebook for more effective tutoring*. Williamsville, NY: Cambridge Stratford, LTD.

McMahon, W.W. (2009). *Higher Learning, Greater Good. The private and social benefits of higher education*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Metzner, B. S. (1989). Perceived Quality of Academic Advising: The Effect on Freshman Attrition. *American Educational Research Journal, 26*(3).

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). www.nacada.ksu.edu

National College Health Assessment (2012). Publications and Reports, American College Health Association. http://www.acha-ncha.org/pubs_rpts.html

Neuhauser, C., & Weber, K. (2011). The Student Success Coach. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2011*(153), 43-52.

Neukrug, E. (2007). *The World of the Counselor: An Introduction to the Counseling Profession*. (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

Parker, D. R., & Boutelle, K. (2009). Executive Function Coaching for College Students with Learning Disabilities and ADHD: A New Approach for Fostering Self-Determination. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 24*(4), 204-215.

Pascarella, E. T. (1980). Student-faculty informal contact and college outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 50*(4), 545-595.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1977). Patterns of Student-Faculty Informal Interaction beyond the Classroom and Voluntary Freshman Attrition. *The Journal of Higher Education, 48*(5).

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students. A third decade of research* (Vol. 2). San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pugh, K. H. (2005). *Peer Tutoring Do's and Don'ts*. Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks, (528), 7-31.

Quinn, M. A. (1996). *Measuring tutoring effectiveness by program delivery model: Small group tutoring compared to tutoring in labs in mathematics, physics, and accounting.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Ramirez, A. P. (2009). *Informal mentoring: A phenomenological study of academically underprepared students in community colleges*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database.

Robinson, C., & Gahagan, J. (2010). Coaching students to academic success and engagement on campus. *About Campus*, ACPA: College Student Educators International.

Schneider, M. (2010). *Finishing the First Lap: The Cost of First-Year Student Attrition in America's Four-Year Colleges and Universities*. American Institutes for Research.

Schreiner, L. A., & Anderson, E. (2005). Strengths-Based Advising: A New Lens for Higher Education. *NACADA Journal, 25*(2), 20-29.

Schreiner, L. A., Noel, P., Anderson, E., & Cantwell, L. (2011). The Impact of Faculty and Staff on High-Risk College Student Persistence. *Journal of College Student Development, 52*(3), 321-338.

Smith, C.L. & Allen, J.M. (2006). Essential functions of Academic Advising: What students want and get. *NACADA Journal*, 26(1).

Smith, K. S. & Martorana, L. (2013). Advising and Academic Coaching Interest Group Survey. Annual Conference, Interest Group on Coaching. National Academic Advising Association. Unpublished raw data.

Swartz, S. L., Prevatt, F., & Proctor, B. E. (2005). A Coaching Intervention for College Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. *Psychology in the Schools, 42*(6), 647-656.

Tinto, V. (1975). *Dropout From Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research*: Review of Educational Research.

Tinto, V. (1982). Limits of Theory and Practice in Student Attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 53*(6), 687-700.

Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of Student Departure: Reflections on the Longitudinal Character of Student Leaving. *Journal of Higher Education, 59*(4), 438-455.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.* 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Trumpy, R. J. (2006). *The Impact of an Academic Recovery Program on Underperforming First-Year College Students' Retention, Grade Point Average, and Credits Earned.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrevied from ProQuest database.

Vansickel-Peterson, D. L., (2010). *Coaching efficacy with academic leaders: A phenomenological investigation*. Open Access Theses and Dissertation.

Williams, A.E., & Beam, L.R. (2013). *Advising, Counseling, Coaching, Mentoring: Models of Developmental Relationships in Higher Education.* The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal. National Academic Advising Association.

(Sent via email through Campus Labs)

Directions: Thank you for taking the time to complete the following survey on coaching programs within higher education institutions. This survey consists of 15 - 25 questions, depending on the nature of your coaching program. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

Intended Audience: Administrators, directors, coordinators, and/or coaches at universities and colleges with an institutionally supported coaching program.

Purpose: The purpose of this survey is to simply describe your institution's coaching program(s).

Note: If your institution has more than one coaching program (for example, distinct "Career Coaching" versus "Academic Coaching"), please submit separate survey responses for each coaching program on your campus. Feel free to forward this survey to a colleague with the most familiarity for each program.

Results: If you would like a copy of the results, be sure to include your contact information after the last question has been answered. Individual answers will remain confidential and institutional themes will be reported in the aggregate. This research has been IRB approved.

Question 1: What is the **name** of your coaching program/your coaches' title? (Select one) (Please note: While there are many related roles/responsibilities on campus such as academic specialists, advisors, mentors, counselors, etc., this survey is intended only for college programs and services that use the title "Coach".) If your institution has more than one coaching program, please select the service with which you are **most** familiar. You will have the option at the end of the survey to complete another evaluation about additional programs.

☐ Academic Coach

☐ Academic Success Coach

☐ Achievement Coach

☐ Career Coach

☐ Coach

☐ College Coach

☐ Graduation Coach

☐ Leadership Coach

☐ Life Coach

☐ Organizational Coach

☐ Retention Coach

☐ Success Coach

☐ Writing Coach

☐ InsideTrack Coach (i.e., Your institution provides outsourced coaching through InsideTrack Company)

☐ Other title (please specify)

Question 2: Please indicate the **type of coach(es)** you employ: (Check all that apply)

☐ Full-time professional coach (i.e., the sole responsibility of coach role is working directly with/coaching students)

☐ "Partial" full-time professional coach (i.e., the coaching role is part of another full-time position on
campus such as advising, teaching, administration, etc.)

☐ Graduate student

☐ Undergraduate student

☐ Private/Outsourced/Contract coaching

☐ Volunteer Coaches (please specify)

☐ Other (please specify)

Questions 3 – 3: Please indicate how many of these types of coaches are **employed within your program**:

1 - 5 coaches

6 - 10 coaches

11 - 20 coaches

21 or more coaches

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
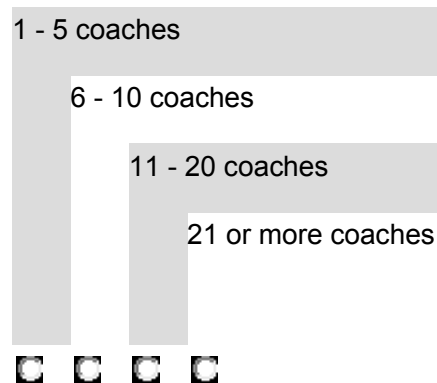
Question 4: Please use this space to provide any additional details on your coach employment: (Optional)

Question 5: What **year** was your coaching program established?

Question 6: **Why** was your coaching program first **established**? (Check the top **three** reasons)

☐ To provide students with a specialized/unique service (please describe)

☐ To provide students with a new service

☐ To expand on a current student services (please name)

☐ To enhance Academic Advising Services

☐ To replace an old title

☐ To increase retention

☐ To work with academic deficient students/students on academic probation

☐ To work with specific population(s) of students (please specify)

☐ Other option 1 (please specify)

☐ Other option 2 (please specify)

☐ Other option 3 (please specify)

Question 7: What are the **primary emphases** of your coaching position? What is the **focus** of the coaching conversations? (Check the top **three** reasons)

☐ Academic planning

☐ Academic recovery/working with students on academic probation

141

- ☐ Career planning/development/exploration
- ☐ Course registration
- ☐ Course selection/Choosing classes for major
- ☐ Course specific support (i.e., tutoring in course content or subject matter)
- ☐ Disability services
- ☐ Engagement planning/involvement
- ☐ Executive function/ADD and ADHD support
- ☐ Financial Aid/Financial Support
- ☐ Goal setting (i.e., reflecting on academic performance and outlining future plans for improvement)
- ☐ Job/Internship
- ☐ Leadership skills
- ☐ Personal concerns (homesickness, depression, etc.)
- ☐ Professional Development
- ☐ Stress management
- ☐ Study skills (time management, reading comprehension, note-taking)
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Other option 1 (please specify)
- ☐ Other option 2 (please specify)
- ☐ Other option 3 (please specify)

Question 8: Please use this space to **comment and/or expand on the above primary emphases of your coaching program.**

For example: What **topics** are discussed in the coaching sessions? What **resources** are used? What **questions** are asked?

Question 9: What are the **intended objectives and/or outcomes** of your coaching program? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Assist in selection of major
- ☐ Career preparation
- ☐ Develop connection to faculty/staff
- ☐ Develop leadership skills
- ☐ Develop student-institutional connection

- ☐ Improve retention
- ☐ Improve student engagement
- ☐ Improve student satisfaction
- ☐ Improve oral communication skills
- ☐ Improve written communication skills
- ☐ Promote critical thinking
- ☐ Promote self-awareness
- ☐ Provide academic assistance
- ☐ Provide institutional resources and information
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Question 10: How do you **measure the intended outcomes** of your coaching program? (Check all that apply and briefly describe your assessment method.)
- ☐ Surveys of students using coaching (please describe)
- ☐ Surveys of coaches (please describe)
- ☐ Focus groups (please describe)
- ☐ GPA data (please describe)
- ☐ Retention/persistence rates of students using coaching services (please describe
- ☐ Other (please describe
- ☐ We do not currently assess our coaching program.

Question 11: If you assess your coaching program, please **describe your results**: (i.e., What measures do you use? What data have emerged?)

Question 12: What do you perceive to be the **unique roles of coaches** on your campus? (i.e., Do coaches provide a service that no other office/position does on campus?) Specifically, please differentiate your Coaching program/roles from Counseling, Tutoring, Advising, Mentoring, and/or other positions on campus:

Question 13: What **student populations** do your coaches work with primarily? (Check all that apply)
- ☐ All undergraduates (first-year through senior)
- ☐ First-year students
- ☐ Sophomore students

☐ Juniors

☐ Seniors

☐ Academic deficient undergraduate students

☐ Graduate students

☐ Special population (please specify)

Question 14: Approximately **how many students** does your coaching program serve in one year (i.e., within the last 12 months)?

○ 10 or fewer

○ 11 - 50

○ 51 - 100

○ 101 - 200

○ 201 - 500

○ 501 - 1,000

○ 1,001 - 2,000

○ 2,001 - 3,000

○ 3,001 or more

Question 15: How do **students utilize** your coaching service? (Please indicate the **primary** reason)

○ Students are required/mandated to attend by a policy, etc.

○ Students are referred (but not required) to attend.

○ Students drop-in/schedule their own appointments.

Question 16: What is the **average length** of a coaching session?

○ 15 minutes or less

○ 16 - 30 minutes

○ 31 - 60 minutes

- ○ 61 minutes or more

Question 17: Do you currently use a **theoretical framework** in your coaching program for service delivery? (i.e., Do your coaches use a theoretical framework when working with students?)

○ Yes (please indicate the name of the framework)

○ No, we currently do not use a framework for our coaching program.

Question 18: Name of institution:

Question 19: Size of student body:
- ☐ Fewer than 1,000
- ☐ 1,000 - 4,999
- ☐ 5,000 - 9,999
- ☐ 10,000 or more

Question 20: Type of institution:
- ☐ 2 year public
- ☐ 2 year private
- ☐ 4 year public
- ☐ 4 year private

Question 21: What is the **name of the office/unit** in which your coaching program is held?

Question 22: In which **division/unit/department** is your coaching program held? (Check all that apply)
- ☐ Academic Affairs
- ☐ Student Affairs
- ☐ Student Success Center/Learning Assistance/Academic Support Office
- ☐ Athletics (i.e., an educational coaching program that support athletes exclusively)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Question 23: What is **your role** on campus? (Please select the description that most closely aligns with your position.)
- ☐ Coach (i.e., I directly work with/coach students.)
- ☐ Director/Assistant Director/Coordinator of Coaching Program (i.e., I oversee our coaching program and supervise Coaches.)
- ☐ Department Head (i.e., Coaching is one part of a larger office with multiple programs that I direct.)
- ☐ Other (please explain)

Question 24: Does your coaching program have a **website**?
- ☐ Yes (please include the web address)
- ☐ No

Question 25: Would you like to receive a copy of the results of this survey?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

You are invited to participate in a **descriptive survey regarding coaching program(s)** on your campus.

The intended audience to complete this survey includes administrators, directors, and/or coaches at universities and colleges with an institutionally supported (i.e. not outsourced) coaching program that is educational and/or academic in nature (i.e. not athletic).

Please take between 10-15 minutes to **complete the survey online**: http://studentvoice.com/usc/collegecoachingprograms2014

IRB approval has been granted for this research and all personally identifiable information will remain confidential. Analysis will consist of themes based on the descriptive nature of your program and/or institution type.

Please note: If your institution has more than one coaching program (for example distinct Career Coaching versus Academic Coaching), please consider taking the survey twice or forwarding the survey to a colleague with the most familiarity for each program.

If you would like to receive a **copy of the results**, please include your contact information after the last question has been answered. Results will be available in May 2015.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Claire

Claire Robinson
University of South Carolina
1322 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29208
claire.robinson@sc.edu
Ph: 803.777.4885

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH QUESTIONS & SURVEY ALIGNMENT CHART

Research Question	Survey Question	Variable
*1. Why do colleges and universities **create** academic coaching programs?*	Q. 4, 5, 11	CREATE
1.a. What **factors** initially motivated colleges and universities to create an academic coaching program?	Q. 5	CREATE
1.b. What types of **student populations** were the academic coaching programs designed to support?	Q. 11	CREATE
1.c. How long has the academic coaching program been in **existence**?	Q. 4	CREATE
*2. What are the **defining characteristics** of institutionally supported (i.e. not outsourced) coaching programs and positions on college campuses?*	Q. 1-3, 6, 10, 12-16	PROGRAMS
2.a. What are institutions **naming** their academic coaching programs? (Frequency table)	Q. 1	PROGRAMS
2.b. Are students **required** to meet with an academic coach? If so, which students and how often are they expected to meet with an academic coach?	Q. 13	PROGRAMS
2.c. How do **students utilize** coaching services?	Q. 13	PROGRAMS
2.d. What is the **typical length** of an academic coaching appointment?	Q. 14	PROGRAMS
2.e. Does the academic coaching program employ a **theoretical framework** for delivering coaching services?	Q. 15	PROGRAMS
2.f. What is the **intended content** and focus of academic coaching conversations with students?	Q. 6	PROGRAMS
2.g. How is the academic coaching position similar to or different from other roles on campus such as tutoring, counseling, advising, and faculty-student interaction?	Lit Review Q. 6 & Q. 10	PROGRAMS
2.h. What are the **official titles** of academic coaches?	Q. 1	PROGRAMS
*3. How do academic coaching programs and positions vary by **institution type?***	Q. 16	INSTITUTION
3.a. Factors to review: two-year public, two-year private, four-year public, four-year private.	Q. 16	INSTITUTION
3.b. Size of student body	Q. 16	INSTITUTION
*4. How are academic coaching programs currently **assessed**? What measures are coaching programs using to demonstrate effectiveness?*	Q. 7-9, 11	ASSESS
4. a. What are the **learning outcomes** of coaching programs?	Q. 7	ASSESS
4. b. Are institutions **currently measuring** their coaching programs? If yes, how?	Q. 8 & Q. 9	ASSESS
4.c. To what extent can academic coaching benefit undergraduate students who are **academically deficient**?	Q. 11 and 11 follow-up	ASSESS
4.d. Do institutions evaluate retention and GPA data when evaluating their coaching programs? If yes, how?	Q. 9	ASSESS

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

March 24, 2014

Mrs. Claire Robinson
University Libraries
Thomas Cooper Library
1322 Greene Street, Mezzanine Level, Student Success Center
Columbia, SC 29208

Re: **Pro00032514**
Study Title: *Academic Success Coaching: A Description of an Emerging Field in Higher Education*

Dear Mrs. Robinson:

The Office of Research Compliance, an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB), has completed an administrative review of the referenced research project on behalf of the USC IRB, and has determined that it is exempt from the Protection of Human Subject Regulations (45 CFR 46 et. seq.). No further oversight by the USC IRB is required; however, the investigator should inform this office prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the exempt status of the project.

If you have questions, please contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Institution Name	State
Anonymous (x45)	NA
Auburn University	Alabama
Mesa Community College	Arizona
Northern Arizona University	Arizona
Arkansas State University Mountain Home	Arkansas
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Arkansas
California State University, Northridge (CSUN)	California
Berkeley city College	California
Stanford University	California
Colorado State University	Colorado
University of Colorado Springs (UCCS)	Colorado
Community College of Aurora	Colorado
University of Connecticut	Connecticut
Central Connecticut State University	Connecticut
College of the North Atlantic Qatar (CNAQ)	Doha Qatar
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	Florida
Stetson University	Florida
University of Central Florida (UCF)	Florida
University of Florida	Florida
University of Tampa	Florida
Rollins College	Florida
"Access Institution in the University System of Georgia"	Georgia
Leeward Community College	Hawaii
Boise State University	Idaho
Benedictine University at Springfield	Illinois
Monmouth College	Illinois
University of St. Francis	Illinois
Purdue University	Indiana
University of Notre Dame	Indiana
Faith University	Istanbul Turkey
Fort Hays State University	Kansas
Friends University	Kansas
Morehead State University	Kentucky
Louisiana State University	Louisiana
University of Baltimore	Maryland
Harford Community College	Maryland
Becker College	Massachusetts
Bridgewater State University	Massachusetts
Bristol Community College	Massachusetts
Wellesley College	Massachusetts
Bay de Noc Community College	Michigan
Hope College	Michigan

Gustavus Adolphus College	Minnesota
Leech Lake Tribal College	Minnesota
Minnesota State Community And Technical College	Minnesota
University of Missouri St. Louis	Missouri
Northwest Missouri State University	Missouri
Saint Louis University	Missouri
University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC)	Missouri
Montana Tech	Montana
University of Nebraska – Lincoln	Nebraska
Rutgers Newark	New Jersey
University of New Mexico	New Mexico
University of Rochester	New York
Long Island University - Brooklyn Campus	New York
Mohawk Valley Community College	New York
Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh, NY	New York
St. Bonaventure University	New York
Syracuse University College of Engineering and Computer Science	New York
Wagner College	New York
University of North Carolina – Greensboro	North Carolina
University of North Carolina Asheville	North Carolina
Campbell University	North Carolina
Cape Breton University	Nova Scotia Canada
Bowling Green State University	Ohio
Cleveland State University	Ohio
Kent State University	Ohio
Ohio State University	Ohio
University of Cincinnati	Ohio
Baldwin Wallace University	Ohio
Capital University	Ohio
Franklin University	Ohio
Miami University Hamilton	Ohio
Ohio University	Ohio
Youngstown State	Ohio
University of Oklahoma	Oklahoma
Southern Nazarene University	Oklahoma
University of Waterloo	Ontario Canada
Oregon State University	Oregon
Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC)	Pennsylvania
Central Carolina Community College	South Carolina
Clemson	South Carolina
College of Charleston	South Carolina
Greenville Technical College	South Carolina
University of South Carolina – Beaufort	South Carolina
Dakota State University (DSU)	South Dakota
University of Memphis	Tennessee
University of Tennessee	Tennessee
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Tennessee
Roane State Community College (RSCC)	Tennessee
Texas A&M University	Texas
Texas State Technical College Waco	Texas

University of Texas at Austin	Texas
Seneca College	Toronto Canada
Champlain College	Vermont
Green Mountain College	Vermont
Tidewater Community College	Virginia
Virginia Tech	Virginia
Washington State University	Washington
West Virginia University	West Virginia
Carroll University	Wisconsin
University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee	Wisconsin