

8-31-2011

# Through the lens of a college success seminar: developing workshops for EOF students

Yesenia Madas

Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Madas, Yesenia, "Through the lens of a college success seminar: developing workshops for EOF students" (2011). *Theses and Dissertations*. 94.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/94>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact [LibraryTheses@rowan.edu](mailto:LibraryTheses@rowan.edu).

**THROUGH THE LENS OF A COLLEGE SUCCESS SEMINAR:  
DEVELOPING WORKSHOPS FOR EOF STUDENTS**

by  
Yesenia Madas

A Dissertation

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Leadership  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
At  
Rowan University  
April, 2011

Dissertation Chair: MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.



## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My husband, Timothy Carl Madas

My children, Sonia Gabriella Madas and  
Baby Madas due August 2011

My Mami, Margarita Torres

My Papi, Adrian Feliciano

My brother, Adrian Feliciano Jr.

## **Acknowledgements**

The journey through this process has been challenging yet amazing and there are so many people I would like to thank. I would like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. MaryBeth Walpole for without you I would not have been able to reach this milestone. I am so grateful for your guidance, your support, and your ability to keep me focused and grounded. You will always have a special place in my heart! I would also like to thank Dr. Glenn Lang and Dr. Kathy Sernak for being a part of my committee and providing such valuable feedback.

I am so grateful to have been a part of the first Community College Leadership Initiative Cohort at Rowan University. To my classmates, I will remember each of you fondly. I have made life-long friendships and am especially grateful to Elvy, Fidel, Jayne, Jim, Karen, Kelly, and Paula! To my classmate, colleague, mentor, and friend Beth, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart for being my anchor; this journey would not have been the same without you! I would also like to thank the faculty of Rowan's doctoral program for their commitment to the program and us!

I would also like to thank my community college family for their support throughout my doctoral work program. Special thanks to Dr. B; you always believed I could do this! I am grateful to the students, faculty, and staff that participated in this study and also to the EOF program. To Brian, Elizabeth, and Natalie I am so grateful for your friendship; you were there for me at each turn...listening, editing, encouraging, and caring. To my other moms Paulette and Susan thank you for your love, encouragement, and super awesome hugs!

A special thank you to my titi's (aunt's) Carmen, Myriam, and Tuty and tio's (uncles) Anthony, Blondie and David who have always supported and loved me. To my wonderful cousin's – I'm back and look forward to spending more time with you! To my Mami Guilla and Titi Rosa, I thank you for loving me unconditionally and celebrating every special life moment with me. To Alice and Lou (my other mom and dad) I say thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me. To all my family and friends, thanks for understanding my distance and supporting me throughout this amazing journey.

Mami, there are no words to thank you for coming to my rescue and being there for my family during my absence. You are a strong woman and I will always admire you for teaching me so many valuable life lessons. Papi, thank you for allowing me to witness the true meaning of hard work; so often, I watched you work so hard to take care of our family. Andy, I have always worked hard to set an example for you, and you have made me so proud! Thanks for always being such a wonderful little brother and supporting me from the sidelines!

I would like to thank my children, Sonia and baby Madas I love you with all my heart! Sonia you came at an amazing time in my life, when I was exploring who I am and reflecting on my life. You pushed me to keep going and reminded me how important family and friendships are! Thank you my little peanut! Baby Madas, you have not arrived yet but, you pushed me to reach the finish line. I am happily expecting your arrival and am looking forward to spending quality time with you and your sister.

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing husband, Tim. You have been there for me since the beginning of my educational journey. You were my greatest cheerleader as I

pursued my bachelor's, master's, and this doctoral degree! There are not enough words to thank you for always being at my side and for stepping up and allowing me to step back as I chased my dreams of obtaining this degree.

## **Abstract**

Yesenia Madas

### **THROUGH THE LENS OF A COLLEGE SUCCESS SEMINAR: DEVELOPING WORKSHOPS FOR EOF STUDENTS**

2010/2011

MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.  
Educational Leadership

The body of research on first-year seminars has grown considerably and there is much evidence to support that college success seminars have increased student persistence and degree attainment (Fidler, 1991; Keenan & Gabovitch, 1995; O’Gara, Karp, & Hughes, 2009; Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007). While most success courses come packaged with content such as study skills, test-taking, and time management, little assessment of the effectiveness of these areas has been conducted. Therefore, this study investigated the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success and used that information to create workshops for students in the Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF). This study utilized action research, which is focused on producing improvements and is cyclical (Hinchey, 2008). I collected data utilizing mixed methods. I used surveys to obtain demographic information and information about students’ and faculty perceptions of course content using frequency scales, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The findings revealed that faculty and students agreed that the most effective components of the College Success Seminar are time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	vii
List of Tables .....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Area of Interest .....	2
1.2 Purpose Statement .....	3
1.3 Context .....	4
1.4 History of College Success Seminar .....	5
1.5 Problem Statement .....	6
Chapter 2: Leadership Platform .....	8
2.1 Statement of Theories .....	9
2.2 Servant Leadership .....	10
2.3 Transformational/Transactional Leadership .....	13
2.4 Ethics and Leadership .....	18
2.5 Organizational Culture .....	19
2.6 Change Theory .....	25
2.7 Conclusion .....	27
Chapter 3: Literature Review .....	30
3.1 First Year Seminar .....	32
3.2 Community College .....	33
3.3 Educational Opportunity Fund Program .....	35
3.4 Retention .....	37
3.5 Student Services .....	38

## Table of Contents (Continued)

3.6 Conclusion .....	41
Chapter 4: Methodology .....	42
4.1 Purpose.....	43
4.2 Research Questions.....	44
4.3 Cycle I.....	44
4.4 Cycle II.....	46
4.5 Cycle III .....	46
4.6 Cycle IV .....	47
4.7 Confidentiality .....	49
Chapter 5: Cycle I: December 2009 – January 2010 .....	50
5.1 Student Survey Results .....	50
5.2 Instructor Survey Results .....	55
5.3 Reflection.....	58
Chapter 6: Cycle II: February 2010 .....	60
6.1 Review of Texts .....	60
6.2 Background.....	62
6.3 Time Management .....	63
6.4 Study Skills and Test-taking Strategies .....	64
6.5 Workshop Development .....	64
6.6 Reflection.....	66
Chapter 7: Cycle III: April 2010.....	68
7.1 Background.....	68

## Table of Contents (Continued)

7.2 Process .....	69
7.3 Pilot Workshop .....	70
7.4 Workshop Survey Results.....	71
7.5 Reflection.....	73
Chapter 8: Cycle IV: July – September 2010 .....	78
8.1 Background.....	79
8.2 Process .....	80
8.3 Summer Conference Planning .....	80
8.4 Summer Program .....	82
8.5 Summer Orientation.....	83
8.6 Summer Survey Results.....	84
8.7 Reflection.....	91
Chapter 9: Analysis.....	94
9.1 Answering the Research Questions .....	97
9.2 Focus on Change.....	101
Chapter 10: Leadership.....	109
10.1 Leadership Analysis.....	110
10.2 Five Leadership Practices .....	112
10.3 Open-ended Responses .....	121
10.4 Journal Entries .....	126
10.5 Answering the Leadership Questions .....	131
10.6 Change and Organizational Culture.....	135

## Table of Contents (Continued)

10.7 Final Thoughts .....	136
References .....	140
Appendix A: College Success Seminar Student Survey .....	147
Appendix B: College Success Seminar Instructor Survey .....	149
Appendix C: EOF Student Workshop Survey .....	151

## List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1 Student survey: The college success seminar helped me?.....	51
Table 2 Student survey: What did you find most helpful in this course?.....	53
Table 3 Student survey: What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?.....	54
Table 4 Instructor survey: Ranking of Course Content .....	56
Table 5 Content of college success course textbooks.....	61
Table 6 Pilot workshop survey: Satisfaction with workshop and presenter .....	72
Table 7 Summer program workshop survey: Number of workshop participants.....	84
Table 8 Summer program workshop survey: Satisfaction with workshop and presenter.....	85
Table 9 What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?..	87
Table 10 What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?.	90
Table 11 Five Practices Summary by Respondent .....	113
Table 12 Model the Way Data Summary .....	114
Table 13 Inspire a Shared Vision Data Summary.....	116
Table 14 Challenge the Process Data Summary .....	117
Table 15 Enable Others to Act Data Summary.....	119
Table 16 Encourage the Heart Data Summary .....	120
Table 17 LPI open-ended question 1 .....	122
Table 18 LPI open-ended question 2 .....	122

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Community colleges have a large diverse population of students enrolling at their institutions because they offer convenient locations, open access admission policies, and relatively low costs (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). These institutions often enroll a greater population of students who are socially, economically, and academically disadvantaged than do four-year colleges (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). These kinds of students typically need basic skills remediation; are unclear of their future goals; and feel anxious, depressed, or overwhelmed.

In the state of New Jersey, there are programs designed to help students who are socially, economically, and academically disadvantaged. One such program is the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, which recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The EOF program offers economically and educationally disadvantaged students a pre-college summer program, scholarship assistance, and support services. The program currently serves over 12 thousand students throughout the state and can be found in 28 public and 13 independent institutions (State of New Jersey, Commission on Higher Education, 2009).

In order to help students overcome the obstacles that hinder their success, community colleges have implemented a variety of student support services. These services take many forms to address students' various needs. Some colleges have moved toward offering one-stop services, providing students with an array of counseling and guidance (Grubb, 2006). Therefore, many student development departments are

structured to provide students with academic, career, personal, and transfer services (Boyd et al., 2003; Coll & House, 1991; Kadar, 2001; Tovar, & Simon 2006).

As community colleges seek to offer students multiple services to help students succeed in their first year in college, many have also adopted a college success course (National Resource Center, 2006, 2008). This course, generally offered to first-year students, is designed to provide students with information about their institutions, help with academic planning and career exploration, and provide an introduction to techniques that improve study habits and other personal skills such as time or stress management (Siegel, 2003). The goals of this course are to provide students with an orientation to the various services offered at the college, help them adjust to the college environment, and give them the tools they need to be successful (Siegel, 2003).

### **Area of Interest**

Over the last two decades, college success seminars have appeared in institutions of all types and sizes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These seminars were developed to increase persistence and retention of first-year students by encouraging increased student-faculty interaction, increased involvement in student life activities, and increased academic satisfaction. These courses are offered in a variety of ways with a variety of content areas. Similarly, at the community college that is the focus of the study, we offer a college success course for our students. However, not all of our EOF students take this college success course. Additionally, although the literature suggests that college success courses increase retention, the content areas have not been deeply investigated (Cuseo, 1991; Porter & Swing, 2006; Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007).

As a faculty member in the student development department assigned to work with the EOF population, an instructor of the College Success Seminar, and a “go to” person for technology, I am very interested and vested in the success of this course and the success of my EOF students. I have been concerned that not all of our EOF students have access to this course due to course availability or scheduling conflicts. I have been teaching college success since the fall of 2004. I have been involved in different aspects of the college success course including: selecting a new course textbook, developing a course rubric, meeting with the publishers, and joining the First Year Experience (FYE) committee that was working on implementing a comprehensive FYE program available to students in the fall 2010. Despite these various efforts, I was still concerned that some of our EOF students were not receiving the College Success Seminar and the important information it contains.

### **Purpose Statement**

Thus, the purpose of this action research study was to investigate the content areas found in college success courses that are most likely to contribute to the success of students in the EOF program and use that information to shape the creation of a series of workshops to be offered to them. Additionally, I studied my leadership as it pertains to this change project. While most success courses come packaged with content such as study skills, test-taking, and time management, little assessment of the effectiveness of these areas has been conducted. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the specific course components of the College Success Seminar at A Community College that contribute to the success of EOF students and use that information to shape the creation of workshops to be offered to those students who are unable to enroll in the course. This study was

geared toward helping EOF students who are considered at risk, underprepared, and of low socioeconomic status. Although student success is defined in a variety of ways (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006), in this study I define student success as helping students transition to college. My aim was to provide EOF students the skills necessary to perform well in college with goals of increased retention, improved grade point average, and persistence to graduation.

### **Context**

A Community College is a comprehensive community college with a Branch Campus and four higher education centers located throughout the county. The college has over 15,000 students with expected growth continuing over the next couple of years. The Educational Opportunity Fund Program has over 500 students and is also expected to continue growing.

The college is vested in student success. In the spring 2008 term I, together with a colleague, applied for a grant to design a College Success Seminar that would be offered in a condensed and accelerated form. The college selected our proposal and awarded us a grant to develop the course. The revised course was offered in five weeks instead of the traditional 10 weeks. Students in this course met once a week face-to-face in a classroom and also on-line for five weeks, covering the same material as students in the regular 10-week course. This required us to examine those components of college success that should be taught in person versus those that could be offered online. This grant, and my initial involvement with the design of college success, further increased my interest in examining the specific content areas of college success.

In the Student Development Division, counselors provide students with academic advising, career counseling, transfer counseling, and personal counseling. Additionally, many of us teach the College Success Seminar. In recent years, we have utilized the College Success Seminar to help students prepare for their second semester of study by spending a considerable amount of time doing academic planning and approving their next semester's courses. While some studies suggest that combining student success courses with academic advising is beneficial, this study seeks to investigate the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success and use that information to shape the creation of workshops in order to increase the number of EOF students who receive this information.

### **History of College Success Seminar**

The history of the college success course at A Community College dates back to 1971 when the course was first offered. In the 1980s the course was further revised and offered as a freshman seminar. In 2004, there was a charge to the Student Development Committee to examine new students' experiences from acceptance to registration, as well as look at how the college communicates with students. This resulted in a recommendation to offer a Freshman Success Seminar. In the spring of 2002, the course was offered for free and student attendance was low. In the fall of 2003, there was a recommendation that the course be mandated for all first-time, full-time students and offered as a one-credit freshman orientation course. Although the recommendation to require the course for all first-time, full-time students was never implemented, the course was offered as a one-credit elective. In 2004, a committee was formed to revise the course and develop its guiding principles. This provoked a lot of discussion and mixed

feelings among faculty, staff, and students. Faculty in good faith wanted to offer the course, however, students felt that it was another way for the college to “make money” by requiring all students to take the course. At the time of the study, students were strongly recommended to take the course and advised about all the benefits it has to offer, but it was not required.

The College Success Seminar is offered in both the fall and spring terms. However, it is highly recommended that students take the course in their first semester at A Community College. Over 40 sections were offered in the fall 2008 in comparison to eight sections offered in spring 2009. However, there were only two sections offered for EOF students in the fall 2008 semester and no courses offered in the spring 2009. The course is offered once a week for 10 weeks and meets for 1 hour and 15 minutes. The course is taught predominantly by counseling faculty, however, other faculty members across disciplines and some master’s level administrators have also taught the course.

### **Problem Statement**

The EOF program has various resources in place to help students succeed. Upon acceptance to the program students are expected to take advantage of all the resources the EOF program provides. However, some of these resources are limited as many first-year students are not able to take our EOF-specific college success courses. This may be due to the location, the time, or the availability, but is often because there are not enough sections of college success offerings for all first-year students. The percentages of EOF students who take the College Success Seminar are low. Therefore investigating supplemental programs, such as workshops, could provide this population with additional resources.

The office of Planning Assessment and Research at A Community College conducted a study in 2005, *Investigating the Impact of HUDV-107 (The College Success Seminar) on Student Retention and Academic Achievement*. This study looked at (1) identifying the demographic characteristics of course participants and reporting the grade distribution/course completion rate, and (2) assessing the potential impact of the College Success Seminar on three measures of student success: retention, overall completion rate for the semester, and term GPA. The results suggested that students who enrolled in the College Success Seminar completed more credits, had higher GPAs, and were more likely to return the following semester (Institutional Report, 2005).

One of the recommendations of that study was to investigate the factors that may be strongly associated with college success as well as an investigation of other “outcomes” that may be important measures of college success, such as study skills. Therefore, this action research project built on that initial study to examine the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success based on student and faculty perceptions and develop workshops for EOF students. The workshops would allow those students not enrolled in college success to have an opportunity to access those important course components. Because I led this effort, the study also explored my leadership. In the next chapter I examine my espoused leadership.

## Chapter 2

### Leadership Platform

As a relatively young professional with great aspirations to lead, I have found myself searching for answers. I have reflected on my journey thus far as it pertains to my leadership. I have thought extensively about who I am as a leader and what type of leader I want to be. In exploring my leadership theory, I realize that I have limited leadership experience. However, I have great potential and a strong desire to lead. One of the reasons I enrolled in the Rowan program was to strengthen and explore my leadership. Although I cannot confine my leadership to one theory, I can identify with different aspects of the leadership theories. I bring those theories together to illustrate what I think my current leadership represents. My leadership theory is an open canvas with endless possibilities. I am a genuine person and know how to work well with people. I have strong values and am committed to changing lives. I learn from others' experiences on a daily basis. I am known to take care of those around me and pour my heart into everything that I do. Therefore, I believe that I am a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977) who also has transactional/transformational (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978), authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007), and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) qualities. As part of my dissertation, I collect data to examine the extent to which I use these theories during the study. My leadership characteristics are described below followed by relevant personal illustrations.

I grew up in the Bronx in an era when drugs and crime were rampant. During this time, there were more abandoned buildings than occupied ones. Selling drugs was a way

to fast money and was more attractive than getting an education. Innocent kids were getting killed. In junior high school, one of my friends was killed while playing outside by two drug lords who were shooting at each other over drug turf. Another friend was hit by a stray bullet that came into her apartment. In high school, one of my teachers was found dead in the river. These experiences pushed me to want to make a difference. Growing up in an environment like this does not provide one with much opportunity. Most of my schoolmates were lucky to make it to high school and even luckier to graduate. High school dropout rates were high and my mom was terrified to lose me to the streets. She always made sure I went to school and instilled in me the value of education. She often pleaded with me to finish high school and earn my diploma. No one in her family had finished high school and this was a dream for her. I knew that education would provide a better life not just for me, but for those around me. I set out to lead by example and to model that change starts from within. I also wanted to prove that one does not have to be a product of one's environment. What currently motivates me to be a leader comes from that background and includes the satisfaction of doing a good job, helping others, and finding meaning in my work and life.

### **Statement of Theories**

As I study various leadership theories, I realize that I do not fit into one leadership theory. Leadership takes various forms, in many styles, with diverse qualities (Bass, 1974; Gardner, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007). My leadership is grounded on the principle of trust, nurtured by respect, and includes a desire for change. My leadership is constantly evolving and growing. I identify strongly with the servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977) who is also transactional/transformational (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978) and has

authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) qualities. I find that the blend of these theories really touches on my values as a person. I see myself as an eclectic leader who utilizes strengths from different theories.

### **Servant Leadership**

The servant leader *is* servant first...it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, *to* serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead...the care taken by the servant is to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 22).

Greenleaf got the idea of the *Servant as Leader* from reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*.

In this story...the central figure...Leo...accompanies the party as the servant who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and song. All goes well until Leo disappears...the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo...known first as *servant*, the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble *leader*. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 18).

When I first read the story of Leo (Greenleaf, 1977), I identified with the role I play in my family. My parents both dropped out of high school. The older I got, the more responsibility I took on. As a young girl, I learned to cook and clean to help out in the home. I helped raise my younger brother and was sometimes confused with being his "very young mother." I, like Leo, did my family's menial chores and tried to keep them in high spirits. Somewhere in this process, I evolved as the leader in my family. I took care of everyone in my family. I made sure that my brother did his homework, that dinner was cooked, that the bills were paid, and that the laundry was done. After high school, I chose not to go to college subsequent to learning that my father was having an affair. I did this to take care of my mother and brother. I went out and got a full-time job in order to contribute financially to the household and ensure that we would not have to

relocate. I felt that I could lead them to better things. As a result of my choices and my desire to pursue higher education, my brother also followed and went to college. I became the glue that held my family together. A servant leader serves by becoming an advocate to those he serves (Sergiovanni, 2007) while motivating them “to become wealthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely themselves to become servants” (Greenleaf, 2002 p. 27). According to Batten (1998), the more we serve and build others, the better our own lives become. Three key ingredients involved in passionate serving are caring, sharing, and forgiving. I have always had a caring nature and learned to share at an early age. I stood up for kids who were bullied and made friends with unpopular kids because I cared about them. The one thing I lacked was the gift of forgiveness. If someone was mean to me at school or hurt my feelings, I would stop speaking to them or write them off. I saw this behavior as an appropriate punishment, like a criminal getting a jail sentence. It took me several years to learn to forgive. I did not give many second chances to make a first impression and was quick to judge. Luckily, I have learned to forgive and am a better person for it.

Jaworski (1998) explores a deeper meaning of his life and he allows himself to live and follow his life’s purpose. He builds directly on Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership as he shifts from being egotistical to caring for others and wanting to serve. It takes him some time to identify his mistakes, but he eventually learns from them. Initially, he is driven by money and power until his purpose shifts. As he goes through a transformation he begins to appreciate nature and people. He takes the time to “smell the flowers.” He finds true meaning in his desire to change and improve his life and the lives of others (Jaworski, 1998).

The opportunity to serve presents itself in all aspects of life. There are so many opportunities to serve within one's work, one's family, and one's community. I get deep satisfaction in serving and helping others. A few years ago I contacted Habitat for Humanity to volunteer. I spent quite a bit of time helping them build a house. As a result, I was asked to serve on their volunteer relations committee. Shortly after, I was making calls to volunteers and mobilizing volunteer groups. I got A Community College involved in helping Habitat with their needs and continue to advocate for them. In this role, I saw myself as servant.

I was appointed President of New Jersey's Community College Counselor's Association (NJ3C) in the summer 2009. I had initially joined NJ3C as a board member. I looked forward to contributing ideas and topics for future conferences. After a few months on the board, the membership chair went on medical leave unexpectedly, creating a vacancy. The responsibilities of this role were to keep the membership directory and send out conference announcements. I accepted the role because I wanted to help the group and knew they needed me. After being in this role for a couple of months, I was approached about running for vice president. Gracefully I declined, noting that I was new to the board and had limited experience. I think I was afraid to take on that leadership role. Another board member accepted the position. A few months later, I was once again approached about becoming the vice president. I was now ready to serve (Greenleaf, 1977) and accepted the position. This position gave me the opportunity to continue to build on my leadership and allows me to bring professional development opportunities to the counselors in our community colleges. By providing these opportunities, counselors

in the state build the skills necessary to help their students succeed. I became president of the organization in 2009.

As president of the New Jersey Community College Counselor's Association (NJ3C) at the time of this study, my goal is to continue to serve the board as a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977) with the intent of inspiring others to take on leadership roles. My challenges will be to keep the board engaged and get more people involved in the membership. I hope to be able to transform NJ3C to a stronger organization. We have already begun making some positive changes, which include lowering the annual conference fee. We want the conference to be affordable, especially during a time when colleges are facing tight budgets. I am optimistic that these changes will build a stronger membership and, eventually, an even stronger board. I hope to use my transformational/transactional (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978) leadership skills to achieve these goals.

### **Transformational/Transactional Leadership**

Burns (1978) defines leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and the needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers” (p. 101). He proposes two types of leadership. The first type is transactional leadership, which occurs when people initiate contact for the purpose of exchanging valued goods. In this type of leadership the leader caters to the follower in an attempt to please him. This type of leadership seeks to satisfy both the leader and the follower. The second type is transforming leadership, which occurs when leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Transforming leadership becomes moral by raising the level of human

conduct and ethical aspirations of both leader and led, thus having a transforming effect on both (Burns, 1978). Transformational and transactional leadership are related.

Initially, one may make contact on the basis of exchanging valued goods for a purpose, which is transactional leadership. However, this purpose can lead members to feel highly motivated and go above and beyond expectations, which is transformational.

Transformational and transactional leadership are so highly related that it makes it difficult to separate their unique effects (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Before coming to A Community College, I worked as an academic advisor at a four-year college in New York. During this time, more and more students coming in for advising sessions were in need of counseling. They revealed personal problems affecting their educational goals. I saw a great need for counseling services at this campus. I decided to apply to a graduate program in counseling and was accepted. This program required a year of fieldwork with several internship possibilities. I wanted to provide counseling for the students at my campus. I began pulling resources together and using the strengths of those around me. I set up an appointment with the dean to plead my case and advocate for students. He agreed and gave me a storage room to utilize as the counseling center. I enlisted the help of the assistant dean and others from the campus to help me get a phone, a computer, and recycled office furniture. We convinced a faculty psychologist to supervise us and the center. This was an example of my transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). I was able to negotiate services utilizing the relationships I had established to make the counseling center a reality. To kick off the new counseling center, we organized events for depression and eating disorders. We tried to make the office a comfortable place where students would want to come. We purchased plants and

made banners with motivational quotes for the office. The counseling center received additional interns during that year, which helped it flourish. As a result of this initiative, the campus continues to have a counseling center today. This transformation provides students with additional support services that had not previously existed and is an example of my transformational leadership.

According to Leithwood (2007), Bass defines transformational leadership based on these four categories of practice:

*Charisma*: practices that arouse strong emotions and identification with the leader's personal qualities and sense of mission

*Inspirational leadership*: communicating an appealing vision and modeling exemplary practices consistent with that vision

*Individualized consideration*: providing support and encouragement to employees for their efforts, and opportunities to develop further

*Intellectual stimulation*: practices that increase followers' awareness of problems and encourage them to think about their work in new ways.

(Leithwood, 2007, p. 186).

Transformational leadership can have additional leadership characteristics as evidenced by the four categories of practice (Leithwood, 2007). In examining these four categories, I am able to make a connection between transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and charismatic leadership. Nadler and Tushman (1990) state, "The charismatic leader excites individuals, shapes their aspirations, and directs their energy" (p. 113). Charismatic leaders are found to operate within three components: envisioning, energizing, and enabling. Envisioning involves articulating vision, setting high expectations, and modeling consistent behaviors. Energizing includes showing personal enthusiasm, expressing personal confidence, and utilizing success. Enabling consists of expressing personal support, empathizing, and expressing confidence in others (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). Passion can drive energy and motivate others. The charismatic leader

can create an infectious ambiance for followers. They convey their confidence in others' ability to perform effectively and meet challenges. Although these components are not sufficient to achieve change, I utilize them in my leadership.

I am a member of the employee volunteer connection committee at A Community College. The employee volunteer connection is a group of A employees dedicated to serving the needs of the community. We help connect and mobilize the campus community for specific community service projects. As a committee, we take on several charitable functions a year. For two years, I co-led their "Empty Bowls" event. Empty Bowls brings volunteers together to make ceramic bowls which are then sold for charity. The bowls are made by members of the college community. On the day of the event, individuals can purchase a ceramic bowl and get a cup of soup with bread or dessert. They keep the bowls as a reminder that there are always empty bowls in their communities. The faculty and students of the culinary program make and donate the soup and dessert. The money raised is donated to local food pantries. I co-facilitated the event and helped energize everyone; together we made over 130 bowls. I wanted to exceed the previous year's donations and set high expectations of the group to raise more money in 2007. We were able to raffle some professional bowls made by the ceramics faculty, which helped us exceed our goal. In 2007, over \$900 was raised exceeding the previous year's total of \$850 dollars for Empty Bowls. During Empty Bowls, I felt my authentic and charismatic leadership (Evans, 2007; Nadler & Tushman, 1990) stood out and was what helped make the event successful.

Evans (2007) writes that authentic leaders are confident, courageous, nurturing and sincere; strong-willed and assertive; and have good problem solving skills. I believe

I have these qualities. I get along well with others and know how to make things happen. I am who I am, and what you see is what you get. The authentic leader is someone others can count on. I see myself as a dependable person who goes out of her way to come through when she is needed. Authentic leaders serve other people and empower them to lead (Evans, 2007). I inspire my family, my coworkers, and my students to lead. When I see leadership potential in others, I promote and encourage it.

As a counselor, I care about others and know the importance of confidentiality and trust. My character is strong, yet charismatic and sincere. The theory that my values most align with is the authentic leader (Evans, 2007). According to Evans (2007), authentic leaders are seen as trustworthy and confident. They are distinguished by their integrity and their savvy. They are known to “practice what they preach.” Authentic leaders value personal ethics, vision, and belief in others. They are sincere and expect high standards (Evans, 2007).

One example of my authentic leadership involves a single mother of two who found herself on her own after being domestically abused for several years. Her spouse was imprisoned and she felt safe and out of harm’s way. She turned to education to provide a future for herself and her two young daughters. Our paths met. As we began to establish a relationship, she revealed other tough circumstances. Every week she was faced with different obstacles and tried to quit. As I helped her reclaim her identity and nurture her confidence, she persevered. I empowered her to believe in herself. If she made it, she would serve to inspire others. This student graduated and went on to pursue her master’s degree in Social Work. There are many examples of students like her, who doubt themselves but, in the end, persevere. I genuinely care about my students and want

them to succeed. I want them to understand why education is important and hope they will become good citizens who make positive contributions to society.

### **Ethics and Leadership**

In writing my personal and professional code of ethics, I easily identified with the ethic of care (Shapiro & Skefkovich, 2005). The ethic of care is guided by “concern for others” and asks us “to grapple with values such as loyalty and trust” (Shapiro & Skefkovich, p. 18). I feel that my personal code of ethics is closely woven with my profession. As an individual I have a caring nature, which blends very well with my career. Making sure that students remain my top priority is important to me, as some members of the college are full of frustration due to upcoming changes in the counseling department. These changes include the hiring a new director for Advising and Counseling and academic advisors. In dealing with this tension, I must not fall into the stagnant pool of resentment and frustration that some of my peers are drowning in, but rather embrace change and make a difference.

I know that I am not tied to any one ethical paradigm. However, I do feel strongly about my ability to make decisions based on the situation at hand. I have never liked the one broad brush approach, where to deal with some problem behaviors everyone gets penalized. This leads me to believe that I am a consequentialist (Shapiro & Skefkovich, 2005). “Rules serve as guides for Act Utilitarianists and for Act Deontologists, but they can be broken depending on the consequences of a certain act. Those who turn to these forms of ethics are consequentialists, and they practice situational ethics” (Shapiro & Skefkovich, p. 11). I adjust my leadership based on the nature and mission of the group and take into account the environment, the people, and the purpose of the group. Densten

and Gray (2001) find that “charismatic leaders are guided by situational factors, and these individuals are capable of accurate modifications of their behavior to correspond to social situations” (p. 121). In community colleges, we try to “be all things to all people” and need to remain flexible in our leadership, and be open to constant change.

Within community colleges, we expect our leaders to be as strong as a super hero, as wise as King Solomon, as compassionate as Mother Teresa, as financially adept as Donald Trump, as all-seeing as the denizens of Mount Olympus, and, at the end of the day, we also seem to expect them to send each of us home with a lifetime supply of chocolate and other wonderful parting gifts. (Hellmich, 2007, p. 103)

Community college leaders have to make tough decisions and it is when they affect some people negatively that issues of equality and equity (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) arise. I think it is important for community college leaders to be consistent in both their personal and professional ethical codes, but also to allow themselves the flexibility to respond to ethical dilemmas utilizing any of the four paradigms, which are the ethic of justice, the ethic of care, the ethic of critique, and the ethic of the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Using four different ethical paradigms may provide community college leaders with different perspectives and equip them with an in-depth look at the dilemma they are facing. “Dilemmas in educational institutions can be complicated and may naturally lead to the use of two or more paradigms to solve problems” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, p. 8).

### **Organizational Culture**

A Community College, a pseudonym, is known for being top in the state for granting associate degrees, having awarded over 1,600 degrees in 2009. Over the 40 years it has been in existence, it has made a commitment to students.

[A] has grown from dream, to concept, to ever-growing...fact of life. The little college that could is now a household name, the first choice of one in three county high school graduates who go on to higher education. [A's] existence is a promise to all our citizens that their education needs are being, and will continue to be, met in accessible ways which support personal growth, professionalism, and [Surburban] County's future. A—no longer the impossible dream, has taken pride of place in the new century's reality. (The [Suburban] County Branch of The American Association of University Women, 2005, p. 114)

A Community College takes pride in continuously challenging the future and is committed to excellence. It values excellence, innovation, diversity, learning, students and employees, freedom and integrity, communication and inclusion, and legacy and history. A holds its head up high and continuously seeks ways to improve. The college is currently undergoing four major construction projects. These projects include renovations to existing structures and new construction *all* to benefit students. A is a great institution and a wonderful place to work.

The organizational culture at A is diverse. There are different cultures operating among and within various constituencies. The organizational culture one might encounter at A is based upon the department in which one works. In some cases, there may be several cultures operating within one department or division. In order to better understand the culture in my organization, I will utilize the four-frame model of Bolman and Deal (2003). Once I have identified the frame(s) (structural, human resource, political, or symbolic) I will move toward gaining a deeper sense of the organizational culture. Schein (2004) postulates that an understanding of organizational culture may be obtained by examining the artifacts, espoused beliefs, values, rules, and underlying assumptions of members.

Every organization has a culture and higher education has its own types of culture: collegial, managerial, developmental, advocacy, virtual, and tangible (Bergquist

& Pawlak, 2008). Although I have always felt that the members of an organization determine its image, the concept of culture was foreign to me as a descriptor of an organization or college. I never thought that understanding the culture of an organization would be a significant asset to leadership as I did not see that “leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin” (Schein, 2004, p. 1). After examining organizational culture, I can appreciate and recognize how knowledge of the levels of culture can help explain the intricacies of an organization. Although organizations can be grouped by category, that is agencies, churches, or schools, each one is different and, therefore, requires one take a step back and examine each organization individually through cultural lenses or frames. Understanding the traditions or customs of an organization can help one be better equipped to work in that setting.

I am more cognizant of utilizing the four conceptual frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2003) for analyzing organizational culture, which gives me the opportunity to look at situations from more than one angle. This provides opportunities to find new options in confusing and troubling organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2003). It is important for leaders to know which conceptual frame they utilize. It is helpful to evaluate whether as a leader one operates in a single, paired, or multi-frame style. Using these references as a guide can prepare future community college leaders for what lies ahead. A president or leader who is capable of using multiple frames or switching from one to another is likely to be more effective in his or her leadership (Bensimon, 1989).

I see A and the EOF program primarily through a human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) is based on the idea

that “organizations need people and people need organizations” (p. 132). In this equation there needs to be a good “fit.” The employee benefits by doing meaningful and satisfying work and the organization benefits from the employees’ talent and energy. Utilizing this same equation, the EOF program provides disadvantaged students with services to help them succeed and the program benefits from students’ talent and energy. There are many employees who love working at A and feel supported by the institution. A has supported my role in this doctoral program and in my research interests. When I came to A I had no idea what type of institution it was. I worked at a private four-year college in New York and had not been exposed to the mission of a community college. I fell in love with the community college mission, but I also fell in love with A. Shortly after being hired, I was introduced to many people from various departments and they all told me the same thing “this is a great place to work.” I am a warm, caring, dedicated individual with integrity and passion. I feel A is a good fit for me because it encourages me to continue to be the person I am by affording me the opportunity to take on various initiatives and leadership roles.

While the college is in the business of caring about students and employees, it also values its past and traditions. The college is rich in symbolism (Bolman & Deal, 2003). There is a strong sense of history at the college, most people who work here know that it was built on and named after a horse farm. There is evidence throughout the campus honoring its past and celebrating its history. Each year the college holds an event to celebrate the accomplishments of various members of the campus community. During this celebration, faculty and staff are acknowledged for their achievements. The organization is known for celebrating rituals and holding ceremonies (Bolman & Deal,

2003). I think the strengths of A lie in its reputation and its people. A is seen as a good institution. Students will often say that they got personalized attention and someone cared about them here. I think that makes it unique. A is known for being innovative and tries to stay current.

There are members of the college who feel that there are hidden agendas and that the environment is very political. The political frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) acknowledges that organizations are coalitions full of diverse people allocating for scarce resources through conflict, utilizing bargaining and negotiating for position (p. 186). In 2006, the President appointed a commission to determine how to best utilize a 12-month academic leadership model. In this model, division-chair positions (held by faculty) would be replaced with newly hired administrative deans. The Commission for Academic Leadership Model (CALM) was created to include various members of the college community who would give recommendations for implementing this new change. However, some felt that the President had his own agenda and was going to do what he wanted regardless of the recommendations of this commission.

A year later another commission was formed. The Commission on Student Development (COSD) was created and the same opinions were held, although the President specifically stated he had no agenda. As both a member of the campus community and a member of COSD, I do not view the President as having an agenda, but simply trying to find a solution to a consistent problem that needs immediate attention. Some view the environment as political because they do not understand the difference between power and authority (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The faculty and administration must begin to talk honestly and openly about how changes in the organizational structure

are impacting students and the college overall. Members of the campus community must recognize that the president of the college, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, implements policy for the overarching benefit of the community it serves including faculty, staff, and students.

As an emerging leader, I value and respect the opinions of others. However, at the end of the day leaders need to be courageous and make unpopular decisions. Therefore, I need to be aware of the organizational culture in which I operate but not allow that culture to influence or coerce my leadership. According to Murphy (2007), “exceptional leaders not only draw on their strengths but also accept their weaknesses and develop a capacity to cope” (p. 56). As leaders, we often are charged with making difficult decisions in order to facilitate change. Often times, leaders are met with hostility and unpleasant behavior. Foster (1986) emphasizes the importance of peer interactions, stating, “the patterns of social relations in a work setting are of major, if not prime, importance” (p. 40). Boggs (2005) discusses the importance of civility on campus. He points out how poorly college employees treat one another in our institutions and how most of us have witnessed these poor behaviors. One may see mean spirited behavior among colleagues, lack of respect for support staff, or poor treatment of students. As an authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leader, this behavior goes against my values. It compels me to create an atmosphere built on positive relationships. I make an effort to be aware of my behavior and engage in constant reflection. I make positive contributions to my department through the work I do with students and the college community. As an emerging leader, I take my reputation seriously and will try very hard to remain an ethical person who is genuine and trusted.

According to Jentz (2006), “Trust and credibility are the bedrock of leadership” (p. 231). Leaders may be unaware of the discrepancies between how they view themselves and how they are perceived. These discrepancies can generate mistrust among the group. We cannot diagnose why we are mistrusted, and therefore self correct, if we are unaware of the differences between our self-image and our actual behavior. In this action research project, I have the opportunity to study my leadership and also effect change.

### **Change Theory**

In order to facilitate change, I utilize the eight-stage process of creating major change (Kotter, 1996). The eight stages of creating major change are: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad based action, generating short term wins, consolidating gains producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture. Several of these stages can be associated with Senge et al.’s (1999) 10 challenges for organizational change. The change process begins with getting in touch with ourselves and learning how to create change in the organizational culture (Kotter, 1996).

There have been many changes in the counseling department since I arrived six years ago. When I first joined the counseling department, I noticed that there was a great deal of tension among the faculty. As an EOF counselor, many of the challenges within the department do not directly impact me. Although the department is divided, I have had little difficulty working with other counselors. I have a good relationship with many of my colleagues. I am fortunate to be a part of the counseling department and the EOF program and share the same office with fellow counselors. In other programs the EOF

counselors are in a separate office. There is one large commonality in the counseling department, students. Any discussions that are centered on helping students or doing something to improve services have a greater likelihood of achieving positive outcomes within the department. If topics are centered on how we could best serve students, everyone who has something to say will communicate their vision.

The EOF program is constantly changing; we are always seeking ways to improve services for our students. Once an idea is brought forward, staff either get excited or debate passionately on the issue at hand. The EOF program by nature is designed to help students and operates primarily from a human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Therefore, utilizing the eight stage process in Kotter (1996) provides me with a framework in which to begin creating change. By introducing the need to service more students and presenting ideas backed by my research, I can create a sense of urgency. Once this need is established, I form a team and develop a plan of action that fosters buy in, tackles obstacles, celebrates successes, and continuously evolves, and sustains change. Kotter (1996) and Senge et al. (1999) share the desire for a sense of urgency. Senge et al. agree that those who feel the energy of a project and are motivated by it may be more willing to try new methods. Keeping the energy and urgency of the learning organization up eventually sparks organizational change (Kotter, 1996; Senge et al., 1999).

Although my change project only affects EOF students, I hope to share the results of my study with all members of the counseling division with the intent that they may want to form groups and provide this service to the overall student population. Through this communication, I hope to create a change that will transform the way students

receive some support services. According to Senge et al. (1999), all beings start small and all great things have small beginnings. One way of approaching change is to form pilot groups, which can come together so that new ideas can hatch to tackle practical problems. These groups can then experiment openly to achieve noticeable results.

Beginning with a small group that increases as a group experiments with new projects and initiatives is a way to naturally draw in more people who share similar values and aspirations. To be successful the group would need opportunities to design, initiate, and implement small actions for themselves (Senge et al., 1999), which I hope to create as a leader of this project.

### **Conclusion**

Each leader has unique qualities, and I have a strong desire to serve, lead, and motivate change. According to George (2007), “Leaders are highly complex human beings, who have distinctive qualities that cannot be sufficiently described by lists of traits or characteristics” (p. 3). Although I identify with various aspects of the different leadership theories, I do not feel “tied” to one theory and find it challenging to identify my leadership style. This may be due to my limited experience. It was my hope that through this dissertation I would gain insight into my leadership and find my way.

It has become clear to me in reflecting on my leadership experiences that I want to be the kind of leader that has a blend of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), authentic leadership (Evans, 2007; George, 2007), charismatic leadership (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), and transactional/transformational leadership (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978). In my opinion, each of these leadership theories help make me a successful leader. Learning about leadership involves recognizing good and bad leadership (Cronin, 1987). I have

been fortunate in experiencing good and bad leadership. I have seen firsthand what bad leadership can do. Bad leadership can come from being arrogant, rude, sarcastic, or having one's own agenda. When leaders lose the trust and respect of those around them, it can be detrimental to the organization or group. The mission of the group is lost; hope is diminished and morale decreases. Good leadership requires good communication, honesty, trust, and respect. It is important to allow members of the group to express themselves so they feel included in the process. It is important to provide vision and direction for the group (Kotter, 1996). My community college president has a great deal of experience and is well respected. He is a great mentor and motivates me to be a good leader. I have also worked with power hungry individuals with strong management and poor leadership. I am happy to know the difference.

Within these last few years, I have noticed many changes in myself. I have had the hard task of reflecting on my journey thus far and looking at what has led me to want to lead. I have learned about true leadership and what it means to be a leader. I have identified with particular leadership styles, which I think allows me to better understand myself as I seek to lead others. I am learning to be more patient and work with difficult people. I feel that learning is a part of leadership and have enjoyed learning about all the facets of leadership. This has allowed me to bridge theory and application. It has made the material relevant to the issues we are facing today in higher education.

I feel that it is because of my enthusiasm and passion that I am asked to serve in leadership positions. As a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977), that is what one does. As my journey continues, I am excited and look forward to what the future holds. I hope to keep making significant contributions to the college as I continue exploring and building upon

my leadership. I hope to remain genuine, committed, and focused on helping students succeed. Through my dissertation, I hoped to change the way EOF students access support services by expanding the programs we offered. Additionally, I studied my leadership of this change project, and hoped that it would allow me to define my leadership style more clearly as I expand my leadership and take on more roles. In the following chapter I review the literature on first-year programs, EOF, and community college students.

## Chapter 3

### Literature Review

In the national landscape of higher education, community colleges are distinctive in their mission to provide access to quality higher education (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). As open enrollment institutions, community colleges are more likely to enroll a greater proportion of students from groups that are socially, economically, and academically disadvantaged. Students entering community college tend to be at greater risk of dropping out (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Therefore, student support services need to be in place to assist students who face barriers to success, specifically to assist those students who are academically and economically disadvantaged.

Nationally, colleges and universities have implemented first-year programs to assist students. Many of our higher education institutions currently offer a freshman seminar also known as first-year or college success seminar. According to the National Survey on First-Year Seminars (National Resource Center, 2008), of the 968 schools that responded 85% reported having some sort of first-year seminar. These programs are “fully ingrained in the consciousness of American higher education” (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005, p. 2). These courses vary in design and organization, from credit to non-credit, mandated to voluntary, graded to pass/fail, and vary in length and number of credits. According to the National Survey on First-Year Seminars (2006), first-year seminars were designed to help students succeed in college and have three overall objectives: (1) to develop academic skills, (2) to provide an orientation to campus resources and services, and (3) to assist students in self-exploration/personal

development. First-year seminars are intended to help students integrate both socially and academically into college, which is important in Tinto's (1987) theory of student departure. Although Tinto (1987) is a prominent theorist in retention, his student departure theory has been criticized for implying that college students must assimilate to their new environment and distance themselves from their home communities (Tierney, 1999). This conflict will be discussed further in this chapter.

Several efforts have been made to retain underrepresented student populations by providing retention programs and comprehensive support services to these students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Many programs offer at risk students a variety of services and programs intended to help them persist in college. The Federal Student Support Services (SSS) program provides nine supplemental academic programs to low-income, first generation, and physically handicapped students (Cohen & Brawer, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In the State of New Jersey, the Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF) assists students of low socioeconomic status by providing them with an array of support services. These students receive a renewable state grant, tutoring, and direct support services like counseling and advising. Additionally programs like EOF have a summer bridge program component. Summer bridge programs can help facilitate students' transition and adjustment to college life and improve their academic performance and persistence rates. These programs are typically offered in the summer before the start of the fall semester. In the fall semester many colleges offer students a first-year seminar to further assist students in adjusting and adapting to college life.

## **First Year Seminar**

The first freshman seminar dates back to 1888 when it was offered at Boston University and the first credit-bearing seminar was offered at Reed College in 1911 (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). Since the initial birth of College Success Seminars, the course has taken on various forms, but nonetheless continues to have the same purpose. Although different institutions focus on different goals for the delivery of college success courses, the common goal for all is student success. First-year student success can be defined as: successful completion of courses taken in the first year and enrollment into the second year. More importantly, institutions have been defining student success to include any of the following: developing intellectual and academic competence, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, exploring identity development, deciding on a career, maintaining health and wellness, considering faith and the spiritual dimension of life, developing multicultural awareness, and developing civic responsibility (Upcraft et al., 2005).

**Course content.** Most of the literature on college success seminars is focused on four-year institutions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Research also suggests that college success seminars have had a positive effect on student persistence, but is limited in terms of identifying which of the many components contribute to the success of students enrolled in success seminars (Porter & Swing, 2006; Zeidenberg et al., 2007). According to Siegel (2003), most college success courses should include basic requirements such as study skills, test-taking skills, library use, and course scheduling; but Siegel believes these courses should be more than that, they should involve how to be part of a community, how to develop positive relationships with peers and faculty members, and

how to make the first-year experience the first step toward the rest of their lives and careers. Other subject areas covered in college success courses include: time management, campus resources, career decisions, critical thinking, student life, and the larger campus community (Siegel, 2003).

In an extensive research review, Cuseo (1991) offers seven concepts as top priority topics for college success seminars. They are the meaning, value, and expectations of a liberal arts education; self concept and self esteem; problem solving and decision making in major and career selection; goal setting and motivation; learning strategies; time and stress management; and interpersonal relations. According to Upcraft et al. (2005), there is overwhelming evidence that suggests student success is determined by student experiences during their first year in college. Therefore, institutions need to “develop policies, make decisions, and create classrooms, programs, curricula, and services that enhance first year student success” (Upcraft et al., 2005 p. 1). The purpose of my study is to investigate the content areas found in college success courses that students and faculty believe are most likely to contribute to the success of students in the EOF program and use that information to create a series of workshops to be offered to those students.

### **Community College**

A principle mission of community colleges is to provide postsecondary education for students who may not otherwise be able to attend college (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Because of their convenient locations, open access admission policies, and relatively low costs, community colleges tend to enroll a greater proportion of students from groups that are socially, economically, and academically disadvantaged

than do four-year colleges. In the United States, community colleges serve almost half of the undergraduate student population and a large number of students who drop out of four-year colleges attend these institutions (Mellow & Heelan, 2008).

The mission of community colleges makes them attractive to a broad range of people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college. Many minority, low income, and first-generation students attend these institutions. Community college students present with a variety of needs, abilities, interests, aptitudes, goals, and motivations (Haggan, 2000). Community college students are more likely to work while in college and have more external pressures on their time (Tinto, 1987). A large population of our students work and may have children. They have greater pressures today than in the past. Minority students may enter community college with less academic focus and preparation, creating greater challenges for success. Specifically, first-generation and minority students often find it difficult to juggle academic and family responsibilities (Tovar & Simon, 2006).

Establishing relationships with these students makes a difference in their academic lives. Disadvantaged students' persistence depends greatly on academic support and on their social participation in the institution (Tinto, 1987). Providing students with the tools necessary to identify resources and empowering them to navigate through the educational system can be very beneficial and is needed. According to Jarrell (2004), high-risk students in community colleges must be challenged to develop a variety of skills to be successful in college. First year seminars and summer bridge programs have been designed to provide students with a variety of skills needed to be successful in college.

## **Educational Opportunity Fund Program**

The Educational Opportunity Fund Program serves over 12 thousand students throughout the state of New Jersey in both public and independent institutions. This program was created by law in 1968, in response to riots in Newark, to ensure meaningful access to higher education for those who come from backgrounds of economic and educational disadvantage (State of New Jersey, Commission on Higher Education, 2009). The EOF program is a comprehensive and successful state-supported program that supports various campus based outreach and support services for students. The program assists low-income residents of New Jersey who are capable and motivated but lack adequate college preparation. Students enrolled in the educational opportunity fund program receive financial assistance through grants. These grants are renewable annually based upon continued eligibility. The students in this program are often minority, first and second generation, non-traditional, and academically at risk. A shared characteristic among the EOF population is their low income status. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), degree attainment by low-socioeconomic status (SES) students helps them achieve better occupational and economic benefits. Studies have found that low-SES students from different backgrounds are less likely to participate in student activities, have lower GPAs than their high SES peers, work more, and study less (Walpole, 2003, 2008). These competing factors lead to high dropout rates of low-SES students. Therefore, institutions need to plan for the retention of these students by implementing success strategies that address their needs. Students in the EOF program receive support services such as counseling, tutoring, developmental course work, and an opportunity to participate in a pre-college summer program.

**Summer bridge programs.** Summer bridge programs were designed to help students transition from high school to college and are offered at A Community College in the summer before EOF students begin college, as is typical of summer bridge programs generally. Summer bridge programs vary depending on the specific target groups they serve and the goals of the program. The common goal for this type of program is to provide targeted populations the support needed to help them transition and adjust to college life and improve their academic performance and persistence rates as compared to their peers (Kezar, 2000; Santa Rita & Bacote, 1996). The curriculum in summer bridge programs may offer academic support in reading, writing, and math, or provide components in areas like study skills, time management, learning styles, study strategies, expectations of college, and career planning (Kezar, 2000). Studies have shown that summer bridge programs for high risk, low-income, minority students can help facilitate their transition and adjustment to college life and improve their persistence rates (Purnell & Blank, 2004; Santa Rita & Bacote, 1996; Walpole et al., 2008).

The educational opportunity fund program at A has a summer bridge program known as the “pre-freshman program” for new students. The program is offered during the day and evening at two higher education centers in the community and include reading, writing, math, human development, and a career focus. The summer program has gone through several changes and currently offers students the opportunity to enroll in a basic skills English course or participate in an accelerated program designed to improve math placement scores. The program also builds in a leadership or diversity component as part of a capstone experience for summer students. In the summer of 2008, 53 students participated, in the summer of 2009, 59 students participated. These

programs help students succeed in their transition to college. The goal is to help students adjust to college and help them complete their educational goals.

### **Retention**

Tinto (1987) developed a theoretical model to explain student drop out. His theory suggested that students entered college with different family backgrounds, individual attributes, and past school experiences. These characteristics affected students' commitment to their educational and career goals. According to Tinto (1987), students who become connected to the social and academic life of that institution are more likely to persist. However, Tinto (1987) was heavily criticized for suggesting that students must be able to effectively distance themselves from their family or community and adopt the values and behavioral patterns of the institution they are attending if they are to be successful (Kuh et al., 2006; Tierney, 1999). Therefore, it is important for colleges to play a role in facilitating academic and social integration for its students without asking them to give up their connections to their home communities. Students who develop connections to individuals on campus, participate in student clubs, and engage in campus activities become integrated to that college. Students who do not feel their institutions are a good fit or feel isolated are less likely to persist. Although it is not necessary to be equally integrated to the social and academic life of the college, students have a better chance of persistence if they are connected to both dimensions. Therefore, the relationships students establish with faculty, staff, and peers as well as with family, friends, and mentors contribute to student satisfaction, persistence, and what students gain from college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), "the weight of evidence is quite clear that both the frequency and

quality of students' interactions with peers and their participation in extracurricular activities are positively associated with persistence" (p. 391). Additionally, they go on to say, "a large part of the impact of college is determined by the extent and context of one's interactions with major agents of socialization on campus, namely, faculty members and student peers" (p. 620). The EOF program attempts to provide students with opportunities to engage with the campus community through various programs such as the summer bridge program, student conferences, and campus activities. Additionally, the EOF program provides students with an array of services that include academic, personal, and transfer counseling, which are all meant to help students persist.

### **Student Services**

At A Community College the EOF program has over 500 students and two student development specialists, each with caseloads of over 250 students. Each student development specialist is assigned students by major in two academic areas: humanities and science or business and social science. Students in the program are expected to participate in various programming provided by the department. The counselors provide students with an array of services. We work closely with students to provide academic advising, transfer planning, career advising, and personal counseling.

Student development models have changed and evolved over time. As the students attending community colleges have changed, so have the services provided. Community college students present with a variety of needs (Haggan, 2000). According to Ray and Altekruise (2000), community colleges will need to continuously search for new ideas and methods in their counseling programs to face and deal with future challenges. Each community college is different and therefore needs to develop its own

model suitable for its students. Community colleges have begun offering student services in their college success seminars, which include academic advising, career advising, and a transfer component. Barefoot and Fidler (1991) found academic and career planning in the ten most popular seminar topics.

**Academic advising.** Academic advisement was historically known for its role in helping students take the correct courses for their degree and making sure that they fulfilled both college and major requirements (Walsh, 1979). According to Frost (1991), “academic advising is a means, not an end. When advising is based on shared responsibility and designed to help students discover meaningful academic plans, then courses and schedules become tools, not products of the advising relationship” (p. 85).

During college success seminars, students have the opportunity to build rapport with an instructor and discuss their goals. The goals of academic advising, according to the National Academic Advising Association NACADA (Frost, 2000), are to (a) assist students in self-understanding and self-acceptance; (b) assist students in considering their life goals; (c) assist students in developing an educational plan; (d) assist students in developing decision making skills; (e) provide accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs; (f) refer students to other institutional or community support services; (g) assist students in evaluating or reevaluating progress toward established goals and educational plans, and; (h) provide information about students to the institution, college, academic departments, or some combination thereof.

According to Ashburn (2006) the majority of students who took the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, known as CCSSE, reported that academic advising was very important to them, more so than student-aid advising, child care, or

tutoring. Tinto (1987) stated that without faculty members to help students define their academic goals, students were at increased risk of dropping out because of uncertainty about why they were in college in the first place. Therefore, helping students clearly set goals and define their career objectives can help students persist.

**Career counseling.** In addition, to academic advising, career planning is a popular college success topic (Barefoot & Fiddler, 1991). Career planning emerged in the early 1970s in reaction to the charge that educational systems were not preparing youth for work. As a result, career education evolved to include topics such as: career awareness, career exploration, values clarification, decision making skills, career orientation, and career preparation (Zunker, 2002). Over the years, students' characteristics and needs have changed. However, there have not been many changes in student services. Today we face large numbers of students entering our colleges with the need for basic skills remediation. It is important for students to understand the relationship between the skills needed for a particular career and whether they possess or can build those skills.

Many students are unclear of their career focus when they enter college (Zunker, 2002). Even when students think they have a clear career focus, they may change their minds. Many students change career goals several times (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1987). According to Fouad et al. (2006), students indicate having difficulty with career decisions. Additionally, Orndorff and Herr (1996) found that whether students were decided on a major or not, they had not spent much time exploring occupations. The college experience is a time of exploration, from freshman students entering with or without career direction, to non-traditional students seeking a career change. It is

important and necessary to have a career component available to students. When this and other components are built into first year seminar courses, students receive these necessary skills. However, these courses are not required of all community college students; therefore students are left to seek these resources on their own.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last few decades the body of research on first year seminars has grown considerably. There is much evidence to support that college success seminars have increased student persistence and degree attainment (Fidler, 1991; Keenan & Gabovitch, 1995; O’Gara, Mechur, Karp, & Hughes, 2009; Zeidenberg et al., 2007). Furthermore, college success courses provide students with the opportunity to gain benefits from student-faculty interaction, student-peer interaction, and student involvement in college activities. Although the college success research focuses mostly on retention, there is a limited amount of literature available that examines the course content as related to student persistence. There has been very little research connecting college success content to the needs of students. Therefore, I hope to add to this area by investigating the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success and use that information to shape the creation of a series of workshops to be offered to EOF students.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

Action research involves conducting a study that is focused on producing improvements and is cyclical. According to Hinchey (2008) the goal of action research is to identify an action that will generate some improvement in the area of study by those inside a community rather than by outside experts. Action research allows me to understand myself better, increase awareness of the issue at hand, and raise my commitment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Although action research is frequently explained as having chronological steps, researchers can move back and forth among various activities. In action research there is always someone directly involved in the situation who serves as researcher (Hinchey, 2008). Action research allows me to conduct research that is practical, directed at my own concerns, and that creates change and improvement (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

I have selected action research for this project because it allows me to systematically collect data and implement an action plan related to assisting EOF students (Hinchey, 2008). Action research builds on what is fundamental to research and allows this researcher to try to understand different people in her own context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this action research study, I collected data utilizing mixed methods. I used surveys to obtain demographic information and information about faculty and students' perceptions of course content using frequency scales, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. Additionally, I kept a journal of my leadership. It is my goal as a leader to investigate the current college success literature and the actual experiences of students

in the College Success Seminar and use those results to create workshops that are meaningful to new EOF students to help them transition to college.

### **Purpose**

This action research study has two goals. The first goal is to investigate the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success and use that information to create workshops to be offered to EOF students. The second goal is to study my leadership as it pertains to this change project. This research project seeks to investigate the specific content areas of the College Success Seminar that lead to greater intent to persist among first-year students in the EOF program. The overall questions this study seeks to investigate are “What specific components of the College Success Seminar do EOF students attribute to helping them succeed in their first year of college?” and “How can I as a leader provide those components to a larger population of EOF students?”

As a Student Development Specialist in the EOF program, each year I see a new cohort of students enter the program. As an opportunity program we are unable to provide *all* students with the opportunity to enroll in our EOF College Success Seminar. For example, in the fall 2008 we had an initial cohort population of 132 students, but only 42% of them participated in the College Success Seminar. In the fall 2009, we had an initial cohort of 120 students, but only 57% of them participated in the College Success Seminar. Although this was an improvement over the previous year, we need to provide services to more students. My goal was to collect information on the College Success Seminar content that is most helpful to students and use that information to create workshops that would serve a larger population of students.

## **Research Questions**

My underlying research questions are as follows:

What are the most effective components of HUDV 107 the College Success Seminar as perceived by faculty and students?

What skill sets do EOF students need to be successful in college as perceived by faculty?

What skill sets do EOF students feel they need to be successful in college?

What are the most common themes found in texts designed for college success?

Will offering newly created workshops based on students' and faculty's perceptions reach more students?

What are students' perceptions of the workshop content?

How do others view my leadership?

How has my leadership evolved through this change project? How is servant leadership reflected during this project?

## **Cycle I**

The first cycle was completed during the fall 2009, and involved collecting mixed methods data through journaling and surveys. I developed a survey for students (Appendix A) and a survey for faculty (Appendix B). Additionally, I collected several textbooks designed for college success seminars at the onset of this study. I already owned several texts in this area. I reviewed the textbooks for common themes to help shape the surveys. To evaluate my leadership throughout this cycle, I kept a journal.

**Participants.** I requested a list from the EOF program of students who were enrolled in the fall 2009 College Success Seminar. Using the college's online course

offering system, I identified the faculty teaching those students. Those faculty members were invited via email to participate in this study. Additionally, students in the EOF program who were registered for the College Success Seminar were invited to participate in this study through course announcements. I used surveys to obtain demographic information and information about faculty and students' perceptions of course content using frequency scales, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. I asked faculty teaching the College Success Seminar to distribute surveys at the completion of the course to EOF students. The surveys were distributed in a sealed envelope and contained a description of this study.

**Data collection.** I asked faculty to participate in this study via email and asked that they return surveys via inter-office mail. Additionally, I asked faculty to distribute and collect student surveys. Students were asked to participate in this survey through classroom announcements. Additionally, I collected a variety of college success textbooks. I maintained a reflective journal during this cycle to collect leadership data. All surveys were anonymous so no identifying information was requested and any links to identifying information were removed.

**Data analysis.** I analyzed the survey data collected from the faculty and student surveys using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS). The responses to open-ended questions were organized into categories. I developed a coding system using a list of coding categories that emerged from the review of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Once data were reviewed and coding categories assigned, emerging themes were recorded. Journal entries were also reviewed and analyzed.

## **Cycle II**

The second cycle was completed in February 2010, and involved using the data from Cycle I and information from college success textbooks to develop workshops for EOF students. These workshops were designed to target the content areas that were identified by faculty and students as contributing to EOF student's success in college. I also maintained a journal throughout this cycle.

## **Cycle III**

The third cycle was completed in April 2010. Initially, I intended to pilot workshops by offering the top content areas identified by students and faculty in Cycle I to students who did not take the College Success Seminar in the fall 2009 or participate in the 2009 summer program. However, as will be discussed in further detail in the results section, few students attended these workshops, which caused me to rethink my approach for Cycle IV. Since action research builds on the results of previous cycles, this adjustment is in keeping with action research (Hinchey, 2008). Each student who participated in the workshop was given a survey after the workshop. The data collected from the surveys were used to improve future workshops. I also kept a journal throughout the cycle to gather data on my leadership development.

**Participants.** I requested a list from the EOF program of all new students who were not enrolled in the fall 2009 College Success Seminar. After obtaining the list, I checked it to make sure each student was in his or her first year of college, and had not previously taken the college success seminar. After the list was checked for accuracy, the students meeting the above criteria were invited to the workshops.

**Data collection.** Students who participated in the workshop were asked to complete a survey (Appendix C). Surveys were distributed at the conclusion of the workshop to obtain demographic information and information about students' perceptions of the workshop using frequency scales, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. I administered the survey at the end of the workshop presentation.

**Data analysis.** I analyzed the survey data collected from the student workshop surveys using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS). The responses to open-ended questions were organized into categories. I developed a coding system using a list of coding categories that emerged from the review of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Once data were reviewed and coded, categories were assigned emerging themes and recorded. Journal entries were also reviewed and analyzed.

#### **Cycle IV**

The fourth cycle, completed during the summer 2010, involved providing new EOF students with these important content areas. I used data collected from student workshop surveys in Cycle III to make any recommended improvements to the workshops that were offered in the spring of 2010. Students who participated in the EOF summer program were introduced to time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. Additionally, new students who did not participate in the EOF summer program were to be invited to the annual EOF summer conference. Due to a major renovation in the student life center, which resulted in a shortage of space with limited seating, these students were not invited to the annual summer conference. A separate orientation was planned for these students. During the orientation session, the students were guided through these content areas. Similar to previous cycles, I gave surveys to

students in these workshops (Appendix C). I continued to examine my leadership development throughout this process by continuing to journal and by providing an opportunity for a select number of study participants to take the Leadership Practices Inventory 360 degree to evaluate my leadership. The participants I asked included my supervisor, the dean, the EOF director, EOF staff, members of the counseling division who teach the College Success Seminar, and several colleagues across various departments at the college. Each participant observed my leadership through my research study and my involvement in several college committees.

I hope to use the results of the summer program and orientation to make improvements to future programming. This includes planning the annual summer conference to include students who do not participate in the summer program and building in workshops for these students based on the content areas identified in Cycle II. Additionally, I am working on building an EOF webpage with the intent to put workshop content on-line so a larger population of students can be reached.

**Participants.** All new students who did not participate in the EOF summer program were invited to an EOF new student orientation in August. Additionally, students who participated in the EOF summer programs were introduced to the content areas during their summer programming. Both groups of students were the targeted population. Those participating in the EOF summer program received the information through the student success seminar portion of the summer program, as the content areas were included in the summer curriculum. Students who did not participate in the EOF summer program were called and invited to attend the EOF new student orientation, which provided a workshop in time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

**Data analysis.** I analyzed the survey data collected from the student workshop surveys using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS). The responses to open-ended questions were organized into categories. I developed a coding system using a list of coding categories that emerged from the review of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Once data were reviewed and coded, categories were assigned and emerging themes recorded. Journal entries and results from the Leadership Practices Inventory 360 degrees were reviewed and analyzed. The Leadership Practices Inventory was administered during the fall 2010 through an online invitation.

### **Confidentiality**

I obtained IRB approval from both Rowan University and A Community College to begin data collection for this study. Participation in this research study did not pose a risk to participants. Consent was obtained from faculty and students participating in this study. Participants were informed that responses were anonymous and that all the data gathered would remain anonymous. Participants are in no way identified and their names are not used. All data collected are being maintained in a locked cabinet in my office.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Cycle I: December 2009 – January 2010**

The purpose of Cycle I was to obtain the perceptions of students and faculty concerning the most effective components of the College Success Seminar course. I developed surveys that provided me with both quantitative and a qualitative data. The instructor survey was designed to obtain demographic information and asked instructors to rank, from most important to least important, the components of the College Success Seminar (Appendix B). Additionally, the instrument had three open-ended questions. The student survey obtained demographic information and had 15 Likert-scale questions, and several open-ended questions meant to gauge the components of the College Success Seminar that were most helpful to students (Appendix A).

In the fall 2009 semester, 65 students were invited to participate in this study via an in-class invitation. I wrote a memo to 10 instructors teaching the College Success Seminar asking if they would assist me by distributing the surveys to students in their classes. Additionally, I emailed the instructors teaching the College Success Seminar inviting them to participate in this study. Copies of the survey were distributed to them via inter-office mail. I received 33 (51%) student surveys and 9 (90%) instructor surveys.

#### **Student Survey Results**

Of the 33 students who returned the survey, 16 were male (49%) and 17 were female (51%). Of the students enrolled, 11 (33%) were Caucasian, 11 (33%) were African American/Black, 4 (12%) were Hispanic/Latino, 5 (16%) were multiracial, and 2 (6%) were unknown. Many students were enrolled full-time (94%) with a small sample

of part-time students (6%) represented. In order to gauge the effectiveness of the course and its content, students were asked a series of questions pertaining to the components of the College Success Seminar they felt most helped them. They were given 12 course components to assess. The components were critical thinking, time management, study skills, test-taking, career development, college resources, academic planning, understanding general education requirements, why college is important, transfer planning, differences between high school and college, and library research skills. Student responses indicated that most of the course content was helpful (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Student survey: The college success seminar helped me?*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Improve critical thinking	27.3	69.7	3.0		
Develop time management	33.3	63.6	3.0		
Improve study skills	36.4	51.5	9.1	3.0	
Improve test-taking	30.3	63.6	6.1		
Learn career planning	60.6	33.3	6.1		
Know campus resources	57.6	42.4			
Learn academic program	53.1	40.6	3.1		3.1
Understand general education	54.5	42.4	3.0		
Understand future plans	72.7	27.3			
Understand transfer	36.4	51.5	12.1		
Understand difference H.S./ College	72.7	27.3			
Learn library research skills	42.4	48.5	9.1		

Students were asked to respond to questions about their attendance, course grades, decisions to enroll in the next term, and whether they would recommend the course to other students. There were 11 (33%) students who indicated they had missed more than two classes, whereas 22 (67%) had good attendance. There were 30 (91%) students who expected to pass the course with a grade of C or better. There were 32 (97%) students that would recommend the course to incoming freshman and 32 (97%) students who intended on enrolling in the spring 2010. Additionally, students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the course, their instructor, and their decision to enroll in the College Success Seminar. Of the 33 students who answered these questions, 100% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the course, the instructor, and their decision to enroll. Students were also asked to indicate the grade point average they expected to earn in the fall semester. There were 2 (6%) students who expected to have between a 3.5 – 4.0, 16 (49%) students who expected to have between a 3.4 – 3.0, 11 (33%) students who expected to have between a 2.9 – 2.5, and 4 (12%) who expected to have between a 2.4 and a 2.0 grade point average.

When students were asked, in an open-ended question, what they found most helpful in the course, eight students indicated that the time management skills they learned in class were most helpful (see Table 2). “I found the time management skills most helpful,” one commented. Another student stated, “The fact that I learn how much time I was wasting when I miss a class how much it cost me.” Another recurring theme expressed by students was the help they received with academic planning. One student responded, “I found the planning out of my upcoming semesters. Before this class I was totally clueless.” Another wrote, “I found the academic plan most helpful in the course. It

helped me understand the order of classes in which I would need to enroll and the pre-requisites I must adhere prior to the class.”

Table 2

*Student survey: What did you find most helpful in this course?*

Theme	Frequency of responses
Time management	8
Academic planning	8
Study skills and test-taking strategies	4
Understanding transfer	4
Understanding college	4
Career planning and future goals	5

When asked to suggest skills first year students need to be successful in college, a large majority of students indicated that time management skills are very important. “Time management kills first year students they need to work on that if they want to succeed,” stated one student. A second student said, “time management is the biggest skill first year students should have” and a third wrote, “time management – don’t procrastinate.” The other notable skill was study skills and test-taking strategies. “Tips on how to study and stay focused” are important skills shared one student (Table 3).

Table 3

*Student survey: What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?*

Theme	Frequency of responses
Time management	23
Study skills and test-taking strategies	13
Understanding college	2
Critical thinking	3

When students were asked to share what they felt was least helpful in the course, the majority of students did not give specific suggestions. Instead some students simply said, “everything was perfect,” and “I thought everything was useful.” Some students indicated that the quizzes and book were not helpful. It appears that many students were very satisfied with their experience in the College Success Seminar and what it offered them.

Comments submitted by students included positive feedback about the course and the instructor, such as:

- “Mrs. --- is an excellent instructor she is down to earth, realistic, patient, and professional. Many students will be lucky to have her as an instructor.”
- “Mrs. --- this class was the only class I can be myself in. Great class.”
- “Instructor was very clear and lenient with students. It thinks he did the best he could.”
- “I really enjoyed this class. I learned a lot about the transfer process.”

- “This course was surprisingly very helpful. I didn’t get it at first but now I know and I had a great time and it helped me to find the path I need to take.”
- “The teacher was awesome there should be more like her.”
- “Mrs. --- was a very good instructor and I would recommend her to all incoming freshman.”

Students were asked to provide suggestions for improving the College Success Seminar course. Their responses indicated that they desired additional instruction in specific areas such as study skills, transfer, and career projects or research as ways to improve the course. Additionally, students recommended that the course have more hands on activities, be longer, and challenge students. One student wrote, “I think the course should perhaps challenge the students with more weighted assignments so that they get a taste of how to deal and prepare for serious assignments.”

### **Instructor Survey Results**

Of the nine instructors who returned the survey (Appendix B), there were four males (44%) and five females (56%). Of the instructors who responded, four (45%) were Caucasian, three (33%) were African American/Black, one (11%) was Hispanic/Latino, and one (11%) was Asian American/Pacific Islander. The faculty represented five (56%) tenured faculty, three (33%) tenure-track faculty, and one (11%) adjunct. The teaching experience of these College Success Seminar faculty members ranged from two (22%) having 0–3 years experience, five (56%) having 4–6 years experience, one (11%) having 7–9 years experience, and one (11%) having over 13 years experience.

The instructor survey asked faculty to rank course content based on their perceptions of the skills first-year EOF students need to be successful from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important). The survey rankings were tallied based on the value

assigned and added up to determine what instructors felt was most important. The area with the lowest number was deemed most important as that content would be assigned a “1” and when added have the lowest number. The results revealed that instructors felt test-taking, study skills, and time management were among the most important skills first-year EOF students need (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Instructor survey: Ranking of Course Content*

Content	Score
Test-taking Strategies	16*
Time management	25*
Study Skills	31*
Goal setting	35
College Resources	41
Critical Thinking	46
Career Planning	47
Academic Planning	52
Transfer Planning	70
Library Research Skills	74

*\*Lowest numbers represent most important*

Instructors were asked, in an open-ended question, what components they found most helpful to students. Responses included “time management” and “study skills.” Additionally, one instructor commented, “Career testing and research into careers as this

provides the motivation to take care of the other aspects of success (i.e., the daily management of time and study).” Another said, “I think when they tie their goals to why they are in college and then have the resources to help them succeed – they are in a better place to help them be successful.” Instructors also commented on the importance of relationships between students and faculty. One faculty member commented, “Academic planning, connecting to a faculty member, and teaching students to become more independent.” Another stated, “The relationship building between the instructor/counselor and the students.”

The student and instructor surveys revealed similarities between what each participant group perceived to be the most important skills first-year EOF students needed to be successful. Student survey data revealed that time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies were important skills that first-year students need. These results are substantiated by instructor survey data, which also revealed that time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies are skills first-year EOF students need to be successful.

Based on the analysis of data from both student and instructor surveys, two workshops were developed for first-year students. Due to the nature of the topic areas, study skills and test-taking strategies were combined into one workshop and time management was offered as a second workshop. Each workshop touched on all areas: the study skills and test-taking workshop stressed the significance of effective planning and the time management workshop stressed that planning time to study is important.

## **Reflection**

I have been teaching the College Success Seminar for six years. With each incoming cohort of students, I feel the excitement of a new semester and the new students it will bring. Each year, I try to understand the needs of my students. I ask them questions about their families, their goals, and their future plans. Students in the EOF program are usually eager to have their stories heard. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to witness the relationship building that occurs between faculty and students in these courses.

Building relationships are important to me. I enjoy building relationships with students and colleagues. Many people know that I care deeply about the services I provide and am passionate about delivering quality service. I have a good reputation at the college and in my department. Although I was nervous about the number of responses I would get from faculty and students, at the same time I felt confident that I would get some feedback. I knew that I was going to need the assistance of my colleagues outside of the EOF program to help me gain their perspective, and the perspectives of their students. Once I identified students, I was then able to identify the instructors. I sent instructors an email asking for their participation in this study. After my first email asking for assistance, I quickly got several email messages from colleagues expressing their support. One colleague responded, “anything for you!” Another added, “No problem...get them to me right away.” A third said, “Of course.” Another said, “Anything for you.” Another commented, “I am happy to help.” Another added, “I will be happy to help! If you get the materials to me, I do whatever needs to be

done next week.” Another commented, “I will be happy to help. Let me know what I should do.”

Overtime, I have developed collaborative relationships with many of my peers. Therefore, Cycle I moved forward with ease. I did not experience any issues in getting people to buy in. They all understood what my project sought to accomplish and wanted to be a part of the process. They understood my vision for this study and the program, the urgency to move forward, and they appreciated my communication and involvement in empowering them and including them throughout the process (Kotter, 1996). In reviewing my journal entries, the theme that emerged was connectedness. In response to my seeking assistance for this study, I noted the following in my journal, “faculty have a desire to help.” Many of my colleagues quickly responded to my call for assistance. In another note I wrote, “Faculty are helping me because they get what I am trying to do.” Members of the counseling division understand how passionate I am about helping students. I noted in my journal, “I genuinely care about students, and others get that.” As a result of all the support I received, I entered the following journal entry, “It feels great to be part of a team.” I also added, “Relationship building pays off!” As a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977) I want to serve and make a lasting contribution to the EOF program and its students. I feel that it is because of my authentic (Evans, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leadership that I had such great participation in the beginning of my study, which is clearly visible.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Cycle II: February 2010**

The purpose of Cycle II was to develop workshops for EOF students. The workshop themes emerged from the data analyzed in Cycle I. In Cycle I, faculty and students identified three content areas they perceived as the most effective components of the College Success Seminar: time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. Faculty and students confirmed the same content areas as being important topic areas. Therefore, in Cycle II, I developed workshops on study skills, test-taking strategies, and time management.

#### **Review of Texts**

In order to get a broader understanding of the items covered in the three topic areas, I reviewed several college success textbooks for content. Each of the textbooks reviewed included topics in time management, study skills, test-taking strategies and numerous others (Table 5). While there was consistency in the topic areas found in each textbook, their presentation and their relationships were organized in a variety of ways. I examined each chapter and assigned a theme coinciding with the themes found in the College Success Seminar offered at A Community College.

Table 5

*Content of college success course textbooks\**

Content	Frequency
Critical Thinking	7
College Resources	7
Time management	8
Study skills	5
Test-taking Strategies	8
Career planning	6
Academic planning	1
Transfer planning	0
Library Research Skills	6
Goal setting	7

*\*Based on review of 8 textbooks used to deliver college success courses*

Other content found in college success texts include note taking, reading, communication, relationships, diversity, physical and mental health, and money management. Although some of these content areas may be discussed in any of the topic areas of the College Success Seminar course, they are not covered as an entire class session. Many of the content areas in the various textbooks were organized differently, therefore creating an uneven distribution in frequency. However, each of the units was discussed in various chapters among the different textbooks reviewed, with the exception of transfer planning. Transfer planning was not found in the majority of texts as not many texts are designed specifically for community college students.

## **Background**

Duplicating the content that currently exists in the College Success Seminar to create these workshops would have been effortless. However, I wanted to provide students with a unique but related learning experience compared to the course. In order to better understand the current delivery, I reviewed the course description, syllabi, and the course outlines specifically relating to time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

The College Success Course is described as follows:

Students learn to identify and practice a variety of skills and behaviors that can foster success in college and work. They will explore their personal goals and values through individual projects, class exercises, and group interaction. This course is highly recommended for all first-time, full-time students in any program that requires less than 66 total credits. This course should be taken in the student's first semester at [A]. ([A] Community College Catalog, 2008)

The College Success Seminar has four course learning outcomes. These outcomes are to (1) help students distinguish between high school and college expectations from the student and institutional perspectives, (2) help students develop a plan of educational, transfer, and career goals, (3) help students weigh career assessment information and apply results to educational decision making process, and (4) help students apply a variety of skills to improve time management, studying, and test-taking abilities. Each learning outcome is intended to meet a core competency in the area of critical thinking, personal development, or information literacy.

The course content includes the following components:

- Commit to College Success
- Time Management
- Learning Styles

- Critical Thinking
- Study Skills and Test-taking
- College Resources
- Library
- Career Services
- Communicate

All of the course content is intended to meet course learning outcomes, which also meet core competencies. For example, Commit to College Success covers the first course learning outcome listed above, which is distinguishing high school and college expectations from the student and institutional perspective, and meets the core competency of critical thinking. In order to be consistent in the delivery of workshop topics, I examined the course content delivered for time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

### **Time Management**

In the College Success Seminar, time management is covered in one class session. The assigned chapter is “Be a great time manager” (Santrock & Halonen, 2007). In this session, students are led through a discussion on procrastination – What is it? How do you do it? How do you conquer it? A PowerPoint presentation is utilized to lead the discussion on effective uses of time and address procrastination. Students are asked to complete an exercise called, “Where Does Time Go,” which is a handout asking students to allot the time they spend daily and weekly on various activities like: classes, studying, chores, work, grooming, cooking, watching television, running errands, etc. They are also given questions related to their values, goals, and uses of time and are led

through a discussion tying their goals, values, and time management into their major and academic plan.

### **Study Skills and Test-taking Strategies**

In the College Success Seminar, study skills and test-taking strategies are combined and covered in one class. The assigned chapters are “Enhance your study skills and memory” and “Succeed on Tests” (Santrock & Halonen, 2007). Students are asked to complete two exercises in the textbook. The first exercise includes two self-assessments (1) meant to help students determine their energy level (early bird or night owl) and to reveal suggestions for when to study and schedule classes, and (2) meant to have students review the elements of effective study strategies and clarify whether they currently perform well or need to improve.

The second exercise involves group work in which students spend four minutes creating a master study habit list that will result in excellent grades for first-year students. Once the lists are created students are asked to have a discussion about what works for them in terms of the “Three Ws” – When, Where, What to study? Additionally, students are informed of all the academic support services, learning assistants, and study groups at the college. Lastly students are asked to complete an additional self-assessment on test anxiety and are guided through a relaxation exercise.

### **Workshop Development**

Utilizing the framework of the College Success Seminar, I developed workshops for students who had not taken the College Success Seminar. I have access to a variety of content and presentations in the areas of time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. Although, it would have been very easy to use the power point presentations

that were supplemental to the course textbook, I developed different presentations for students in the EOF program. It felt unethical to use the presentations from the course. I created two workshops; one on time management and the other on study skills and test-taking strategies. The presentation on study skills and test-taking strategies is titled “Test Anxiety” and had the following description:

This workshop is two-fold: students will learn tips on how to effectively prepare for examinations and students will also learn tips on test-taking. In this workshop students will have the opportunity to share with other students their personal experiences with study skills and test-taking, also EOF counselors will highlight research based tips that have proven to be useful for students in their pursuit of academic success. This workshop will help to reduce test-taking anxiety by equipping students with the tools necessary to succeed in the classroom.

The workshop titled “Time Management” had the following description:

In this workshop, you will be given the opportunity to assess where your time goes and make some decisions about changes you would like to make to use your time more effectively. There is no one right way to manage your time; however, it is important to get to know yourself so you can make good decisions about how to use your time. We all have 168 hours in a week to use as we wish; however, some people make better use of this time than others. If you are new to college or have not managed your time effectively and perceive that this is an area of your life that needs improvement, this workshop is for you!

I put together presentations that I thought were engaging, interactive, and would grab students’ attention. I incorporated pictures and sound clips into some of the material to engage my audience. During this time, I informed members of my division about my project and why I was embarking on this journey. During a division meeting, a colleague stated that she had recently developed a presentation geared for nursing students on test anxiety and study strategies. She shared the presentation with me and encouraged me to utilize it any way I could. Although I used some of the material in the presentation, I also added a great deal of information and incorporated the themes of study skill and test-

taking strategies. I hoped that giving the workshop the title of “test anxiety” would lure more students.

### **Reflection**

As part of my responsibilities in the EOF program, I am charged with delivering a series of workshops for EOF students throughout the academic year. Offering workshops based on the content of the College Success Seminar was not explored, because EOF students are strongly encouraged (almost required) to take the College Success Seminar. However, after assessing the number of EOF students who were actually enrolling in the course, it made sense to offer the content workshops to expand programming and reach more students. In the beginning stages of the planning for these workshops, I had a meeting with the director of the EOF program to lay the foundation for this research study and obtain his support. As was expected, he was very supportive of the idea and understood that the targeted audience would be students who did not take the College Success Seminar in their first year. He also understood the necessity to provide students with content that would contribute to their success in college. The director and other members of the EOF staff were excited about my research project and ready and willing to help.

As a charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) and servant leader (Evans, 2007), I wanted to engage the EOF office staff to have confidence in my project and a desire to get involved. Several of the members of the EOF staff offered to assist me in any way they could. Because I did not have authority to direct them to specific tasks, I was happy they volunteered to be of assistance. Cycle II also provided a great sense of accomplishment and ease. I was offered assistance at every turn. My journaling in this

cycle revealed a theme of collaboration as illustrated by many of my journal entries. One colleague said, “You have my full support; whatever you need.” Another commented, “This is a great project; tell me what I can do.” Another added, “Email what you need and I will get on it.” I wrote in my journal, “I am so fortunate to work for a program that affords me the opportunity to try new things but is also supportive of my leading the project.”

The EOF program operates within a human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) and continues to support the work I do with students. While we have always offered workshops to students, the workshops have not been well attended. As a program, we have never examined the specific needs of our first-year students. I hope that as I move through this project I will be able to reach more students in meaningful ways.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Cycle III: April 2010**

The purpose of Cycle III was to pilot workshops, in the spring 2010, to students who did not take the College Success Seminar in the fall 2009. The workshops offered were based on the top content areas identified by faculty and students in Cycle 1. The workshops I scheduled were time management and test anxiety. The test anxiety workshop included study skills and test-taking strategies. Students who participated in the workshop were given a survey (Appendix C). The student survey obtained demographic information, asked a couple of Likert-scale questions, and included several open-ended questions meant to gain insight into students' perception of the workshop and improve future workshops. I continued journaling to gather data on my leadership development.

#### **Background**

The EOF program offers students a variety of workshops and programming throughout the academic year. Student programming is focused on leadership, diversity, career development, transfer, and college skills. Additionally, the EOF program highly recommends that first-year students take the College Success Seminar. Although we have comparative EOF students participating in the College Success Seminar, we are not capturing our entire study body. Therefore, I attempted to reach more students through these workshop offerings. There has never been any data collected to investigate the content areas that are most helpful to students. This research identified the most effective components of the College Success Seminar as stated by faculty and students. As a

result, the programming scheduled for the spring 2010 semester included the time management and test anxiety workshops I had designed.

### **Process**

I requested a list from the EOF office of all first-year students entering fall 2009 and spring 2010 who did not take the College Success Seminar. The list generated 47 students. I looked at each student individually to determine if they were new students (never attended college) and to verify they had not taken the College Success Seminar, reducing the student list to 35 students. All 35 students were invited to the workshops via an email invitation.

I was concerned about attendance, though, because several other workshops offered during the academic year to EOF students were not well attended. In fact, one workshop on stress management was not attended by any students, and the other titled “Getting to Know You” only had one student attend. My concern caused me to rethink how students should be contacted. I scheduled the time management workshop and emailed students, but the workshop was cancelled because of a weather closing. I was not able to reschedule the time management workshop based on the timing of the semester and the scheduled programming already in place. I suspected that the time management workshop would not have been well attended based on the outcome of the others offered.

After a short meeting with the EOF Director, he recommended students be called as this strategy had worked in the past to increase student participation at EOF events. He offered to have staff members make calls to students, however, I told him I would be making the calls and if needed would ask staff to volunteer to help. I did not want the EOF staff to feel as if I was adding to their workload. I personally called students on the

list and invited them to the test anxiety workshop. Of all the students I contacted, 12 (34%) committed to attending the test anxiety workshop. Several students declined the invitation due to childcare issues, work conflicts, or because they had already attended a similar workshop, or felt they were very knowledgeable in the content area. I called students two days prior to the workshop to remind them of the workshop and confirm attendance. At that time, I informed them that they would get a voucher for free lunch and a backpack full of goodies for attending. All other students were called again and left messages regarding the workshop location. I decided to leave a message for these students letting them know that if they attended they would get a bag full of goodies; this was my plea to increase attendance.

### **Pilot Workshop**

The test anxiety workshop was scheduled to run during the college hour, which is from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Students were asked to arrive at 11:30 a.m. Upon arrival, students were asked to sign in and take a seat. The workshop began promptly at 11:45 a.m. with four students in attendance. As the facilitator, I introduced myself and the other members of the EOF staff who were present. I then asked students to introduce themselves and tell us their name, major, and where they were from. After introductions, the students were given an overview of the workshop.

The workshop consisted of a lecture on the topic, a “Jeopardy like” game show, and a self-assessment. Students were given tips throughout the presentation and encouraged to ask questions. Each student was given a handout that included a test anxiety self-assessment. Students were given time to complete the self-assessment and share their scores. Students engaged in dialogue about their feelings toward test anxiety.

During the workshop strategies for combating test anxiety were discussed as were test-taking strategies and study skills. Students appeared engaged during the workshop.

At the end of the workshop students were given an opportunity to ask questions. The feedback from students was positive and they stated it helped them in some way. Students were also told that they could make individual counseling appointments to further discuss test anxiety, study skills, or test-taking strategies. Each student was thanked for coming and received a A bag with a t-shirt, pen, and stress reducing pencil; they were also given a voucher for a free lunch in the cafeteria.

### **Workshop Survey Results**

Although I received confirmation from 12 students who said they would attend the workshop, only four (33%) actually attended. Of the four students who attended the workshop and completed the survey, one was male (25%) and three were female (75%). Of those students, one (25%) was Caucasian, two (50%) were Hispanic/Latino, and one (25%) was multiracial. All students (100%) were enrolled full-time, indicated they were first-year students, stated they would recommend this workshop to first-year students, and planned to enroll in the fall 2010 semester. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the workshop and presenter (see Table 6). Students were also asked to indicate the grade point average they expected to earn in the fall semester. There was one (25%) student who expected to have between a 4.0 – 3.5, and three (75%) students who expected to have between a 3.4 – 3.0 grade point average.

Table 6

*Pilot Workshop Survey: Satisfaction with workshop and presenter*

Please rate your satisfaction with:

Item	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Workshop	2	2		
Presenter	3	1		

In order to gain insight into students’ perceptions of the workshop, students were asked a series of open-ended questions. When students were asked what they found most helpful in the workshop all students indicated the importance of the topic. One student commented, “Certain strategies...different studying strategies from what I am use to but I’m interested in trying them, they might be more helpful.” Another student stated, “The study skills because not many people know how to study.” Students were also asked what they found least helpful in the workshop. Students appeared to find most of the workshop helpful; one student commented, “It was all very helpful and all very truthful and understanding.”

When asked to suggest skills first-year students need to be successful in college, each student response reflected the workshop content. One student commented, “Learn how to study, and be determined to take the time to study and realize the difference between college and high school.” Another student said, “Getting a handle on distractions – social networking sites, friends.” Students were also asked for suggestions for improving the workshop. One student suggested, “Getting [the] audience more involved.” Another added, “Maybe answering more questions, surveys and getting up

and opening up with each other.” In an attempt to discover other content that students may be interested in receiving, students were asked for suggestions for future workshops. One student recommended, “Half an hour of soft sound and relaxation.” And another student added, “More peer relation[s].”

Students were asked how they would use or apply what they learned in the workshop. Each student indicated they would apply what they learned. One student commented, “Listening to others’ [and] testing skills may help in other classes, there are strategies that I am interested in trying.” Another said, “Study tips.” Another added, “Tell myself that this is more important than cleaning, cooking, and any other thing that will take my focus off my studies.” Another commented, “In my classes.” Additional comments submitted by students included positive feedback about the workshop and presenter:

- “The counselors are very caring and seem to believe in their students and know that the workshops are helpful and it is highly appreciated for them to take the time”
- “Great information”

## **Reflection**

At the beginning of each academic year, the EOF director has asked members of the EOF program to put together a menu of student programming. The director is always open to new workshop ideas. Each year we try to offer new workshop topics and hope they help to increase student participation. During an EOF meeting, I gave everyone an update on my research project. My intention was to gain the support of my colleagues and inform them of the process moving forward. I shared with them my ideas and strategies for these workshops. I wanted to communicate my vision while empowering staff to get involved. I shared my concerns about the lack of participation in our

programming and staff agreed that unless they called students and strongly encouraged or required them to attend, attendance was low at our functions. I asked the staff if they thought a prize or giveaway would solicit greater numbers of students at the workshop and they responded saying it was possible. I remember thinking, “I need to offer students something tangible like a giveaway” as I noted in my journal.

I had a meeting with the EOF director to solicit ideas on what we could offer students to increase attendance. While he offered his full support, he did not have any specific suggestions on tangible rewards that I could provide to students to increase participation. He recommended that I meet with members of the student life and activities department because of their constant interaction and planning with students. After meeting with members of student life, they suggested that I provide food at the workshop. They felt that providing students with a meal would increase the likelihood of them attending. I shared with them that we tried that in the past and it did not work. After a short discussion, they recommended I get vouchers for students. In other words students would be provided a coupon with a set dollar amount that they could take to the cafeteria and get a free meal. I thought this was a great idea! I met with the EOF director again and pitched the new idea hoping to get buy in. He agreed and said to set an amount and he would approve it. The office assistant handled all the paperwork and she provided me with the vouchers. I continued to think about what else I might be able to offer students, some tangible trinket they could take with them for attending the workshop. I emailed the Executive Director of Marketing Services to request a donation of college paraphernalia. His email response was, “Stop over anytime and we’ll take you down to the ‘vault.’ If I’m not here, [Jane] would be pleased to accommodate you, Yesenia.”

I believe this is evidence of my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974). I wanted and needed students to attend my workshop. Therefore after obtaining approval for free lunches, I also sought to obtain some trinkets for the students. The 12 students who had confirmed their attendance at the workshop were not originally informed that they would receive anything for attending the workshop. Initially they were invited to attend the workshop and were told what the workshop had to offer. However, in a follow up confirmation phone call each student was told they would be receiving a voucher for a free lunch as well as a backpack full of goodies. Students seemed to respond favorably to the extra bonus for attending the workshop. In a journal entry I noted, "This is great, I am definitely going to have students attend my workshop." So I was very disappointed when only four students attended. This cycle confirmed my desire to change the way student programming was offered. I noted in my journal, "We really need to change the way we communicate with students." I also commented, "Should we continue calling students...this almost feels like harassment." Additionally, I noted, "Is making phone calls to students a good use of time?" I felt as though the director, who came from a four-year institution, did not fully understand the community college student. I wrote in my journal, "The community college student is often stretched too far, we need to help them without adding so much to their already full plate."

As I thought about the EOF program, the nature of our student body, and the community college setting, I began to think about what changes could be implemented so that our resources would be put to better use. I had a meeting with the EOF Director to discuss changing the way we offer workshops. I wanted to stop offering stand-alone workshops during the academic year and instead build them into the current conferences

we have for students during the summer and winter break. He was open to the idea and said we should discuss it further. I asked if it would be possible to add me to the next upcoming meeting agenda so that the EOF program staff could provide input.

During the next meeting, I was given some time to discuss my study. I began by giving everyone an overview and history of my study followed by the results. I encouraged open and honest dialogue as I sought their feedback. I informed them of the content areas that were most important to faculty and staff and asked them about ways we could provide the information to students. I informed them that only four students attended the test anxiety workshop, despite all our efforts to get students to participate. This included personally calling students, and offering giveaways for participation. While there was not an abundant outpouring of ideas from everyone at the time, most agreed that the stand-alone workshops were not the most effective way to offer workshops to students. I shared various ideas, which are discussed below. I thanked everyone for their time and asked them to get back to me with any ideas they may have. I was really trying to include everyone in the process and make them feel empowered, while hoping to engage them while communicating my vision (Kotter, 1996). Everyone agreed that we should be looking at things differently. This was my opportunity to celebrate a small win (Kotter, 1996), we were moving toward changing workshop delivery in the hopes that we would reach more students. The EOF staff was in agreement that we should operate differently, tackle the obstacles like low student attendance, and lay the foundation for change. I began to see my transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) begin to take some shape. I was attempting to transform the way that student programming would be delivered in the future. This change would alter

a practice that has been in place for many years. I had a vision that we could deliver workshop content in other ways, not simply through the traditional stand-alone workshops. Ideas included providing new students with CDs of the workshop content, implementing content into current student conferences, and introducing content into the summer program. After much discussion and thought, we decided to introduce the content to students in our summer program (many of whom would be moving into the College Success Seminar in the Fall 2010) and also have a separate session in August during our summer conference for students who did not participate in the summer program. I was very excited about this change and hoped we could reach many more students. Students benefit from having this content knowledge and if we find ways to make sure they receive the information, we are providing them with a greater chance to do well in college. In the next cycle, I explain how I developed the summer program curriculum to embed time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies into the learning outcomes. Additionally, I offered this content to new EOF students who were not part of the summer program.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Cycle IV: July - September 2010**

The initial purpose of Cycle IV was to offer a series of workshops to first-year EOF students. The workshops were based on the content areas identified in Cycle I (time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies). However, as detailed in Cycle III, the participants in Cycle IV changed. Initially the participants in this cycle included first-year EOF students who were not enrolled in the 2010 summer program or registered for the college success seminar in the fall 2010 semester. However, in Cycle III, we decided to integrate the three content areas above into the summer program, thus increasing the participant pool to include those students enrolled in the 2010 summer program and/or registered for the college success seminar in the fall 2010. Essentially, this increased the population to include all first-year students accepted into the EOF program. In order to reach the students I initially intended to target in the summer of 2010, EOF students not enrolled for either the summer program or the fall college success seminar, I planned a separate session during the annual EOF summer conference. However, as will be discussed in further detail, these students could not be accommodated during the conference and were therefore invited to a separate meeting referred to as an orientation.

Students in the EOF summer program were given content in time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies as part of their student success seminar class. Students who did not participate in the EOF summer program were invited to a new student orientation and given a workshop on the same topics. Each student who participated was given a survey (Appendix C). The student survey obtained demographic

information, asked Likert-scale questions, and included several open-ended questions meant to gain insight into students' perceptions of the content that could improve future workshops. Additionally, during Cycle IV, I continued journaling to gather data on my leadership development and also invited members of the college community to take the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) 360 degree to evaluate my leadership. The LPI results will be presented and discussed in Chapter 10.

### **Background**

The EOF program has a summer bridge program that offers first-year students a college preparatory course. The sessions are as follows: a four-credit Fundamentals of Writing Course, a non-credit creative writing and reading session, two non-credit reading and writing sessions, and an accelerated basic skills math program (A+ Advanced Math) designed to improve placement scores. Each of the sessions consists of a student success seminar component. As a result of Cycle III, each of the sessions began to include time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies in the curriculum.

The EOF summer program enrollment is driven by a strong recruitment effort, which yields student applications. As students apply to the program they are instructed to select a summer program option. If students are not able to attend a summer session, they must submit a waiver request, which is reviewed and approved by the EOF director. Each section of the summer program is capped at 20 students. Each year the EOF director tries to fill each summer session to capacity, however, we have not been able to reach this goal. Although our enrollment did not increase in 2010, the EOF summer program has seen significant growth through the last several years. The EOF applicant pool in the summer of 2010 was 124 students, of whom 70 were admitted and enrolled in our

summer program, 28 were admitted and waived from the summer program, and 26 were not admitted. The 70 students enrolled in the summer program received the time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies content areas within the program. The 28 students were invited to the summer conference, which as previously stated, included an orientation session with the three content areas. Therefore, including the 28 students in the conference allowed us to reach more students and provide them with components of the student success seminar including time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

### **Process**

I worked on the curriculum for the student success seminar portion of the EOF summer program with my EOF counterpart. Utilizing the same learning outcomes from the College Success Seminar, we developed lessons that would introduce students to time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. We were cautious not to duplicate what was done in the College Success Seminar, as many students from the EOF program would be moving into that course in the fall 2010 semester. Additionally, we created the lessons with the intent to use them as workshops for those students who would be attending the summer conference. When we completed the revisions to the summer curriculum, we sent the summer program instructors an email with the course outline and supplemental materials.

### **Summer Conference Planning**

Each year at the conclusion of the summer program, we have an annual summer conference. The annual summer conference planning is done by an EOF staff member. For the last several years these conferences have been successful and well attended. In the past this conference was intended for summer program students only, however, in the

last year all newly admitted EOF students were invited. During a staff meeting, I recommended offering a workshop during the summer conference for those students who did not participate in the summer program. This recommendation was well received by the EOF director and staff. Therefore, a workshop was scheduled as part of the conference for the students who did not attend the summer program.

The planning began, and several weeks before the scheduled event, the EOF staff member in charge of planning the conference contacted me with a problem. She had just learned that the student life center was under construction and that we did not have a venue to accommodate a large group of students for the summer conference. I explored various options with the staff member hoping to resolve the issue. I gave her several options and a few key people she could contact. This led to her getting authorization to hold the conference at a new recreation center on campus that was not yet available for public use. There were parts of the building that were under construction, however, the main gym was complete and could accommodate a large number of students. She was able to get approval to use the gym, but only in the morning. However, the workshop for students who did not attend the summer program was scheduled in the afternoon. This conflict meant that the students targeted for the workshop were then not invited to the conference.

I was not told that these students were not being invited until I called to inquire about the logistics of the day. The event was less than two weeks away and not only was it specifically related to my research study, but it was intended to reach more students. The entire EOF staff had agreed it was important to reach these students. I was very concerned and wrote in my journal: “How could this be happening...all of the

discussions, unheard; all of the planning, undone; all of the preparation, dismissed!” I picked up the phone and called the EOF director. The phone call was not what I expected. I asked what had happened and wanted to know why no one contacted me. He told me, “You were not even thought of...you were not part of the discussion.” I was so angry that I simply said, “Wow [followed by a brief pause] thank you for your time, I have to go.”

In that moment I felt outraged, but I knew I had to act as a leader. I wrote in my journal: “This is a true test of my leadership. I must think and react as a leader. I will be faced with tough circumstances in the future.” The phone rang immediately after I hung up; the director called back and said, “How can I fix this, what can we do?” I felt a great sense of relief. The director knew how much this project meant to me and our students. After some discussion I recommended we offer a separate session that we called an orientation session for students who did not participate in the summer program. I suggested the orientation be offered in the afternoon following the summer conference. The orientation was scheduled in a classroom of another building since the student life center was being renovated and the gym was not available for our use in the afternoon. Therefore instead of having the workshop as part of the conference it was scheduled separately on the same day, but in the afternoon. This orientation would allow us to reach more students.

### **Summer Program**

The traditional EOF summer program consists of five summer sessions. The students in the summer program received a lesson in time management and a lesson in study skills/test-taking strategies as part of their student success seminar, and the students

who attended the new student orientation attended a workshop, which covered the same content (see Table 7). Therefore, the students enrolled in the summer program received the lessons as part of their participation in the student success seminar class if they were in attendance on the day it was given. Additionally, those students who attended the orientation were given one lesson that included both topics (time management and study skills/test-taking strategies). As a result there were a total of 71 students who got the lesson on time management and 65 students who got the workshop on study skills and test-taking strategies. As a result this yielded a total of 136 surveys.

### **Summer Orientation**

The new student orientation was a result of the problems discussed previously regarding scheduling for the annual summer conference. This led to planning a student orientation for newly admitted EOF students. Invitations were sent to all new EOF students who had not participated in the summer program. Parents were also invited to attend. The agenda included an overview of EOF for students and their parents followed by the student workshop and a parent orientation. The student workshop on time management and study skills/test-taking strategies was well attended. Of the 32 students invited, 18 attended (56%) and each of the 18 filled out two surveys, one for time management, and one for study skills/test taking skills.

Upon arriving, students were asked to sign in and take a seat. As the workshop facilitator, I introduced myself and the other members of the EOF staff who were present. I then asked students to introduce themselves and had them participate in an ice-breaker. The workshop consisted of a lecture on time management, study skills/test-taking, a game show, and a self-assessment. I provided students with tips throughout the

presentation and encouraged them to ask questions. I thanked students for coming and gave them a college decal, a dictionary, and a keychain.

### **Summer Survey Results**

The data included five summer sessions and the orientation (Table 7). The total for each session is as follows: session one (16), session two (32), session three (25), session four (14), session five (13), and the orientation (36). Seventy-four percent of the sample was from the EOF summer program participants and 26% was from the new student orientation.

Table 7

*Summer program workshop survey: Number of workshop participants*

Summer Program	Time Management	Study Skills and Test-Taking Strategies
Session One	8	8
Session Two	15	17
Session Three	14	11
Session Four	6	8
Session Five	10	3
Orientation	18	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>65</b>

Of the students who attended the workshop and completed the survey, 49% were male and 51% were female. Twenty-two percent were Caucasian, 42% were African

American/Black, 2% were Asian American/Pacific Islander, 17% were Hispanic/Latino, 14% were multiracial, and 3% did not disclose. Eighty-five percent were enrolled full-time, 5% were enrolled part-time, and 10% did not disclose. The entire student population (100%) indicated they were first-year students. Additionally, 96% of students stated they would recommend this workshop to first-year students, and 4% stated they would not. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the workshop and the presenters (see Table 8). Students were also asked to indicate the grade point average they expected to earn in the fall semester. Of those students who responded, 26% expected to have between a 4.0 – 3.5, 48% between a 3.4 – 3.0, 21% between 2.9 – 2.5, 1% between 2.4 – 2.0 grade point average and 2% did not disclose.

Table 8

*Summer program workshop survey: Satisfaction with workshop and presenter*

Please rate your satisfaction with:

Item	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Workshop	59%	39%	2%	0
Presenter	80%	18%	2%	0

**Time management session.** In order to gain insight into students' perception of the time management content, students were asked a series of open-ended questions. There were a total of 71 surveys collected from students who participated in the time management session. Students were asked what they found most helpful in the time management lesson; many indicated the importance of the topic and a better

understanding of the commitment of college. One wrote, “How to balance and manage time is most helpful to me personally because I have an issue with not using my time wisely.” Another student stated, “I think that learning about how much hours a week we have to dedicate to school was the most helpful because it helps me recognize the things I can do and how long I can do it.” Another commented, “I found that the hours I need to devote to school helpful because it will help me get things done when needed.” A fourth stated, he or she “learn[ed] how many hours a week are committed to school because I didn’t realize.”

Other students discussed the importance of learning how to balance school and work. One student commented, “It’s important to manage my time if I am enrolled as a full-time student and want to work.” Another stated, “I feel as if everyone needs help with time management, everyone has jobs...and don’t know how to manage it wisely.” Another commented, “Learn to manage time and work because I’m going to need a job.” A fourth added, “Since I have a job it help[s] me to know how many hours I can work at my job before I start cutting my days.” Another student commented, “Working because it’s hard to be in school full-time and also work full-time.”

Students were also asked what they found least helpful in the workshop. Many students found the workshop helpful as indicated by several comments indicating that everything was helpful. Although many students found the workshop helpful, a small number of students commented on what they felt was least helpful. Those comments include the use of planners. One student commented, “Planners they don’t always work [they are] easily lost” and “I found certain time management skills, such as not texting/leaving facebook...using a planner to organize...I’ve been doing that for a while

now.” Other students commented on the condition of the room or lesson. One student stated, “The air conditioning in the room.” Another said, “The least helpful aspect of the lesson was the hand out they didn’t really help me at all - I don’t enjoy group work.” A third responded, “I think the case study work sheets were little less helpful because I didn’t get anything from them.”

When asked to suggest what skills first-year students need to be successful in college, many student responses reflected the workshop content (see Table 9). The totals in the table are quantitative totals; I added the amount of times the themes were represented in the open-ended responses. After the lesson, students were asked to complete a survey on the time management session. The responses are a reflection of the session students attended. In other words, more students indicated time management as a result of having just received the lesson on time management prior to completing the survey.

Table 9

*What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?*

Theme	Frequency of responses
Time management	43
Study skills	13

Students were also asked for suggestions for improving the workshop. Suggestions were directly related to workshop content and included incorporating more case studies, asking more questions, and having more group discussions and activities.

One student commented, “More case studies and group discussion.” Another stated, “The lesson was great but you can probably ask a little bit more questions.” Another student added, “More examples.” A fourth stated, “More fun or hands on activities.” Students were also asked how they would use or apply what they learned in the time management workshop. Students discussed the importance of having a planner and being organized in response to how they would use the information they learned. One student commented, “I will make sure I have a planner when I start classes in the fall.” Another said, “I’m going to get a calendar.” Another stated, “I will start out with a mini to do list for my day.” Other students responded that the time management lesson made them think about how they managed their time. Many students indicated they would apply what they learned. One student commented, “To manage my time because I am a big procrastinator.” Another stated, “When I ever feel like I’m stuck between work and school I use this lesson.” Another said, “Establish a schedule to make school my #1 priority.” Another commented “I would use time management throughout the years of college and personal life.”

At the end of the survey, students were given an opportunity to add any additional comments. Comments submitted by students included positive feedback about the workshop and presenter:

- “Good Work”
- “Love it”
- “Great lesson”
- “Thank you EOF”
- “I am grateful to have been given this information!”
- “You are a very nice person, if you were a teacher I would pick you twice”
- “Keep it unboring”
- “I learned a lot from here, ready for my classes”

**Study skills/test-taking session.** In order to gain insight into students' perception of the study skills/test-taking strategies content, students were asked a series of open-ended questions. A total of 65 surveys were collected from students who participated in the study skills/test-taking session. Students were asked what they found most helpful in the study skills/test-taking strategies workshop; many students indicated the importance of the topic. Many students commented on the benefits of learning how to prepare for a test. One student commented, "The presentation on studying and test-taking [was important] because I hate taking a test." Another stated, "Ways to get over test anxiety because I'm always nervous before a test." Another commented, "How to be prepared and ready for tests."

Other student comments centered on the benefits and techniques of studying, one student commented, "This lesson really helped me to wrap my mind around how it will be like in college and how I should act and do certain things." Another stated, "Different ways to study and different ways of studying." A third commented, "Tips on how to study because I really picked up on some learning tips." Another stated, "That it help me see the importance about study and techniques." A fifth student commented, "This workshop was most helpful because as a first time college student you get tips about college and studying tips etc." Additionally, students discussed the demands of college and resources available. One student commented, "There are many places to go for extra help." Another said, "The self assessment - it gave me a clear understanding of my strengths and weaknesses." Another commented, "Realizing how much time I would be doing school work for." A fourth added, "I found out that I need to work harder in studying."

Students were also asked what they found least helpful in the workshop. Many students indicated that they found the workshop to be helpful. There were no comments indicating areas students found to be least helpful. When asked to suggest what skills first-year students need to be successful in college, many student responses reflected the workshop content (see Table 10). The totals in the table are quantitative totals; I added the amount of times the themes were represented in the open-ended responses. After the lesson, students were asked to complete a survey on the study skills/test-taking strategies session. The responses are a reflection of the session students attended. In other words, more students indicated study skills/test-taking strategies as a result of having just received the lesson on study skills/test-taking strategies.

Table 10

*What skills do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?*

Theme	Frequency of responses
Time management	14
Study skills & Test-taking Strategies	40

Students were also asked for suggestions for improving the workshop. A few students recommended that we provide them with more details. One student commented, “List more ways for improving study skills.” Another commented, “Making the power point a tad bit longer (include video).” Overall, a large portion of the students enjoyed the lesson and did not suggest improvements. Students were also asked how they would use or apply what they learned in the workshop. Many students indicated they would use

the study skills and test preparation tips they were provided in the workshop for self-improvement. One student commented, “[I will] try using tips learned to not have anxiety.” Another said, “I’ll use the studying tips those were helpful.” Another commented, “I will use and apply this...when I study because this will really help me.” A fourth added, “[I] will make sure to prepare and study more effectively.”

Some students commented on their use of time as it relates to test-taking and studying. One student commented, “Pace myself studying, get a tutor when needed, maybe get a study partner.” Another said, “I will make more time to study and to be more focused during the test...” Another commented, “I will study more time of the day.” Some students discussed the importance of using note taking effectively. One student commented, “I will put more into my note taking and when I don’t understand something I will ask for help.” Another said, “I will use what I learned to help build my skill in studying, taking notes, and preparing for tests.” Another student commented, “I will take more notes.”

At the end of the survey, students were given an opportunity to add any additional comments. Comments submitted by students included positive feedback about the workshop and presenter:

- “Really enjoyed the class it prepared me for a lot at college”
- “The study skills self assessment; great”
- “Thank you”

## **Reflection**

Despite the oversight with the annual summer conference mentioned earlier, Cycle IV was quite successful. I was able to reach more students even though these students were not accommodated as initially intended. The workshop results indicate that students found the content they received in both the summer program and orientation

beneficial. However, I was very frustrated by the lack of communication as it pertained to the summer conference. Actually, I was very upset. I remember wanting to cry in the moment, but I knew that this experience was part of being a leader. I needed to figure out my next move, what was I going to do? After I contacted the EOF director and was told that I had essentially been forgotten, I started thinking about a plan. As I was thinking about solutions, my phone rang and the director was on the other line extending his complete cooperation and assistance in correcting the mishap with the summer conference.

I wondered why he had so quickly reached back out to me and tried to rectify the situation. Although I expected the response to be directly related to students, to my surprise he said he wanted to correct the situation for me. However, I imagine he was concerned about the students also. In a follow up discussion, I asked him why he called me and why he was so eager to correct the mishap. He said, “I know how much this means to you, and I know that we dropped the ball...I just wanted to make everything right, you have been working hard on this.” I was really touched by his words. I felt really appreciated in that moment; I commented in my journal, “Hard work pays off, the relationships you build can have an impact” and “I have worked hard to build a reputation not only in the EOF program but at the college and I think I have been successful.” I believe this is directly tied to my leadership qualities as an authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leader.

During a follow up EOF meeting, I shared the results of the summer program and orientation with the EOF staff. I also discussed the issues surrounding communication and process. What could I do to improve this? Could I possibly get more involved? We

discussed the need to have these events scheduled well in advance. Scheduling conflicts do not usually occur on campus during the summer months, as there is usually ample space during this time. Due to the construction, however, space became an issue during the summer. This was a valuable experience for me. It allowed me to experience conflict while I moved forward trying to resolve the problem. Moving forward, I hope to help EOF by organizing the program to ensure that students are not forgotten and that EOF staff is supported during the planning of our programs. As a transformational leader (Burns, 1978), I hope the changes I implement during my years of service to the EOF program become instrumental in helping and reaching more students.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success, use that information to create workshops for EOF students, and study my leadership throughout the process. As a student development specialist assigned to the EOF program, I had a strong desire to create an improvement for the students and the program. I decided to focus my attention on improving the programming offered to EOF students. I wanted to investigate the most important components of the college success seminar and offer workshops on those topic areas because not all EOF students could take the seminar. There has been extensive research connecting college success courses with student success. These courses, generally offered to first-year students, are designed to provide students with information about their institutions, assist with academic planning and career exploration, and provide an introduction to techniques that improve study habits and other personal skills such as time or stress management (Siegel, 2003).

A study conducted at the college showed evidence that students who enrolled in the College Success Seminar completed more credits, had higher GPAs, and were more likely to return the following semester. Additionally, one of the recommendations of that study was to investigate the factors that may be strongly associated with college success as well as an investigation of other “outcomes” that may be important measures of college success, such as study skills (Institutional Report, 2005). Although this report supported the notion that students who enrolled in the College Success Seminar benefited from the course, our EOF sections were not filled to capacity and we were not reaching

enough students. This initial study at the college further motivated me to investigate the most important components of the College Success Course and design workshops for our students. To begin the project, I designed a survey for faculty and students to identify those components of the course they found most helpful. Although the literature suggests that college success courses increase retention, the content areas had not been deeply investigated (Cuseo, 1991; Porter & Swing, 2006; Zeidenberg et al., 2007). My vision was simple: to find out faculty and student perceptions about aspects of the course content that were important, and to create workshops using that content. In order to achieve this, I used action research because it allowed me to conduct research that was practical, directed at my own concerns, and that created change and improvement (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

In Cycle I, I distributed surveys to students and faculty in order to investigate the most important components of the College Success course. In Cycle II, I reviewed several college success textbooks and developed two workshops: time management and study skills/test-taking strategies based on the data collected in Cycle I and information from the textbooks. In Cycle III, my intent was to offer workshops with the college success seminar content to first-year students who had not had an opportunity to take the college success seminar course. However, as I was working through my cycles I did not tackle one very important issue – getting community college students to attend events. During my tenure at the college, I have offered several workshops for students that have not been well attended. However, I was so excited about this project that I did not think ahead and plan for how I would get students to attend these new workshops. During this time, EOF was starting to loosely require students to take the College Success Seminar.

In other words, students were told they had to register for a section of the course, but were allowed to waive out of the requirement. Additionally, students who were accepted into the EOF program after the beginning of the semester were not able to add the course to their schedules. Therefore, my intent in Cycle III was to offer these workshops and students admitted after the beginning of the term could be “required” to take them as an alternative to being “required” to take the College Success Seminar.

After the workshops were scheduled in Cycle III, I ran into some issues. First, one of my workshops had to be cancelled due to inclement weather and could not be rescheduled due to the timing of the semester. Second, the workshop that was offered had poor attendance. I was reminded of the difficulty we have in getting students to attend our events. Community college students are more likely to work, have external pressures on their time, and find it difficult to juggle academic and family responsibilities (Tinto, 1987; Tovar & Simon, 2006). During an EOF staff meeting, we discussed low student participation at our events. We understood our population and the issues they faced. Therefore, I suggested we build workshop offerings into existing programs like our annual conferences. The time had come to think of different ways to deliver workshops to students. In our discussions, the EOF team agreed that we needed to change and should try something new. This allowed me to work through the change process (Kotter, 1996) as will be discussed in further detail in this chapter. These discussions led to the decision to offer the workshops on study skills, test-taking strategies, and time management at our annual summer conference, which was later changed to an orientation. However, further discussions surrounding this issue led me to embed time

management, study skills, and test-taking strategies into the EOF summer program curriculum in Cycle IV.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

In this action research study, I explored the perceptions of students and faculty concerning the most effective components of the College Success Seminar course in order to develop workshops for EOF students. The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) What are the most effective components of HUDV 107 the College Success Seminar as perceived by faculty and students?
- (2) What skill sets do EOF students need to be successful in college as perceived by faculty?
- (3) What skill sets do EOF students feel they need to be successful in college?
- (4) What are the most common themes found in texts designed for college success?
- (5) Will offering newly created workshops based on students' and faculty's perceptions reach more students?
- (6) What are students' perceptions of the workshop content?
- (7) How do others view my leadership?
- (8) How has my leadership evolved through this change project? How is servant leadership reflected during this project?

I will answer questions (7) and (8) in the next chapter.

In Cycle I, I developed a survey intended to obtain the perceptions of students and faculty and answer questions (1) - (3) above. In the fall 2009 semester, 65 students

and 10 instructors were invited to participate in this study. I received 51% of the student surveys and 90% of the instructor surveys. The student and instructor surveys revealed similarities between what each participant group perceived as important skills for EOF students. These skills included time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies.

Students were asked, in an open-ended question, what they found most helpful in the course and eight students indicated that the time management skills they learned in class were most helpful as discussed in Chapter 5. Students were also asked to suggest skills first-year students need to be successful in college and a large majority of students indicated that time management skills were very important (23 responses). The other notable skill was study skills and test-taking strategies, which had 13 responses combined. I also asked faculty, in a survey, to rank course content based on their perceptions of the skills first-year EOF students need to be successful, and the results revealed that instructors felt test-taking, study skills, and time management were among the most important skills first-year EOF students need. Thus both student and faculty survey data revealed that time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies were important skills that first-year students need and were the most effective components of the College Success Seminar course.

In Cycle II, I reviewed several college textbooks intending to answer the 4<sup>th</sup> research question, “What are the most common themes found in texts designed for college success?” Using that information and the survey data, I created workshops for EOF students. There was consistency in the topic areas found in each textbook; however, their presentation and relationship were organized in a variety of ways. I examined the chapters, assigned themes, and compared them to the college success seminar

curriculum. My review of college success textbooks in Cycle II and the data from Cycle I assisted me in developing a workshop on Time Management and another on Study Skills/Test-Taking Strategies.

In Cycle III, I piloted workshops to students who did not take the College Success Seminar in the hopes of reaching a larger population of students. The data from this cycle answered the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> research questions: “Will offering newly created workshops based on students’ and faculty’s perceptions reach more students?” and “What are students’ perceptions of the workshop content?” The workshops scheduled were time management and test anxiety, which consisted of study skills and test-taking strategies. I developed a survey for students who participated in the workshop in order to get feedback aimed at improving future workshops. As discussed in Chapter 7, the first workshop on time management was cancelled due to a weather closing. The second workshop on test anxiety was offered, but not well attended. Therefore, creating new workshops did not reach more students in Cycle III. However, due to these results, a decision was made to embed the time management, study skills, and test-taking content into the summer program. This type of action based on results is characteristic of action research (Hinchey, 2008) and will be discussed further below.

In Cycle III, I collected surveys intending to answer the 6<sup>th</sup> research question. Although student feedback was positive, the limited number of attendees confirmed prior research on community college students. Our population is often first-generation and minority students; these students often find it difficult to juggle academic and family responsibilities (Tovar & Simon, 2006). Therefore as I reflected on this cycle, I began to think that the stand-alone workshops offered were not the best method for delivering this

content to students. Therefore my project shifted in Cycle IV, which is consistent with action research (Hinchey, 2008). This shift included integrating the content areas into the summer curriculum, and adding a workshop targeting EOF students who did not participate in the EOF summer program.

Annually, the EOF program holds an end-of-summer conference for students who complete the summer program. This conference features a keynote speaker and celebrates students' commitment through an awards and recognition ceremony. I wanted to invite new first-year EOF students who did not participate in the summer program to this event and offer them a break-out session to deliver workshop content. Due to scheduling conflicts these students were invited to a separate orientation, but nonetheless received a workshop on time management, study-skills and test-taking strategies, which was discussed in Chapter 8.

In Cycle IV, I integrated the content areas identified in Cycle I (time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies) into the EOF summer program curriculum and offered a workshop for EOF students who did not participate in the summer program. Students in the EOF summer program were given a workshop in time management and study skills/test-taking strategies as part of their student success seminar class. Students who did not participate in the EOF summer program were invited to a new student orientation and given a workshop on the same topics. This resulted in a total of 71 students who got the time management content and 65 students who got the study skills and test-taking strategies content. Thus by adding these components in the summer, we reached more students. Also, as stated in the previous chapter, students indicated that the workshops were very helpful.

## **Focus on Change**

I moved through many of my cycles with ease, often reflecting on the process and feeling overwhelmed by the amount of support I received. At the outset of this study, there were no conflicts or difficulty in moving my project forward. I had a high level of participation from faculty and students. The EOF department was interested in my study and appeared excited to be included in the process. They understood the issues and agreed that we needed to re-think how we delivered programming to students. I had several conversations with the EOF director regarding my study and discussed the direction I was headed in. All of these conversations were positive and I always felt supported and encouraged moving forward. I feel that I have built countless collaborative relationships with various constituencies at the college, which aided me in accomplishing my goals for this study.

Essentially, I was supported during each turn of the process despite a slight mishap resulting from a lack of communication in Cycle IV. Whenever I needed to move something along or set something in motion, I encountered no resistance from any member of my department or the college. I have been described as student-centered and passionate about my work with students. My desire for change and improvement is genuine. I wanted to serve more students and provide them with meaningful content which could help them transition to college.

The organizational culture at the community college in this study is diverse. One can find different cultures operating among and within various constituencies. Organizational culture may be viewed differently based upon the department in which one works. However, I see A and the EOF program primarily through the human

resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The human resource frame is based on the idea that organizations need people and people need organizations. In this equation there needs to be a good “fit.” The employee benefits by doing meaningful and satisfying work and the organization benefits from the employees’ talent and energy (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 132). Utilizing this same equation, the EOF program is a service-oriented program designed to help disadvantaged students succeed by providing them with additional services, and in turn the EOF program benefits from students’ talent and energy.

The EOF program has undergone several transitions as a result of the work of the current director, who has held this position for a relatively short term as compared to his predecessor who held office for over 25 years. When new ideas are brought forward, staff are either excited or debate passionately on the issue at hand. As a service-oriented program, the EOF program operates primarily from the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Therefore, I felt that utilizing the eight stage process in Kotter (1996) would provide me with a framework to create change and help me transform the manner in which we deliver workshops and increase student participation. Kotter’s (1996) eight stages include: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad based action, generating short term wins, consolidating gains producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture.

**Establishing a sense of urgency.** I cannot take full credit for establishing a sense of urgency; it was present all along. As I began Cycle I, the college was in a period of transition. With the college looking to improve student services, as evidenced by the

president's commission, and EOF being looked at as a model student development program, the sense of urgency grew and was sustained throughout my project. This allowed me to strengthen the urgency needed for change within EOF by having discussions centered on improving services and continuing to be a model program. The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific course components of the College Success Seminar that contribute to student success and use that information to create workshops. After having low attendance at the workshop in Cycle III, I was able to reinforce the necessity for change. This involved exploring new ways to reach students through our programming efforts, which continued to sustain the sense of urgency. This urgency was the desire to improve student services, offer meaningful programming, and reach more students. Kotter (1996) and Senge et al. (1999) also support the need for a sense of urgency. Senge et al. agree that those who feel the energy of a project and are motivated by it may be more willing to try new methods. Keeping the energy and urgency of the learning organization up will eventually spark organizational change (Kotter, 1996; Senge et al., 1999). As an EOF counselor, I was motivated and willing to try new methods. I was not afraid of change, but rather welcomed it. I tried to engage the EOF staff in my project by informing them and seeking their input. I wanted them to feel they had a voice and were a part of my project. My intent was to work with them to develop a plan that fostered buy in, tackled obstacles, celebrated successes, and could continue to evolve and sustain change.

**Creating the guiding coalition.** Putting together a team that can lead change is about finding the right members, which include those who are in a position of power, have expertise, credibility, and leadership (Kotter, 1996). The EOF program has these

people in place. This allowed me to utilize the strengths of our team and get them to support my project. I had already established trust among the group and had their support moving forward. The EOF culture operates in the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) and has members who have a strong connection to the program and care about its success. Beginning with the director, an EOF alumni, who is passionate about the program and open to finding ways to improve student services, and including the EOF coordinator who has been with the EOF program for over 20 years and several other staff members who are also EOF alumni, these individuals believe in the services of the program and have contributed to the college community. As a team they created the perfect melting pot of members who shared a common goal (Kotter, 1996). This team had strong leadership, and included two counselors (I am one of them), who were doctoral students involved in leadership roles at the college. The EOF staff shared a team spirit based on trust with a common goal for the program (Kotter, 1996). This combination provided the support I needed to move my project forward from Cycle I through IV.

**Developing a vision and strategy.** My vision for this project was to develop workshops for EOF students based on the content of the College Success Course. I realized this goal in Cycle II and III, although in Cycle III the workshops were not well attended. Student participation was an issue with which we have always grappled. Therefore, my vision for the program became to embed the workshops into the EOF summer program and provide a separate workshop for EOF students who did not participate in the summer program. Creating this vision with the EOF team was straightforward – I wanted us to reach more students. There was no resistance to future

planning or thinking. As I moved through my project and provided a rationale for the need to change, there was agreement and support among the group. The members of the EOF staff agreed that something had to change. In Cycle III, I proposed including the newly created workshops into the summer program curriculum in order to reach more students. I also recommended building student programming into our already scheduled student conferences, which have a targeted audience and are always well attended. This would move us way from offering stand-alone workshops throughout each semester. I was somewhat successful in this attempt, as I did not offer any additional student workshops during the fall semester in 2010. This demonstrates that we are moving in the right direction, but more work needs to be done in this area. Students continue to be hesitant to participate in various programs that put more demands on their time. Our student conferences are offered when classes are not in session (summer and winter break), which is an ideal time and leads to greater participation.

**Communicating the change vision.** Effective communication of vision includes explaining a vision in simple terms with examples aimed to create understanding and to spread the word through various forums where ideas can be heard repeatedly, followed by leadership that is consistent and open to communicating problems and having two-way discussions (Kotter, 1996). At the outset of this study and throughout my cycles, I updated the EOF staff. I shared the data with them and encouraged open dialogue and exchange of ideas. In addition, I also had informal conversations with various members of the college community who were interested in my research. As a result, I was asked to share my research findings and the surveys I developed with the first-year experience committee. Many of the discussions with the EOF program were centered on the issue of

low student attendance, which had always existed, but was never addressed. Part of this study initially was to reach more students and although much thought was given to student programming, not much thought was given to increasing attendance. I was naïve to think that changing the workshops would automatically increase student participation.

**Empowering employees for broad-based action.** As stated earlier, I moved through many of my cycles with ease. I was supported and empowered throughout this project. I have a reputation for being passionate and student-centered. Although other members of the EOF staff agreed that the stand-alone workshops were not working, they felt the EOF director would not be willing to change. I often spoke up as a collective voice, as the EOF staff did not feel empowered individually, to attack the problem of student attendance. Historically, the director charged the staff with the task of calling students and requiring them to attend EOF events, after students had already been sent some correspondence at home and via email. In some cases, students received letters threatening their EOF grant. This tactic has seen some results, but should not be used to coerce students to attend EOF programming. Although I have been empowered throughout this project, the EOF staff had not initially felt empowered to speak up about student programming. However, there have been EOF meetings in which EOF staff agreed that student programming should be delivered solely through the EOF student conferences instead of as stand-alone workshops. I have not been successful in moving all EOF programming to those conferences, but did have some success in facilitating the discussion and having a voice for those who were initially afraid to speak up.

**Generating short-term wins.** Although, I was not successful during Cycle III when I piloted the workshops and only four students attended, I was successful overall at

reaching more students. The results in Cycle IV reveal that a total of 71 students got the lesson on time management and 65 students got the lesson on study skills and test-taking strategies. This information provided large numbers with concrete results, which limited the arguments that could be made against this new attempt to reach more students. We are in the process of changing the way we deliver programming to students. We have begun to move away from offering stand-alone workshops and are now offering more conference style programs. We currently offer two student conferences annually. Each conference lasts approximately 3-4 hours and food is always provided. We offer a summer conference for students in the summer program, and a spring conference geared toward first-year students, although the entire EOF population is invited. These events are always well attended. Therefore, we capitalized on programs already in place instead of reinventing the wheel. This was a way to enhance the conferences and create excitement in planning student programming. It allowed us to celebrate that we are moving in the right direction and beginning to see results.

**Consolidating gains and producing more change.** As a leader and a strong student advocate, I saw other areas in which we could improve services and reach more students in meaningful ways. I am in the process of developing a comprehensive webpage, which will allow us to reach more students. In addition to information for students, sections will be available for parents and educational professionals. Additionally, I will be utilizing a new technology available at the college to build an on-line EOF community. The capabilities of the EOF community page will allow the EOF program to have a presence on-line. This will allow the program to better inform students about program expectations and functions. It will provide the program with a direct link

to its students. I also hope to utilize the technology available to provide students access to important skills via PowerPoint presentations that would be available on-line.

Therefore, students could watch the presentations on their own time. These improvements will allow us to continue to reach more students.

**Anchoring new approaches in the culture.** The changes discussed above are a direct result of this dissertation process, my leadership, and my desire to make things better. As a program, we are committed to offering the new content areas into future summer programs. Therefore, the students enrolled in the 2011 summer program will receive lessons in time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. Additionally, newly admitted summer students who were not able to participate in the summer program will have access to the same content either through workshops or on-line access. As these changes become routine they will become embedded into our culture. The EOF program cares about students and their success. I am not certain that I have fully transformed the EOF program; however, the EOF program agrees that we need to reach more students and provide them with helpful information that will allow them to be successful in college and beyond. My leadership has aided the EOF program in being open to change. We are eager to try different strategies to improve student services and reach more students. In the following chapter my leadership of this study will be discussed in further detail.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Leadership**

During the first semester of my doctoral studies, I was asked to reflect on my leadership and identify my leadership style. I found myself searching for answers, and looking back at my life's experiences. Who was I as a leader? What leadership had I engaged in? What kind of leader did I want to be? These were the types of questions I sought to answer. As a young professional, I have limited leadership experience. I am, however, full of passion and drive. I have always felt like a leader and was faced with the task of studying my leadership and identifying my leadership qualities.

My leadership is composed of different aspects of leadership theories. I bring these theories together to illustrate my current leadership. Many people know that I am a genuine person. Due to my personality and counseling background, I work well with others. I have strong values and am committed to changing lives. I pour my heart into everything that I do. These qualities led me to identify strongly as a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977). However, I also felt that I had additional leadership qualities that were tied to transactional/transformational (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978), authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007), and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leadership. What motivates me to be a leader comes from my life experiences and background. I feel immense satisfaction and fulfillment in doing a good job, helping others, and finding meaning in my work and life.

## **Leadership Analysis**

In order to evaluate my leadership, I chose to utilize the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) – 360 Assessment (Kouzes & Posner, 2009) and maintained a journal. The LPI is an online survey that evaluates leaders in five practices. The five practices of Exemplary Leadership include: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The LPI has a self-assessment, which I completed, and an observer assessment meant for colleagues, direct reports, managers, and others. Each assessment takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and contains 30 statements describing specific leadership behaviors, which are rated on a frequency scale from 1 through 10: (1) almost never, (2) rarely, (3) seldom, (4) once in a while, (5) occasionally, (6) sometimes, (7) fairly often, (8) usually, (9) very frequently, and (10) almost always. In addition to the frequency scale, I added two open-ended questions asking respondents to identify the skills and abilities I possess and areas I need to improve.

I chose the five practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) because the behaviors related to the practices can be tied to several of my espoused leadership theories. For example, the characteristics found in “Model the Way” are representative of my authentic leadership (Evans, 2007; George, 2007). These characteristics include setting an example and following through on promises. The characteristics found in “Inspire a Shared Vision” can be tied to transactional/transformational (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978) and charismatic (Evans 2007; George, 2007) leadership. These characteristics include the ability to envision the future and enlist others. “Challenge The Process” can be tied to transactional leadership (Bass,

1974). These characteristics include the ability to experiment and take risks, and seizing opportunities to make sure milestones are met. “Enable Others to Act” includes characteristics from servant (Greenleaf, 1977), charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), and authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) leadership and demonstrate my ability to balance transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978). These characteristics include relationship building, treating people with respect, being supportive, and ensuring that others grow. Lastly, “Encourage The Heart,” which recognizes contributions by showing appreciation and celebrates values by creating a spirit of community also demonstrates my ability to balance transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978).

After completing the LPI self-assessment, I invited 22 individuals to take the LPI 360 assessment, including colleagues and managers. These individuals were sent an email asking them to participate in the survey. Surveys were administered online through the LPI website and were anonymous. Of the 22 individuals invited to participate in this study, 17 responded for a response rate of 77%. Participants included my supervisor, the dean of enrollment development and student affairs, the EOF director, EOF staff, members of the counseling division who teach the College Success Seminar, and several colleagues across various departments at the college. Each participant has observed my leadership through my research study and my involvement in several college committees. In the following section, I will discuss the five practices of exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) and how they pertain to my self-assessment in comparison to the observers’ assessments.

## **Five Leadership Practices**

As stated earlier, the five leadership practices are: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). These leadership practices grew from a deep investigation into “the dynamic process of leadership, through case analyses and survey questionnaires...uncovering five practices common to personal-best leadership experiences” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007 p. 14). The five practices represent a model of leadership that has been tied to “getting extraordinary things done in organizations” (p. 14).

**Five practices response summary.** The LPI contains six leadership behaviors related to each of the five practices. The six leadership behaviors are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 and scores can range from 6 to 60. The five practices data summary shows the average of all my observers (see Table 11). My average scores range from 50.1 to 53.1, with the highest scores concentrated in the practices of Model the Way (52.4) and Enable Others to Act (53.1). In most areas the average scores were higher than my self-score except for in Encourage the Heart. Additionally, in Inspire a Shared Vision and Encourage the Heart, my individual score (47, 53) was higher than my manager score (46.3, 46.3).

Table 11

*Five Practices Summary by Respondent*

	<i>n</i>	Model The Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge The Process	Enable Others To Act	Encourage The Heart
All respondents	17	52.4	50.1	51.9	53.1	52.1
Managers	3	51.7	46.3	51	54.3	46.3
Coworkers	14	52.5	50.9	52.1	52.9	53.4
Self	1	48	47	49	51	53

In the practice of Inspire a Shared Vision, my score was higher than my managers' average score. However, after examining each individual score, I found that I received scores of 56, 50, and 33, therefore only one manager felt that I did not exhibit the characteristics of this practice. I further examined the six leadership behaviors in that section and found that this particular manager rated me much lower than his counterparts, not only in this section, but in many of the sections. This perception may be related to a different viewpoint on my leadership. Additionally, in the practice of Encourage the Heart, my scores were higher than my managers' scores. After examining these individual scores, I found that I received scores of 59, 49, and 31. In this area, two managers scored me lower than I scored myself. I also examined the six leadership behaviors in that section and found that I was ranked lowest in two areas: creatively rewards people for their contributions and expresses confidence in people's abilities.

I reflected on these areas and tried to understand what they meant. There was a discrepancy between how my co-workers saw me versus my managers. When I first examined these differences, I wanted to disregard them because the majority of my peers

did not rate me the same. However, I later realized that I needed to examine these further and that each opinion matters. This will be discussed further in this chapter.

***Model the Way.*** In this practice, Kouzes and Posner identify the ability to “clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals” and “set the example by aligning actions with shared values” as specific characteristics of leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 6). I received an average of 52.4 points out of a possible 60 (see Table 11). My highest averages came from following three behaviors: setting an example, making sure that people adhere to agreed upon standards, and following through on promises (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Model the Way Data Summary*

	Self <i>n</i> =1	Manager <i>n</i> =3	Coworkers <i>n</i> =14	Average <i>n</i> =17
Sets a personal example of what is expected	8	9.3	9.2	9.2
Makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards	7	9	8.9	8.9
Follows through on promises and commitments	10	9.3	9.5	9.5
Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect people’s performance	7	7	8.4	8.1
Builds consensus around organization’s values	7	9.3	8.1	8.4
Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership	9	7.7	8.4	8.2

There were two leadership behaviors related to this practice in which my scores were higher than observer scores. In “follows through on promises and commitments” the scores were very close, .5 difference. However, in “is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership” the scores were not as close and I feel that they indicate a discrepancy between how I see myself and how others see me. This may be due to a perception that I am clear about my leadership as a result of having gone through this leadership program. In the remaining leadership behaviors my self-scores were lower than those of managers and co-workers scores. In many areas the scores were close, however, in “makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards” and “builds consensus around organization’s values” I rated myself almost two points lower. These discrepancies may suggest that I underestimate my ability to influence others and hold them accountable.

***Inspire a Shared Vision.*** In this practice, Kouzes and Posner identify the ability to “envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities” and “enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations” as specific characteristics of leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 10). I received an average of 50.1 points out of a possible 60 (Table 11). My highest averages came from following three behaviors: speaking with conviction about meaning of work, appealing to others to share dream of the future, and paints big picture of group aspirations (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Inspire a Shared Vision Data Summary*

	Self n=1	Manager n=3	Coworkers n=14	Average n=17
Talks about future trends influencing our work	7	7	8.6	8.3
Describes a compelling image of the future	8	6.3	7.9	7.6
Appeals to others to share dream of future	9	7.3	8.7	8.5
Shows others how their interests can be realized	6	8	7.9	7.9
Paints “big picture” of group aspirations	7	8	8.6	8.5
Speaks with conviction about meaning of work	10	9.7	9.4	9.4

There were two leadership behaviors related to this practice where my scores were higher than observer scores. In “describes a compelling image of the future” the scores differed from managers and co-workers, which may indicate that I am more likely to describe a compelling future to my coworkers to try and boost morale, but less likely to do so with managers since they are in a position of power. In “appeals to others to share dream of the future” my co-workers rated me very close to how I rated myself, however, managers gave me a lower rating. Moving forward I will need to express my views to my managers the same way I do with colleagues. Lastly, in “speaks with conviction about meaning of work” the scores were very close, .5 difference. In the remaining leadership behaviors my self-scores were lower than those of managers and

co-workers scores. In many areas the scores were close, however, in “shows others how their interests can be realized” I rated myself almost two points lower. As noted in a previous leadership behavior, I feel that this also suggests that I underestimate my ability to influence others.

***Challenge the Process.*** In this practice, Kouzes and Posner identify the ability to “search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve” and “experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience” as specific characteristics of leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 14). I received an average of 51.9 points out of a possible 60 (Table 11). My highest averages came from following three behaviors: seeks challenging opportunities to test skills, searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve, and makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set (Table 14).

Table 14

*Challenge the Process Data Summary*

	Self <i>n</i> =1	Manager <i>n</i> =3	Coworkers <i>n</i> =14	Average <i>n</i> =17
Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills	8	9	9.3	9.2
Challenges people to try new approaches	8	8	8.6	8.5
Searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve	9	8	8.7	8.6
Asks “What can we learn?”	7	8.3	8.4	8.4
Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set	9	8	8.8	8.6
Experiments and takes risks	8	9.7	8.3	8.5

There were a few leadership behaviors related to this practice in which my scores were slightly higher than observer scores. In “searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve” and “makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set” my co-workers rated me very close to how I rated myself, however, managers gave me a slightly lower rating. These scores were close and will provide me with areas to improve moving forward. In the remaining leadership behaviors my self-scores were either comparable or lower than those of managers’ and co-workers’ scores. In “asks what we can learn” my self-score was lower than those of managers’ and co-workers’ scores. However, in “experiments and takes risks” the manager scores were almost two points higher than my self-score. I feel this is because several of my managers have asked me to take on various tasks that involve me taking risks and experimenting with new ideas.

***Enable Others to Act.*** In this practice, Kouzes and Posner identify the ability to “foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships” and “strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence” as specific characteristics of leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 18). I received an average of 53.1 points out of a possible 60 (Table 11). My highest averages came from the following three behaviors: develops cooperative relationships, actively listens to diverse points of view, and treats people with dignity and respect (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Enable Others to Act Data Summary*

	Self <i>n</i> =1	Manager <i>n</i> =3	Coworkers <i>n</i> =14	Average <i>n</i> =17
Develops cooperative relationships	10	9	9.1	9.1
Actively listens to diverse points of view	8	9	9.1	9.1
Treats people with dignity and Respect	10	10	9.2	9.4
Supports decisions other people make	6	9	8.4	8.5
Gives people choice about how to do their work	8	9.3	8.6	8.8
Ensures that people grow in their Jobs	9	8	8.5	8.4

There were a few leadership behaviors related to this practice in which my scores were slightly higher than observer scores. In “develops cooperative relationships” and “ensures people grow in their jobs” my co-workers and managers rated me very close to how I rated myself. Moving forward, I will continue to find ways to further improve in these areas. In the remaining leadership behaviors my self-scores were either comparable or lower than managers’ and co-workers’ scores. In “actively listens to diverse points of view” my self-score was slightly lower than managers’ and co-workers’ scores.

However, in “supports decisions other people make” manager scores were three points higher than my self-score and coworker scores were almost two and a half higher. It appears that others view me as being supportive of others’ decisions more than I do. I viewed myself as being less supportive, because I usually stand up to others and am

assertive, however, this is not the majority of views held by others. I am quite pleased to learn that I am more supportive than I thought.

*Encourage the Heart.* In this practice, Kouzes and Posner identify the ability to “recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence” and “celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community” as specific characteristics of leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 22). I received an average of 52.1 points out of a possible 60 (Table 11). My highest averages came from following three behaviors: gives team members appreciation and support, praises people for a job well done, and recognizes people for commitment to shared values (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Encourage the Heart Data Summary*

	Self <i>n</i> =1	Manager <i>n</i> =3	Coworkers <i>n</i> =14	Average <i>n</i> =17
Praises people for a job well done	10	7.7	9.3	9.0
Expresses confidence in people’s abilities	10	8	8.4	8.4
Creatively rewards people for their contributions	8	6.7	8.6	8.2
Recognizes people for commitment to shared values	9	8	8.9	8.7
Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments	7	7.7	8.9	8.6
Gives team members appreciation and support	9	8.3	9.4	9.2

In this section, there were three leadership behaviors in which my scores were higher than observer scores. In “praises people for a job well done” my manager scores were more than two points lower, whereas my coworker scores were very close to my own. I do not generally praise my managers for their work, because I feel uncomfortable in that role; however, I do express to other colleagues praise for their work. This may explain the discrepancy in scores. I will need to remember that managers also deserve praise for their hard work. In “expresses confidence in people’s abilities” I rated myself almost two points higher than managers and coworkers. My perception of showing confidence in others’ abilities is not reality. I am not verbalizing my confidence in others as much as I think. In “creatively rewards people for their contributions,” my manager scores were also lower than my self-rating. I think this also demonstrates my need to recognize managers for their contributions. In the remaining leadership behaviors my self-scores were either comparable or slightly higher than those of manager and coworker scores.

### **Open-ended responses**

After completing the 30-item assessment, observers were asked two open-ended essay questions: What abilities or skills does Yesenia need to improve? and, What abilities or skills does Yesenia possess? Answering these questions was optional; I received 15 responses for each question out of a possible 17. There was a pattern in the responses for both questions. The message was clear, my strengths are my weaknesses. This will be explained in further detail below. The responses to the open ended responses were coded and assigned themes (see Tables 17 and 18).

Table 17

*LPI open-ended question 1*

What abilities or skills does Yesenia need to improve?

Theme	Frequency of responses
Communication	4
Emotions	5
Managing responsibility	4
Tolerance	3

Table 18

*LPI open-ended question 2*

What abilities or skills does Yesenia possess?

Theme	Frequency of responses
Drive	3
Ethical	6
Organized	3
Passion	5
Student Advocate	5
Supportive	3
Team Oriented	2

In the first question, several things were clear – my passion gets in the way of communication, I need to learn to say no and manage responsibilities, and I need to be more open and tolerant of others’ views. I feel that my servant leadership (Greenleaf,

1977) is well represented here. In the following paragraphs, I share various comments from my observer assessments.

One observer commented:

Yesenia should consider how her passion can be misconstrued as being rigid in her thinking. I have found her to be open and interested in new ideas, but have seen that her passion can sometimes set people off from listening to what she is saying, allowing them to focus only on how she is saying it...

I have always been the kind of person to “wear my heart on my sleeve”; I do not hide my emotions well and am known to speak up. As far back as I can remember I have been opinionated and have said what is on my mind. However, I do agree that my passion has sometimes interfered with the message I am trying to deliver. I get very emotional when I am debating or discussing an issue, which I feel is connected to my authentic leadership (Evans, 2007; George 2007). Authentic leaders are sincere, strong-willed, assertive, and expect high standards (Evans, 2007). Although I thought I was managing my passion, several observers point out that I still need work in this area.

Another observer stated:

Yesenia needs to learn to control her emotions and hide her personal feelings in work situations. Sometimes her passion for an issue interferes with her ability to acknowledge different viewpoints. This could also hurt her in negotiating situations because she wears her emotions on her sleeve. She’ll need to develop more of a poker face. She also tends to say exactly what she feels. I happen to admire that characteristic, but it can be damaging in certain situations. She needs to pick her spots.

Additionally, several observers also commented on me stepping in to save the day or taking on more responsibility. I enjoy problem solving and like to be part of the solution. I have been known to fix problems caused by others and to take on more than I can handle – although it is difficult to actually admit. I thought I understood my boundaries when it came to taking on too much, but it is clear that others feel I need to

slow down. I think this is representative of my servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). As a servant leader one has a natural feeling to serve, which is how I feel most of the time. I think it is because of this desire to serve and meet others' needs that I take on so much. I always want to help; it is who I am. Many of these statements suggest I take on too much, however they also reveal my lack of allowing others to help me. I know that I have some issues in this area, and that I harbor a need for control. This need to control stems from my childhood and gives me a sense of security. When I am in control, I feel safe. As I continue to evolve, I will promote the leadership of others and will be more cognizant of my difficulty in asking for help and managing my personal issues with control.

One observer commented:

Yesenia needs to improve her ability to hold others accountable, and to say no. Often, Yesenia steps into leadership roles when "the ball has been dropped" by others. While Yesenia is really great at finding creative solutions to problems, at times her solutions become a cover for someone who is not pulling his or her own weight. This can contribute to problems in the office because certain people are used to Yesenia fixing problems and they become reliant or do not take responsibility for their mistakes.

Another observer said:

Yesenia's passion for her work and her students can sometimes interfere with her efforts to meet her goals. This intensity can sometimes work against her. She may also need to better identify when she should decline when asked to participate or add responsibilities to her list of obligations.

In the statements above, my passion is described several times as "getting in the way." However, in the second question my passion is described positively. In the statements below there is much discussion on my personal and leadership characteristics. I was humbled reading these comments. They were honest and refreshing. However, they also provided areas for me to examine further. Although some of the patterns that emerge

speak to my ability to work with teams, other comments speak of my integrity, honesty, humor, and likeability. I have maintained throughout this dissertation that I work well with others and truly care about my students and work. I think the following comments illustrate this point.

One observer commented:

Yesenia has both passion and an ethical core. Her ethical core drives her both to be a strong leader for the issues in which she believes and the students with whom she works and refuses to bend for those who would challenge the institution's mission for their own interests.

Another observer said:

She possesses a tremendous passion for her work and for students. She also possesses a willingness to try new things. She is very likeable and people gravitate to her and work to try to please her. This is an ability that can't be taught, and when combined with her work ethic bodes for well future success.

Another observer added:

Yesenia is masterful at building effective teams and recognizing and valuing the contributions of those who are active members of a workgroup or team. She creates outcomes by staunchly supporting the efforts of those with whom she works.

These comments really touched me. I was once again humbled by the comments made by others. In reviewing these comments, I felt validated and supported in my desire to be a good leader. I seek to motivate my students and peers to better things. I encourage leadership and enjoy watching others grow as I establish meaningful relationships. I feel these comments confirm my espoused authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007), charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). The following comments also support these claims of authentic, charismatic, and servant leadership. One person wrote, "She inspires people around her to do more than just what is expected. She is always student focused."

Another responded:

Yesenia is a warm intelligent, outgoing person. As such, she is an extraordinary value in a one-on-one relationship as well as within a committee. She is practical, visionary, and extremely competent. She also bears a sense of humor that makes it so pleasant to work with her. Yesenia is a rare treasure of a human being. She can lead, be decisive, and perform competently all with a humane spirit and fine character.

A third wrote:

Yesenia possess the following abilities or skills: a maturity beyond her years, an intensity and passion for her work, a dedication to and demonstration of a strong work ethic, excellent communication skills, and directness and honesty that is refreshing, integrity, compassion for others, and ability to delegate when in a position to do so, able to multi-task, demonstrates an outstanding use of technology, follows through on multiple responsibilities with success, is extremely dependable, confident and personable, has a great sense of humor.

### **Journal Entries**

I kept a journal throughout this project to examine my leadership. My journal also helped me reflect on the journey and on this experience. Since I began working at A Community College, I have worked to develop collaborative relationships with many of my peers. I feel that it is because of these relationships, my work ethic, and my charismatic leadership (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) that I moved through most of this project with ease. Most people believed in what I was doing and had no problem buying in. They understood what I wanted to accomplish and that I wanted them to be a part of the process.

In Cycle I, I had discussions with the faculty teaching College Success courses about my study and what I was hoping to achieve and I received overwhelming support. In response, I noted in my journal that “faculty have a desire to help” and “faculty are helping me because they get what I am trying to do.” This was due to the connection I felt with the college community and also my desire to create change and help students.

The theme for Cycle I was connectedness; I wrote in my journal in response to how much support I received: “I genuinely care about students, and others get that” and “it feels great to be part of a team.” I felt really good through this project. I was supported and encouraged. I knew this was because I had worked at establishing relationships, which helped me along the way. I also wrote in my journal, “Relationship building pays off,” which is evidence of my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974). As a servant (Greenleaf, 1977) and transformational leader (Burns, 1978) I want to serve and make a lasting contribution to the EOF program and its students. However utilizing my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974) allows me to collaborate with others to make changes that will benefit students. I feel that it is because of my authentic (Evans, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leadership that I had such great support during my study.

In Cycle II, I sent an email to faculty teaching College Success asking for their participation in this study and I also discussed my plan with the EOF department. During this cycle, I again received overwhelming support. The theme that emerged in my analysis was collaboration. I made several notations of comments that I received as I solicited participation in this study. As noted in my journal, these comments include: “You have my full support; whatever you need,” and “This is a great project; tell me what I can do.” In another entry I noted the following response, “Email what you need and I will get on it.” Once again I felt supported during my project. In response I wrote in my journal, “I am so fortunate to work for a program that affords me the opportunity to try new things but is also supportive of my leading the project.”

As I continued journaling, I continued to see the value of working with others and building relationships. I knew I needed students to participate if I were to be successful. As I was thinking about how I would lure students to my workshop in Cycle III, I thought of ways I could guarantee they attended. I wanted to offer them a “prize” for coming. I noted in my journal, “I need to offer students something tangible like a giveaway.” Therefore, I emailed the Executive Director of Marketing Services to request a donation of paraphernalia with the college name and logo. His email response was “stop over anytime and we’ll take you down to the ‘vault.’ If I’m not here, [Jane] would be pleased to accommodate you, Yesenia.” This was also tied to the relationships I was building and had established. Not everyone would have been able to make such a request and get my results.

What became clear from the data was that I utilized my relationships to create exchanges. I exchanged my relationship with the marketing director for college paraphernalia and exchanged that paraphernalia for student attendance. I believe this is evidence of my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974). Although I do not build relationships for control or authority, I do believe there is much value to establishing relationships in which one can seek rewards or exchange services. I wanted and needed students to attend my workshop. Therefore after obtaining the giveaways, I also got approval for free lunch for students. I noted in my journal, “This is great! I am definitely going to have students attend my workshop.” In Cycle III there was evidence of my desire to negotiate services for services. I wanted to give students knowledge, but knew I needed to provide them an extrinsic reward for their attendance (Bass, 1974). I thought this would guarantee that I would have a greater attendance rate.

I was very disappointed when only four students attended my workshop. This confirmed the need for change. I wrote in my journal, “We really need to change the way we communicate with students” and I questioned “should we continue calling students...this almost feels like harassment.” For quite some time frustration was building among the staff because they were being utilized to make lots of phone calls. This was not a good use of their time and did not always yield positive results. I noted in another journal entry: “Is making phone calls to students a good use of time?” and “The community college student is often stretched too far, we need to help them without adding so much to their already full plate.” I wanted others to understand and acknowledge the issues we faced in the program and be open to changing our workshop delivery. I also hoped to modify the way we contact students. This was evidence of my transformational (Burns, 1978) leadership and the desire I had to change old practices that were no longer effective.

It was not until the later part of the dissertation that I faced an issue, which I acted on quickly to resolve. I thought the stage was set for me to deliver a workshop series to new EOF students who had not participated in the EOF summer program, until I found out that the workshops could not be delivered due to space and communication issues that arose during the end of the summer program. I was initially to offer all new EOF students who did not participate in the summer program a series of workshops on time management, study skills and test-taking strategies at the annual conference. However, after inquiring about the details of the day I found out that my section had been cut and I was never notified. Therefore, a separate orientation was planned only after I notified the EOF director about my dissatisfaction with what had happened. The EOF director was

very quick to call me and try to rectify the problem. He apologized and wanted to know how we could proceed with reaching those students who did not attend summer. I wondered why he acted so quickly to rectify the situation. In a follow up discussion, I asked him why he called me so quickly and why he was so eager to correct the mishap. He said, “I know how much this means to you, and I know that we dropped the ball...I just wanted to make everything right, you have been working hard on this” as noted in my journal. In the end it was the relationship I established with the EOF director that allowed me to provide an orientation session to those students who were not enrolled in the summer program.

I tried not to take what had happened personally. Although I was angry and emotional, I had to get a grip on myself. I tried to utilize servant (Greenleaf, 1977) and transformational (Burns, 1978) leadership, which allowed me to focus on solving the problem and serving our students with little distraction. I felt very successful in achieving my goal to reach more students. Additionally, I felt that I was accommodated because I am respected and I care about our students. During Cycle IV, I felt really appreciated. I commented in my journal, “Hard work pays off, the relationships you build can have an impact” and “I have worked hard to build a reputation not only in the EOF program but at the college and I think I have been successful.” These statements are representative of my transactional (Bass, 1974) leadership, which I use to collaborate and exchange services.

Many of my journal entries and themes reveal the emphasis I place on establishing relationships and making connections. In examining the data in my journal and reflecting on this process, I have come to realize that I establish relationships for

exchanges. My transactional leadership (Bass, 1974) is very evident here. I create relationships with various people in order to exchange services. Building relationships with others allows me to broaden my ability to gain access to goods or services.

### **Answering the Leadership Questions**

In this chapter, I sought to answer the following research questions:

(7) How do others view my leadership?

(8) How has my leadership evolved through this change project? How is servant leadership reflected during this project?

In order to evaluate my leadership and answer questions (7) and (8) above, I chose to utilize the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) – 360 Assessment (Kouzes & Posner, 2009) and maintained a journal. The LPI allowed me to examine my leadership based on the five practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Several of the leadership behaviors associated with the five practices have been tied to my espoused leadership theories as discussed earlier. In addition, the LPI allowed me to ask two open-ended questions aimed at obtaining others' views on my leadership and how my leadership has evolved.

I reviewed the leadership data collected to answer the 7<sup>th</sup> research question “How do others view my leadership?” Using my journal and the LPI survey data, I concluded that others view me as a strong leader. The open-ended responses on the LPI, provided comments that describe me as having the following traits:

Passion, ethical core, student focused, compassion, drive, dedication, appreciation for others, team sense, integrity, reliable, trustworthy, likeable, highly organized, able to trouble shoot, multi-task, problem solver, patience, enthusiasm, good listening skills, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, friendly, intelligent, outgoing, practical, visionary, competent, sense of humor, mature, strong work ethic, confident, encouraging, supportive, and genuine.

In contrast to the overwhelmingly positive responses above, respondents also commented on areas I need to improve. These comments stated that I need to learn to say no and manage responsibilities, because I take on too much; I need to be more open and tolerant of others' views; my passion interferes with the message I am trying to deliver, and I should modify my intensity and control my emotions. The comments above point to areas I need to improve. These areas are not unfamiliar to me. Throughout this study and leadership program, I have had to reflect on who I am; this process has allowed me to gain a great deal of insight into my behavior and characteristics.

Others view me as a strong leader, however, I still consider myself as having limited leadership experience. I am not sure when I will feel that I have acquired enough skills and abilities to feel more seasoned or comfortable in my leadership; I am not sure if this will come with time or further experiences. However, since studying my leadership, I am more confident of my ability to lead and have gained great insight into my leadership style. This will be discussed further in this chapter. The negative and positive comments I received from respondents were particularly valuable in seeing how others view my leadership.

The LPI data revealed that the view I hold of my leadership is similar to observer views. This is consistent with the leadership I espouse and what is observed. The LPI consists of Five Leadership Practices and within each practice there are six leadership behaviors. Therefore, there are a total of 30 leadership characteristics examined, which can be associated with my leadership qualities. Overall, I scored a 9.0 or higher in nine leadership behaviors, which means I was ranked as very frequently engaging in the following practices: Model the Way, which is tied to authentic leadership (Evans, 2007;

George, 2007); Inspire a Shared Vision, which can be tied to transactional/transformational (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978) and charismatic (Evans 2007; George, 2007) leadership; Enable Others To Act, which includes characteristics from servant (Greenleaf, 1977), charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), and authentic (Evans, 2007; George 2007) leadership; Encourage the Heart and Challenge the Process, which can also be tied to transactional leadership (Bass, 1974).

Additionally, I scored an 8.1 or above in 19 areas, which means I was ranked as usually engaging in those practices. The lowest ranking scores I received were a 7.9 and 7.6, in Inspire the Way, which means I was ranked as fairly often engaging in this practice.

I reviewed the leadership data collected to answer the 8<sup>th</sup> research question “How has my leadership evolved through this change project?” and “How is servant leadership reflected during this project?” Using my journal and the LPI survey data, I concluded that I called upon my espoused leadership characteristics throughout this project.

Although primarily I feel that servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is at my core, I also utilized some authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007), charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), and transactional/transformational leadership (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978) characteristics. The leadership characteristics I most utilized in this project were servant, authentic, and charismatic. The least utilized or observed was transformational (Burns, 1978) and the one I gained most insight into was transactional leadership (Bass, 1974).

The LPI survey data in “Enable Others To Act,” which is tied to “foster[ing] collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships” and “strengthen[ing] others by increasing self-determination and developing competence” (Kouzes & Posner , 2009,

p. 18) confirms that servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is reflected in this project. In this area I received an average of 53.1 points out of a possible 60. My highest averages came from the following three behaviors: develops cooperative relationships, actively listens to diverse points of view, and treats people with dignity and respect. These high-ranking behaviors can also be connected to my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974). In the open-ended responses several respondents commented that I take on too much, which is evidence of my servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977).

My leadership has evolved immensely in this process. In the past, I led without a clear understanding of my leadership. I now have a clearer understanding of my leadership style and substantial resources to assist me as I lead additional projects or assume more responsibility. In particular I learned about the emphasis I place on building relationships (Bass, 1974). I build relationships to build alliances with others. I never thought of my relationship building in that way, because it made me feel as though I was building these relationships for personal gain, which felt unethical. However, I now understand that I build these relationships to serve (Greenleaf, 1977) and accomplish meaningful outcomes.

I also have to admit that I never understood how the culture of an organization could hinder change. I have a much clearer understanding of organizational culture and a greater respect for examining the culture of an organization before plunging in to create change. I am fortunate that my leadership style, which works particularly well in a caring environment (Bolman & Deal, 2003), allowed the transition between stages to be a collaborative process, which permitted me to implement change (Kotter, 1996).

## **Change and Organizational Culture**

My desire for change and improvement is genuine. I successfully reached more students and provided them with meaningful content to help them transition to college. I was able to accomplish what I set out to do by building a coalition and sharing my vision with others (Kotter, 1996). I was working in a culture that operated primarily from the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) and was very supportive. Although A has a diverse organizational culture, I most often worked within a culture that allowed me to lead from my espoused leadership, which includes authentic (Evans, 2007; George 2007) charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) servant (Greenleaf, 1977) and transformational/transactional (Bass, 1974, Burns, 1978) leadership characteristics. My project was directed at creating improvement for students in the EOF program, which, coupled with my espoused leadership and the organizational culture, allowed me to create change that was direct and natural. Although I was able to create a change in the EOF program, I do not feel that I have transformed the program as a whole. There has been some change, such as the change to the 2010 EOF summer program curriculum, which I know will be in effect 2011, but I feel as though transformational leadership takes longer to measure.

To create change I utilized Kotter's (1996) change framework, which works particularly well in a culture that embodies the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). I felt using Kotter's (1996) eight stages worked well because I already had supportive people in place to carry my vision forward as was discussed in Chapter 6. Additionally, my authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) and charismatic (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) leadership attracted others to follow me and identify with my vision.

When I began to work through Kotter's (1996) eight stages, I found the transition from each stage to be a collaborative process, which was uncomplicated and sincere. Many of those involved in this project cared about students and their success; all I had to do was share my vision with the group and get them on board.

Moving forward, I will have challenges that stem from operating in different organizational cultures that may not be supportive or align with my leadership. I will need to constantly assess my leadership, the organizational culture I will be operating in, and develop a change framework that is based on the kind of change I hope to implement. In the future I may need to adjust my leadership, which functions primarily well in a caring supportive environment. As I go forward, I will need to recognize that not every leadership role can be met with the same kind of leadership style. I will need to continue to grow, re-evaluate, and adjust as the opportunity for future leadership presents itself.

### **Final Thoughts**

I have learned that my passion is seen as both a positive and negative attribute. While it is good to have passion, I must be careful not to allow my passion to interfere with my message. Several of the open-ended comments on the LPI indicate that the way I communicate can be misconstrued as being rigid in my thinking, can set people off from listening to what I am trying to say, can interfere with my ability to acknowledge different viewpoints, and can interfere with my efforts to meet my goals. These comments were very helpful and will allow me to learn to better communicate and validate others' views. I need to lower my intensity a bit, while still maintaining the passion I have to serve (Greenleaf, 1977) and make a lasting difference (Burns, 1978)

with positive outcomes. Additionally, I will continue to utilize my authentic (Evans, 2007; George, 2007) and charismatic leadership (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) to create a trusting environment in which individuals feel excited and motivated to work together to create change.

During this process, I gained substantial insight into my leadership qualities. When I espoused to utilize transactional leadership, I saw myself as a leader who was able to access resources and make things happen. However, I realized that it was much more than this and that my ability to reach these outcomes was based on the relationships I establish with others. After much reflection and thought, I realized that if I build relationships with the “right people” I also build a coalition, which allows me to utilize my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974). It was difficult to acknowledge this because I do not see myself as an opportunistic individual. I am not the kind of person who takes advantage of others; this goes against my core values. However, as I continued to reflect, I began to understand and think about the emphasis I place on building relationships, which are generally with people who are committed and passionate about helping others and creating effective change.

At the suggestion of my committee members, I reflected on other aspects of my leadership and my views of organizational culture. Their recommendations gave me the opportunity to deepen my understanding of my leadership and the culture in which I was operating. Although I stated that the least utilized frame was the political frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003), further reflection has allowed me to gain insight into the current political environment at my institution and also how I used the political frame during my study. Some examples of this are when I made the decision to create a different curriculum for

students in the summer program and not replicate what the counseling department utilizes in the college success seminar. I was really aligning myself to utilize the relationships I established, which are coalitions, to secure resources for students. Additionally, my committee helped me further understand my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974) in connection to my personal and professional code of ethics, which I easily identified as the ethic of care (Shapiro & Skefkovich, 2005). Although I initially hesitated to connect my transactional leadership (Bass, 1974) with my ability to access resources through the relationships I established, I am much more comfortable acknowledging this leadership trait and also connecting it to my ethics, because the services I bargain for are not for personal gain, but rather for the good of students.

At the beginning of this study I stated that I had limited leadership experience, however, my leadership has evolved. I began this study with some hesitation and fear that I might not be able to achieve what I hoped for. I also felt anxious about things not working out or going as planned. I have since become a stronger leader and more than ever feel a desire and urge to lead. I want to serve, while inspiring others to do so also (Greenleaf, 1977). I no longer equate successful outcomes with effective leadership; instead I view leadership as an organic process. I aspire to be a transformational leader (Burns, 1978), one who leaves a legacy of good behind.

As an emerging leader who is full of passion, I care deeply about education and helping my students transform. I am a living example of how education can transform a life. As I write the final chapter of my dissertation, I am truly transformed. I am now fully equipped to say – I went all the way. I obtained the highest degree I could and I can lead and empower others to do the same. I will continue to take on leadership roles and

now have a great library of resources to call upon if I get stuck. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity and know that I will utilize what I have learned to the fullest. I will continue to serve (Greenleaf, 1977) with passion, integrity, honesty, and care (Evans, 2007; George, 2007; Nadler & Tushman, 1990; Shapiro & Skefkovich, 2005) so that I can encourage and inspire others (Bass, 1974; Burns, 1978).

## References

- American Association of University Women. Northern [Suburban] County Branch. (2005). *A triangle of land*. Lincroft, NJ: Author.
- Ashburn, E. (2006, December). 2-Year-college students rarely use advisers, survey shows. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. A1.
- Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barefoot, P. P., & Fidler, D. S. (1991). First National Survey on Freshman seminar programs: Findings, conclusions and recommendations. (Monograph No. 6). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina: National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience.
- Barefoot, P. P., & Fidler, D. S. (1992). National Survey of Freshman Year Programming, 1991. Helping First Year College Students Climb the Academic Ladder. The Freshman Year Experience. (Monograph No. 10). Columbia, South Carolina: Center for the Study of the Freshman Year Experience.
- Bass, B. M. (1974). The meaning of leadership. In T. J. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion: Insights on leadership through the ages* (pp. 37-38). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Batten, J. (1998). Servant-Leadership: A passion to serve. In L. C. Spears (Ed.), *Insights on leadership: Service, stewardship, spirit, and servant leadership* (pp. 38-53). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bensimon, E. M. (1989). The meaning of 'good presidential leadership': A frame analysis. *Review of Higher Education*, 12, 107-23.
- Berquist, W. H., & Pawlak, K. (2008). *Engaging the six cultures of the academy*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Boggs, G. R. (2005) Introduction: Civility on campus. In P. A. Elsner, & G. R. Boggs (Eds.), *Encouraging civility as a community college leader* (pp. 1-12). Washington, DC: Community College Press.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2003). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

- Boyd, V., Hattauer, E., Brandel, I. W., Buckles, N., Davidshofer, C., Deakin, S., Steel, C. M. (2003). Accreditation standards for university and college counseling centers. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 81*, 168-177.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). Transactional and transformational leadership. In T. J. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion: Insights on leadership through the ages* (pp. 100-101). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (2008) *The American community college* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Coll, K., & House, R. (1991). Empirical implications for the training and professional development of community college counselors. *Community College Review, 19*(2), 43-52.
- Cronin, T. E. (1987). Leadership and democracy. In T. J. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion: Insights on leadership through the ages* (pp. 303-309). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Cuseo, J. B. (1991). The freshman orientation seminar: A research-based rationale for its value, delivery, and content. Monograph Series No. 4. National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina.
- Densten, I. L., & Gray, J. H. (2001). Leadership development and reflection: What is the connection? *The International Journal of Educational Management, 15*(3), 119-124.
- Evans, R. (2007). The authentic leader. In Jossey Bass (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 135-156). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fidler, P. P. (1991). Relationship of freshman orientation seminars to sophomore return rates, *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 3*(1), 101-106.
- Foster, W. (1986). *Paradigms and promises: New approaches to educational administration*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Fouad, N. A., Guillen, A., Harris-Hodge, E., Henry, C., Novakovic, A. & Terry, S. (2006). Need, awareness, and use of career services for college students. *Journal of Career Assessment, 14*, 407-420.
- Frost, S. H. (1991). Academic advising for student success: A system of shared responsibility. *ASHE ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3*. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University School of Education and Human Development.

- Frost, S. H. (2000). Historical and Philosophical foundations for academic advising. In V. N. Gordon & W. R. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 3-17). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gardner, J. W. (2007). The nature of leadership. In Jossey Bass (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass Reader on educational leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 17-26). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- George, B. (2007). Authentic leadership: Bill George on finding your internal leadership compass. Retrieved from [http://leadership.wharton.upenn.edu/digest/04-07.shtml#AUTHENTIC\\_LEADERSHIP:\\_Bill\\_George\\_On\\_Finding\\_Your\\_Internal\\_Leadership\\_Compass](http://leadership.wharton.upenn.edu/digest/04-07.shtml#AUTHENTIC_LEADERSHIP:_Bill_George_On_Finding_Your_Internal_Leadership_Compass).
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). Servant leadership. In T. J. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion: Insights on leadership through the ages* (pp. 18-23). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness* (25th anniversary ed.). New York, NY: Paulist Press.
- Grubb, W. N. (2006). "Like, what do I do now?" The dilemmas of guidance and counseling. In T. Bailey & V. S. Morest (Eds.), *Defending the community college equity agenda* (pp. 195-222). Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Haggan, P. (2000). Transition counseling in the community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 24, 427-442.
- Hellmich, D. M. (2007). *Ethical leadership in the community college: Bridging theory and daily practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Hinchey, P. H. (2008). *Action research*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Jarrell, C. L. (2004) Creating a Foundation for Student Success: From Research to Practice. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28(6), 513-524.
- Jaworksi, J. (1998). *Synchronicity: The inner path of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Jentz, B. (2006). Commentaries: Making our own minds the object of our learning: Three reasons to seek self-knowledge. In P. Kelleher, & R. Van Der Bogert (Eds.), *Voices for Democracy: Struggles and celebrations of transformational leaders* (pp. 230-239). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

- Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(5), 755-768.
- Kadar, R. S. (2001). A counseling liaison model of academic advising. *Journal of College Counseling*, 4, 174-178.
- Keenan, K., & Gabovitch, R. (1995). Evaluating the impact of a freshman seminar program on student development and retention. (ERIC. Document Reproduction Service No. ED 395 614).
- Kezar, A. (2000). Summer bridge programs: Supporting all students. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/2001-1/summer.html>.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2007). *The leadership challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2009). *Leadership Practices Inventory online*. Retrieved from <http://www.lponline.com/>
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B., & Hayek, J. C. (2006, November). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. Final report for the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative and National Center for Education Statistics. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/npec/papers.asp>.
- Leithwood, K. A. (2007). Transformation: School leadership in a transactional policy world. In Jossey Bass (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 183-196). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mellow, G. O., & Heelan, C. (2008). *Minding the dream: The process and practice of the American community college*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Murphy, J. T. (2007). The unheroic side of leadership. In Jossey Bass (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 51-62). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- National Resource Center. (2006). Results from the national survey on first-year seminars. Retrieved from <http://sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfindings/index.html>.
- National Resource Center. (2008). Results from the national survey on first-year seminars. Retrieved from <http://sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfindings/index.html>.

- Nadler, D. A., & Tushman, M. L. (1990). Beyond the charismatic leader: Leadership and organizational change. T. J. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion: Insights on leadership through the ages* (pp. 108-113). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- O'Gara, L., Mechur Karp, M., & Hughes, K. L. (2009). Student success courses in the community college: An exploratory study of student perspectives. *Community College Review*, *36*, 195-218.
- Orndorff, R. M., & Herr, E. L. (1996). A comparative study of declared and undeclared college students on career uncertainty and involvement in career development activities. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *74*, 632-639.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Porter, S. R., & Swing, R. L. (2006). Understanding how first-year seminars affect persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, *47*(1), 89-109.
- Purnell, R., & Blank, S. (2004) *Support success: Services that may help low-income students succeed in community college*. New York, NY: MDRC.
- Ray, D., & Altekruise, M. (2000). Introduction: Counseling in the community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *24*, 423-425.
- Santa-Rita, E., & Bacote, J. (1996). The benefits of college discovery prefreshmen summer programs for minority and low income students. (ERIC. Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 536)
- Santrock, J. W., & Halonen, J. S. (2007) *Connections to college success*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., Roth, G., & Smith, B. (1999). *The dance of change: The challenges to sustaining momentum in learning organizations*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2007). Leadership as stewardship: "Who's serving who?". In Jossey Bass (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 75-92). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Shapiro, J., & Stefkovich, J. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Siegel, M. J. (2003). *Primer on assessment of the first college year*. Brevard, NC: Policy Center on the First Year of College.
- State of New Jersey, Commission on Higher Education. (2009). *Educational Opportunity Fund Program*. Retrieved October 10, 2009, from (<http://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/EOF/index.html>)
- Tierney, W. G. (1999). *Building the responsive campus: Creating high performance colleges and universities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Tovar, E., & Simon, M. A. (2006). Academic probation as a dangerous opportunity: Factors influencing diverse college students' success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30, 547-564.
- Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2005). Introduction, the first year of college revisited. In M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner, B. O. Barefoot & Associates (Eds.), *Challenging & supporting the first-year student, a handbook for improving the first year of college* (pp. 1-14). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Walpole, M. (2003). Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *Review of Higher Education*, 27(1), 45-73.
- Walpole, M. (2007). Economically and educationally challenged students in higher education: Access to outcomes. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, 33(3), 7-16. EJ791627.
- Walpole, M., Simmerman, H., Mack, C., Mills, J. T., Scales, T. M., & Albano, D. (2008). Bridge to success: Insight into Summer Bridge programs Students' College Transition. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 20(1), 11-30.
- Walsh, M. E. (1979). Revitalizing academic advisement. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 57(4), 446-449.
- Zeidenberg, M., Jenkins, D., & Calcagno, J. C. (2007). Do student success courses actually help community college students succeed? *CCRC Brief*, 36, 1-6. Teachers College, Columbia University, Community College Research Center.
- Zunker, G. V. (2002). *Career counseling: Applied concepts in life planning*. Pacific Grove, CA: BROOKS/COLE.

## Appendix A

### College Success Seminar Student Survey

Page 1 of 2

This survey is part of a research study for a doctoral dissertation through Rowan University. The goal of the study is to get your perception of the college success seminar. Responses are anonymous. Participation is voluntary. You need not answer every question. Thanks in advance for your help.

Principle Investigator: Yesenia Madas 732.224.2556

#### General information:

Gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female      Enrollment Status: ( ) Full-time ( ) Part-time  
Race/Ethnicity: ( ) Caucasian ( ) Asian American/Pacific Islander  
( ) African American/Black ( ) Native American/American Indian  
( ) Hispanic/Latino ( ) Multiracial

**Based on the class topics in your college success seminar, please evaluate course outcomes. If a topic below was not covered in your section, please mark “not applicable.”**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>The college success seminar helped me:</b>					
1. Improve my critical thinking skills	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
2. Develop time management skills	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
3. Improve study skills	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
4. Improve test-taking strategies	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
5. Learn about career planning	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
6. Become familiar with college resources (learning assistants, writing and reading center, math lab, etc.	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
7. Learn about my academic program	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
8. Understand general education requirements	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
9. Understand why college is important to my future plans	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
10. Understand the transfer process	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
11. Understand the differences between high school and college	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )
12. Learn library research skills	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )

<b>Please respond to the following questions:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
13. Did you miss <i>more than</i> two classes?	( a )	( b )
14. Do you expect to pass this course with a C or better?	( a )	( b )
15. Would you recommend this course to incoming freshman?	( a )	( b )
16. Do you intend to enroll <u>in classes in the</u> Spring 2010?	( a )	( b )

Page 2

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	
17. Please rate your satisfaction with this course	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	
18. Please rate your satisfaction with your instructor	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	
19. Please rate your decision to enroll in the college success seminar	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	
20. <b>What grade point average (GPA) do you expect to earn this semester?</b> (a) 3.5-4.0 (mostly/all A's) (b) 3.0-3.4 (balance of A's and B's) (c) 2.5-2.9 (mostly B's, some C's) (d) 2.0-2.4 (mostly/all C's) (e) <2.0 (C's and below)	( a )	( b )	( c )	( d )	( e )

**Please answer the following questions.**

21. What did you find *most* helpful in this course?
22. What did you find *least* helpful in this course?
23. What *skills* do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?
24. What suggestions do you have for *improving* this course?

Additional comments:

## Appendix B

### College Success Seminar Instructor Survey

Page 1 of 2

This survey is part of a research study for a doctoral dissertation through Rowan University. The goal of the study is to get your perception of the college success seminar. Responses are anonymous. Participation is voluntary. You need not answer every question. Thanks in advance for your help.

Principle Investigator: Yesenia Madas 732.224.2556

General Information:

Gender:                     Male     Female

Faculty Status:         Tenured  Tenure Track     Adjunct

Race/Ethnicity:         Caucasian             Asian American/Pacific Islander  
                           African American/Black  Native American/American Indian  
                           Hispanic/Latino                     Multiracial

How many years have you been teaching the college success seminar?

0-3     4-6     7-9     10-12     13 and over

Please rank the following based on your perception of the *skills* first-year EOF students need to be successful using “1” as being *most* important and “10” being *least* important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Critical Thinking
- \_\_\_\_\_ College Resources
- \_\_\_\_\_ Time Management
- \_\_\_\_\_ Study Skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Test-taking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Career Planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transfer Planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Research Skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Goal Setting

Please answer the following questions:

Page 2

1. What additional *skills* not mentioned above do you think first-year EOF students need to be successful in college?

2. What components of the college success seminar do you perceive are *most helpful* to students?

3. What components of the college success seminar do you perceive are *least helpful* to students?

Additional comments:

## Appendix C

### EOF Student Workshop Survey

Page 1 of 2

This survey is part of a research study for a doctoral dissertation through Rowan University. The goal of the study is to get your perception of this EOF workshop. Responses are anonymous. Participation is voluntary. You need not answer every question. Thanks in advance for your help.

Principle Investigator: Yesenia Madas 732.224.2556

#### General information:

Gender:         Male         Female        Enrollment Status:     Full-time  
                  Part-time

Race/Ethnicity:     Caucasian         Asian American/Pacific Islander  
                          African American/Black     Native American/American Indian  
                          Hispanic/Latino         Multiracial

1. Are you a first-year student?         Yes         No
2. Would you recommend this workshop to first-year students?  Yes     No
3. Do you plan to enroll in classes in the fall 2010?         Yes         No

- |   | <b>Very Satisfied</b> | <b>Satisfied</b> | <b>Dissatisfied</b> | <b>Very Dissatisfied</b> |       |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 4. Please rate your satisfaction with this workshop                           | ( a )                 | ( b )            | ( c )               | ( d )                    |       |
| 5. Please rate your satisfaction with the presenter                           | ( a )                 | ( b )            | ( c )               | ( d )                    |       |
| 6. <b>What grade point average (GPA) do you expect to earn this semester?</b> | ( a )                 | ( b )            | ( c )               | ( d )                    | ( e ) |
| (a) 3.5-4.0 (mostly/all A's)  |                       |                  |                     |                          |       |
| (b) 3.0-3.4 (balance of A's and B's)  |                       |                  |                     |                          |       |
| (c) 2.5-2.9 (mostly B's, some C's)  |                       |                  |                     |                          |       |
| (d) 2.0-2.4 (mostly/all C's)  |                       |                  |                     |                          |       |
| (e) <2.0 (C's and below)  |                       |                  |                     |                          |       |

**Please answer the following questions:**

7. What did you find *most* helpful in this workshop? Why?
8. What did you find *least* helpful in this workshop? Why?
9. What *skills* do you think first-year students need to be successful in college?
10. What suggestions do you have for *improving* this workshop?
11. What suggestions do you have for future workshops?
12. How will you use or apply what you learned?

Additional comments: