CAREER CONSULTATION IN THE CLASSROOM: AN OUTCOME STUDY ON THE

EFFECTS OF COMBINING A CAREER COURSE WITH INDIVIDUAL GRADUATE

STUDENT-LED CAREER CONSULTATION SESSIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Yvette Q. Getch)

ABSTRACT

Students enrolled in an academic and career planning course integrating multiple one-on-one, graduate student-led career consultation sessions were interviewed and surveyed to better understand the experiences of students enrolled in the course. The unique effects and outcomes were studied to ascertain whether individual career consultations as part of the course curriculum increased the effectiveness of a career planning course offered by a large southeastern university. The *Career Decision Scale* (Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, & Koschier, 1976) and *Career Factor Inventory* (Chartrand, Robbins, Morrill, & Boggs, 1990) were quantitative instruments used to measure changes in students' levels of self-efficacy as well as unique perceptions regarding academic major and career decision-making. The posttest design also involved completion of a qualitative interview seeking to understand students' experiences in the dual intervention course. The qualitative results of this study revealed an overwhelmingly positive experience among students enrolled in the dual intervention course. Both qualitative and quantitative results suggest a need for further research investigating the reasons students elect to register for an academic and career planning course. Suggestions for further research and implications for practice are explored.

INDEX WORDS: Career, Counseling, Career Development Course, Dual Intervention, Career Decision Scale, Career Factor Inventory, Self-Efficacy, Phenomenology

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Randall L. Parks and Mrs. Janet C. Parks. Without their unfailing emotional and psychological support, neither this document nor my degree would have been possible. I owe them both a lifetime of gratitude for their words of encouragement, listening skills, advice, and above all else expressions of confidence and support. The love and acceptance of my mother and father gave me the necessary strength to finally achieve my lifelong goal of earning my Ph.D.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, career counselors have increasingly emphasized utilizing interventions based on their effectiveness (Lasoff, 1998; Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Patton & McIlveen, 2009; Sexton, 1998; Whiston, 2002). As a general rule, career interventions are effective in assisting individuals who are having difficulty establishing a viable career path (Patton & McIlveen 2009; Rehfuss 2009; Whiston, 2002). Referencing a study in which 72 percent of college students sought guidance to prepare them for their careers, Orndorff and Herr (1996) note, "Aside from resume preparation . . . receiving assistance in choosing a major or career is the next most important need among students" (p. 632).

According to career construction theory, career development is a process that is learned and internalized by individuals in response to their environments (Savickas, 2008). One underpinning of Savickas' (2002) theory is that the "implementation of vocational self-concepts in work roles involves a synthesis between individual and social factors" (p. 63). Savickas (2002, 2005) explained that "the process of vocational change may be characterized by a maxicycle of career stages characterized as progressing through periods of growth, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement" (p. 64). The transition to college, where an individual has the ability to learn self-discipline, time management, and independent living skills, may lead to career development challenges for some young adults.

Researchers must understand the needs of today's college students as well as the demands of a changing workforce for changes in career interventions to effectively address the consequences of academic major and career indecision. Twenty to 50 percent of students

entering college at traditional higher education institutions are undecided about an academic major or career choice (Gianakos, 1999; Lepre, 2007). Gati and Amir (2010) recognize that vocational indecision during college may result in "spending an additional year at college, [and a] negative effect on the individual's self-esteem" (p. 301). With such a significant percentage of students experiencing career indecision, effective interventions are needed to help students transition from tentative vocational preferences to more specific career goals and plans (Super, 1990; Rehfuss 2009). Effective career interventions are also essential as a means of reducing resource utilization. In a time of budgetary constraints, course offerings may become increasingly limited for students, with fewer sections available in some courses. Solidifying career aspirations early in one's college career is thus becoming increasingly important.

Identifying what motivates students to take an academic and career planning course is important because like other career interventions, academic and career planning courses are tools students use to make informed decisions about their academic and professional futures. Based on Thompson's (2004) findings, students may take a career planning course to decrease anxiety regarding the career decision-making process as well as to gather information that confirms their tentative choices. Additionally, such courses appear to help students begin the process of choosing or declaring an academic major.

Students often choose a career path prior to choosing a college major; thus, academic and career planning courses frequently help students match career aspirations with an academic curriculum that matches their career goals (Nauta, 2007). Many first-year college students tend to be future-oriented, with pre-determined career paths prior to entering college. However, after one or two terms many students realize they do not have the aptitude to complete the prescribed programs of study (Nauta, 2007). Students may also discover that they are not truly interested

inthe area, which can result in uncertainty in identifying a desirable career path (Fouad, Cotter, & Kantamneni, 2009).

Solidifying a career path may reduce the floundering some students experience as they try to find an appropriate "fit" for their future career endeavors. Discovering that pre-set plans for a certain career do not complement an individual's personality or aptitude may cause the student to change majors, which can delay graduation, not to mention incur the use of additional university resources including courses, financial aid, advising, and support staff. Discovering effective interventions to assist students in solidifying their academic major is likely to help students avoid these setbacks to graduate on time. Students will be able to use resources to assist them in narrowing down an academic major earlier, enabling them to change their academic path before they cause a delay in their graduation (Orndorff & Herr, 1996).

Potential interventions to aid undecided students include individual career counseling, group counseling, college courses, workshops, and computer-based training. There is extensive debate among researchers over what methods approach is best (Fouad, Cotter, & Kantamneni, 2009; Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Whiston, 2002). Through one meta-analysis, Whiston, Sexton, and Lasoff (1998) concluded that individual counseling was the most effective career intervention, followed by group counseling, then career classes. The effectiveness of individual counseling is influenced positively by the "clients' attachment style and their perceptions of the counselor as a provider of social comfort and personal security" (Patton & McIlveen, 2009).

Evidence also indicates, however, that career development courses can help students solidify a career path by providing models to build self-efficacy and reinforce career interests. The research shows that both career counseling and career development courses can be effective tools in assisting students in the decision-making process. Which type of career intervention is

most effective in a given situation may be a product of the underlying stimuli—such as career indecisiveness, environmental factors, or internal motivation—that lead individuals to seek vocational guidance (Gati & Amir, 2010).

Current literature does evaluate the effectiveness of individual college career counseling interventions, but there is little research examining combined interventions, and more specifically, college career courses integrated with individual career consultation sessions. While there may be a perceived difficulty in combining individual career counseling sessions within the construct of a career development course, a Southern university has developed a unique way to integrate individual career counseling into an academic and career planning course.

The goal of combining the interventions, from a programmatic perspective, is to help students gain more clarity and certainty about their majors and career paths early in their academic careers. In today's higher education institutions, increasing emphasis is placed on service-learning initiatives, experiences that engage students in building their skills, ethical decision-making, and character as they meet real needs. Thus, allowing graduate students to offer individual career counseling not only provides a real-world setting for these students to practice their career counseling skills; it also provides an outlet for undergraduates to further explore their feelings, interests, and values regarding their future career aspirations. Integrating graduate student-led consultations within career courses offers undecided students personalized counseling that focuses on each individual's unique challenges in establishing major and career goals, increasing self-efficacy and improving decision-making abilities.

Significance of the Study

While previous literature has focused primarily on single career interventions (Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998), this study explores an area that has received little attention in previous literature: the effectiveness of a combined career intervention. The researcher examined whether combining two career development interventions leads to improvements in their effectiveness. Specifically, the research examines whether this combination of two interventions solidifies college students' career paths earlier, assists students with choosing a major more readily than students receiving a single intervention, and creates more positive attitudes and decisions regarding the future. Additionally, the researcher employed a phenomenological approach to begin to understand the experiences of students participating in a combined interventions career course. Specifically the phenomenologist approach honed in on the meanings students made from receiving both an intervention through the traditional parameters of the career course as well as the one-on-one career counseling session given. Information gleaned from the qualitative portion of the study provided the material with which themes could be extracted from the group of students being researched.

If evidence supports the effectiveness of using combined interventions within a course, faculty may further explore ways to combine graduate students with undergraduate students to assist both groups in their career endeavors. Graduate students studying counseling will gain useful experience and apply concepts learned in the classroom, while undergraduates will have another tool to assist them in their educational and career development. Conversely, if the research indicates that the combined interventions are no more effective, or only marginally more effective, than simply the career course alone, administrators and faculty may make better

use of their resources by focusing on standardizing course curricula and assessing course syllabi of existing career courses.

Research Paradigm and Theoretical Orientation

Because little research has explored combining career consultation with a career course, a phenomenological approach offers the ideal methodological vantage point for this study. In phenomenological inquiry, "the investigator abstains from making suppositions, focuses on a specific topic freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 47). Phenomenological discovery thus enables the exploration of meanings that may help shape the practices and structure of future academic and career planning courses.

A key methodology of the phenomenological approach is the in-depth interview. Conducting in-depth interviews with students enrolled in the academic and career planning course elicits information about the context of the students' behaviors. "To observe a teacher, student, principal, or counselor provides access to their behavior. Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action" (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). Phenomenological inquiry goes beyond observation to allow the students in this study to provide the contextual explanations important to their experiences in the course.

Two theoretical perspectives--social constructivism and cognitive psychology--guide this study and provide the framework for the interview questions. Social constructivism emerges from the fundamental insight that the participant's view of the situation is historically and socially constructed, and that this view must be determined to understand the meanings individuals make of their experiences (Creswell, 2008). The goal of the research and the

interview questions themselves is to use the participants' worldviews as guides to the meanings of each individual's experiences (Creswell, 2008).

Cognitive psychology contributes the tenet that individual cognition can influence feelings and behaviors either positively or negatively, depending on the life events and stressors the individual has experienced (Beck & Weishaar, 2000; Lam & Gale, 2004). However, cognitions are not static and may change over time. Moreover, individuals can change their ineffective cognitions by learning and implementing new ones (Free, Oei, & Appleton, 1998; Maddux, 2002; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Adopting the perspective that change is possible produces interview questions that challenge participants to actively reflect on their experiences throughout the course.

Contemporary career development research has adopted the basic premises of cognitive psychology and has attempted to identify cognitive factors that may contribute to career indecision (Hinkelman & Luzzo, 2007). Some cognitive factors have been found to facilitate career decidedness, whereas others have been shown to inhibit career choice (Luzzo & Ward, 1995). Researchers Dik, Eldridge, and Duffy sought to define the constructs of calling and vocation to facilitate "clear and specific counseling application." (2009, p. 625) Career and life planning advocates have increased awareness of the idea of finding or fulfilling a specific calling or vocation because of its positive relation to career decision-making abilities and career satisfaction (Dik, Eldridge, & Duffy, 2009). Conversely, confusion about one's identity, along with an absence of mental and emotional support, may hinder an individual's ability to make career choices. These concepts from cognitive psychology underlie interview questions that are intended to elicit the positive and negative experiences of being enrolled in a dual intervention academic and career planning course.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the unique effects and outcomes that may arise when combining a career planning course with multiple career consultation sessions undertaken during the course. This focus highlights a specific area that has not been previously researched in depth. For the past two decades, career counseling researchers have evaluated counseling effectiveness by comparing interventions. Overall, researchers have found that career interventions can be effective in helping clients address career concerns (Whiston, Brechiesen, & Stephens, 2003), and much of the literature provides evidence that individual career counseling is more effective than group counseling or structured courses (Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998; Reese & Miller 2006). However, several quantitative studies have rebutted this notion, finding well-structured career courses to be equally, if not more effective than individual career counseling (Reese & Miller 2006; Whiston, 2002). Contradictory findings such as these make it difficult for counselors to identify a best practice for improving career decidedness among college students.

While both career development courses and individualized career counseling have been found to be effective in helping college students solidify career paths, these interventions are consistently used separately. To determine whether there may be a synergistic effect if the methods are combined, the researcher investigated whether there were changes in students' experiences and improvements in career decision-making abilities brought about by the addition of five one-on-one career consultation sessions. The sessions were conducted by doctoral students in an advanced career counseling course during a regular class period. The data collected allowed the researcher to determine whether the individual career consultation sessions added to the effectiveness of the career course.

The research questions for this study were derived from the literature on career counseling intervention effectiveness and related career constructs. Specifically, the following research questions were asked in an effort to fill a gap in the literature regarding the use of combined interventions to increase the effectiveness of an academic and career planning course. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher sought to understand the role the dual intervention course plays in academic and career planning. The researcher also sought to understand students' experiences of participating in a career course that incorporated multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Finally, the study examined constructs related to career decision-making such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

SELECTED REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In combining interventions to facilitate college students' major selection and career decisions, it is vital to understand how students make meaning of these interventions. If students are unable to understand these interventions, they could have little or no effect on students' decision-making abilities or, worse, create even more confusion about majors or career decisions. Researchers note that setting a goal for completing an academic major often serves as a proxy for attaining a position within a specific occupation or career path. (Fouad, Cotter, & Kantamneni, 2009; Orndorff & Herr, 1996). By assigning an academic major as a gateway to a specific vocational field, it is imperative that students have the most appropriate tools in making the decisions that will place young individuals on the appropriate pathway toward that occupation. Several studies have found that class interventions have significant effects on career-related outcomes such the ability to make a definite choice in academic major, confidence to complete the chosen course of study, and ultimately, satisfaction with career choice. (Brown & Krane; Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Oliver & Spokane, 1988; and Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998).

The literature reviewed in this study focuses on major decision-making, career decision-making, major and career decision-making courses and other factors linked to academic majors and career selection as they apply to undergraduate students. Reviewing the previous qualitative and quantitative studies that have investigated major choices and career decidedness among undergraduates is critical to understanding how students make meaning of majors and careers. The review of these methodologies and paradigms is intended to broaden the

understanding of career decision-making and thereby establish a foundation for the research methods used in this study.

History of Career Courses

At the beginning of the twentieth century, colleges and universities began providing formal vocational guidance to assist students in career decision-making. As early as 1911, freshman orientations included several hours of instruction designed to help students plan not only their academic futures, but also their professional futures (Maverick, 1926). Folsom and Reardon cited, "Edgar J. Wiley, who included a unit on occupation as part of a contemporary civilization course in 1923, had developed the first career course" (p. 423). By the 1930s, descriptions of 18 college career courses were offered by a variety of types of colleges, and by 1952, the American Council on Education directory of colleges showed career courses at 11 institutions (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). The existence of these courses conveys colleges' and universities' acknowledgment of vocational advising as a necessary part of the higher education curriculum. Career advising was deemed so essential that full academic credit was offered for enrollment in these types of courses (Folsom & Reardon, 2003).

Vocational Planning, offered at the General College at the University of Minnesota in 1932, is recognized as the first comprehensive career course in the U.S. Reports reflect increased inclusion of these courses all the way through the 1960s, with full academic credit (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). Furthermore, the increasingly limited job market of the 1970s influenced higher education to develop a more holistic program to foster their students' pursuits. (Ripley, 1975). Devlin (1974) conducted a survey identifying colleges that either already offered career development courses or planned to offer formal career guidance. Such courses were defined by

encompassing three focus areas: career choice factors, career information, and job-seeking techniques (Devlin, 1974).

By the 1990s, career courses focused on career decision-making, preparing for impending job searches, or exploring the specific career fields from which students could choose (Mead & Korschgen, 1994). When 1,688 college members of the National Association of Colleges and Employers were surveyed, the debate over whether career courses should be offered with full academic credit continued (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). While the debate may persist, researchers continue to measure how career courses enable students to plan for successful futures.

Theoretical Background of Career Intervention Effectiveness

Counseling as a profession has developed in a social context. Advances in technology, changing population demographics, and the deterioration of traditional family structures all contribute to problems for people trying to cope with everyday life. At the same time, contemporary ideas of progress, productivity, and perfection create higher expectations from today's college students (Hartung, 2010).

These social transformations have enormous implications for career counseling. Individuals who seek career counseling are increasingly confronting ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict in relation to their professional aspirations (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). The increasingly competitive nature of higher education and an earlier focus on career development often lead to tremendous pressure for students to decide early on a major. The pressure of choosing a major within the first two years of college may seem imperative to their college careers if they are to graduate in four years, which is often itself imperative for a multitude of personal, financial, and family reasons. Students feel pressure through-out the academic major and career decision-making process. Therefore, counselors must comprehend the scope of the transformations

society has endured over the past two decades, and in particular how they affect each individual and each individual's self-concept. Emphasis on issues of self-construction, self-as-narrative, and life planning have become of paramount importance to career counselors.

Career development is the process of identifying and implementing vocational activities to bring about changes with the intent of facilitating personal growth within the area of vocational aspirations. The interventions investigated in this study were based upon theories of career development. Career development assists individuals in identifying their personal skill sets and aptitudes and fitting these with the individuals' interests and vocational experiences. A number of studies have focused on the career development of college students (Gordon, 1998; McWhirtner, Crothers, & Rasheed, 2000). The resulting literature was used to help students clearly define career goals and provide assurance that they can achieve these goals, solidify their career paths, and counteract negative cognitions that may deter achievement.

Career construction theory. Career construction theory represents one of many career theories seeking to explain occupational choice and work adjustment. The career theories that have risen to prominence have done so because they seem to effectively address many of the important changes impacting today's college students. The global economy of the 21st century poses new questions about the fundamental notion of a career, especially the question of how individuals can negotiate a lifetime of job changes without losing their sense of self and social identity (Savickas, 2005).

Much of contemporary career development research has adopted the premise of career construction theory because it provides a way of thinking about how individuals choose and use "work" (Savickas, 1989). The theory presents a model for comprehending vocational behavior across the life cycle as well as providing the methods and materials career counselors use to help

clients make vocational choices and maintain successful and satisfying work lives. Career construction theorists examine the process of psychosocial adaptation and explore how individuals cope with vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas from the perspective of developmental psychology (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Thus, the theory enables counselors to examine, using life themes, how individuals construct their careers to integrate the personal organization of personality and the extension of career adaptability into a self-defining whole that animates work, directs occupational choice, and shapes vocational adjustment.

Career construction theory responds to the needs of today's mobile workers, who may feel fragmented and confused as they encounter a restructuring of occupations, the transformation of the labor force, and changing multicultural demographics. This fundamental reshaping of the work world is making it increasingly difficult to comprehend careers with only person-environment and vocational development models that emphasize commitment and stability rather than flexibility and mobility (Super, Savickas, & Super. 1996). The new job market in our unsettled economy calls for viewing a career not as a lifetime commitment to one employer, but as selling services and skills to a series of employers who need projects completed. In negotiating each new project, the prospective employee usually concentrates on salary (Bolles, 2011). Yet he or she also seeks to make the work meaningful, control the work environment, balance work-family responsibilities, and train for the next job (Savickas, 2005).

Within career construction theory is a life theme component that addresses the subject matter of work life and focuses on the "why" of vocational behavior. Career stories reveal the themes individuals use to make meaningful choices and adjust to work roles. The meaning given to a career, coupled with the dynamics of its construction, is revealed in self-defining stories

about the vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas that an individual has faced (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). The life theme component of career construction theory originated from Super's postulation that in expressing vocational preferences, individuals put their ideas of the kinds of people they are into occupational terminology. In entering an occupation, they seek to implement a concept of themselves. After stabilizing in an occupation, they seek to realize their potential and preserve self-esteem (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

Narrative theory. As an offshoot of career construction theory, narrative theory is the process by which individuals match their traits with job requirements (Savickas, 2005). Previous work experiences mold the traits by which individuals make decisions on the future roles they will fill within a specific work environment. Through this framework of experience, the individual mentally constructs a story of work life, and what it means within society's definitions of a career (Savickas, 2005). Narrative theory is especially relevant to examining the themes gleaned from qualitative research because one-on-one consultations promote deeper reflections on the meanings of participants' academic and career choices within the broader context of their career lives' thus far.

The influence of cognitive psychology on career development. The way a person's perceptions affect how he or she acts or experiences feelings forms the foundation of cognitive psychology (Lam & Gale, 2004). Its ideas and theories have dictated researchers' understanding of behaviors associated with vocation. An individual's perceptions result from past experiences, which in turn either negatively or positively influence that individual's perception of his or her environment (Ochs & Roessler, 2004). Behavior as a result of cognitions may be controlled and new cognitions may evolve through learning (Maddux, 2002; Beck & Weishaar, 2000).

The tenets of cognitive psychology have aided contemporary career development research by illuminating cognitive factors that facilitate or inhibit career decidedness and career choice clarity. High levels of negative career thoughts, as well as low levels of career decision-making self-efficacy, are linked to career indecision (Austin, Wagner, & Dahl, 2008). The Cognitive Information Processing Theory (CIP) of career decision-making explains a person's perceptions affect how he or she acts or experiences feelings as well as the idea that behavior as a result of cognitions may be controlled and evolve through learning by focusing on the thought processes involved in making effective career decisions.

According to CIP, individuals possess internal, cognitively-based decision-making structures used for making career choices. These structures guide individuals' decision processes. Career decidedness results from the acquisition of necessary information and utilization of the most appropriate skills. Career indecision occurs when there is a breakdown in the process defined by CIP. If individuals receive too little or too much information or skip processing steps, an interruption in the decision-making process may occur (Austin, Wagner, & Dahl, 2003). The greater the level of negative thoughts, the greater the level of career indecision; conversely, positive thoughts facilitate the career decision-making process, increasing career decision-making self-efficacy (Nauta, 2007). For example, if a student discovered he or she did not have the aptitude for science courses, but science was a required element of the major being pursued, frustration and inability would cause doubt in both the chosen academic major and career. Meanwhile, discovering a natural talent in writing would bolster confidence in pursuing an academic major that would lead to a career in journalism.

The research questions for this study emerged from the literature regarding career counseling intervention effectiveness and related career constructs. Specifically, the following

research questions were asked to explore whether a combination of interventions may be more effective than a single-method approach in helping college students solidify a career path via their academic majors. The researcher used a mixed-methods approach to understand the role the dual intervention course played in academic and career planning. The researchers in this study sought to understand the experiences of students participating in the career course with multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Additionally, constructs related to career decision-making--such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge—were examined.

Career Development of College Students

Individuals experience many dimensions of influence on career development and decisiveness throughout their formative years. Researchers' examination of these formative years has focused on both the internal and external contributors that shape the decision-making process. Internally, individuals make decisions via a complex process of cognitive development that seeks to maintain a balance between intuition and logical rationalization of the available options (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). Externally, the environment surrounding an individual or group in their formative years inevitably affects the decisions they make (Duffy & Dik, 2009).

Leaving home for the first time, absence of parental supervision, and the necessity of self-reliance are a few contributors to an environment where each individual must learn and utilize a mindset of independence. College students must be motivated without a teacher or guardian's management. Because of the general transition of limited responsibility to complete decision-making freedom experienced by college students entering into higher education, they have the ability, and often the necessity, to make significant decisions regarding a career path

and an overall future. The process begins with choosing a major, and students often choose

majors utilizing "five decision-making styles: a logical and structured approach to decision-

making (rational style), reliance on feelings and impressions (intuitive style), reliance on the

support of others (dependent style), postponing or avoiding making decisions (avoidant style),

and impulsive decision making (spontaneous style)" (p. 300). Researchers van Vianen, De Pater,

and Preenen (2009) found that the style used in the decision-making process depends on each

individual's unique cognitive style and that often, combining decision-making styles results in

establishing a position in the right career field.

Combining types of decision-making alludes to the individual's need to balance rational

and intuitive means of constructing an informed decision to achieve peace of mind. These

internal calculations are also influenced by college students' specific stage of life. Transition and

uncertainty affect adolescents' abilities to rationally or intuitively select a major or career

without experiencing some doubt. Doubt may stem from the correlation between an unstable,

vocational identity and career indecisiveness (Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008). Researchers have

identified a number of individual determinants of career indecision, including attitudes regarding

planning and exploration, knowledge of careers and decision-making strategies, and decision-

making self-efficacy (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). Each of these elements

influences an individual's willingness to making a concrete commitment, though the degree of

influence varies based on individual characteristics.

Researchers use two primary approaches in defining how external characteristics, such as

time constraints or limited finances and experiences such as past discouragement from peers or

disappointment in previous failed endeavors influence students' abilities to establish and achieve

career goals (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). One group views external influences as

complementary to internal motivators in their significance for the decision-making process (Duffy & Dik, 2009). A second group considers internal motivations over external motivations to be the greater determinants for career decisiveness (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). For example, van Vianen et al. examine how socioeconomic opportunity affects the ability to evaluate one's own wants and needs (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). These researchers believe that events and environment alone do not place an individual in a predetermined situation; rather, individuals' interpretations of events and their environment influence their reaction to their surroundings. Holland's theory of vocational personalities and Schein's theory of career anchors portray the decision-making process as an endeavor whereby individuals seek out environments that match their abilities, attitudes, and values (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). Just as van Vianen et al. attribute importance to both internal and external influences, Duffy and Dik (2009) likewise argue that neither type of factor is wholly responsible for shaping the decision-making process.

The approach to career development in college students identified by van Vianen et al. (2009) underscores cognitive styles; how individuals engage in decision-making thought processes through logic, intuition, or impulse. This approach contrasts with the school of thought emphasizing external and fixed effects that shape career development. Duffy and Dik (2009) posit that every person responds to "a combination of internal and external factors in their decision-making and the ratio of importance placed on each category greatly var[ies]" (p. 32). However, Duffy and Dik also suggest that the indecision commonly associated with choosing a career comes primarily from the external influences that limit an individual's freedom to make the best or most compatible choice. Social cognitive career theory defines the "critical role for external factors by suggesting [that] resources and barriers influence career decision-making

indirectly through their effects on the acquisition of self-efficacy and outcome expectations and directly through their effects on choice goals and choice action" (Duffy & Dik, 2009). External factors gain their influence from individuals' perception that these factors are out of their control. Researchers and counselors examine how such external factors affect how a college student in the process of choosing a life path discerns his or her position in the pursuit of a specific goal. Students often feel pressure not only to succeed, but to weigh the probabilities of succeeding within a specific context. Traditionally, the choices an individual makes may close off other career opportunities or makes them difficult to pursue later (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). Students today should remain flexible to acknowledge that as they continue to learn and grow, emotionally and mentally, they will pass through many different career stages in the course of their lives.

Student Development Context

The participants in this study were all enrolled in an academic and career planning course focused on the career decision-making process. However, their commonalities may end at this point. For many undergraduates, few questions elicit more anxiety and doubt than the ubiquitous "What is your major?" Although some college students have little difficulty choosing a major and/or career path, others struggle with this decision throughout college (Gordon, 1981; Gerow, 1997). The students in this study differed in the ways they experience tasks and responsibilities associated with the college experience and the ways they think about, approach, or process those tasks. So each individual provided insights into his or her unique style of experiencing events and tasks requiring the decision-making process.

A plethora of literature has explored the psychosocial and cognitive stages associated with the college years (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, and

Scott & Ciani, 2008). The resulting psychosocial and cognitive developmental theories allow for greater understanding of the students interviewed in this study. Deciding on a major is a psychosocial task, and students engaged in this task may exhibit varying levels of cognitive ability. Although college student development is not the focus of this study, the concepts reviewed here are essential to understanding the participants in this study.

Developmental vectors of the college experience. Arthur Chickering, offers comprehensive insight into the developmental vectors along which the college experience unfolds (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). These vectors, often referred to as highways for journeying towards individuation, provide a framework for understanding the psychosocial and cognitive challenges a student may experience in college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified seven vectors associated with college student development. They include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy towards independence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing identity. Within this framework, colleges and universities may be understood to facilitate the development of students' intellectual, social, and physical competence.

Higher education and student development. Supplementing the work of Chickering and Reisser (1993) is Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) review of research on the impact of higher education on student development. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) critiqued and synthesized more than 2,600 research studies on the impact of college on students. They concluded, "evidence suggests that college has a rather broad range of enduring or long-term impacts. These include not only the more obvious impacts on occupation and earnings but also

influences on cognitive, moral, and psychosocial characteristics, as well as on values and attitudes and various quality of life indexes" (p. 573).

The most recently updated compilation of research findings supports the conclusion that between the freshman and senior years of college, the more core curriculum courses a student takes, the higher their level of critical thinking skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The gains in cognitive and moral reasoning development that occur during these years are directly attributable to exposure to colleges' academic environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The studies evaluated by these researchers, both in 1991 and again in 2005, depict evident developmental growth, but it is through varied approaches that students reach these outcomes.

Although these foundational pieces of research are extremely informative, research on psychosocial development does not answer the important question of how students think about the tasks they encounter throughout their college experiences. Numerous studies have focused on the intellectual development of college students. However, many of these studies do not provide evidence of cause and effect because they focus on such a wide range of influences that create the developmental outcomes.

Pascarella and Terenzini's compilation of analyses affirms the gains college students make developmentally. However, the inconsistent means of producing these positive outcomes points to the necessity of replicating studies across a plethora of variables to provide more concrete conclusions (2005). The field of cognitive development addresses how students think, learn, make decisions, and intellectually process their experiences in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Confirming that students mature developmentally, researchers recommend examining the means by which these outcomes are produced. The objective is to ensure that

these outcomes are produced consistently for any individual in the career development stage of college.

Focus on Career Objective

In a survey of entering college students at a large southern university, respondents indicated that their reasons for entering higher education were to get better jobs and be financially well off (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). Like these students, researchers often focus their attention on the career decision-making process rather than the major decision-making process. Though choosing the major that is most compatible with individuals' interests and personal qualities may help students enter their chosen field, students may choose majors they believe will best prepare them for their intended career, but this strategy does not necessarily yield a successful career outcome.

Quinley and Quinley (1999) studied such outcomes in their article, "The Urban Postbaccalaureate Reverse Transfer Student: Giving New Meaning to the Term *Second Chance*." Their research subjects were students returning to community college *after* completing a four-year degree, many of whom were seeking to gain skills for a different career field (Quinley & Quinley, 1999). The participants' four-year degrees had either cultivated skills for a career they no longer pursued or inadequately prepared them for their vocation, so they returned to community college to adapt to the field's skill requirements (Quinley & Quinley, 1999). There is little point in gathering all the tools for assembling the wrong vehicle--in this case, the wrong career field. This study highlights the importance of choosing the right vocation for the individual and the costs of completing education or training for an ill-fitting career, as well as the risks of choosing a career prior to choosing a major.

Choosing a major versus choosing a career. Declaring a major does not necessarily provide an individual with a set career path to follow, nor does pursuing a major necessarily enable students to confidently seek and find work in a particular field associated with that major. Melissa Ezarik (2007) noted that, "By 1997, just over 50 percent of graduates worked in a field related to their major" (p. 21). Almost half of all college graduates, then, pursued careers outside the field of their formal education. It is misperception that earning a traditional four-year degree or seek career-oriented education build up skill sets in preparation for the career linked to that type of training (Unger, 2010). Ezarik reported almost half of the graduates of the National Education Statistics study considered the most valuable skill sets they built in college were not the ones that earned them a diploma. Rather, they were "soft skills," like the ability to work with and contribute to a team or maintain a good work ethic (Ezarik, 2007). Whether a student has decided on a major or not, declaring an academic major does not translate to achieving and maintaining a career a field linked to that program of study.

Even when students formally declare a major and delve into the required coursework, they may still be uncertain about their professional aspirations beyond college. Such individuals face an even greater likelihood that they will leave higher education without truly knowing what career to pursue. Ironically, those with undecided majors may benefit from their status by using this admitted uncertainty to actively seek advice and assistance in searching for a profession that is best suited for them (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). Universities offer counseling to undecided students yet do not offer this same service to students who have declared majors, under the assumption that having a declared major means having a declared career path (Orndorff & Herr, 1996).

Career counselors neglect a significant part of the student population by failing to offer guidance to students with declared majors. Such students, who may be uncertain about their majors even as they persevere in completing them, may account for many of the nearly 50 percent of graduates who do not use their degrees directly in their careers. Students may pursue a specific major as a means to achieving a particular career goal; however, research shows that many students choose career paths in a haphazard and arbitrary fashion (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). Students may choose majors based on careers they have been exposed to, despite lacking both familiarity with the field and information on a broader variety of careers (Gordon, 1981). Moreover, without undergoing the same type of self-assessment that counselors advise undecided students to complete, students with declared majors may limit their opportunities before actually starting the search for employment.

Gordon (1981) observes that, "the estimates of how many undecided students enter college are misleading because they constitute such a heterogeneous group . . . they usually include students who are openly undecided." (p. 433) Boomerang children or quarter-life crises represent the young adults who were working towards a goal that, once completed, left them with the sudden realization that what they had been working for was not in fact what they wanted in a career for the rest of their lives (Stern, 2007). Some young people in this situation buy time by moving home with their parents as they plan their next course of action.

Sam Roberts (2009) of the *New York Times* reported, "Fifty-six percent of men 18 to 24 years old and 48 percent of women were either still under the same roof as their parents or had moved back home" (p. 16). He notes as well that the 16-24 year-old age group is unemployed due to the extremely aggressive job market (Roberts, 2009). Completing a degree might initially bring a sense of freedom resulting from the belief in one's ability to pursue work that can

provide satisfaction for a lifetime. However, for those who have no desire to apply their education to a field directly associated with their acquired skill set, a diploma may ultimately create enormous pressure to determine what one's best choices could be.

      Emphasis on academic major as training for a career. The concept of declaring a major evolved from an institutional need to clarify the difference between elective courses and courses that make up the specialized area of study called the academic major (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). This institutional need to clarify curriculum was first identified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977) through its assertion that a detailed grasp of a specific subject was important to most undergraduate students. The specialization in an academic niche, now more than ever, affects how universities nationwide provide students their higher education because of the trend towards a career oriented training, focusing on a subject to fit a very specific industry (DiMaria, 2010).

      Current trends within the U.S. culture and economy, however, encourage students to look to professional colleges to prepare them for the daunting task of asserting their presence in the professional world (DiMaria, 2010). The pressure to declare a major that will provide specific professional skill sets and establish career goals may originate from the emphasis to use college education as preparation for the professional world. Students often feel the need to declare a major early and stick to the prescribed objectives within a four-year program to earn what has now become a minimum requirement for having a productive, fulfilling career (Leef, 2006)

      Prior to World War II, many individuals pursued higher education as a "mind-broadening study… a luxury good rather than an essential step toward employability," because industries focused on the production of tangible, not just intellectual goods (Leef, 2006, p. 17). Liberal arts colleges once provided the luxury of putting off a career to seek knowledge. However, in the

current economic climate, these colleges may be seen as an expense that many families cannot afford (Ungar, 2010). Depending on the type of academic major, individuals may hone skills for a specific vocation. Traditionally, choosing a specific field of study is supposed to enable students to concentrate on the areas in which they have the greatest interest. Pringle, Dubose, and Yankey (2010) examine how individuals often base major decisions off of stereotypes of personality characteristics such as the assumption that someone analytical and introverted might seek a profession in accounting versus an extrovert entering a profession like marketing or communications. Students match their expectations of work environments, salaries, career opportunities, and prestige with their personalities as factors that determine compatibility (Pringle, Dubose, & Yankey, 2010). Students choose majors they feel will allow them to meet their career goals, under the assumption that a major will prepare them for the specific career they have in mind. This is especially true for careers that require a specified education, such as those in healthcare, accounting, or finance (Ezarik, 2007). Before an individual can enter the medical profession, for example, a nurse, he or she must complete a standardized set of coursework rather than just gaining experience and general skill sets acquired over time. The misconception of liberal arts colleges is that they do not offer academic programs of study that provide the type of specialized training required for a professional livelihood (Ungar, 2010).

The shift from viewing majors solely as a means to meet institutional standards to viewing majors as the determinant for what career and individual will have for the rest of his or her life is an area that continues to reflect a gap in the research. George C. Leef (2006) argues that there has not been an increase in the desire to learn and to know more, but that higher education is being oversold as a necessity to having a career. Students buy into the conventional wisdom that earning a degree ensures higher earnings, but the "mass production" of higher

learning might prove a costly mistake for those without the aptitude or drive to complete the process (Leef, 2006).

Career Decidedness in College-Age Students

Much of the literature regarding career decidedness focuses on college students' indecision with choosing a career path. Researchers have sought to determine how career guidance might reduce career indecision and the anxiety associated with it, as well as increase long-term career satisfaction. To provide the most effective vocational guidance, researchers search for the causes of the indecision so commonly experienced by college students and young professionals. Theories on the origin of career indecision range from those that focus on individual emotional and behavioral characteristics to those that examine environmental stimuli that make some opportunities available while eliminating others entirely.

Focusing on the undecided indivudals themselves, Victoria Gordon (1981) lists variables pertinent to the study of indecision among college age youths. Among the most examined variables are "personality traits such as interests and abilities, avoidance behavior, social and moral attitudes, risk taking, and values" (p. 433). By examining these variables within the context of Super's career learning theory, Gordon identifies the value of being able to understand the stages, attitudes, and behaviors associated with a person's continuous career development (1981). Her article, "The Undecided Student: A Developmental Perspective," seeks to create a portrait of the undecided student as well as the characteristics defined as typical, developing, and predictable. By tailoring career interventions to the long-studied characteristics that typify an undecided student, career counselors are able to assist students in a more practical and beneficial manner.

Super's five vocational life stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline provided Gordon with a framework with which to view the college age individuals and their cognitive processes. Gordon (1981) employed Super's and Tiedeman's theories to help understand what vocational tasks are required to continually mature within a lifelong career. She also incorporated the student developmental model by William Perry to map out how and when the individual student is ready developmentally to accomplish these vocational tasks (p. 435). Gordon utilizes these career development theories to identify ways to advise students by understanding their state of vocational maturity. Based on that state, students can be taught to successfully navigate the pressure and anxiety linked to this life-stage to determine the most compatible career path.

Researchers van Vianen, De Pater, and Preenen (2009) offer a perspective for career decision making that reflects the state of the current career market and the outlook for students committing to a specific field. Their article, "Adaptable Careers: Maximizing Less and Exploring More," argues that young adults must "develop a positive and flexible view of the self and the environment while diminishing concerns about accountability for and irreversibility of career decisions" (p. 298). Addressing indecision, van Vianen et al. call students to transform the self in order to choose career paths. Traditional career theories no longer seem applicable to the present career environment, where the field an individual enters will rarely be the sole source of employment for the rest of that individual's life.

The researchers argue that in an environment where it is rare to remain with the same employer for more than five years, it is vital for students to develop decision making abilities that emphasize adaptability, the mastery of different roles, and short-term decision making (van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). Individuals who establish such abilities will be less affected

by the pressure and insecurity caused by career indecision, as they will not require a single, fixed decision incapable of alteration. The future will likely consist of careers "including periodic shifts between work activities, jobs, and occupation areas. Hence, the conventional path of career development, which leads to stability, will be replaced by a concept of careers characterized by lifelong learning and change." (p. 305) van Vianen et al. highlight the individual's inner motivations, rationality, intuition, and impulse for evaluating career options rationally and intuitively (2009). They claim that indecision is the product of evaluating possible job options. Undecided inviduals focusing only on the negative aspects regarding personal skill levels, confidence in one's ability to fit well with the environment of the field, or fearing a negative outcome by entering that field, such as discovering it is the wrong career choice or wasting time in a field incompatible to the personal skill sets.

Indecision relates to the internal motivators unique to each individual. Conversely, in "Beyond the Self: External Influences in the Career Development Process," Duffy and Dik explore how decisions may be limited due to social circumstances (2009). The two articles previously discussed in this section weigh the variables of individual values, interests, and moral and social attitudes. Yet, these researchers ask, to what degree do our individual values mirror the interests and values of those with whom we have a close relationship? The views of family and friends may have a powerful influence on an impressionable youth trying to choose a career path.

Family and friends' influence may be especially critical for individuals whose family's expectations or needs do not coincide with their own personal goals and passions (Duffy & Dik, 2009). None of us choose the families into which we are born, and likewise, we are not free to choose the specific life circumstances that shape us economically, physically, and mentally as we

grow up. Yet these conditions may unknowingly create the context within which individuals select a vocation. Using their understanding of the internal and external causes of indecision, researchers can help undecided students overcome obstacles and be better prepared to make important career decisions.

This outcome study, designed to determine the effectiveness of combining a career course with graduate-student led individual career consultations, seeks to fill a gap in the existing research regarding career guidance effectiveness. Specifically, examining motivating factors that influence college age students' career certainty is just one facet of career guidance and its effectiveness. Building on the foundation of previous studies of career courses and existing theories explicating college students' life stages, this work endeavors to contribute to the literature of career counseling by investigating a new combination of methods to increase the effectiveness of career course interventions. Furthermore, the researcher's observations and individual interviews provided descriptions of the unique responses individuals had to a combined career intervention.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

An analysis of the literature on academic and career planning courses reveals that little research exists describing the experiences of students in career planning courses who also receive career consultation. Prior research conducted by Stotchel (2008) indicated that interventions combining an academic and career planning course with one career consultation session increased students' career decision-making self-efficacy. Stotchel (2008) recommends improving academic and career planning courses by providing four to five sessions of career consultation, allowing students to experience the full effects of the dual intervention.

To develop a clearer understanding of the experiences of students in a dual intervention course with five career consultation sessions, this study employed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods. This chapter outlines the methods used to investigate students enrolled in a dual intervention academic and career planning course taught at a large Southeastern university. The purpose of this study was to answer the question, "What are the experiences of undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course that embeds five career consultation sessions conducted by graduate students enrolled in an advanced career development course?" Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher sought to understand the role that the dual intervention course plays in academic and career planning including the unique lived experience of the students participating in the dual intervention. Participant selection, selection of site, data collection, instrumentation, research design, and data analysis are also described in this chapter.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher holds prime importance in qualitative research. Researcher bias or presupposition may impact the manner in which a phenomenon may be studied. According to Sciarra (1999), "The social science researcher must interpret (understand) the other within the context, within the group or culture in which the other functions." (p. 40) Thus, the qualitative researcher seeks to enter the worldview of each participant rather than functioning as a subject matter expert.

Merriam (1998) identifies five characteristics that underlie the role of the qualitative researcher (p. 6-8):

- Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed. The goal of qualitative research is not to dissect information to predict or understand, but to understand the phenomenon from the individual's subjective worldview.

- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. There is no such thing as objective research and regardless of design, the researcher shapes the questions and methodology that contribute to the phenomenon being examined.

- Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork. To develop greater appreciation for the experiences of the participants, the researcher should strive to enter the physical and conceptual worlds of the person(s) being studied.

- Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy. Instead of creating and testing hypotheses, qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon without imposing a predetermined structure.

- The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Qualitative research is different from quantitative inquiry in many ways. While quantitative research may be condensed, qualitative findings require a participant's own words to be presented in full.

In this study, the researcher was the primary instrument in data collection and analysis, and was responsible for establishing and maintaining the research relationships with all participants to collect meaningful data. The researcher fully understands the responsibility of

protecting the rights of those who participate in the study, coupled with the need to maintain high ethical standards in the research. Issues of objectivity and sensitivity were taken into consideration in the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Researcher as Instrument. As the researcher served as the primary instrument in collecting data from the study's participants, it is important to bracket the researcher's philosophical and professional background and how it might create a bias in gleaning meaning from qualitative results (Creswell, 2008). Specifically, it is necessary that I disclose how my personal experiences affected the concept and creation of this study.

My professional history stems from a human resource and employment background as well as a long career in higher education administration. For the last three years, I have participated in the career development of many young individuals by instructing career development courses at a local technical college. Though I did not instruct any of the course sections examined in this study, I was the primary instrument in gathering qualitative data from one-on-one interviews. Knowing the struggles that accompany the formative years of college students, I have a vested interest in improving career interventions so that individuals who are undecided in academic major and career goals are able to benefit through increased self-efficacy and abilities to make decisions about their futures. I had the basic interest to see the study succeed in supporting a higher effectiveness of dual career interventions. This interest in finding intervention approaches that will achieve this end had the potential to affect my interpretation of information volunteered by the study's participants. Therefore despite measures taken to bracket my biases, my personal interpretation of meanings gleaned from interviews with the participants may be different than the meanings made by the actual participants themselves. Because individuals may experience the same phenomenon differently, it is necessary I provide rich, thick

descriptions to provide evidence of different perspectives (Creswell, 2007). Regardless of effort and intent, the researcher can never be fully detached from the research process, therefore it is impossible to assume that all biases are eliminated in evaluation of qualitative data. The section on instrumentation further identifies potential effects of any bias including details of my research team being informed so that they would be aware of it and be able to assist in upholding objectivity in reviewing the data. Additionally, the research team was informed of the primary researchers' personal bias to help keep these biases in check throughout the research project.

Development of Qualitative Interview Questions

Perhaps the most effective approach to understanding how students make meaning of majors and major decidedness was through the use of a constructivist paradigm and qualitative inquiry. In an undertaking of this nature, it was especially important to define the constructs to be evaluated when attempting to understand "meaning making." Regarding majors, "meaning making" refers to the process that the students who were enrolled in the course engaged in as they negotiated their way through the course with special focus on career-decidedness. Constructivist theory, illuminating the reality individuals experience in daily life through their meaning and knowledge is a way to explain occupational choice and work adjustment (Savickas, 2005). This paradigm resulting in the students' experiences would be difficult to study using standard quantitative questions.

Constructivist approaches used to explore career decidedness is rooted in positivism, the process of meaning-making through sensory experiences and cognitive development (Grier-Reed & Nicole, 2010). The purpose of incorporating a qualitative component was to discover the complexities of students' thoughts and feelings that may be overlooked by quantitative approaches. This qualitative measurement technique thus enhances the identification of data that

quantitative measures cannot tap (Creswell, 2008). A mixed methods design allowed for discussion of the relationship between choosing a major or career and students' perceptions of and experiences with receiving one-on-one career consultations.

All of the interview questions were derived from a constructivist approach resting on the belief that the participant makes meaning of the events he or she described from a subjectivist perspective. Following Cresswell's (2007) suggestion, the questions focus mainly on gathering information that provided rich, thick descriptions of the students' lived experiences of meeting one-on-one with their assigned graduate student. The categories of questions fell into the following topics: personal information and background, experiences of the career consultation process, importance of choosing a major, and overall structure of taking the dual intervention course.

Interview Procedure. After the participants were selected the researcher conducted individual in-person interviews. These interviews were audio taped and later transcribed. The interviews took place in the researchers' office, scheduled at the convenience of the participant. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 50 minutes in length. Upon arrival to the interview I summarized the purpose of the interview and had them read and sign the consent form. When the interviews were completed students were encouraged to add any additional information they felt was important to the study. Participants were informed that they would receive a copy of the transcribed transcripts for review for accuracy and asked to provide feedback on any errors or discrepancies. Prior to departing, the researcher paid the participant $10.00 for their time.

Qualitative Research Paradigm. Qualitative research methodology is considered to be a valid form of research in counseling (Creswell, 2008) that is also effective in exploring the complexities of career counseling. Understanding the participants' unique perspectives during

the course is key (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Qualitative research does not attempt to simply explain one reality. Instead, it garners the worldview of each participant and providing a description of that person's perspective (Creswell, 2008). Through qualitative interventions, the researcher sought to describe and understand a phenomenon resulting from the dual interventions in the classroom and through one-on-one consultations, about which very little is known. This type of research values the experience of the individual, rather than looking at quantifiable data for a group or population (Merriam, 1998). While predetermined methods provide semi-structure, once data collection begins, questions and methodology may need to be reexamined and modified to fully understand and answer the primary research questions (Creswell, 2008).

The Phenomenological Paradigm. Although there are a variety of qualitative approaches, phenomenology is best suited when it is important to understand the shared or common experiences of a phenomenon. Understanding these common experiences is important because career counselors and academic administrators may alter policies or practices so that a deeper understanding of the phenomena can be discovered (Creswell, 2008). Understanding the ways in which students experience the dual intervention and the context and situations that affect their career decidedness could benefit students in future academic and career planning courses.

The task of the phenomenologist is to capture the essence or basic structure of an experience and to temporarily set aside or "bracket" his or her own prior beliefs that may interfere with the interpretation (Merriam, 1998). In phenomenology, the researcher collects data through multiple in-depth interviews from individuals who have a shared experience, interprets the data for meanings, then writes a composite description that presents the essence or essential structures of the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007). The researcher is able to identify themes from the participants' experiences that could not be gleaned from quantitative

measurements. The phenomenologist approach is especially important in this study because the researcher's ultimate goal was to identify the subjective experiences students have through the dual interventions.

Rationale for Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Research Design

Collecting data from a course designed to promote career decidedness enabled the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative data within the desired context. Prigogine and Stengers (1984) assert that what students call reality--perhaps the reality assigned to choosing a major and subsequently a career--is revealed through activities that synthesize participation. The career course itself provides an opportunity for active construction of that reality. One element of the course is engaging the students in critical reflection on the active construction of meaning regarding careers, as evident in the design and activities laid out in the standardized course syllabus (see Appendix A). The career course utilized in this study provides a unique environment for data collection. The subject matter requires students to actively construct meaning with regard to careers to help them solidify a career path early in their college careers. Instrumentation used in the study was designed to require the active construction of meaning regarding the selection of an academic major and career.

This convergent parallel mixed-methods design involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, analyzing the information separately, and then merging the two databases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Data collection was done concurrently but independently; that is, one method did not depend on the results of the other. The purpose of this convergent parallel mixed-methods approach was to synthesize quantitative and qualitative data. In this approach, survey data was used to measure the relationship between the factors of career decidedness and career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, need for career information, and need for self-

knowledge. While the quantitative portion of data was collected at the beginning and end of the study, the qualitative intervention was ongoing through the semi-structured interviews the researcher conducted. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was to compare the results from two different perspectives and triangulate the data to better understand the phenomenon of "students' experiences" in the dual intervention academic and career planning course.

No specific measures were taken to explicitly control the assignment of students to a specific group or group of students to a specific section for this study; thus, the groups of students may be nonequivalent or not similar to each other (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008). The quantitative instruments used in this study included the *Career Decision Scale (CDS)* (Osipow et al., 1976) and the *Career Factors Inventory (CFI)* (Chartrand et al., 1990), which was used to measure the relationships between career decidedness, career anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, and the need for career information and self-knowledge. The concept of the "students' experiences," of being enrolled in a career course with multiple graduate-led career consultation sessions, was explored using semi-structured interviews. This research design allowed the researcher to ascertain how participants view their own decision-making and reflect on their career development within the context of taking a course with multiple career consultations.

Research Design. A pre-experimental design for the quantitative portion of the research was used. Pre-experimental designs involved a group of individuals examined in a pretest measure, then exposed to a treatment, and finally examined again in a posttest measure. Pre-experimental designs do not involve control groups and rely on investigating the outcomes of the treatment to make causal statements. This approach was supported by Babbie (2009), who

asserts that quantitative inquiry proved useful when trying to assess the effectiveness of an intervention. Gauging the effectiveness of a career course in increasing levels of career decidedness or major decidedness were two examples of such assessment. The dependent variables used in this study were major decidedness and career decidedness. The qualitative portion of the study explored student experience using semi-structured interviews. The independent variable in this study was the career course treatment.

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The purpose of this convergent parallel mixed methods study was to synthesize quantitative and qualitative data to compare the results from two different perspectives, as well as to capture the unique perspectives of the students participating in the dual intervention course. The impetus for the research was identified through visual description in Figure 1.

A convergent parallel mixed-methods research design should be an effective way to assess the components of career decidedness as well as to gain an understanding of the experiences of students receiving career consultation sessions in conjunction with the career planning course. Triangulation of the results included the use of descriptive statistics from quantitative data for categorization of qualitative data. The combination of a qualitative instrument and two quantitative instruments, adapted to measure career decidedness, allowed for the exploration of meaning-making with regard to career decidedness among students enrolled in a career course.

Figure 1

Convergent Parallel Research Design

| QUAN | **+** | QUAL |

Pretest/Posttest QUAN Design

QUAN Pre
Data Collection

QUAN Post
Data Collection

QUAN Pre Data
Analysis

QUAN Post Data
Analysis

Qualitative
Data Collection

Qualitative
Data Analysis

Quantitative
Results

Concurrent

Qualitative
Results
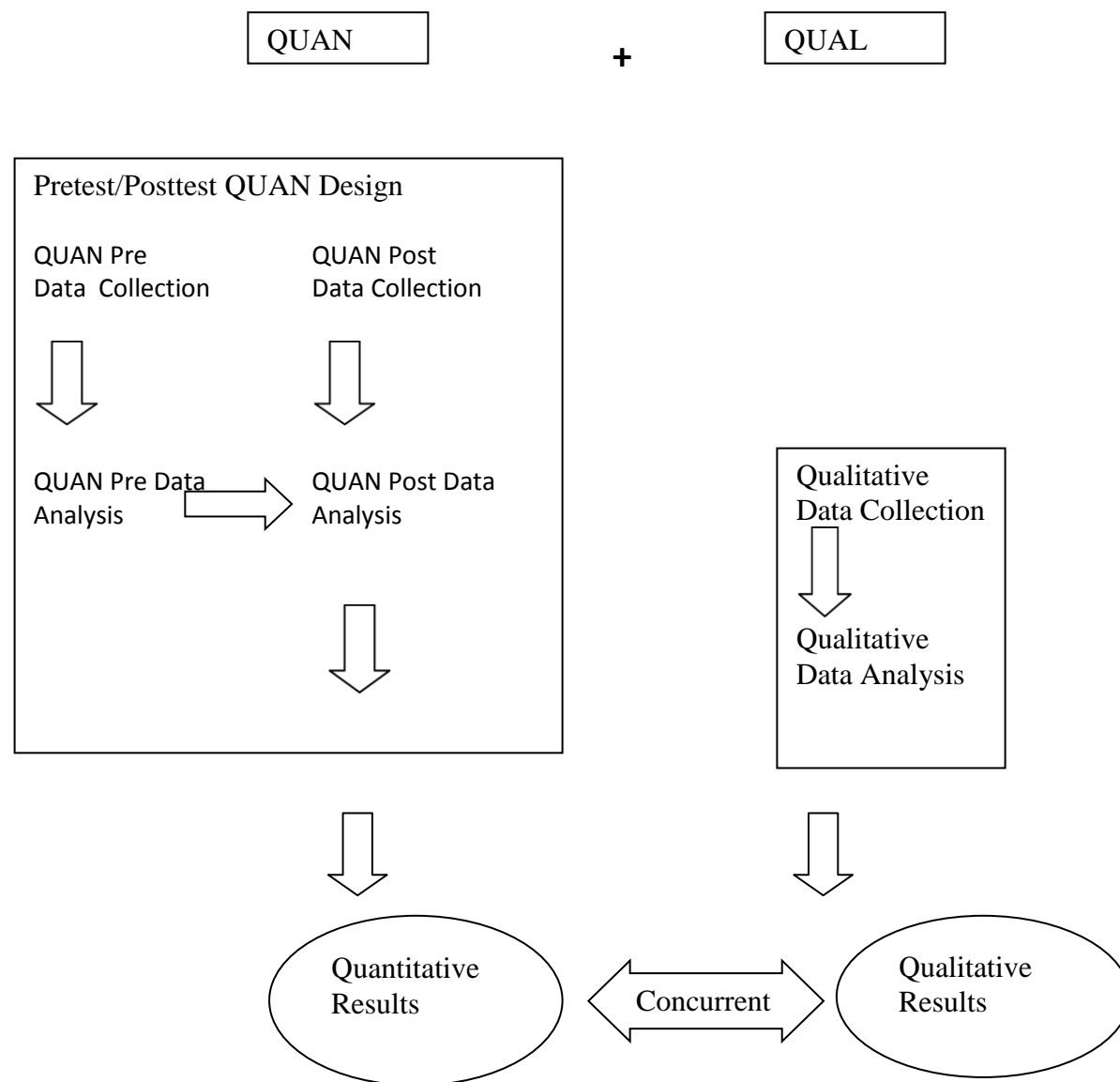
Sampling Method

Recruitment of participants involved the researcher attending new student orientation sessions over the summer and encouraging students who expressed career indecision to register for the Academic and Career Planning course. Only freshman and sophomore-level students were specifically recruited into the dual intervention course given that the course is primary focused on students who are classified as undecided while completing the core curriculum. Although students were encouraged to enroll in the dual intervention section, students were free to select any section of the course or choose not to enroll in the course at all. Paper flyers announcing the course and brochures detailing course information were distributed in high profile areas across campus to bolster recruitment efforts. Additionally, the department that offers the course regularly advertised it through various means including bus card advertisements, flyers posted at strategic locations around campus, announcements sent out over campus listservs, and announcements made in other undergraduate classes.

Participants

The researcher recruited undergraduate students from a large Southeastern university as research participants. This university is classified as a primarily White institution, with 76.7% of students indicating a White ethnic origin (*Office of Institutional Research Fact Book*, 2009). Specifically, recruitment occurred among students enrolled in an academic and career planning course taught during the fall 2010 academic term.

At the beginning of fall 2010, approximately 154 students at a large Southeastern research university were enrolled in 16 sections of an academic and career planning course that focused on career decidedness. The majority were first- and second-year students. Two different inventories were administered to the participants. All 16 sections received a single intervention

of the academic and career planning course integrating one student-led career consultation. The participants in one section also received a dual intervention of five sessions of graduate student-led career consultation. A secondary recruitment effort was made to recruit students for the dual intervention academic and career planning course.

The official name of the course in which the research participants were enrolled is "Academic and Career Planning." The course teaches skills to assist students in choosing a major and in career decision-making, and it includes one career consultation led by a graduate student as part of the curriculum. The course is comprised primarily of first- and second-year students representing a variety of races/ethnicities, genders, and major and career goals.

Data Collection Methods

Data from participants was gathered over a period of 16 weeks beginning in the second week of classes in fall semester 2010 and ended on the last day of classes for fall semester 2010. Prior to survey administration, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. The researcher also received permission from the department offering the course as well as all section instructors to attend the first 40 minutes of a designated class meeting at the beginning and end of the fall semester 2010 before administering the survey.

The study was conducted in two phases using a mixed-methods convergent parallel design. The first phase involved collecting quantitative pretest data using the *Career Decision Scale (CDS)* and *Career Factor Inventory (CFI)*. Upon meeting with each section, the researcher or graduate student assistant explained the purpose of the study and distributed consent forms as well as the paper instrument. The questionnaires took approximately 40 minutes to complete. Once the students completed the surveys, the researcher gathered the completed consent forms

and instruments from all volunteers. This process was replicated during the final week of the career course for posttest analysis.

The second phase involved using a researcher-developed qualitative instrument to collect qualitative data on the dual intervention course, in which students receive five one-on-one career consultation sessions. The qualitative instrument was offered concurrently with the quantitative posttest. Participation in this study was confidential and names were removed from instruments once pretest and posttest matching of individuals is complete. Purposeful sampling procedures, specifically convenience sampling (Patton, 2002), were used to obtain participants who met the criteria of the study, specifically that they were registered in the Academic and Career Planning course. The primary researcher solicited voluntary participation from the students registered in the course to be interviewed during the last week of class during the fall 2010 academic term. Participants received a $10.00 cash payment for the interview as an incentive for their participation.

Interventions. This study involved two interventions. The first was the academic and career planning course, which provided an overview of decision-making models for selecting academic majors and exploring career options. The course primarily focused on self-exploration, assessment of career and academic interests, and understanding of the world of work compatible with students' personality styles, skills, abilities, and values. The second intervention, provided to only one section of Academic and Career Planning, was five one-on-one graduate student-led career consultation sessions in combination with the course.

Dual intervention academic and career planning course. As an intervention for this study, students taking one section of the Academic and Career Planning course participated in five one-on-one graduate student-led career consultation sessions. The decision that five one-on-

one consultation sessions would be provided to students was made through a collaborative effort of course instructors, counselors, and administrators, and was also informed by prior research findings suggesting that four to five sessions of career consultation may be most efficacious for assisting students with career decision-making (Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998; & Stotchel, 2008). Without any literature to set precedents, this study served as an exploratory study in determining the effectiveness of combining career courses and graduate student-led career consultation.

   Career consultation sessions. The career consultations took place in the classroom, another designated room, or a counseling center, all of which were in the same building as the classroom. Sessions began following a short lecture composed by doctoral students registered in the Advanced Career Development Course, taught by the department of Counseling and Human Development Services. These doctoral students presented information as a group regarding aspects of the career course the participants were enrolled in and the ways in which the various types of evaluations such as the Type Focus Inventory and the Strong Interests Inventory would aid students in academic major and future career decision-making. The sessions were approximately one hour in length. The goal of these sessions was to assist students in furthering their career exploration. Whether or not students had declared a major, they were assisted by their assigned graduate student in determining further career-related goals and learning strategies for making successful career decisions. Time was spent helping undergraduate students better understand the assessments completed during the course and how these assessments could assist students in their career decision-making process. Final structure and use of time in the consultation sessions was determined by the Advanced Career Development course instructor.

To address doctoral level graduate students' proficiency in career consultation, the professor in charge of the Advanced Career Development course provided ongoing training and feedback throughout the course. Students who signed up for the Advanced Career Development course were required to become familiar with best practices in career counseling. Requisite information on the interpretation of career assessments was provided to familiarize counselors with measures students might bring with them to their consultation sessions and the course instructor provided oversight. Other areas covered included common challenges faced by students in career exploration, potential issues that could arise in sessions, and resources to be utilized by both students and counselors.

Informed Consent. Before individuals may participate in any study, researchers must acquire informed consent. Informed consent provided participants the necessary information for deciding whether to participate in the research study. Students agreeing to participate in this research study are informed of the following:

1. You will be asked to complete two questionnaires about career decidedness. The surveys are voluntary and should take no more than 45 minutes to complete.

2. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be given a survey packet at the beginning and near the end of the semester while you are enrolled in your Academic and Career Planning course.

3. The survey will be conducted during your Academic and Career Planning course. No identifying information will be collected on the survey. Your instructor will NOT have access to the survey nor will any identifiers be placed on the survey. Survey results will be stored in aggregate for data analysis.

4. The course instructor will not have access to any data with identifying information. However, the course instructor will have access to the data after all identifying information has been removed and the data has been entered into a database.

5. For those students participating in the dual intervention course, all qualitative data will be transcribed and pseudonyms given to protect the identity of the participants. The course instructor will not have access to any transcripts until after grades have been submitted.

Direct Benefits. There are no direct benefits to the participants of the study, but the findings from this project may provide information that gives insight to both instructors and students involved in the Academic and Career Planning course by determining the level of effectiveness of the course in assisting students in choosing a major or career path. Completion of the survey is voluntary. The instructor will not know whether you have participated or not and your grade in Academic and Career Planning will not be affected by participation or non-participation in the survey.

Potential Implications. The results may help determine if there is a particular type of student (i.e., first year, undecided about major) who would most likely benefit from the course. Information gleaned by the researcher from the results can be used in future planning for the course and could help to provide students with a better educational experience.

Risks and Discomforts. The only anticipated risks for students participating in this study are concerns about the confidentiality of the information they are providing and/or distress from the awareness that they may not be at the place they wish to be with their major or chosen career path. It is possible the student may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions. Individuals are free to skip any questions they do not wish to answer. In addition, they may stop

answering questions or discontinue participation at any time. If students experience any distress as a result of participation in this research, they may contact the researchers for other referrals, assistance, and resources.

No incentives or direct benefits are offered to students participating in this study. Any benefits obtained from participating in the survey are considered separate from this study and are not the responsibility of the instructors of the Academic and Career Planning class.

Confidentiality. Any information obtained in connection with this study that can identify a student will remain confidential unless identities are required by law. Any data containing individually identifying information will be kept securely password protected on a computer in the researcher's office. Only the researchers will have access to the survey data collected.

Participation and withdrawal. All participation is voluntary. Students may refuse to participate and may withdraw from participation without any penalty or any loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. Participants may request to have the results of their participation, to the extent that it can be identified with them, removed from the research records or destroyed.

Instrumentation

This project utilized two standardized career decidedness inventories, the *Career Decision Scale (CDS)* (Osipow et al., 1976) (see Appendix A) and the *Career Factors Inventory (CFI)* (Chartrand et al., 1990) (see Appendix B). These instruments were used to measure the pretest and posttest changes in levels of career decidedness. Both instruments are utilized for purposes of comparison. A final qualitative instrument (Parks, 2010) was developed as a means of eliciting experiences of students taking the course with one-on-one consultation sessions (see Appendix C).

Qualitative Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis involved a recursive, co-construction process with participants combined with researcher interpretation (Creswell, 2007). The following section provides a description of the steps used for qualitative data analysis in this study.

Procedures. The researcher used a four-step process to conduct data analysis. The first step involved the primary investigator describing and documenting his experiences with the phenomenon. Secondly, the primary investigator read and transcribed interviews to achieve a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). During step three, the research team met to develop a list of statements from the interviews about how students experienced the phenomenon and created a list of non-repetitive statements. These statements were placed in a code book to better assist in grouping significant statements into themes. The research team analyzed the raw data independently and then met face-to-face to review coded transcripts, examine proposed themes, and identify significant statements that support each theme. The final step involved the primary investigator writing up a composite narrative of the themes and sub-themes, relating the essence or life experiences of the study participants.

Transcripts. The increased use of qualitative research requires robust data collection techniques and the documentation of research procedures (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). An effort was made to follow Mergenthaler and Stinson's (1992) principles for developing transcription rules. The principles are as follows (p. 65):

1. Preserve the morphologic naturalness of transcription by keeping word forms, the form of commentaries, and the use of punctuation as close as possible to speech presentation and consistent with what is typically acceptable in written text.

2. Preserve the naturalness of the transcript structure by keeping text clearly structured by speech markers.

3. Generate a verbatim account of the interview.

4. The transcription rules should be universal. Make transcripts suitable for both human/researcher and computer use.

5. Everyday language competence rather than specific knowledge will be required.

6. The transcription rules will be independent. Transcription standards will be independent of transcribers as well as understandable and applicable by researchers or third parties.

7. The transcription rules will be intellectually elegant, limited in number, simple, and easy to learn.

The researcher adhered to the guidelines set forth to protect and ensure the accurateness of the transcripts. Interviews were audio taped with the permission of the student. The content of each interview was transcribed in its entirety, including any elisions, mispronunciations, slang, grammatical errors, nonverbal sounds, and background noises (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Transcripts were formatted identically via Microsoft Word 2007. All interviews and transcriptions were completed by the primary researcher. Pseudonyms were used for participants at the point of transcription. Respondent validations of transcripts were conducted after transcription. To improve trustworthiness of data, member checks were conducted by all six participants.

Credibility. One measure of qualitative research is the trustworthiness of the study's design. Validation of qualitative research is an attempt to assess the accuracy of the finding as described by the research participants (Creswell, 2007). The following strategies were used to strengthen this study and increase trustworthiness of the data collected.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity means that the writer was aware of any biases and experiences he brought to the study (Creswell, 2007). The primary researcher bracketed any biases by sharing his personal background with team members prior to interviewing the six participants. After bracketing those said assumptions and experiences, the researcher continued the process of

reflexivity throughout data collection through use of a reflective journal. This journal was shared with the research team to strengthen its poignancy, as team members illuminated any possible biases that might affect the credibility of the study. Additionally, research team members were asked to bracket their own biases prior to reviewing participant transcripts.

   Research team and peer debriefing. The primary researcher met with the two other members of the research team to review all interview transcripts to extract key phrases and terms to identify meanings individuals constructed about their experiences. This review was an analytic process consisting of member checks which produced an intercoder agreement of all the data gleaned from the interviews.

   The research team included two white female school counselors who each hold specialists degrees in counseling and are part of a doctoral cohort in Counseling and student Personnel Services at a large Southeastern university and a doctoral student who served as the primary researcher. The first team member practiced as a school counselor at the elementary school level for six years and was currently working at the high school level in a large school system in a suburban setting. The second team member was a white female who was a practicing middle school counselor in a large, suburban school system. The second member also had experience as a high school graduation coach and high school counselor. Both of these team members, in addition to the primary researcher, had experience in classroom teaching. The primary researcher met with the counselor educators prior to data collection to review and agree to bracket their assumptions at the beginning of the study (Creswell, 2008). All research biases were documented using memoing (Creswell, 2008) in the hope of generating an additional source for data collection and analysis by assisting in making conceptual connections from raw data to phenomenal explanations within the study's specific context. To analyze the data, the

research team met on two separate occasions to collaborate on themes/subthemes of the transcribed data. The final categories were agreed upon by the research team using email correspondence. The research team also helped in researcher reflexivity; the primary researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout data collection and analysis and shared any poignant entries or concerns with the research team. Doing this kept biases at the forefront of data analysis.

Member checking. This step in the data collection and analysis process is one of the most critical for establishing credibility. The primary researcher took data analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they could review the transcribed data for credibility and accuracy (Creswell, 2007). Member checking provided the opportunity for participants to judge the accuracy of the transcriptions as well as the credibility of the interpretations (Moustakas, 1994). Raw transcripts were sent to each participant immediately following transcription within one week of the interview. No coding took place until all participants sent email correspondence approval to the primary researcher. Participants reviewed the transcripts and were asked to make any changes they felt were needed. All participants gave the primary researcher their approval to use the transcripts in their initial form and no changes were made.

Follow-up interview. A secondary follow-up interview was conducted during the last week of class once all sessions of career consultation were completed. The researcher used this interview to clarify and probe more deeply for richer understanding of the students' lived experiences. Transcripts were again sent back to study participants for review of transcribed data for credibility and accuracy (Creswell, 2007). All participants gave the primary research their approval to use the transcripts in their initial form and no changes were made to the second round of transcribed transcripts. Transcripts were then sent to research team for review. The

research team revisited the original themes/subthemes that were identified during the first round of qualitative interviews and a decision was made to not make additional modifications to the original codebook.

Description. When qualitative researchers use rich, thick descriptions of participants' experiences, transferability to similar settings and participants becomes possible. These detailed descriptions enable future researchers and practitioners to transfer the information to other settings (Creswell, 2007).

Classroom observations. The researcher employed memoing, observing daily classroom activities as well as one-on-one consultation sessions. Memoing assisted the observer in making conceptual ties from unprocessed data to explanations of the research phenomena. As a form of triangulation, it emphasized the importance of reinforcing the researcher's findings as well as enabling the compilation of information regarding the process and environment in which the treatment took place. Likewise, this method enhanced the researcher's exploration, and continued conception and contemplation regarding the findings of the study(Creswell, 2008).

Dependability. The primary researcher kept detailed records of the entire research process, creating an audit trail helped to confirm findings therefore strengthening the study's dependability. Records included critical reflections of course content and observations made during the one-on-one career consultation sessions as well as bracketed assumptions concerning career development.

Qualitative Limitations and Implications

Results are likely pertinent to college students registered in future Academic and Career Planning courses at the undergraduate level rather than the participants themselves. There is also some variability with regard to course structure and delivery of course material due to variation

in course instructors. There were seven different course instructors across 16 sections of the Academic and Career Planning Course.

The researcher anticipated that the results of this study would have two major impacts. First, researchers would identify the experiences of students enrolled in an Academic and Career planning course infused with one-on-one graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Second, this study provided a starting point for colleges and universities to utilize classroom resources such as guest speakers or bringing in counselors for individual consultation in a way that would benefit all students. Based on the results of this study, the course curricula may be modified to permanently include graduate student-led career consultations or adjust the focus of career and major interventions.

Qualitative Analysis

Review of qualitative data comprised another aspect of data analysis. Following qualitative protocol, responses to questions were reviewed in each category based upon the established research questions. Miles and Huberman (1994) advocate early establishment of measurement criteria, such as the establishment of groups or categories of analysis. As the Indecision Scale of the *Career Decision Scale* (Osipow et al., 1976) has the longest history of reliability and validity, it was used as a tool for grouping qualitative responses. The analysis of qualitative data was accomplished in three steps using methods recommended by Creswell (2008). Creswell explains three effective analysis strategies:

1. Preparing and organizing the data.

2. Reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing.

3. Representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.

Qualitative Summary

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher aspired to understand the experiences of college students enrolled in a dual intervention academic and career planning course utilizing five sessions of graduate student-led career consultation. Using a credible, mixed methods design with a robust qualitative component, this study can inform the body of literature on the benefits of career consultation within the framework of an academic and career planning course.

Quantitative Instrumentation

Two quantitative instruments were chose for use in this study. Information about these instruments including their development, norming procedures, reliability and validity are described below.

The Career Decision Scale. The literature cites the *CDS* as a prominent instrument for measuring career decidedness (Chartrand & Robbins, 1990). The 21-item *CDS* is designed to measure career indecision through the use of a decidedness scale and an indecision scale. During the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's the instrument was tested and revised, making it a solid choice for assessing career indecision.

The first two questions on the *CDS* constitute the Certainty Scale, which measures career certainty by asking about both majors and careers. The remaining 19 items on the instrument, which constitute the indecision scale, are clustered to provide the researcher with a greater understanding of the factors associated with indecision. Within the indecision scale, the following four factors are clustered: lack of structure and confidence, external barriers, positive choice conflict, and personal conflict (Chartrand & Robbins, 1990).

Lack of structure and confidence with regard to vocational decision making indicates the possibility of choice anxiety leading to the avoidance of career decision making. The second

factor, external barriers, reflects the possibility that an external barrier may be influencing or limiting vocational choice. Positive choice conflict is revealed when an individual has difficulty choosing from several possible vocations of interest. The final factor, personal conflict, is elicited through an open-ended question designed to allow students to list other barriers to decision making that are not listed within the constructs of the scale. The *CDS* was originally tested with 737 students and revealed test-retest coefficients between .70-.90, with the majority of the correlations between .60 and .70 (Osipow et al., 1976). Although the authors of the *CDS* advocate the use of the two original scales, much research has been done to expand and reconfigure any factors that underwent notable changes.

Higher scores on the career certainty subscale (items 1 and 2) indicate a higher level of certainty about having to make a decision about a major and a career. The remaining items form the *indecision subscale*. This subscale measures the degree of academic and career indecision an individual experiences. Higher scores on this subscale indicate higher levels of indecision. Total scores on each subscale can be compared to norms to determine percentile ranks. On the certainty subscale, scores in the 15th percentile or below are considered to be significant and suggest that an individual is uncertain about the selection of a career or major. Scores in the 85th percentile or higher on the indecision subscale are considered significant and suggest that an individual possesses a serious level of indecision. Norms are available for college students and are divided by gender.

Clustering of the **CDS.** One of the original criticisms of the *CDS* addressed the original clustering of items for analysis (Chartrand et al., 1990). The first two questions on the *CDS* allow the participants to be clustered into undecided and decided categories regarding career/major choice, while the remaining items measure the level of decisiveness/indecisiveness regarding a

career. Larson et al. (1988) examined whether the original clustering of the instrument's decided/undecided categories was too narrow. Cluster analysis of 113 responses revealed four distinct and statistically significant areas of decision/indecision (p<.05): avoiders, informed indecisive, confident but uninformed, and uninformed. Larson et al. (1988) concluded that all decision and indecision is not the same and called for a revision of the *CDS* based on their findings.

Vondracek et al. (1990) offered an in-depth look at the concept of indecision. This study, involving high school students, was undertaken over a period of three years and focused on isolating long-term change associated with career indecision. The researchers revised the *CDS* questions into four new clusters: diffusion, support, approach-approach, and barriers. The results of the study offered mixed support for this method of clustering, with correlations falling between .36 and .58 on factor-based scales and .70 and .81 on the overall *CDS* score. The study neither invalidated the original *CDS* approach nor proved that this new method of clustering was more accurate than the original approach.

In 1991, Savickas & Jarjoura introduced the concept of using the *CDS* as a typological of scaling decision problems based on a new cluster formation. The results of their study showed a relatively large increase in 15 sums of squares, giving the researchers the ability to propose using their method to cluster the *CDS* differently. The typologies uncovered by Savickas & Jarjoura (1991) were illuminated through the following cluster formations: implementing choice or making plans, specifying choice though advanced exploration, crystallizing a preference through broad exploration of self and occupations, unrealistic or learning to compromise, and indecisive or learning to make decisions.

Overall, while there appears to be a lack of evidence regarding the overall reliability of the *CDS*, there is a significant amount of research regarding its validity. The construct validity of the instrument was shown by the association of the *CDS* with the Career Maturity Index attitude scale (Crites, 1973). Kortas, Neimeyer & Prichard (1992) demonstrated the commonality of these two measures in their studies. There is also considerable research supporting the content validity of the *CDS*. Limburg (1980) found the *CDS* was able to differentiate between decided and undecided students and showed that students who sought some form of career assistance (participation in a career course or a visit to the career center) scored higher on indecision than non-seekers.

In addition, the *CDS* has been used in studies with college students to show their responsiveness to various career interventions, including residential career counseling (Barak & Friedkes, 1981) and career workshops (Carney, 1977). The *CDS*'s discriminate validity has also been demonstrated in its relationship to other career-related concepts. High levels of indecision, as measured by the indecision subscale of the *CDS*, were negatively correlated with measures of planfulness (Osipow & Schweikert, 1981), career maturity (Westbrook, 1980), locus of control (Cellini, 1978), and fear of success (Taylor, 1979).

Factor Analysis of the CDS. One of the first research efforts to expand the *CDS* was a study conducted by Newman and Fuqua (1990) focusing on anxiety as a factor in career indecisiveness. In conjunction with breaking down and rearranging the cluster arrangements of the *CDS*, many researchers were also offering new factors to be included in the *CDS* (Newman & Fuqua, 1990; Tokar et al., 2003).

Reese and Miller (2006) reasoned that premature commitment to a career choice could prove expensive in terms of human and economic resources. Committing to a career prematurely

may create anxiety within the individual as well as waste financial aid resources if a student takes academic courses that will not lead the completion of a degree that will assist in entering a desired career. The results of their study of 122 respondents showed that all levels of decisiveness/indecisiveness regarding career had a direct impact on anxiety. Additional research was recommended to ascertain the role anxiety may play on the varying levels of career decidedness.

Tokar et al. (2003) added issues of attachment to at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development is critical in defining career indecision. Attachment theory is a relatively new addition to the field career indecision. Tokar et al. (2003) assert that attachment plays a role in a number of developmental issues, including adjustment in an educational forum. Therefore it may also play a role in career decisiveness. However, the study found no significant correlations between attachment and career indecision, and a recommendation was made for further study of these constructs.

Clearly controversy remains among experts over what exactly constitutes career decidedness and career indecision. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments continue to be developed and modified, along with a call for more qualitative research to fill the gaps left by quantitative inquiry. Given the extensive work done to validate the *CDS* and its pervasive use throughout the literature, it was chosen as one of two instruments in this study. The other instrument chosen for measuring career decidedness constructs is the *Career Factors Inventory* (Chartrand et al., 1990).

The Career Factors Inventory. The *CFI* (Chartrand et al., 1990) was created using four specialized constructs: need for career information, need for self-knowledge, career choice anxiety, and generalized indecisiveness. The need for career information comprises the first

factor analyzed by the *CFI* and measures the perceived need to acquire information about or experience in various occupations before making a career choice. The need for self-knowledge is offered as a scaled item to measure the desire for greater self-understanding, especially in regard to career decisions. Career choice anxiety is a factor designed to measure the level of nervousness felt when making career decisions. The final factor, general indecisiveness, is intended to measure the general tendency towards having difficulty making decisions. The *CFI* has the ability to round out and complete those factors not examined in the *CDS* (Chartrand & Robbins, 1990).

>>>>>*Development of the CFI.* The *CFI* was developed in several stages (Chartrand et al., 1990). The initial stage involved identification of relevant issues concerning career indecision, including the four factors listed previously with the addition of self-esteem. The second stage involved confirmatory factor analysis, which revealed that the factor of self-esteem was loading significantly on each of the other scales. Thus, the self-esteem scale was removed and a 21-item, four-factor model was presented. After presentation of the revised scale, the *CFI* was tested on a sample of 409 college students, with promising results. A second factor analysis was successfully conducted with college students on the four-factor scale with similar results (goodness-of-fit index = .91). The tests indicated that the instrument was measuring what it was designed to measure and fit well within the designed constructs.

>>>>>*Norming of the CFI.* The *CFI* was specifically normed using college students because the authors believed this group was actively engaged in the career decision making process, thereby making it salient for them. Although college students served as the normative group for testing the index, the instrument has been given to over 4,000 adults of different races and genders in a variety of locales. Results show that the *CFI* was consistent in mean scores across

diverse populations in relation to the college population used for norming (Chartrand & Robbins, 1997).

Combining the *CDS* and *CFI*

The decision to use two established career decidedness instruments was based upon a review of available instruments and the literature related to instrument effectiveness. The *CDS* was chosen for this study based on extensive external evaluation and the ability to withstand scrutiny given its tenure. The *CDS* measured constructs relevant to college students and had the ability to measure four constructs accurately. In addition, the *CDS* offered an open-ended question, allowing students to share their own thoughts in addition to responding to three questions specifically related to choosing a college major. The *CFI* was chosen based on its ability to measure constructs different from those measured by the *CDS* as well as its strong history of reliability and validity. The *CFI* was also chosen because it was the only instrument developed for and tested solely on college students.

Research Questions

Due to the mixed-methods convergent design, both qualitative and quantitative research questions were explored. The specific questions are listed below.

Qualitative Research Question. How do students describe their experiences of participating in a career course that incorporated multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions?

Quantitative Research Questions for the *CDS/CFI* Constructs. Additionally, the study examined constructs related to career decision-making such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge. The following sub-questions were used to guide this construct:

RQ1: Is there a difference in scores between the constructs of career choice anxiety, generalized career indecisiveness, the need for career information, and need for career self-knowledge as measured by the *CFI* for undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course?

RQ2: Is there a correlation between the constructs of career certainty and career indecision, as measured by the *CDS* for undergraduate students enrolled in a career decision-making course?

RQ3: Is there a correlation between the constructs of career certainty and career indecision, as measured by the CDS for undergraduate students enrolled in a academic and career planning course.

Mixed-Methods Data Analysis

The use of two established instruments for measuring career decidedness, the *Career Decision Scale* (Osipow et al., 1976) and the *Career Factors Inventory* (Chartrand et al., 1990), allow for pretest and posttest measurement of levels of career decidedness in this study. A qualitative instrument developed for this study was used to explore the experiences of students receiving one-on-one career consultation sessions from graduate students enrolled in an advanced career counseling class. Additionally, the qualitative instrument was used to explore how students decide on a college major as well as how they internalize the connection between major and career (Thompson, 2004).

Pretest quantitative analysis. Pretest analysis was conducted to answer the quantitative research questions posed in the previous section. The researcher reviewed the correlations between the constructs to determine the ability of one to predict the other. The pretest allowed for the presentation of descriptive statistics related to major and career constructs before exposure to the career course.

Preliminary findings. Guttman split-half reliability coefficients were calculated for each

of the instruments to provide preliminary analyses of the collected data. Administered at two

different points during the study, this procedure ensured sufficient reliability of all the

instruments used in this study. This measurement was employed since equal variances between

the two measures are not necessary (Ferguson & Takane, 2005). These split-half reliability

coefficients increases further confidence levels of the instruments' reliability.

The researcher gleaned descriptive statistics for all sample data. Demographic variables

provided the source for frequencies and percentages to be calculated while means and standard

deviations were calculated from each of the test scores. These findings identified any anomalies

in participants' answering patterns as well as the existence of any outliers. A series of *t*-tests

ensured equivalence between the two research groups' pretest scores, assuming that both groups

were similar when pretest measures were taken. It was anticipated that differences would

develop due to the interventions each group received, and the *t*-scores were compared at the .05

significance level to test this assumption.

Posttest quantitative analysis. Posttest analysis included a comparison of differences in

means between the pretest and posttest. Analysis of covariance was utilized as a means of

determining the extent to which students report a perceived difference in constructs of the *CDS*

and *CFI* upon completion of the career course. The researcher attempted to control for pretest

scores to determine differences in mean scores as a result of the career course. Correlation scores

were utilized to discuss any changes in the ability to predict responses.

Quantitative statistical analysis. Each of the scales and subscales was tested using a one-

way ANCOVA. A one-way ANCOVA was utilized for its ability to control effects of pre-

existing individual differences that might obscure differences in changes between groups over

time (Ferguson & Takane, 2005). The posttest score served as the dependent variable while the interventions administered to each group (dual intervention or single intervention) served as the independent variable. The pretest score was used as the covariate. For the intervention groups (independent variable), *F* statistics were compared at the .05 level of significance, examining the differences between groups on the pre- and posttests. The research questions were administered in a way that determined whether the dual intervention group exhibited more changes than the single intervention group.

A series of two-way ANCOVAs were calculated using the main scales *CDS*, CTI, and *CDS*E-SF as well as their subscales to study any moderating effects that existed due to demographic variables (gender, ethnicity, age, and year in school). A two-way ANCOVA was calculated for each scale/subscale using the demographic variables. The demographic variables were input as a second independent variable into the original one-way ANCOVA equation, resulting in a clustering by the particular demographic variable studied. Any moderating effect present in students' scores for each scale could be identified then by the *F* scores generated. A Bonferroni correction was applied to adjust the level of significance for the analysis of seven separate measures and to reduce the probability of performing a Type I error. *P* values equal to or less than .007 (.05/7) were required for significance.

Chapter Summary

This chapter details the procedures for choosing the participant sample as well as for carrying out the study. Explanations of the interventions used by the researcher are provided as well as theoretical support for why these interventions were particularly appropriate for this study.

Acceptable protocol for both quantitative and qualitative research was followed at all stages of data collection and reporting process. This resulted in a greater understanding of how students make meaning of decisions surrounding choosing a career as well as an understanding of the experiences of students receiving one-on-one graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Chapter four will present the findings for this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this study. The chapter will first address the qualitative research questions and then describe the qualitative themes revealed through inquiry. Six participants were interviewed from the dual intervention group. Using the qualitative data as a foundation, the quantitative data will then be presented. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher sought to understand the role the dual intervention course played in academic and career planning. The researcher also sought to understand students' experiences of participating in a career course that incorporated multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Finally, the study examined constructs related to career decision-making such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge.

Qualitative Research Participants

The findings of this study are based on semi-structured interviews with 6 students enrolled in the dual intervention academic and career planning course. Table 1, Demographics of Qualitative Participants, gives a brief overview of the participants. The information in the table reflects the order of the interviews as they took place from November to December 2010. This information was obtained from a biographical data sheet that each participant completed at the interview session.

Table 1

Demographics of Qualitative Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Academic Standing	Declared Major?
Steven	23	Fifth Year	Yes
Heather	20	Sophomore	Yes
Sara	20	Junior	Yes
Charles	31	Junior	Yes
Walter	21	Junior	Yes
Jesse	30	Sophomore	Yes

Basic participant demographics are displayed in Table 1. Pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity. The average age of the qualitative participants was 24.2. Even though the academic and career planning course is primarily designed for students who are undecided about their major and career path, all of the volunteers for this study had previously declared a major.

Steven is a 23-year-old white male currently in his fifth year of study. He is scheduled to graduate at the end of fall 2010 academic term. Steven indicated that while he was initially studying Sociology, he changed his major in his third year of study to Business. Steven seemed satisfied with his decision to change majors; however, he did indicate an interest in returning to school someday to complete graduate work in the field of Social Sciences.

Heather is a 20-year-old white female in her sophomore year. Heather has declared Biology as her major in the hopes of one day pursuing medical school. While being a medical doctor remains her primary objective, she did express an interest in Veterinary Medicine as a fallback plan if medical school did not work out.

Sara is a 20-year-old with female in her junior year. Sara has declared Psychology as her major indicating that it is a precursor to pursuing graduate school. Sara seemed pushed to accept this major because her father is a Psychologist. Sara seemed happy about pursuing this area of study; however, she did indicate an interest in School Counseling as well.

Charles is a 31-year-old white male in his junior year. At the beginning of the course Charles seemed undecided about future career aspirations. Because of his family obligations and his responsibilities at work, he was struggling with how to meet his goal of pursuing a career in higher education. Charles began the course as a Philosophy major but changed his major halfway through the course following the advice of his assigned graduate student.

Walter is a 21-year-old white male in his junior year. Walter has declared Agricultural Engineering as his major. Walter seemed happy with his career/major choice. This happiness was reinforced late in the course following an externship assignment set up by his assigned graduate student.

Jesse is a 30-year-old white male in his sophomore year. Jesse has declared dual majors in Art and Physics which he is completing concurrently. Jesse seems complacent about his major choice. He is adamant about not finalizing a career choice until he finishes school. Jesse definitely enjoys being a lifelong learner; however, he often seemed scattered and disorganized.

Results of Qualitative Data Analysis

Findings from the data revealed four major themes: Positive experience in counseling sessions, choosing a major is important, course affected major/career goals, and structure of the course (see Table 2). Additionally, 11 subthemes were identified related to participants' experiences of taking an academic and career planning course synthesized with graduate student-led career consultation. This chapter will examine the themes and subthemes, using quotes from

participants to support the findings. The use of the term participant will be used throughout the

qualitative summary as a means to clarify specific phrases related to chosen themes.

Figure 2

Factors That Influence the Experiences of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in an Academic and Career Planning Course Who Received Five One-on-One Graduate Student-Led Career Consultation Sessions

1. Positive experience in counseling sessions
    a. Positive rapport with graduate student
    b. Provided practical guidance/steps toward action
2. Choosing a major is important
    a. Necessary to stay on track
    b. Causes pressure/anxiety
    c. Influences that impact major/career choice
3. Course affected major/career goals
    a. Inventories and graduate students provided great feedback
    b. Comfortable environment to discuss frustrations/ideas
    c. Validating but also opened door to other options
4. Structure of the Course
    a. Inventories and sessions were helpful
    b. Some liked back-to-back sessions; others wished they were spread out to provide time to ponder between sessions
    c. Most would change length and frequency of graduate students' presentations
    d. Course would be beneficial earlier in college – freshmen and sophomores

Positive Experience in Counseling Sessions

All of the participants reported having a positive experience during their one-on-one

career consultation sessions with the graduate students. The six volunteer participants from the

dual intervention course suggested that the overall experience of meeting with their assigned

graduate student was beneficial to their academic and career planning. Two subthemes were

identified under the topic of positive experience in counseling sessions. First, the students had a

good rapport with their assigned graduate student. Secondly, the graduate students provided

practical guidance/steps toward action. While the graduate students provided insight, they also

gave direct "homework" assignments that the students reported were helpful.

Positive rapport with graduate students. Participants seemed eager to talk about the positive experiences they had while meeting with their assigned graduate student. Charles noted:

I really enjoyed our one-on-one sessions. I thought they were very informative. They helped me analyze a lot of the information that we had taken through the tests. My graduate student was really, really helpful. He was a great listener, and he had great advice to give me. He actually even helped me change my major, which is something I had kind of considered, but I hadn't really thought much about it until we had our discussions and talked about career choices, and where I was at this point in my life and where I wanted to be.

Toward the beginning of the first interview, each participant was asked, "How would you describe the rapport between you and the graduate student assigned to you?" All participants agreed that the rapport they had with their assigned graduate student was good. As Heather noted:

We got along really well. The very first meeting I think she started us off on a really great note, because she just sat me down and was like tell me about yourself. She had an agenda, but it was very loose, and she just wanted to know about my family and my experiences, and really by knowing a lot about my background, it made it very easy later on when I would say stuff. I could reference other things, and she knew how it fit to the context of my life and my relationship with my parents and siblings, and how that affected my college decisions. So, we got along really well. She's very nice, very easy to talk to, really enthusiastic. So it made for a very fun time. I always looked forward to meeting with her. It was never a drag or anything.

The positive experiences theme continued to unfold as the interviews progressed. While participants' experiences with the graduate students varied, all agreed that the positive rapport with their assigned student made their meetings more enjoyable. This is reflected throughout the remaining themes.

Providing practical guidance/steps towards action. In addition to having a good relationship with their assigned graduate student, students also felt they were receiving practical guidance on how to consolidate all the information presented in the course. As Heather stated:

I think she really helped me look at everything as a whole, because the inventory tests were great at kind of looking at specific areas that I'm interested in and stuff like that, my personality type. She really helped bring everything together and say: All right, looking at this as a whole, what do you think it says about you, and what does it say about what kind of career you want? So I think it was good at synthesizing the different things that we had done and letting me see it as a whole. I've taken inventory tests a lot, because of my dad and stuff. So I'm very familiar with my results, but I hadn't ever taken it into account with my personality, and we did like a sheet on your values – what you value in like friends and your job. So she brought kind of all that together, so I think that helped a lot.

Walter reinforced this concept by saying "it was a pretty good experience, just so I could talk to someone and get a second opinion if I was doing the right thing, or if I was on track, or get a second opinion, really."

While the graduate students helped provide insight and structure, most also gave direct "homework" assignments that were helpful in synthesizing guidance to action. Jesse described the assistance her graduate student provided:

She really helped me, giving me like mini-assignments where she would be like, okay, well, you really liked these three different ideas that we were talking about. Come in next time and look at some internships, or look up some jobs within that field. Do these things seem like jobs you would enjoy? So that each week we had something to discuss, and if I had -- like one week I came in, I was like I can't find internships. And she explained that they don't really come out until the spring, and that's normal, but she showed me where to look, and we went over different ways to go about looking at internships.

In contrast, Steven expressed frustration at the number of structured homework assignments, preferring less structured exercises with a greater emphasis on critical reflection. He suggested:

Yeah, like maybe do like -- not a take-home assignment where the student has to feel they're obligated to do this, but like a -- here's some concepts. Why don't you think about these things? Or here are some things you mentioned, some careers you might like. Why don't you look into those, and I'll make some notes, and then we'll come back and talk about it next month?

Choosing a Major is Important

Throughout the interviews, participants conveyed the importance of choosing a major for their career/professional development. Individuals assigned this theme varying levels of importance, but all interviewees agreed that choosing a major is an important step on the road to career development. The three subthemes reveal the varying complexity individuals ascribe to the process of choosing a major.

Necessary to stay on track. Participants generally supported the idea that choosing a major is necessary to stay on track academically. When asked, "How would you describe the role

of a major in your life at this point in time?" Sara stated, "It's pretty important, I guess, because I'm already – this is my third year in school, I'm kind of ready to get out and get started. Being in college, I'm ready to get out and make some real money."

Heather indicated:

Well we -- we talked about what courses I should take, grades, what other options I had for my major, and just what the consequences would be if I did change my major and if I did change paths. Pretty much -- I don't know, I always have doubt, and I like being reassured, so we usually talked about that, just how it's okay to have doubts, and everything will eventually work out and take its place.

Causes pressure/anxiety. All participants conveyed that they felt pressure early in their college careers to choose a major. Jesse stated:

It's extremely confusing, because I feel like there's a lot of pressure to choose a major right when you get to college, just because you can't just be undecided for a whole year because you're going to be off track and graduate late. So I think it's really important, you need to start deciding early what your major is.

Heather shared:

So as a three-and-a-half year student, I feel like I really have a lot less room, especially as a psych major. Psych undergrad is useless, and I've always known that. So it's like I know I've got to go to grad school So there's kind of that driving pressure as a psych major: where do I want to go, what do I want to do, how am I going to do it? So I think if I was business or something else, I'd be a lot more relaxed at this point, because I feel like I'd have more time.

Walter stated, "I did consider the fact that I've been trying to – for a very long time to fit myself into a specific – trying to like pigeon-hole myself into a specific career, and I always end up feeling like I'm in a straitjacket." This "pressure" leads to a rich subtheme that highlights the complexity of choosing a major.

Influences that impact major/career choice. When asked, "How would you describe the relationship between choosing a major and choosing a career?" participants agreed that their views were influenced by a number of sources, including parents, peers, their own interests, and previous courses. Jesse stated:

I think this is a very sticky topic, because I don't know. So many people – or adults tell me your major won't even matter; it's the people you meet and the connections, and you can be an English major and go to med school, which is true. But I think it would make it – I think you would be – knowing myself, being a science major would make me more confident in going to med school. I feel like if I wasn't, I wouldn't feel like I was qualified enough, and I would kind of be subconscious[sic] about that.

Walter shared, "When you're in college, it's a playground in a way. There's a certain amount of room to play, but – it's a place to ask questions. College is a place to ask questions and get some of the questions answered and to feel things out." Heather identifies parental influences on a student's major/career choice, noting:

I definitely grew up, went to a private school, with my parents it's always been a push to -- you're going to go to vet school. Oh, okay, you failed chemistry. You're going to go to law school. It's very much they want me to be all you can be, there's always been an expectation I'll go to some sort of secondary school, get my Ph.D. in something.

The participants emphasized throughout the interviews the variety of influences that impacted their major/career choices. In addition, respondents also discussed how taking the academic and career planning course affected their major/career goals. The following section explores the theme of how the course affected participants' major/career goals.

Course Affected Major/Career Goals

One overwhelming theme among all six participants was that the course affected their major/career goals. Charles explained how his career goals changed as a result of taking the course and meeting one-on-one with his assigned graduate student, stating:

It definitely gave me perspective, and something I needed a lot of was perspective. So it gave me something to shoot for, whereas before I felt maybe I was kind of waiting for maybe a shoe to drop, waiting for just something to fall out of the sky. This allowed me to focus my energy toward looking for a career, looking – actually actively participating in my choices.

Inventories and graduate students provided great feedback. All participants noted that their graduate student spent time talking about and providing helpful feedback on the standard inventories the students completed as part of the course. Heather stated:

I came into the semester fairly certain that I wanted to do industrial organization, and kind of through talking to her -- I, well I guess realized/accepted that's more of what my parents want me to do. And it does not jive a lot with my inventory results, a lot with my desires for leadership, organization, and things of that nature. But it does take into account that I really like being hands-on with people; I like more of a counseling approach to life. So we kind of discussed how these are two kind of like not necessarily opposing ideas, but IO is very different from counseling, and what do I want to do versus

what do I feel like my parents expected me to do. So that was kind of -- I guess probably

by our second meeting, those were the two different areas we were really concentrating

on.

Charles shared a similar level of satisfaction in discussing inventory results, observing:

Really the Strong Interest Inventory information from that test, that really gave me a lot

of information, gave me a lot of things I had just never thought about. One of the things

I'm looking at is -- a suggestion was being a trainer, and something I have experience

doing, but I just never thought about that as a possible career choice, and it really stuck

out. There was a lot of other good information that I got from that test as well.

Throughout the interviews, another subtheme that emerged was the level of comfort the

students felt while discussing majors, career goals and inventory results.

Comfortable environment to discuss frustrations/ideas. Jesse addressed how

comfortable the graduate student made him feel during the consultation sessions:

I would say that it went really well. She was extremely nice, made me feel really

comfortable. She basically just asked me simple questions, then wanted to know how I

chose my major and everything, what I was thinking for the future, things like that.

It became apparent shortly after beginning each interview that the participants shared a

positive relationship with their assigned graduate student. As Walter noted, "Oh yeah, I felt

extremely comfortable. Very comfortable." The following subtheme reflects this relationship by

addressing the participants' feeling that the graduate students were not only "validating" but also

helped them explore other options.

Validating but also opened the door to other options. All six participants viewed the

meetings with their graduate student as a positive experience. In addition to helping validate their

current major or career path, they also felt the graduate students helped open doors to other options or areas they hadn't previously considered. As Steven explained:

> I thought it was really good. I think that -- I would say it was good getting a feel for what I was doing, getting on track with what was a good idea; it was really good for direction. She was very welcoming; she wasn't necessarily stand-offish. She was actually asking about what my scores were for my personality types, and kind of went through that a little bit. It was a good feeling. I think I've been offset, she was gone for a week for a class or some sort of committee, and then I was gone the next week, so I didn't see her. But for the first week, it was actually -- it was a pretty good experience, just so I could talk to someone and get a second opinion if I was doing the right thing, or if I was on track, or get a second opinion, really.
>
> Similarly, Sara notes:
>
> I think just hearing someone that has gone through the same thing. I mean, I know everyone has gone through this, but they're -- I don't know, they're close to our age, and they know -- I don't know, it's just different from your parents telling you what to do. They are advising you what to do, they know how tough it is. I feel like -- I know, I think both my first grad student, and I know my second, she said that she was pre-med for her first year and she changed her mind. And it's just nice to be like, okay, you're not the only one who doubts. It's good to relate.

Charles felt that his graduate student helped give him new direction by setting up an externship:

> It fit well because she like put me on the right path, like after I did the job shadowing for a day, and she set that all up. She got me going on that, so like once I got -- like I feel like I'm in the right place, I'm going in the right direction.

Structure of the Course

One major theme the participants did not unanimously agree on concerned the overall

structure of the course. While all participants agreed that the inventories and one-on-one sessions

were helpful, the timing of the sessions and opinions regarding the overall structure of the course

varied.

Inventories and sessions were helpful. Heather described the overall experience of the

course plus the one-on-one sessions as "very positive," noting, "I don't think I would have gotten

as much out of the course if we hadn't met with the graduate students." Charles likewise stated,

"Just being able to have somebody go over the large amount of information that we had was

nice. Just having somebody to bounce feedback off of, somebody to ask questions to." Steven

reinforced this subtheme, saying:

> I think I kind of like the personal aspect. It's very easy to listen to a teacher who's already
>
> a parent and very integrated into the workforce saying you'll be fine, you'll find a job. It's
>
> nice to hear somebody closer to your own age talk about realistically the struggles and
>
> the challenges and stuff like that and what they're doing to try to accomplish their goals. I
>
> think it's very motivational, it motivates you and it's also a bit reassuring.

Walter reiterated that the ability to relate to the graduate student contributed to the

helpfulness of the sessions, explaining:

> I would say -- I guess just maybe getting feedback from somebody who's already in grad
>
> school and getting a different perspective on how you get into the school as a process and
>
> how they got there was the most beneficial part. Because again my first thought would be
>
> that they just like -- they would graduate and just go into grad school, but they have some
>
> work experience behind them and all that, and what brought them back to grad school.

Some liked back-to-back sessions while others wished they were spread out to provide time to ponder between sessions. Although some participants felt the five sessions were structured in a way that was beneficial to career consultation, others wished they were spread out to provide more time for reflection. As Steven noted:

I thought it was really good. It seemed seamless to me. If you guys didn't tell me it was your first time doing it or second time I never would have guessed. Otherwise it seemed very structured and it made a lot of sense. I like how it integrated very well. It wasn't choppy at all; it wasn't a guess for what we would be doing each day. So I thought it was really good.

In contrast, Jesse offered suggestions for improving the meeting schedule:

I thought that the way that we did it was good. The only thing that maybe is -- if we instead of just having a big block of meetings where we met rapid fire like one week, second week, third week, fourth week, maybe if we could spread it out to meet one week, then have an in-class regular meeting within the class, the second week after that meet with the graduate students again. Just kind of spread it out, give time in between the sessions to maybe research more before we get back with the graduate students, and then -- but other than that, I think it was good.

Most would change length and frequency of graduate students' presentations. Interestingly, the graduate students' presentations came up as a common subtheme under structure. While all participants felt their one-on-one meetings with the graduate students were beneficial, most felt the presentations at the beginning of the class should be changed. As Steven suggested:

I think maybe instead of doing the presentation from the grad students every week, maybe like every other week, and then having course professor do something in the week between. I don't know; I didn't mind meeting with the grad student every week. I always thought it was interesting to talk to her.

Heather stated:

I think the presentations that the students made got very repetitive. I think it's hard because it's stuff that needs to be repeated to kind of sink in, but I thought maybe with one or two less of the graduate student presentations, that maybe instead an extra meeting would be beneficial.

Course would be beneficial earlier in college. Additionally, upper classmen felt that the academic and career planning course would be most beneficial to freshmen or sophomores. As Steven stated:

I think more for people who are sophomores or freshman, I think it really gives them some insight, because ultimately I think when you are a freshman, you think about grad school, and going further after your career. It might change when you're a senior, but you're always thinking about that. So I think when they're going through and talking to a grad student, I think it's good for them because they can get feedback on the process to get there, what they need to look into. It would help a freshman or sophomore more than people like me who already are a senior and already have my GPA set in stone; it's variable and can move a lot for them.

Heather further emphasized the need to take the course earlier in one's academic career, stating:

I wish I had known these things as a freshman, but I also think I had to have certain life

experiences to the point where I was ready to kind of look at everything as a whole. So I

think -- I'm just going to take something freshman year to get me -- kind of get me more

focused, and then taking this now to really kind of home onto what I want to do. So it

probably would have benefited me by taking something freshman year.

Qualitative Summary

The participants in this study shared a number of common experiences related to taking

an academic and career planning course combined with graduate student-led career consultation

sessions. Participants agreed that having someone to talk to about inventory results, academic

major, and potential careers was helpful, and felt students would benefit most from taking this

course early in their academic careers. All six participants noted the positive rapport they felt

with their assigned graduate student and the practical guidance they received in their sessions.

Textural meanings. The themes positive experience in counseling sessions and

importance of choosing a major reveal textural meaning in terms of the phenomenon experiences

of meeting one-on-one with a graduate student for career consultation. Throughout their

observations under the theme of positive experience, participants talked about positive rapport

they felt with their assigned graduate student, that the sessions provided practical guidance, and

that choosing a major causes anxiety but is necessary to stay on track to graduate in a timely

manner. Each of these needs and others were realized and discussed, though the efforts of the

dual intervention course. Overall, *what* these undergraduate students enrolled in the dual

intervention course described as meaningful in their experience was their partnering with the

graduate student to address individualized concerns about career/major decisions.

Structural meanings. The themes course affected major/career goals and structure of the course offer meaning in terms of the structural qualities of the phenomenon of students in the dual intervention course. In terms of *how* these participants experienced these themes, several essential qualities prevailed. According to these six individuals, socialized expectations (parents), personal investment, and course structure all played a role in intervention effectiveness.

The essence of the phenomenon. Following the process of the qualitative research called phenomenology, this study was guided by the following central research question: The researcher sought to understand the role the dual intervention course plays in academic and career planning. The researcher also sought to understand students' experiences of participating in a career course that incorporated multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Finally, the study examined constructs related to career decision-making such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge. Textural and structural meanings of their experiences lead to the following synthesis, essence, or essential invariant structure of the phenomenon under study. The experience of students enrolled in the dual intervention course is made meaningful by deep connection with their assigned graduate student.

Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

This section presents the quantitative results of this study collected from the 138 participants. Non-significant quantitative findings are reported in text for descriptive purposes only. Table 2 summarizes the overall age demographics of the sample including the both single and dual intervention. Additional demographic information will be presented in the quantitative summary later in the chapter.

Table 2

Study Demographics

Gender	N	Percent n	Average Age
Men	42	30.4%	19.38
Women	96	69.6%	19.18
Combined	138	100%	19.24

The quantitative results are presented based upon the order of the research questions. Within each section, descriptive analysis is provided regarding the construct measured and results obtained. It is important to point out that fewer students completed the posttest inventories. This could occur for a number of reasons including students who withdraw from class, students absent on the day the survey was administered, or simply more students choosing not to complete the posttest inventories.

Career Certainty Statistics

Career certainty scores were derived by summing items from the *CDS* Certainty subscale. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 2.63 (SD = 1.20) and a posttest mean score of 2.71 (SD = 1.27) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 2.38 (SD = 1.03) and a posttest mean score of 3.01 (SD = .838) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on CDS Certainty Subscale

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	2.63	1.20	138	2.38	1.03
Posttest	14	2.71	1.27	125	3.01	.838

Career Indecision Statistics

Career indecision scores were derived by summing items for the *CDS* Indecision subscale. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 29.94 (SD = 14.66) and a posttest mean score of 31.43 (SD = 15.52) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 33.66 (SD = 14.73) and a posttest mean score of 30.45 (SD = 14.34) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on CDS Indecision Subscale

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	29.94	14.66	138	33.66	14.73
Posttest	14	31.43	15.52	125	30.45	14.34

Research Question 1

Is there a difference in scores between the constructs of career choice anxiety, generalized career indecisiveness, the need for career information, and need for career self-knowledge as measured by the *CFI* for undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course?

The first research question was designed to determine whether there is a difference in scores on the constructs of career choice anxiety, generalized career indecisiveness, the need for career information, and career need for self-knowledge, as measured by the *CFI* for undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course. The *CFI*, with its generalized analysis of the four constructs of career choice anxiety, generalized career indecisiveness, the need for career information, and career need for self-knowledge, was given to supplement the *CDS*. Individualized construct scores were derived by summing items for each subscale.

Career choice anxiety. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 17.06 (SD = 6.99) and a posttest mean score of 18.21 (SD = 7.19) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 18.07 (SD = 6.77) and a posttest mean score of 16.47 (SD = 6.48) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on CFI Career Choice Anxiety Construct

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	17.06	6.99	138	18.07	6.77
Posttest	14	18.21	7.19	125	16.47	6.48

Generalized career indecisiveness. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 13.81 (SD = 6.11) and a posttest mean score of 14.57 (SD = 6.57) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 14.40 (SD = 5.55) and a posttest mean score of 14.14 (SD = 5.66) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on CFI Generalized Career Indecisiveness Construct

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	13.81	6.11	138	14.40	5.55
Posttest	14	14.57	6.57	125	14.14	5.66

Need for career information. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 23.56 (SD = 8.53) and a posttest mean score of 23.50 (SD = 6.61) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 24.35 (SD = 5.17) and a posttest mean score of 24.02 (SD = 5.90) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on the CFI Need for Career Information Construct

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	23.56	8.53	138	24.35	5.17
Posttest	14	23.50	6.61	125	24.02	5.90

Career need for self-knowledge. For the dual intervention group, a pretest mean score of 14.38 (SD = 5.79) and a posttest mean score of 16.29 (SD = 4.08) were obtained. For the single intervention group, a pretest mean score of 16.09 (SD = 3.96) and a posttest mean score of 16.38 (SD = 4.12) were obtained. Information regarding these figures can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Scores Obtained on the CFI Need for Self-knowledge Construct

	Dual Intervention			Single Intervention		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Pretest	17	14.38	5.79	138	16.09	3.96
Posttest	14	16.29	4.08	125	16.38	4.12

Research Question 2

Is there a correlation between the constructs of career certainty and career indecision, as measured by the *CDS* for undergraduate students enrolled in a career decision-making course? The second research question was designed to see whether there was any between the constructs of career certainty and career indecision, as measured by the *CDS*. The *CDS* has two scales, the Certainty Scale and the Indecision Scale.

The *CDS* Certainty Scale measures the degree of certainty an individual feels in having already made a decision about a major and a career. The *CDS* Certainty Scale revealed no significant differences between major certainty and career certainty on either the pretest or posttest. The findings, or lack thereof, for this research question indicate that once students have decided on a major or career, they exhibit similar levels of certainty for both majors and careers. The significant correlations presented in Table 9 show that once the student's decision has been made, the levels of certainty regarding majors and careers can be predictive of one another.

To determine whether students in the dual intervention group exhibited greater career certainty than those in the single intervention group at the end of the course, as reflected by significant increases on the Certainty subscale of the *CDS*, a one-way ANCOVA was performed. The need to control for pre-existing group differences was shown by the results of a previous t-

test, which indicated that equivalence could not be assumed for the pretest scores on the *CDS*

Certainty subscale. Since equivalence could not be assumed, the use of an ANCOVA accounted

for any preexisting differences when examining for differences in the posttest scores.

In calculating the F statistic for this ANCOVA, the different interventions offered to each

group served as the independent variable; the posttest scores obtained on the *CDS* Certainty

subscale served as the dependent variable. The pretest scores obtained on the *CDS* Certainty

subscale served as the covariate in the calculation. A p value of .05 was used to evaluate the F

score that was obtained.

The results of this ANCOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between the

career certainty of the dual intervention and the single intervention groups after covarying for

their pretest scores on the *CDS* Certainty subscale, $F(1,342) = .000$, $p = .286$. This finding

suggests that the adjusted levels of career certainty reported by each group on the posttest

measurements of the *CDS* Certainty subscale are not significantly different from each other.

Table 9

Results of One-way ANCOVA for Group Differences on CDS Certainty Subscale

Source	*df*	SS	MS	F	*p*
Intercept	1	31.78	31.76	20.72	.000
Group	1	.01	.01	.001	.001
CDS Certainty Pretest	1	236.22	1.78	1.147	.286
Error	153	234.46	1.53		
Total	154				

Tests of Equivalence

To test whether there was any initial difference between the research groups, I performed an independent sample t-test for each set of pretest scores. These t-tests allowed me to determine whether the research groups began the study at similar baselines for each of the constructs being measured. The t-scores were compared at a .05 level of significance to test this assumption of equivalence. Table 10 summarizes these results and displays the group means, standard deviations, t-scores, and levels of significance.

A review of these results revealed no difference between the pretest scores for the *CDS* Indecision subscale. However, statistically significant differences were found between the pretests scores for the *CDS* Certainty subscale, t (138) = -1.49, p = .041. These results indicate that equivalence could not be assumed for these three measures. Since equivalence could not be assumed, I chose to utilize a series of ANCOVAs to account for the pre-existing differences that were found. These ANCOVAs were used to test for between-group differences on all of the main measures in this study.

Table 10

Results of t-tests Examining Equivalence of Pretest Scores for CDS Main Constructs

Scale/Subscale	Research Group	*n*	M	SD	t	*df*	p
CDS Indecision	Dual Intervention	17	30.94	14.80	15.70	155	3.70
	Single Intervention	138	33.79	14.81	12.71	155	1.26
CDS Certainty	Dual Intervention	17	1.83	.25	-1.09	155	.041*
	Single Intervention	138	1.94	.37	-1.49	155	.086

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3

The third research question was designed to look at both the correlation between career certainty and career indecision and the magnitude of correlation between the pretest and the posttest. Specifically, this research question aimed to discover whether there was a correlation between the constructs of career certainty and career indecision as measured by the *CDS* for an academic and career planning course. This section also reports findings indicating that indecision about one's major can predict career indecision at the beginning of the course, but its predictive ability diminishes by the end of the course.

As seen in Table 11, the *CDS* Certainty Scale and *CDS* Indecision Scale have a weak relationship between pretest/posttest responses on parallel questions regarding career certainty (r=.286, .086). However, the *CDS* Certainty Scale reported a moderate relationship between posttest responses on parallel questions regarding certainty about one's career choice (r=.61, .04). The *CDS* Indecision Scale has a significant relationship between pretest responses on parallel questions regarding indecision about one's career choice (r=.86, .000). The *CDS* Indecision Scale also has a significant relationship between the posttest responses on parallel questions regarding indecision about one's career choice (r= .78, .000).

Table 11

Pretest and Posttest Correlations on Parallel Constructs of CDS

Scale	Pretest	Posttest
CDS Certainty Scale	.29	.61
CDS Indecision Scale	.86	.78

Chapter Summary

The convergent mixed-methods approach utilized in this study encouraged integration of qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Conceptualizing dual methodologies given the categorical nature of quantitative data within the boundaries of qualitative inquiry is problematic at the point of convergence. Merged data analysis strategies involve merging the results and assessing whether the results from the two databases are congruent or divergent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This chapter presented the results of both qualitative collected from six participants and quantitative data collected from 138 students enrolled in an academic and career planning course. What is now known through examination of data is that the overall picture of career decision making appears simple on the surface. Chapter 5 will examine the results from Chapter 4 and offer thoughts on the implications of these findings, as well as offering recommendations for future practice.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the unique experiences, effects and outcomes that may arise from integrating a career planning course with multiple career consultation sessions undertaken during the course. This chapter will briefly review the purpose and administration of the study, discuss the findings, and offer recommendations for future research and practice. Finally, a research summary will provide a final overview of the completed study.

Purpose of the Study

As stated in Chapter 1, the researcher investigated whether there were changes in students' experiences and improvements in career decision-making abilities brought about by the addition of five one-on-one career consultation sessions to an academic and career planning course. The consultation sessions were conducted by the doctoral students of an advanced career counseling course during a regular class period of the academic and career planning course studied. The data collected allowed the researcher to examine whether the individual career consultation sessions added to the effectiveness of the career course.

Abundant research exists regarding careers and the career decision-making process. The data indicate that both career counseling and career development courses can be effective tools in assisting students with the decision-making process (Gati & Amir, 2010). In current literature, researchers evaluate the effectiveness of individual college career counseling interventions (Patton & McIlveen, 2009). However, there is little research examining dual interventions, and more specifically, college career courses integrated with individual career consultation sessions.

Thus, the research questions posed by the researcher of this study were asked in an effort to fill a gap in the literature regarding the use of combined interventions to increase the effectiveness of an academic and career planning course as well as understand the lived experiences of students taking the dual intervention course. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher sought to understand the role the dual intervention course plays in academic and career planning. The researcher also sought to understand students' experiences of participating in a career course that incorporated multiple graduate student-led career consultation sessions. Finally, the study examined constructs related to career decision-making such as career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, the need for career information, and the need for self-knowledge.

Administration of the Study

This study was conducted in the fall of 2010. The study was administered over an entire semester and involved students enrolled in 16 sections of an academic and career planning course. All 16 sections received the intervention of the academic and career planning course where one student led consultation was issued to all participants. The participants in one section also received a second intervention of five career consultation sessions led by graduate students. Two different quantitative inventories were administered to all participants in the study. A third qualitative component included interviewing six participants from the dual intervention course.

The final sample for the study consisted of 154 undergraduate students enrolled in a large Southeastern university. Of these students, 138 participated in a standard academic and career planning course, while 16 students participated in one section of academic and career planning that received a dual intervention of five career consultation sessions led by graduate students. The students ranged from 17 to 30 years old, with a mean age of 19. The demographic

composition of this sample included 114 European American/White students, 15 African American/Black students, 15 Asian students, 3 Bi-racial students, 1 Hispanic/Latino student, 1 Middle Eastern student, and 5 students who identified themselves as "Other." Finally, the study included 54 freshmen, 59 sophomores, 18 juniors, 11 seniors, and 12 students in their fifth year.

The researcher collected data using the *Career Decision Scale* (*CDS*) (Osipow et al., 1976), the *Career Factors Inventory* (*CFI*) (Chartrand et al., 1990), and qualitative interviews. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved collecting pretest data from all students using the two quantitative instruments (*CDS* and *CFI*). The pretest took place during the second and third weeks of the semester. The posttest administration of the same two instruments was conducted during the last week of classes for the fall 2010 academic term.

Additionally, two sets of qualitative interviews were conducted with six volunteer participants enrolled in the dual intervention course. These qualitative interviews were conducted during the last month of the course. Four of the five scheduled career consultations sessions were completed prior to the first qualitative interview. The second interview took place after the remaining consultation session.

The following section presents results of the study in a context for discussion. The discussion topics are arranged based upon findings from the qualitative and quantitative elements of this study.

Qualitative Research Elements

The qualitative research elements in this study were used to capture students' experiences of taking a dual intervention academic and career planning course. In each of the four primary themes, students expressed positive experiences while meeting with their assigned graduate student.

Positive experiences during consultation sessions. Thematic review confirms that students perceived the one-on-one meetings with their assigned graduate student as both positive and practical, especially in relation to career development. As expressed by students in this study, the purpose of college is to prepare for a career and it is therefore crucial to choose a major related to that future career. This theme supports previous research findings that students' principal purpose for going to college is to prepare for a future career (Astin, Korn, & Riggs, 1993).

Many of the participants stated that the one-on-one graduate student-led consultation sessions helped them by guiding them in the right direction as well as helped them analyze the abundance of information conveyed in the course itself. While one participant went as far as changing his major as a result of taking the course, others felt that meeting with their graduate student helped them reaffirm their intended major/career path. As Jesse stated, "I think it did help me solidify what I wanted to do."

Participants also believed the graduate students could relate to how they were feeling because their career development experiences were still relatively recent. Positive rapport between the undergraduate and graduate students furthered these positive feelings of being able to relate, lending even greater authority to the information the graduate students shared. The consultation sessions thereby helped to foster relationships that provided both professional and personal support. As Steven pointed out "she was really friendly and easy to talk to" when describing his rapport with his assigned graduate student.

Implications. By integrating five graduate student-led career consultation sessions to an academic and career planning course, students appeared to either find the direction they were seeking or reaffirm the major/career path they had already chosen. Thus, the emotional support,

encouragement, and validation of their major/career paths offered by the graduate students provided crucial components for student success.

While most universities offer career counseling for undecided students, many do not offer this same service for students with declared majors, under the assumption that having a declared major means having a clear career path (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). Although, students may pursue a specific major as a means to achieving a particular career goal, research shows that many students choose career paths in a haphazard and arbitrary fashion (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). Students may choose a major/career solely based on careers they have been exposed to, despite lacking both familiarity with the field and information on a broader variety of careers (Allen & Robbins, 2010). As noted earlier, students in the dual intervention group exhibited low levels of major and career indecision upon entering the course. Thus, they may have chosen the course merely to support what they believed prior to enrolling in the course. While all students felt the validation they received was beneficial, for some it also provided a bridge from where they were to where they wanted to be.

Recommendations. The relationship between a student's major choice and career path is of the utmost importance. While it is perhaps not surprising that undecided students benefited from the course and the graduate-led consultation sessions, the more unexpected finding was the benefit garnered by students who had already chosen a major/career path. Students who had previously chosen a career path may have taken the course as a means of reaffirming their major/career decision. Students with undeclared academic majors may have taken the course in the hope that it would help them find a major to match their career aspirations. As Sara explained of her interaction with her graduate student, "She guided me in the right direction as far as

helping me pick out classes. I pretty much already knew the step I wanted to go in, and she's

helped me just because I could ask her what I need to do now."

With a multitude of majors available to match career aspirations, having an academic

counselor who is well-versed in fitting student interests with required coursework is key. Results

from the qualitative interviews indicate that students not only developed an excellent rapport

with their assigned graduate student but also felt they could relate to the graduate students

because they had gone through the same process so recently. Because it is difficult to know the

graduate students' depth of knowledge regarding careers, majors, and requirements, it is clear

that they were well prepared for their meetings with the undergraduates, as evidenced by the

unanimously positive feedback in the interviews and from the fact that all the participants felt

that the consultation session should be incorporated into every section of the academic and career

planning course.

Indecision about one's major and one's future career may contribute equally to college

student attrition. Enrollment management administrators frequently recommend providing

programs or services to address career indecision because of the potential for career uncertainty.

Because career indecision and changes in career aspiration are not tracked on college campuses,

the primary indicators of major and career indecision currently are undeclared major status,

changes in major, and career indecision (Komives & Woodard, 2003). However, we need a

practical means other than self-identification or an undeclared major status through which to

identify students as "career uncertain."

The current literature indicates that no difference exists between students with declared

and undeclared majors in terms of career decidedness or career aspirations (Allen & Robbins,

2008). The intervention in this study is designed to help students who have not chosen a

major/career. However, for students who have chosen their major/career path, this intervention appears to help students reaffirm their major/career choice. The results found in the study also indicated that students who have chosen career paths may still feel unable to attain or perhaps change their goals without assistance.

Future research must examine why students register for academic and career planning courses. It was surprising to discover that 27 percent of those registered for this course were in their junior year or beyond. It is difficult to hypothesize why upperclassmen elected to take a course described as a "review of decision making models for selecting academic majors and exploring career options." However, at the university where this study was conducted, the course is among a very limited number of courses offered on campus worth two credit hours of graded credit. With policies in place encouraging students to register for a minimum of 14 hours to qualify for academic honors such as Dean's List and Presidential Scholar, students may choose the course simply to meet these requirements. Students may also select the course to help them meet the requirement of 12 credit hours for full-time student status. Additionally, students may perceive the course as an easy elective that would help boost their grade point average.

Finally, a longitudinal study is needed to examine the effects of taking the dual intervention course to assess long-term effects of taking the course beyond the short term effects found in this study. Comparing the results from students who took the dual intervention course with results taken after a period of time has elapsed, as opposed to the comparisons done in this study that take place immediately after the intervention will give us a better idea of the true impact of the dual intervention. Investigating changes in students' majors/careers over time would offer a better gauge of the overall effectiveness of the dual intervention.

Choosing a major is important. As noted above, thematic review confirms that choosing a major is an important process for these students. Students felt significant pressure to choose a major early in their academic careers. Participants noted that their parents were the primary influence on which major students choose, although peers, interests, and past courses were also mentioned as factors influencing them to choose a major early in their academic careers.

Many students expressed their belief in the importance of choosing a major that provides a precise career match. Others alluded to the idea that some career areas allow for students to choose among multiple majors, especially if these majors require graduate education prior to entering the workforce. Previous research has shown a relationship between changes in major and changes in career aspirations, with these changes most often occurring between the first and second years of college (Almaraz, Bassett, & Sawyer, 2010). This supports the notion that as students are changing their minds about majors, they are doing the same in regard to career aspirations. This could help explain why students who have already chosen a career/major may nevertheless choose to take an academic and career planning course. Giving students an opportunity to talk about their career/major choice may help to reaffirm and validate their decision.

Implications. The assertion that changes in major are linked to career indecision creates a forum for critical reflection and discussion on the retention of college students. It is clear that choosing a major and therefore career is very important to today's college student, and students often feel pressured to choose early to "stay on track." This perceived need to choose early may stem from pressure to graduate from college within a four-year time span, whether for financial reasons or as a result of family or societal pressure. The fact that major changes do not

necessarily indicate major indecision, but rather career indecision, may mean that academic and career planning courses will become even more important in the future, as the pressure to choose a major/career is expected to occur earlier than ever before (Allen & Robbins, 2010).

Recommendations. Major change data has traditionally been used to determine the length of time until graduation for colleges and universities. The later the students change their majors, the more likely they'll extend the time it takes to complete degree requirements thereby increasing costs to the student as well as the institution. Interventions to counter this concern are based upon economic concerns encouraging timely graduation. One such intervention used by many universities was the change in terminology from freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior, to first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year students. It was hoped that this change in classification would encourage students to take more courses each semester to graduate in a four-year time span.

The findings clearly support the use of major change statistics to identify and intervene with students struggling with career indecision. Future research exploring why students change majors may provide further support for the assertions made in this study. If future researchers determine that major changes are consistent with career changes, further interventions may be necessary. For example, those providing career consultation may benefit from training on helping students choose a major once the student commits to a future career.

Course affected major/career goals. This theme highlights student reports that the course not only validated their majors/career paths but also opened the door to other options. Students expressed gratitude for the additional feedback they received on the two inventories (the Type Focus based on the Myers-Briggs and Strong Interest Inventory) administered in the

course. Students responded positively to discussions of the inventory results as they pertained to their particular major/career objectives.

This qualitative theme not only serves as a foundation for future academic and career planning courses, but conveys the impact a dual intervention curriculum may have on students thinking about major and career choices. The major or program of study students choose will likely affect which college or university they attend. Once enrolled in that institution, their major choice determines the department they are in, and the teachers and students with whom they interact. The culture and climate of this department, research shows, affects students' learning, grades earned, satisfaction, and graduation (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Thus, it is important for students to choose a major and career based on their personality and interests. In college, students "choose academic environments compatible with their personality types" and in turn "academic environments reward certain patterns of student abilities and interests" (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2000, p. 33). The better students' personalities and inherent traits fit with the people, culture, and demands of their major, the more interested in the academic majors the students will likely be.

Implications. Students were asked to identify the most beneficial element of the graduate student-led consultation sessions. Students felt the course both validated their current career/major but also opened the door to other options. All participants expressed that the consultations were a valuable resource that should be offered to all sections of the academic and career planning course. For example, Walter indicated his assigned graduate student "really helped me kind of calm down, and kind of like prioritize everything and got me headed in the right direction." It is clear that universities offering these courses must include a focus on the academic requirements of majors as well as the academic exploration of coursework, rather than

simply exploring majors. At the same time, students need help in exploring the results of inventories individually and in-depth, rather than leaving them to reach their own conclusions about the results. While college career centers frequently offer individualized career consultation sessions to meet this need, embedding consultations within the course itself not only require students to critically reflect *in situ*, but also encourages them to do so when the information is fresh.

Recommendations. The simplest recommendation, although the most difficult to implement, is to incorporate graduate student-led career consultation into every academic and career planning course. However, while optimism pervades the study, it is important to point out that only six of the 17 students enrolled in the dual intervention course were interviewed. The sample consisted entirely of volunteers, leaving open the possibility that not all students who met one-on-one with the graduate students had an equally positive experience. If a survey was given to all students in a dual intervention course and the survey elicited specific information regarding questions developed for this study, researchers may be able to clarify whether or not students chose to participate due to negative experiences during the course.

Additionally, given the overall positive experiences, it would seem that all students would benefit from taking the course during their freshman or sophomore year. One student actually stated, "Another recommendation would be to redesign the core curriculum to include an academic and career planning course regardless of whether or not the student has chosen a major/career path. It is clear that the course benefits not only those who are undecided, but also those who have declared a major/career. A collaborative intervention such as graduate student-led career consultation assists both declared and undeclared students in understanding the requirements of undergraduate and graduate academic programs. Students can and should be

exposed to multiple career alternatives related to their choice of major, should a change be necessary if students fail to meet academic or career standards. As noted above, a longitudinal study of the effects of the dual intervention is needed to truly gauge intervention effectiveness.

A final recommendation for future research involves examining both undergraduate and graduate student perceptions and expectations of the career consultation process. It is not known what the students expected going into the one-on-one consultation sessions. Such research has the ability to potentially merge career consultation or possibly career counseling into academic and career planning courses across the country.

Structure of the course. The final theme that emerged from the interviews pertains to the structure of the course itself. Early in the interviews, participants were asked what they liked and disliked about how the course was laid out. While some participants liked meeting with the graduate students back-to-back for four sessions in the middle of the course, others wished the sessions were more spread out to give them greater opportunity to reflect on these discussions. One fairly common subtheme was a negative response to the graduate student presentations that preceded the one-on-one consultation sessions. Participants felt "pushed" at times to participate in these sessions and felt the presentations disrupted the flow of the course. One participant recommended spacing out the presentations to allow students time to meet with the primary course instructor between graduate student sessions.

Implications. Although this course focuses primarily on self-exploration, assessment of career and academic interests, and understanding of the world of work, the course still has a more traditional feel when it comes to learning objectives and assignments. Students spoke extensively about the structure of the course and reported a sense of disruption when it came

time for assignments and exams. Overall participants expressed some anxiety in response to the structure of the dual intervention course.

  Recommendations. Clearly some participants felt the information they received from the graduate student presentations was important. One solution may be allowing the undergraduate students to meet with the primary course professor for the first 30 minutes of class; reducing the length of the graduate student presentations might improve the negative perceptions regarding course structure. None of the participants expressed negative feelings regarding the time used for the one-on-one consultation sessions. However, students reported feeling overwhelmed by the assignments for the course itself and wished they had more time to ask questions or bring up concerns with the primary course instructor. Thus, ensuring that students have time in their "home room" prior to meeting with the graduate students may offset structural concerns.

  Additionally, perhaps coupling sessions into two-week time frames, with one to two weeks in between, would solve the concerns some students had about back-to-back meetings. While the time in between one-on-one consultation sessions cannot be too long, lest students forget the previous discussion, a small break between group sessions may work better in the overall structure. A follow-up study adjusting the sessions is needed to isolate an ideal structure for the benefit of all students. It may also be helpful to elicit the graduate students' insight regarding the issue of structure. Perhaps assignments could be altered to be more in line with the graduate students' presentations which may make the course more seamless by imbedding the idea that the graduate students are an integral part of the course both in the teaching and career consultation aspects.

Quantitative Research Constructs

The purpose of the quantitative portion of this study was to empirically investigate the outcomes of incorporating five graduate student-led career consultation sessions into an academic and career planning course. To better understand the effects of this combined intervention, it was compared with the regular academic and career planning courses that did not include graduate student-led career consultation. By comparing these two sets of career interventions, I hoped to obtain a better understanding of how combining career consultation with an academic and career planning course might uniquely assist college students in making career-related decisions. I also hoped the quantitative results would complement the qualitative findings listed above and further the dialogue regarding combined career interventions to assist college students.

I examined the differences between students participating in the dual intervention and single intervention courses. These differences were measured by examining students' self-reports on two career-related assessments, the *CDS* and the *CFI*. These assessments measured constructs including career certainty/indecision, career choice anxiety, generalized career indecisiveness, the need for career information, and career need for self-knowledge. The quantitative research constructs have been divided into two sections: differences and similarities.

Difference: Career choice anxiety. Nauta (2007) provided evidence that lower levels of career indecision would result in decreased anxiety regarding potential careers. This study supports Nauta's findings for the single intervention group. However it contradicts this notion for the dual intervention group. Nervousness and anxiety regarding career decisions actually increased for the dual intervention group. These scores reflect that students who received career

consultation had higher levels of anxiety regarding careers at the end of the course, whereas anxiety decreased for those students registered for the single intervention course.

   Implications. Given the nature of the course, it is not surprising to see the single intervention group exhibit lower levels of career anxiety in their posttest than in their pretest results. However, it is somewhat surprising to find the dual intervention group showing higher levels of career anxiety. The increase in nervousness could be indicative of bringing closure to the career decision-making process. This may include deviating from career goals encouraged by parents or significant others in the student's life. Several students indicated they realized their options could be expanded, but while this was seen as a positive thing, it also contributed to increased anxiety.

   Recommendations. The implication that students experience anxiety when attempting to choose a career requires examination. The researcher found that the anxiety experienced when choosing a career increased for students who received graduate-led career consultation. The qualitative discussion above alluded to external pressures associated with choosing majors and careers, specifically pressure from parents. The anxiety exhibited by the dual intervention group may be the direct result of students preparing for a career that is contradictory to parental influence or desire. Further investigation of anxiety related to choosing a career is necessary. A future mixed-methods study using Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale in conjunction with qualitative interviews may provide a more comprehensive approach to understanding this phenomenon.

   Difference: Career need for self-knowledge and generalized career indecisiveness. Similar to career choice anxiety, career need for self-knowledge and general career indecisiveness for the dual intervention group increased whereas the single intervention group

saw a slight decrease ($p < .05$) when pretest/posttest results are compared. These particular scales measure students' desire for greater self-understanding, especially in regard to making a career decision and the general tendency to have difficulty making decisions. Interestingly, the academic and career planning course itself spends a great deal of time focusing on self-exploration, interests, and understanding the world of work compatible with students' personality styles, skills, abilities, and values.

Implications. Not surprisingly, the single intervention group exhibited lower levels for both constructs on the posttest than on the pretest. However, higher levels were reported on the posttest for the dual intervention group, indicating students who received graduate student-led career consultation reported a greater need for further self-understanding before making a career choice, as well as high difficulty in making career decisions. The qualitative findings suggest that students may have registered for the academic and career planning course to help validate their choice of major and career. While the graduate student-led consultation sessions may have validated major and career choices for some students, for others they may have opened the door to alternative major/career opportunities. Students may also be considering a stopgap career with the hope of pursuing a different career or "dream job" at some point in the future. This notion was supported by the qualitative research when Steven stated, "But there will be a turning point at some point where I'm going to want to do something different."

Recommendations. Research to this point has identified freshmen and sophomores as possessing insufficient levels of self-understanding to make career decisions (Hardin, Varghese, & Tran, 2006). The question of why 27 percent of the students registered for the academic and career planning course were juniors, seniors, or fifth-year students remains unanswered. Clearly the students have different beliefs from one another as their need for career information grows. It

is possible that the graduate students opened doors to previously unconsidered careers during the consultation sessions, leaving some students with more uncertainty than when they entered the course. Further career exploration, such as additional meetings with a career counseling professional, may be needed for students who fall into this category. Also, only one participant indicated that their graduate student helped to set up an externship during the course. Thus, students trying to validate their major/career choice may find it beneficial to work with their graduate student to find opportunities for job shadowing or an externship. Further research is needed to better understand this phenomenon.

Similarity: Similarity in the need for career information. Students in both the single and dual intervention groups showed a small decrease in the need for career information from their pretest to their posttest results. This scale measures a student's perceived need to acquire specific information about various occupations before making a career decision. For the dual intervention group, the decrease may have resulted from a classroom assignment in which students were required to research a particular career field and present their findings to the class. While this research represented a broad overview, it may have provided enough information for students to feel comfortable with the baseline career information they possessed.

Implications. Students agreed that before choosing or entering a particular career, they needed to gain practical knowledge of different jobs. Posttest results showed a drop in this statistic, indicating that both the single and dual intervention students may have gained the practical knowledge they initially sought by taking the course. While course syllabi are not fully standardized across all 16 sections, the assignment to do research on a career of interest is fairly standard. This assignment, coupled with another standard assignment that requires students to

interview a professional in a field of interest, may account for the reduction in this particular measure.

Recommendations. Additional research is needed to identify which external factors impact the need for career information. Clearly some element(s) of the course itself played a role in modulating this statistic; the key is narrowing down which aspect of the course accomplished this task.

Similarity: Career certainty and career indecision. The findings indicate that once students decide on a career, they exhibit similar low levels of indecision. Correlations between career certainty and career indecision indicate that once the student's decision is made, the levels of certainty and indecision can be predictive of one another. Additionally, the researcher found no significant difference between the career certainty of the dual intervention group compared to the single intervention group after co-varying for pretest scores on the *CDS* Certainty subscale.

Implications. For the purposes of this study, "certainty" is described as a state of confidence expressed after a decision is made regarding both major and career choice. Students' certainty may be undermined when they change their minds about their majors and therefore their careers. There remains a void on college campuses when it comes to tracking student career change (Quinley & Quinley, 2009). Changes in college major have historically been used as the predictor variable for identifying a change in career aspiration (Tracey & Robbins, 2006). The data presented in this study is merely a snapshot of students at the beginning and end of an academic and career planning course exhibiting levels of certainty at a point in time during the course. Prior research has shown little relationship between a student's undergraduate area of study and the job they attain after graduation (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

Recommendations. The findings presented may impact future researchers interested in understanding varying certainty among students regarding majors and careers during the college experience. The information is also helpful to career centers and academic advisors, given their roles in guiding students to pursue an area of study that matches potential career interests. As noted earlier, career indecision may be indicative of major indecision. If graduation and retention rates are to improve, we must synthesize resources such as academic and career planning courses with career centers. Both are designed to recognize and meet the needs of today's college student, but a more collaborative approach between the two is necessary.

Synthesizing the Convergent Mixed-Methods Approach

Utilizing a convergent mixed-methods approach represents a social science research approach that encourages integration of qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Conceptualizing methodologies given the categorical nature of quantitative research entity within the boundaries of qualitative inquiry and then converging the data can be problematic. Merged data analysis strategies involve merging the results and assessing whether the results from the two databases are congruent or divergent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Discovering a partial divergent finding in this study may mean analyzing the research problem further. The quantitative finding that nervousness and anxiety regarding career decisions increased contrary to the qualitative findings that the dual intervention academic and career planning course helped reinforce career/major decisions is a quandary. Given the unique nature of testing a dual intervention academic and career planning course, recommendations have been embedded in the text throughout this chapter. However, it is necessary to synthesize those recommendations for clarity and provide an alternative framework given divergent results.

Qualitative data collected through interviews conveys an overwhelmingly positive impact

on study participants who were enrolled in the dual intervention course. What remains unclear

are why quantitative did not compliment the qualitative findings when it comes to career anxiety,

generalized indecisiveness, and need for career self-knowledge. We do not know the contributing

factors for this difference. In fact, greater anxiety may be indicate students were challenged to

move further along in their career decision making. It is possible the graduate students

challenged the undergraduates to consider alternative majors/careers as they covered the results

of inventories taken in the class. It is also possible that students with some doubt regarding their

major/career may have registered for the course hoping for reassurance that they were on the

right path. The qualitative data suggest that the dual intervention course was helpful in providing

this affirmation, but the question of how unsure the students were at the beginning of the course

leaves many questions for further evaluation.

In particular, it is necessary to address students' motivation for taking an academic and

career planning course. The results of this study show that students entered the course at a

normative level of indecision regarding careers and majors (Osipow et al., 1976). Moreover,

students used the course to decrease anxiety regarding career decision-making and to gather

information to reaffirm their major/career choice. For the single intervention group, it also

appears that the course assisted students in beginning the process of choosing or declaring a

major. As mentioned earlier, to truly understand how the dual intervention course affects

students, a longitudinal study is needed to track career/major changes of those students over

time.

It is important for career researchers to continue refining ways to support and assist

college students in making major and career decisions. Given the decline in institutional

resources, many college administrators have advocated policy changes that encourage students to

finish their degrees in four years. With these changes, students are apt to feel pressured to declare a major early in their academic programs (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Making major and career decisions early in a student's academic career may serve the best interest of the student, and it is likely to meet the institution's need for course effectiveness.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to answer the question, "What are the experiences of undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course that embeds five career consultation sessions conducted by graduate students enrolled in an advanced career development course?" Those experiences have been documented throughout this study. This phenomenological study has resulted in an in-depth summary of the lived experiences of undergraduate students registered for an academic and career planning course that utilized five sessions of graduate student-led career consultation.

It appears that students may have a number of reasons to register for an academic and career planning course and while all students benefited by having the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a graduate student to discuss their major/career goals and objectives, some students experienced increased anxiety and indecisiveness after taking the dual intervention course. The practical implications of this study are far reaching and recommendations have been made that may impact career centers, career counselors, career courses, enrollment managers, and above all else the college student. The majority of recommendations require that counselors work together toward the common goal of helping students gain the necessary knowledge to reinforce career/major objectives. Based on the data from this study it is evident that campus constituencies should dialogue on the interconnectivity between majors, careers and ultimately college retention.

The findings of this study support and provide insight into previous findings discussed in the literature. Students exposed to the dual-intervention perceived the integration of one-on-one consultations as both positive and practical in relation to career development. Choosing a major and confirming that decision appears to be a strong indicator of career preparedness. Students participating in the dual-intervention expressed that they experienced validation of their chosen majors. Additionally, the general increase in exposure to career information seemed to assist students in their decision-making abilities, levels of indecision, and levels of self-efficacy. Previous research indicated that one-on-one consultations and career courses benefit students in ascertaining both major and career goals. This intervention also benefited students by validating their current career path/major or by providing evidence that a change in career path or major was warranted. This study's findings support effective career consultation within the framework of an academic and career planning course. The dual intervention course helped students solidify major/career paths as well as choose a major/career early. The dual intervention appeared successful in producing emerging adults who are better prepared for the difficult demands of college and career.

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    db=a9h&AN=13672659

Appendix A

CAREER COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall Semester 2010

Fall Semester 2010 Syllabus

ECHD 2050: Academic and Career Planning

Time: Thursdays 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Call Number: 14-001

Required Text:

Discovering Your Future In A Global Society, Pearson Custom publishing. This text is available at the University bookstore.

Additional required readings will be posted on elearning or passed out in class.

Course Description:

Review of decision making models for selecting academic majors and exploring career options. Focus is on self-exploration, assessment of career and academic interests, and an understanding of the world of work compatible with students' personality styles, skills, abilities, and values.

Course Overview:

ECHD 2050 is a two (2) hour course that will orient you to the process of career and life planning. It will focus on self-assessment, career exploration and decision-making. The course will also educate you on how to choose a course of study compatible with your personality type, skills, abilities, and values. Through learning this process, you will develop the skills necessary to choose a major and/or career direction.

This particular section of ECHD 2050 is paired with an Advanced Career Counseling Course. Doctoral Students in this course will present in this class as well as meet individual with students during class on four occasions to assist students with making meaning of their career assessments and assist them in exploring majors, careers, and future decisions regarding their careers.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

Class Participation and Attendance: Active engagement in this course is required for you to receive the full benefits. You will be asked to work in groups on particular assignments and will be encouraged to join the discussions in class. Talking in class while your instructor or classmate is talking is prohibited. You are allowed two unexcused absences for any day other than the test administration days.

Four class periods are mandatory:
Assessment Day   September 2, 2010
Feedback/Interpretation Day September 23, 2010
Midterm TBA
Final Exam Thursday, December 9th, 8-11 a.m.

Absences: Attendance is very important. Absences will negatively impact your grade.

- After two absences, 10 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each day missed that is not excused by a **documented** medical emergency or other documented extenuating circumstance (i.e. funeral, etc).
- Two points will be deducted from your participation grade every time you are late to class.

Participation:
- Participation: 100 points of the grade is determined through instructor evaluation of class participation and contribution. Active participation is essential and will be evaluated in the following way:
- Excellent - Proactive participation through leading, originating, informing, challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration. [90 - 100 points]
- Satisfactory - Reactive participation with supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but relies on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation. [80 – 90 points]
- Minimally acceptable - Passive participation including being present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved. [60 – 80 points]
- Unsatisfactory - Uninvolved including being absent, late, present but not attentive, sleeping, making irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the discussion. [60 points or less]

Career Assessments and Written Summary:

You will be taking a battery of career inventories to assess your personality type, interests, and abilities. Most of these will be administered at the Career Center on our Assessment Day which is *during* class time on . **You <u>MUST</u> attend assessment day or you will be dropped from the course.** Additionally, you must write a summary of your assessment results. Include the results and what you learned from taking the assessments. You can also discuss how the results relate to you, your career development, and your choice of a major or career. The paper must be 2-3 pages in length.

<u>Attend the Fall Career Seminars</u>: (these will help you with the Event Journal assignment).

Be sure to check the Fall 2010 Calendar of Events to identify the days and times of the Career Seminars. Some of the topics include careers in the following areas: financial planning; history counseling; global impact; resumes, biotechnology and careers for making a difference in America.

<u>Event Journals</u>:

You will submit 3 Event Journals as part of this course. One must be the Career Consultation Journal. You can choose the remaining two from the list below). Guidelines:
- 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 1"margins, Times New Roman
- Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
- Paragraphs should be 3-5 sentences
- Logical sequence: Intro>Body>Conclusion
- **Everyone must do the Career Consultation Journal**

Career Seminar Journal – After attending one of the career seminars, you will be required to write a two page response/reflection paper. This paper should be a minimum of two pages in length, typed and double spaced. It should include a description of activities attended and reflection on the significance of the activities.

Assessment Journal – Reflect on your experience while completing your assessments on Assessment Day. Discuss both assessments, including the results! Questions to ponder: Do you agree with the assessment of your interest and personality? Does it match your self-perception? How well did the assessments predict careers in which you are interested? Are there other careers that match your interest areas and personality that you find appealing? Do you think that the results of these assessments will affect your decision-making process regarding your career? In addition, share your reflection with your doctoral student counselor and discuss your career path together, integrating the results.

Informational Interview Journal - You will contact a professional who is in a career that interests you. You will develop your own questions to ask. A list of these questions, along with the professional's answers and a one-page reflection paper, will be required to receive full credit.

Career Consultation Journal (required**) – Discuss your in-class individual meetings with the doctoral students. You must describe all of the sessions, paying special attention to the changes that occurred (or did not occur) as a result of the meetings. In other words, write not only about what happened, but also about how it happened and the impact of both.

Career Goals Paper: Describe your career plans and goals at the beginning of this course. It is not necessary to be sure about your career goals to complete this assignment successfully. If you are dealing with uncertainty, include that in your paper. It may be helpful to refer to the following questions as guidelines.
- What are your top three career goals and what is your plan to meet these?
- What career/job would you like after graduation? Why?
- What are some of the pros/cons of your career considerations?
- Where would you like to live/work? Why?
- Will this job meet your salary expectations/needs?
- Will this job allow you to pursue outside interests and activities?
- What type of education is required for this job?
- What is the outlook for the career you have in mind?

Special Presentations and Individual Consultations:
Our class has the special opportunity of working with graduate students specializing in career counseling. These graduate students will provide you with a career consultation session during the semester. You will be required to write a reflection paper on your session. See description under the event journals.

Career Life Lines:

To gain a better understanding of how your prior experiences and education have influenced your life and your career direction to present, each person will develop a career life line. Specific instructions for this activity will be posted on elc.

Integrative Paper:
Using material gained from assessments, journal writings, in-class assignments, homework, textbook, informational interviews, web searches, career center consultations and independent research, you will complete a final paper. A handout will be provided with details for this final project.

Career Search Presentation:
After completing the career assessments, you will begin to narrow down your career search. To assist you in this process, you will be asked to investigate one career in depth and present your findings to the class. This will include the completion of an informational interview, which will

allow you to familiarize yourself with a particular career/employer. (You should have no prior relation with this person.) A handout will be provided outlining the requirements for this assignment. The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length.

Quizzes: 1-2 short quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. These may be through elearning, in class, or as a take home assignment.

Midterm/Final Exams:

There will be two exams during the semester, which will consist of a mid-term and a final. Exams will come from the readings and class discussions. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of a documented medical emergency or significant extenuating circumstance (i.e. death of a family member). Exams will begin promptly on the day they are scheduled. If you are late to class, you must still finish the exam within the allotted time for class. No extensions are given due to tardiness.

Grading Policy:

The grade you receive in the course will be based on the completion of the following:

Classroom Attendance and Participation	100 points
Homework, activities, quizzes	50 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Career Goals Paper	100 points
Assessments and written reflection of assessments	50 points
Event Journals	150 points
Integrative Paper	150 points
Career Search Presentation	100 points
Career Life Line	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Total Possible Points	1000 points

* All classroom activities must be completed and turned in at the beginning of the class on the assigned day to receive full credit. Assignments are to be turned in electronically on elc. These must be sent/posted before class time on the day the assignment is due. The Career Life Line and the Career Search Presentation must be presented on the day assigned. **There will be a five point deduction per day on late assignments.**

Examination and Quiz Policies:

Exams will be given at the beginning of the class on the day it is scheduled. Students arriving late to class will **not** be given additional time to complete the exam. Failure to attend class on the date of an exam

without prior arrangements will result in a zero for the exam. Prior arrangements for exams are only made for unusual circumstances and are at the discretion of the instructor. Verification (e.g., from Health Center) must be provided to support requests for absences for illnesses. Excused absences, in which prior arrangements are not possible, (i.e. accident requiring hospitalization, death of an immediate family member, sudden illness, etc.) will be handled on a case by case basis and make-up exams will be administered as soon as possible after the missed exam. Students are not to ask classmates about the content of the exam or to discuss the exam with other students as these behaviors constitute academic dishonesty.

Exam policies apply to quizzes, exams, and to the Final as well. However, quizzes may be given at any time during class period and may be given without notice. Students, who miss a quiz due to an unexcused absence, will receive a zero for the quiz. The final exam follows the University's final exam schedule. **Students are required to attend, participate, and meet the requirements for the final exam during the scheduled final exam time.** Failure to show up for the exam will result in a zero. Arriving late, leaving early, or failing to participate will negatively impact your grade as points will be deducted.

Exams: There will be two exams during the Semester. The format may include short answer, multiple choice, matching, and short essay. The first exam is tentatively scheduled but may be moved due to guest speaker schedules. The exact date of the first exam will be announced at least one week prior to the date indicated on the syllabus. Note: there may be take home parts to the exams. **No talking is allowed during exam time. Anyone suspected of cheating will be reported. Students are expected to assist the instructor in maintaining an environment of Academic Honesty.**

Missed Exams: I require prior notification for missed exams. For more information see section on Exam/Quiz Policies.

* Exams must be taken at the scheduled time. Make-up exams will only be given under extreme extenuating circumstances and must be cleared with the instructor.

* Other topics and activities may be added by the instructor throughout the semester.

Grades assigned are based on the following scale:
A = 100-94%
A- = 93-90%
B+ = 89-87%
B = 86-84%
B- = 83-80%
C+ = 79-77%
C = 76-74%
C- = 73-70%
D = 69-60%
F = 59% and below

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Disability Policy

Help for students with disabilities is available from the Disability Services/ Learning Disabilities Center. If accommodations are desired please notify me and the office for Disability Services as soon as possible and preferably within the first 2 weeks of class. More information is available at: http://www.uga.edu/stuact/handbook/stuaffairs/disability.html

Diversity

Diversity in the workforce and in the student's experiences, values, opinions, and beliefs are highly values in this course. Whenever possible, class topics and discussions will be approached from a diverse perspective. Students are encouraged to share their ideas and respect individuals with different perspectives in the class.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Tentative Class Schedule:

The syllabus, course schedule, and readings should be considered a general plan for the course. Changes will occur throughout the semester and will be announced in class. The most updated course schedule will be accessible through Elearning. Students are expected to check Elearning weekly to ensure that they have the most updated information. All assignments will always be due at the beginning of the class.

August 19th	**Overview of Course** Introductions Review Class Syllabus Meet and greet graduate students working with our class *Assignment: Read Chapter 1& 2 Pearson
August 26th	**Overview of Career Development** **Who Am I and Where am I going** **Career Decision Making** Pearson pp. 111 – 152
September 2	**Career Assessments meet at the Career Center in Clark Howell Hall** **Career Goals Paper Due**

September 9	**Diversity** Pearson pp. 45 – 61
September 16	**Dreams, Goals, and Plans** **The Bucket List** Readings to be announced
September 23	**Assessment Feedback** **Nikki Smith the Career Center** **Identifying and Overcoming Barriers** Pearson pp. 153 – 206
September 30	**Presentation by Graduate Students** **Career exploration model – Strong** **Initial individual sessions with graduate students** Pearson pp. 77 – 110
October 7	**Presentation by Graduate students** **Type Focus** **Individual sessions with graduate students** Pearson pp. 63 – 75
October 14	**Presentation by Graduate Students on Values** **Individual sessions with graduate students** Readings to be announced
October 21	**Graduate Student presentation on Integrating Assessments & Goal-setting** **Individual sessions with graduate students** Pearson pp. 27 – 45
October 28**	**Midterm and Begin** **Career Life Lines** **Assessment Summary Paper Due**
November 4	**Career Life Lines**
November 11	**Career Search Presentations**
November 18	**Follow-up and closure with graduate students** **Resumes** **Event Journals Due** Readings to be announced

November 25	Thanksgiving break (no class)
December 2	**Career Search Presentations**
December 9th	**FINAL EXAM Thursday, 8-11 a.m.**

Appendix B

ADVANCED CAREER COUNSELING COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall Semester 2010

ECHD 9050- SEMINAR IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND RESEARCH
FALL 2010
Tentative as of 8/19/10

INSTRUCTOR:
EMAIL:
OFFICE:
PHONE:
Appointments recommended

RATIONALE
Counselors and counseling psychologists have a rich and distinguished history of attending to the career development needs of youth and adults in society. The counseling professions have grown from vocational guidance origins to extend to many other missions and areas of service, but vocational psychology remain a distinct and unique identity counselors and counseling psychologists.

The discipline of vocational psychology deserves study to ensure that professionals are prepared to offer the highest quality assistance possible to persons pursuing primary life tasks. This course has been designed to encourage students to consider important theoretical and research issues associated with vocational psychology, and to value the unique roles and responsibilities of counseling psychologists in the facilitation of career development.

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course is intended to serve as a review of contemporary career theory and research. The course presupposes that students are familiar with the basic issues and practices of career counseling. Special attention will be given to the implications of individual career development and the associated values, interests, and aptitudes within a social and cultural context.

COURSE
OBJECTIVES
 Students will:
- Understand career theory, concepts, research, and practice within a social/cultural context
- Improve basic understanding of historical, and theoretical constructs and terms of important career development theories

- Build greater commitment to career counseling and to other career interventions through an assessment of one's personal status with regard to current perspectives on career counselor competencies
- Continue development of skills necessary for facilitating individual and group career development
- Know the etiology of proven career appraisal instruments, and demonstrate an ability to select appropriate instrumentation and conduct interpretations and interviews
- Develop a knowledge base of new theories, and innovative application strategies and techniques for implementing appropriate career interventions with diverse populations
- Work with undergraduate students enrolled in a section of ECHD 2050 to facilitate their career development

While there is not a required text for the class, a variety of classic as well as current texts related to career counseling and vocational psychology are available in the library, from the instructor, and on the course website. Such texts will be invaluable in preparing your presentations and paper. Students are also responsible for all class handouts.

USEFUL JOURNALS

The Counseling Psychologist	Journal of Counseling and Development
Career Development Quarterly	Journal of Counseling Psychology
Journal of Applied Psychology	Human Relations
Journal of Occupational Psychology	Journal of Employment Counseling
Academy of Management Journal	Training and Development
Journal of Rehabilitation	Journal of Human Stress

TOPICAL OUTLINE
- History and development of vocational psychology
- The nature of career development: myths, misconceptions, and mistakes
- Overview of the career intervention process
- Theories, Principles, Issues and Intervention Techniques
- Traditional & Emerging Theories and Approaches
- Special focus on issues of diversity in career counseling
- Assessment instruments, strategies and techniques

PARTICIPATION
Active participation and contribution are essential and will be evaluated in the following way:
- Excellent – Proactive participation through leading, originating, informing, challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration. This does not mean dominating discussion or using a lot of words to say little.
- Satisfactory – Reactive participation with supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation.

- Minimally acceptable – Passive participation including being present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved.
- Unsatisfactory – Uninvolved including being absent, late, present but not attentive, sleeping, making irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the discussion.

Special learning needs: If you have a documented disability or any other special needs and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. Necessary academic accommodations will be made for you based on the recommendations received from Disability Services. You must be registered with Disability Services to receive academic accommodations.

Academic honesty and integrity: All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers.
1. No student shall receive or attempt to receive assistance not authorized in the preparation of any laboratory reports, examinations, essays, themes, term papers, or similar requirements to be submitted for credit as a part of a course or to be submitted in fulfillment of a University requirement. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when ideas of another are incorporated into a paper, they must be appropriately acknowledged.
2. No student shall knowingly give, or attempt to give, unauthorized assistance to another in such preparation.
3. No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person any material which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any examination scheduled to be given at some subsequent date or time in any course of study offered by the University, excluding questions and answers from test previously administered.
4. No student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including test, examinations, grade change forms, grade rolls, roll books, laboratory equipment, etc.

Students in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services found in violation of the University's academic honesty policies or codes of professional ethics are subject to review and possible permanent expulsion from the programs offered in the Department.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance/Participation: Each person is expected to be present and participate in class each week. Students will observe confidentiality, listen respectfully, and respond honestly.

Career Lifeline: A career lifeline can be thought of as a creative way to depict past work experiences as well as future occupational aspirations. The goal of this activity is to obtain a better perspective on your developmental history by representing your life to date in a creative way. Choose a metaphor that makes sense for you and your life. Portray your life creatively in any way you like, representing the most significant occupational daydreams or personal/professional experiences past to present. Also consider your interests, hobbies, past

awards, special skills, and role models. Include a daydream for the future. Creative examples from past classes include: a quilt, a board game, a mobile, a kaleidoscope, a tennis court, a road map, and a river. Use your imagination!!!

ECHD 2050 Class Presentation: In small groups, prepare a one hour class presentation for a section of 2050 in consultation with course instructor.

Career Client: Serve as a facilitator for career exploration of a student in ECHD 2050. Prepare a case study to be presented as the final exam on December 9th and should include a description of the undergraduate student as well as process and outcomes related to career exploration and development.

Jigsaw Learning Groups: Participate in a small research group as a basis for class discussion on one of the major career counseling models. The theories will be assigned during the first class period. As a group, prepare a 3-5 page handout to be used as a study guide for licensure exams. Your handout should address:
1. Key components and theoretical constructs related to the model.
2. Research upon which the theory or model is based.
3. Potential for generalizability to diverse populations
4. Practical applications including assessment instruments

Handouts are due on November 4th.

Feedback: Provide feedback to other students on their 2050 presentations and jigsaw learning group facilitation as well as contributions to the group process. Engage in self-evaluation of your own contributions.

GRADING

A	94 – 100	A-	90 – 93		
B+	87 – 89	B	84 – 86	B-	80 – 83
C+	77 – 79	C	74 – 76	C-	70 – 73
D+	67 – 69	D	64 – 66	D-	60 - 63
F	Less than 60				

Tentative Course Outline

August 19   Introduction to content, syllabus, requirements, and each other

Meet & Greet with ECHD 2050 students

August 26	Meet in the Career Center in Clarke Howell Hall Small group planning
September 2	Lifeline Presentations
September 9	Career concepts, myths, misconceptions Career counseling sequence; initial interviews Small group planning
September 16	Career Assessments & Resources
September 23	**Observe 2050 class – Interpretation**
September 30	**Small group presentation in 2050 on career exploration model –** **Strong** **Initial individual sessions with 2050 students**
October 7	**Small group presentation in 2050 on Type Focus** **Individual session with 2050 students**
October 14	**Small group presentation on Values** **Individual session with 2050 students**
October 21	**Small group presentation in 2050 on Integrating Assessments &** **Goal-setting** **Individual session with 2050 students**
October 28**	No class – Research Day
November 4	No class – Research Day
November 11	Work Adjustment Theory Vocational Personalities in Work Environments Developmental Models
November 18	Social Cognitive Career Theory Sociological Perspective Career Construction Theory **Follow-up and closure with 2050 students**
November 25	Thanksgiving break (no class)
December 2	Integration of experience and reading**:** Finish theory discussions

New Directions for Theory Development in Vocational Psychology

December 9   Exam 9:00 – 11:00 (Case study of ECHD 2050 student)

THE BASIC AGREEMENT*

It is important that participation, observation, and feedback in the course be conducted in a way that provides psychological comfort and security for each member. Everybody who becomes a part of the course enters into the following basic agreement:

1. I will use the structured experiences in this course as opportunities to learn. This agreement means that I am willing to engage in specific behaviors, seek out feedback about the impact of my behavior on others, and analyze my interpersonal interactions with other class members in order to make the most of my learning.

2. I will make the most of my learning by (a) engaging in specific behaviors and in being open about my feelings and reactions to what is taking place in order that others may have information to which to react in giving me feedback and in building conclusions about the area of study, (b) setting personal learning goals that I will work actively to accomplish-- which means that I will take the responsibility for my own learning and not wait around for someone else to "make me grow," (c) being willing to experiment with new behaviors and to practice new skills, (d) seeking out and being receptive to feedback, and (e) building conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.

3. I will help others to make the most of their learning by (a) providing feedback in constructive ways, (b) helping build the conditions (such as openness, trust, acceptance, and support) under which others can experiment and take risks with their behavior, and (c) contributing to the formulation of conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.

4. I will use professional judgment in keeping what happens among class members in the exercises appropriately confidential and not transmit any identifiable personal information about any member to anybody outside the course. I agree that each member has the right to control whatever personal information he or she may provide.

5. Like most students, I will probably feel some mild anxiety occasionally, in participating, observing, or making or receiving feedback reports. Although such reactions are highly predictable and quite normal, I may meet with the instructor at any time to discuss any problems I may be experiencing as part of the course. I am aware that alternative means to meeting the requirements of the course can be explored.

6. The Department of Counseling and Human Development Services cooperates with the Office of Student Disabilities (OSD) to make reasonable accommodations for qualified

students with disabilities. I understand that if I am a person with a disability, I should register with OSD and present my written Accommodation Request to the instructor during the first week of class. If I experience any problems in getting reasonable accommodations, I understand that I should speak with the instructor, the Department Head or contact OSD.

7. I also understand that the Department complies with the University's policies as well as the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association concerning discrimination and sexual harassment. I understand that if I have any ethical complaints that I am to discuss them with the instructor, the Department Head, or Equal Opportunity Office. Complaints made to the EOO may be done anonymously with no action taken if that is my choice. I am aware that even seemingly small or trivial incidents may lead to increased discomfort for some students, Faculty or students may not be aware of the impact their statements have on others, so it is important that all members of the educational community are sensitive to concerns of potential harassment. I understand that the best way to address these issues is by sharing my concerns as they are encountered so that an early resolution may be achieved through mutual understanding.

8. I understand that all students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers in accordance with The Honor Code, which states: *"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." Specifically, I understand that:*

   a. All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

   b. Academic honesty means performing all academic work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving unauthorized or illegitimate assistance from any other person, or using any source of information that is not common knowledge.

   c. Suspicions of dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction for resolution according to the UGA academic honesty policy, A Culture of Honesty. Students are responsible for reading and abiding by the honesty policy, which is found at: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi.

   d. In addition to the University policy, students in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services found in violation of the University's academic honesty policies or codes of professional ethics are subject to review and possible permanent expulsion from the programs offered in the Department

9. I understand that it is my obligation as a professional counselor to facilitate growth and development of my clients, my colleagues, and their clients, and myself as a person and as a professional. By engaging one another in dialogue, I recognize that we can enhance our own

interpersonal understanding while running the risk of misunderstanding and potentially offending one another. When such offenses occur, it is more facilitative to develop an educational and informative approach as a first step in resolving any differences.

10. Finally, I understand that students in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services found in violation of the University's academic honesty policies or professional codes of ethics are subject to review and may be expelled from the programs offered in the Department.

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*Adapted, in part, from: Bales and Cohen (1979, pp. 510-511), Johnson and Johnson (1982, p. 15), The Graduate Bulletin 2002-2003 (pp. 29-32).

Appendix C

QUANTITATIVE INFORMED PRETEST CONSENT FORM

Consent to Act as a Participant in this Study Pretest

Consent to Act as a Human Participant

Project Title: Career consultation in the classroom: An outcome study on the effects of combining a career course with individual graduate student led career consultation sessions.

Project Director: Dr. Yvette Getch (ygetch@uga.edu), Ph.D. and Rodney Parks, M.A. (rlparks@uga.edu)

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Issues revolving around career choices and professional development are critically important in how individuals define themselves and the satisfaction received from their lives. The aim of this study is to examine the effects of a career education class when students receive one-on-one career consultation from students registered in a graduate level career counseling class. Attitudes and decisions of course participants in regard to major selection and career path will be gauged. While research exists evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions, little research has been done on the effects of combining successful career interventions. The study will determine whether or not students enrolled in an ECHD 2050 receiving career consultation sessions show greater career decidedness compared to students registered in an ECHD 2050 course not receiving the consultation sessions.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to take part in this research study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to participate in two questionnaires about career decidedness. The survey is voluntary and should take no more than 45 minutes to complete.
2. If you agree to take part in this research you will be given a survey packet at the beginning and near the end of the semester while you are enrolled in your academic and career planning course.
3. The survey will be conducted during your academic and career planning course. No identifying information will be collected on the survey. Your instructor will NOT have access to the survey nor will any identifiers be placed on the survey. Survey results will be stored in aggregate for data analysis.
4. Course instructor will not have access to any data with identifying information. However, the course instructor may have access to the data after all identifying information has been removed and the data has been entered into a database.

DIRECT BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you but the findings from this project may provide information which gives insight to both instructors and students involved in the academic and career planning course by determining the level of effectiveness of the course in assisting students in choosing a major or career path. Completion of the survey is voluntary. Your instructor will not know whether you have participated or not and your grade in academic and career planning will not be affected by participation or non-participation in the survey.

POTENTIAL FUTURE BENEFITS

The results may help determine if there is a particular type of student (i.e. first year) that would most benefit from the course. This information can be used in future planning of the course and could help to provide students with a better educational experience.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

The only anticipated risk for students participating in this study are concerns about confidentiality of the information they are providing and/or distress from the awareness that they may not be at a place where they expect themselves to be with their major or chosen career path. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. In addition, you may stop answering questions or discontinue participation at any time. If you experience any distress as a result of your participation in this research in this research, you may contact the researchers for other referrals, assistance, and resources.

COMPENSATION OR INCENTIVE

There are no incentives or direct benefits that are being offered to students participating in this study. Any benefits that are attained from participating in the survey are considered separate from this study and the responsibility of the instructors of the academic and career planning class.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential unless required by law. Any data containing individually identifying information will be securely kept password protected on a computer in the researcher's office. Only the researchers will have access to the survey data collected.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to participate and can withdraw from participation without any penalty or any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can request to have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified with you, removed from the research records or destroyed.

QUESTIONS

The researchers can be contacted for any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project. See contact information for the researcher at the top of the page. Additional questions, concerns or complaints regarding your rights as a research participant or in the event of a research related injury should be addressed to The IRB Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, GA 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; e-Mail address: irb@uga.edu.

Appendix D

QUANTITATIVE INFORMED POSTTEST CONSENT FORM

Consent to Act as a Participant in this Study Posttest

Consent to Act as a Human Participant

Project Title: Career consultation in the classroom: An outcome study on the effects of combining a career course with individual graduate student led career consultation sessions.

Project Director: Dr. Yvette Getch (ygetch@uga.edu), Ph.D. and Rodney Parks, M.A. (rlparks@uga.edu)

At this time, I would like to invite you to participate in the second half of this study. Although most of the informed consent contains the same material as the first, I advise you to read the rest of this form and familiarize yourself with what is being asked of you. It will allow for you to be an informed participant of the study.

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Issues revolving around career choices and professional development are critically important in how individuals define themselves and the satisfaction received from their lives. The aim of this study is to examine the effects of a career education class when students receive one-on-one career consultation from students registered in a graduate level career counseling class. Attitudes and decisions of course participants in regard to major selection and career path will be gauged. While research exists evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions, little research has been done on the effects of combining successful career interventions. The study will determine whether or not students enrolled in an ECHD 2050 receiving career consultation sessions show greater career decidedness compared to students registered in an ECHD 2050 course not receiving the consultation sessions.

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3. The survey will be conducted during your academic and career planning course. No identifying information will be collected on the survey. Your instructor will NOT have access to the survey nor will any identifiers be placed on the survey. Survey results will be stored in aggregate for data analysis.

4. Course instructor will not have access to any data with identifying information. However, the course instructor will have access to the data after all identifying information has been removed and the data has been entered into a database.

DIRECT BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you but the findings from this project may provide information which gives insight to both instructors and students involved in the academic and career planning course by determining the level of effectiveness of the course in assisting students in choosing a major or career path. Completion of the survey is voluntary. Your instructor will not know whether you have participated or not and your grade in academic and career planning will not be affected by participation or non-participation in the survey.

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The results may help determine if there is a particular type of student (i.e. first year) that would most benefit from the course. This information can be used in future planning of the course and could help to provide students with a better educational experience.

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The only anticipated risk for students participating in this study are concerns about confidentiality of the information they are providing and/or distress from the awareness that they may not be at a place where they expect themselves to be with their major or chosen career path. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. In addition, you may stop answering questions or discontinue participation at any time. If you experience any distress as a result of your participation in this research in this research, you may contact the researchers for other referrals, assistance, and resources.

COMPENSATION OR INCENTIVE

There are no incentives or direct benefits that are being offered to students participating in this study. Any benefits that are attained from participating in the survey are considered separate from this study and the responsibility of the instructors of the academic and career planning class.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential unless required by law. Any data containing individually identifying information will be securely kept password protected on a computer in the researcher's office. Only the researchers will have access to the survey data collected.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to participate and can withdraw from participation without any penalty or any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can request to have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified with you, removed from the research records or destroyed.

QUESTIONS

The researchers can be contacted for any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project. See contact information for the researcher at the top of the page. Additional questions, concerns or complaints regarding your rights as a research participant or in the event of a research related injury should be addressed to The IRB Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, GA 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; e-Mail address: irb@uga.edu.

Appendix E

QUALITATIVE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I agree to take part in a research study titled "Career consultation in the classroom: An outcome study on the effects of combining a career course with individual graduate student led career consultation sessions." The aim of this study is to examine the effects of a career education class when students receive one-on-one career consultation from students registered in a graduate level career counseling class. Attitudes and decisions of course participants in regard to major selection and career path will be gauged. While research exists evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions, little research has been done on the effects of combining successful career interventions. The study will determine whether or not students enrolled in an ECHD 2050 receiving career consultation sessions show greater career decidedness compared to students registered in an ECHD 2050 course not receiving the consultation sessions.

The study is being conducted by Rodney L. Parks, a doctoral student in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, who can be reached at 706-542-8762 or via email at rlparks@uga.edu. The research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Yvette Getch, Associate Professor, Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, who may be reached at 706-542-1812 or via email at ygetch@uga.edu. I do not have to take part in this study. I can refuse to take part or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The purpose of the study is to gain a more complete picture of the issues associated with career decision-making process and how students view the experiences of undergraduate students enrolled in an academic and career planning course including five career consultation sessions conducted by graduate students enrolled in an advanced career development course.

I will not benefit directly from this research. However, my participation in this study may advance the available literature on college majors and the relationship between majors and careers.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1. A series of two audio taped interviews will be conducted the last month of classes during the fall 2010 semester. Each interview should last approximately 60 minutes.
2. I will receive compensation of $10.00 in cash for each interview that I give for a maximum of $20.00.
3. I will be asked to review a typed transcript for accuracy following each interview.
4. I understand that I may elect not to answer any question without having to explain why.

No discomforts or stresses are expected. No risks are expected to any participant. The results of this participation will be confidential and only the research will be aware of my identity. Audio tapes will not be publically disseminated. Only the CI and transcriptionist will have access to the audio tapes. Once the audio tapes are transcribed, audio tapes will be destroyed. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: 706-542-8762.

My signature below indicated that the research has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction, I am at least 18 years of age, and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date   Signature of Researcher   Date
                                                          Rodney L. Parks, (706) 542-8762
                                                          rlparks@uga.edu

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant, should be addressed to The IRB Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, GA 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; e-Mail address: irb@uga.edu.

Appendix F

CAREER DECISION SCALE EXCERPT

Name		Date of Birth
Age		Class/Grade

REMEMBER- 4 is *exactly like me*, 3 is *very much like me*, 2 is *only slightly like me*, and 1 is *not at all like me*

CIRCLE ANSWER

Like Me   Not Like Me

4   3   2   1

1. If I had the skills of the opportunity, I know I would be a _____ but this choice is really not possible for me. I haven't given much consideration to any other alternatives.

    Like Me   Not Like Me

    4   3   2   1

2. Several careers have equal appeal to me. I'm having a difficult time deciding among them.

    Like Me   Not Like Me

    4   3   2   1

3. I know I will have to go to work eventually, but none of the careers I know about appeal to me.

    Like Me   Not Like Me

    4   3   2   1

Only 3 questions permitted for reprint by authors.

Appendix G

CAREER FACTORS INVENTORY EXCERPT

Name_____   Date_____

Directions: *To respond to each item, you must circle the NUMBER that best indicates how you feel. For example, if you strong agree with the item, you would circle the number 5 as illustrated below*

---

1. Before choosing or entering a particular career, I need to gain practical knowledge of different jobs through as much work experience as possible.

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

2. Before choosing or entering a particular career area, I need to answer, what are my personal values?

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

3. When I think about actually deciding for sure what I want my career to be, I feel.

    Relaxed   1   2   3   4   5   Tense

4. While making most decisions, I am:

    Relaxed   1   2   3   4   5   Tense

*Only 4 questions permitted for reprint by authors.

Appendix H

QUALITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe your experience of meeting one-on-one with the graduate students for the career consultation sessions?

2. How would you describe the role of a major in your life at this point in time? Has your career goals changed as a result of taking this course? Why do you think this is so?

3. What thing did you consider before choosing a major? Why?

4. What aspects of choosing a major did you discuss with your assigned graduate student?

5. How would you describe the relationship between majors and careers? Why?

6. How would you describe your relationship with your graduate student?

7. What role did your assigned graduate student play in your major/career decision making process?

8. Do you feel the career consultation sessions were worthwhile? Why?

9. What aspects of the course structure would you change, if any? Why?

10. What benefit did you get out of the career consultation sessions?

Appendix I

QUANTITATIVE INTAKE SHEET

ECHD 2050 – Academic and Career Planning
Intake Sheet

Please fill out the demographic sheet by choosing the answer that best represents yourself and placing your answer on the blank line.

1. What is your gender?_____

    (1) Male   (2) Female   (3) Other (Please Specify)

2. What ethnicity/race do you consider yourself?_____

    (1) Asian   (2) African American/Black (3) Hispanic/Latino(a)

    (4) Middle Eastern   (5) Native American (6) Pacific Islander

    (7) European American/White   (8) Bi-racial   (9) Other – Please specify

3. What is your current year in school?_____

    (1) Freshman   (2) Sophomore   (3) Junior

    (4) Senior   (5) Fifth Year   (6) Other – Please specify

4. What is your age?_____

5. Have you decided on a major?_____

    (1) Yes   (2) No

    If yes, please specify your major/area of study: _____

6. Have you ever participated in an individual/group career counseling session?_____

    (1) Yes   (2) No

Appendix J

DATA COLLECTION SCRIPT

1. Thank you for taking the time to consider my research project. My name is Rodney Parks and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Counseling and Human Development.

2. The title of my research is "Career consultation in the classroom: An outcome study on the effects of combining a career course with individual graduate student led career consultation sessions."

3. The aim of this study is to examine the effects of a career education class when students receive one-on-one career consultation from students registered in a graduate level career counseling class. Attitudes and decisions of course participants in regard to major selection and career path will be gauged. While research exists evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions, little research has been done on the effects of combining successful career interventions. The study will determine whether or not students enrolled in an ECHD 2050 receiving career consultation sessions show greater career decidedness compared to students registered in an ECHD 2050 course not receiving the consultation sessions.

4. There are a few things that I must tell you upfront:

    a. You do not have to take part in this study.

    b. You can stop participating at any point without penalty.

    c. You can ask for me to return any of the forms you fill out or have them destroyed.

    d. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

    e. You will not benefit directly from this research, but those who come after you may benefit through what is revealed by this study.

    f. No discomforts, stress, or risk is associated with this study.

    g. Results of this study will be confidential.

5. If you choose to volunteer for this study, you will be asked to do the following:

    a. Participate in the pretest today and the posttest during the last two weeks of this class.

    b. Read and agree to the consent form provided.

    c. Complete a total of 6 surveys. Three are included in the pretest today and 3 are included in the posttest at the end of the quarter.

    d. The questionnaires should take approximately 30 minutes to fill out and include both open-ended and circled-response questions.

6. Are there any questions?

7.   I will now hand out the survey packets.

8. After opening your packets, please read the consent form. The consent form is yours to keep.

9. The entire survey follows with 3 sections.

    a. The intake summary sheet.

    b. The Career Decision Scale.

    c. The Career Factors Inventory.

10. Directions are provided in writing at the beginning of each survey.

11. I will be available to answer any questions as you fill out the survey, just raise your hand.

12. Are there any questions before we begin?