

*REACCULTURATION OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN IN A FRESHMAN  
ORIENTATION COURSE*

---

A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

---

by  
MICHELE LITCHY  
Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, Dissertation Supervisor  
May 2013

© Copyright by Michele Litchy 2013

All Rights Reserved

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the  
dissertation entitled

*REACCULTURATION OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN IN A FRESHMAN*  
*ORIENTATION COURSE*

presented by Michele Litchy,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of education,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Dr. Cynthia MacGregor

---

Dr. Beth Hurst

---

Dr. Denise Baumann

---

Dr. Kim Finch

---

Dr. Thomas Lane

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. MacGregor for her assistance with my academic research. If not for her aid, this work may not have been completed.

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their time and expertise. I appreciate all their knowledge and support.

I would like to thank the faculty and staff in the University of Missouri Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis for their patience and understanding during this experience.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued support and patience throughout this process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION TO STUDY.....	1
Background.....	2
Conceptual Underpinnings.....	9
Statement of the Problem.....	13
Purpose of the Study.....	17
Description of the Course.....	18
Research Questions.....	18
Limitations, Assumptions, Design Controls.....	19
Definitions of Key Terms.....	20
<i>Reacculturation</i> .....	21
Culture.....	21
Knowledge Community.....	21
Standard or Normal Discourse.....	22
Nonstandard or Boundary Discourse.....	22
Transition or Community Group.....	22
Definitions of Subscales.....	23

	Connectedness.....	23
	Communication.....	23
	Anxiety.....	23
	Trust.....	24
	Modification of Beliefs.....	24
	Ambivalence.....	24
	Intent to Stay.....	24
	Chapter Summary.....	24
2.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	27
	The Culture of American High Schools.....	28
	The Culture of American Universities.....	33
	History of University Guidance in America.....	36
	Development of the Freshman Orientation Course.....	38
	Retention of Freshman Students.....	40
	Intent to Stay.....	43
	<i>Reacculturation</i> .....	46
	Connectedness.....	48
	Communication.....	50
	Anxiety.....	51
	Trust.....	52
	Modification of Beliefs.....	53
	Ambivalence.....	54
	Intent to Stay.....	55

Chapter Summary.....	57
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	60
Research Questions.....	63
Ethics.....	64
Pilot Study Design.....	64
Pilot Study Population and Sample.....	65
Pilot Study Data Collection and Instrumentation.....	65
Pilot Survey.....	65
Pilot Study Data Analysis.....	66
Pilot Study Summary.....	67
Study Design.....	68
Study Population and Sample.....	68
Study Data Collection and Instrumentation.....	69
Litchy Scale of <i>Reacculturation</i> .....	69
Study Data Analysis.....	69
Study Summary.....	71
Chapter Summary.....	71
4. RESULTS.....	73
Introduction.....	73
Demographics.....	74
Research Questions Findings.....	75
Research Question One.....	75
Research Question Two.....	76

Research Question Three.....	77
Research Question Four.....	80
Chapter Summary .....	83
5. DISCUSSION.....	86
Introduction.....	86
Conclusions.....	87
Discussion.....	90
<i>Reacculturation</i> .....	91
Connectedness.....	92
Communication.....	93
Anxiety.....	94
Trust.....	96
Modification of Beliefs.....	97
Ambivalence.....	98
Intent to Stay.....	98
Limitations.....	102
Implications for Future Practice.....	104
Recommendations for Future Research.....	107
REFERENCES.....	112
APPENDICES.....	123
VITA.....	149

## LIST OF APPENDIES

Appendix	Page
A. Factors Which Influenced the <i>FYE</i> Movement in Higher Education.....	123
B. Efforts Made to Improve Conditions for Incoming Freshmen Students.....	124
C. USC, University 101 Goals to Promote Student Retention.....	125
D. Van Gennep's (1960) Rites of Passage as Simplified by Tinto (1987).....	126
E. Human Participants Protection Review.....	127
F. Request to Enter the Department.....	128
G. Request to Enter the Classroom.....	129
H. Informed Consent Letter.....	130
I. Standardized Instructions.....	131
J. Pilot Survey Instrument.....	132
K. Item Total Correlations for Connectedness Scale of Pilot Study.....	138
L. Item Total Correlations for Communication Scale of Pilot Study.....	139
M. Item Total Correlations for Anxiety Scale of Pilot Study.....	140
N. Item Total Correlations for Trust Scale of Pilot Study.....	141
O. Item Total Correlations for Modification of Beliefs Scale of Pilot Study....	142
P. Item Total Correlations for Ambivalence Scale of Pilot Study.....	143
Q. Item Total Correlations for Intent to Stay Scale of Pilot Study.....	144
R. Litchy Scale of <i>Reacculturation</i> and Intent to Stay.....	145

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Pre-test and Post-test Likert Scale Results.....	80
2. Bivariate Scatter Plot.....	82

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Cronbach's Alpha Results from Pilot Study.....	67
2. <i>Reacculturation</i> of Pre-Test Participants.....	76
3. <i>Reacculturation</i> of Post-test Participants.....	77
4. <i>Reacculturation</i> of Pre-and Post-test Participants.....	78
5. <i>Reacculturation</i> of Pre-and Post-test Participants.....	79
6. Correlations of <i>Reacculturation</i> Subscales.....	81
7. Cronbach's Alpha Results for Revised Litchy Scale of <i>Reacculturation</i> and Intent to Stay.....	83
8. Predictive Ability of Positive Correlations.....	89
9. Predictive Ability of Negative Correlations.....	90

## Abstract

According to Sparks (2011), “the cost of college is increasing faster than inflation with the government funding over 19 million student loans....Congress is demanding answers from colleges and universities about the quality of their education and the return on the government’s investment”(p. 1). According to Bruffee (1999), the current construct of education does not prepare graduates to interact with other human beings on substantive issues because they are not reacculturated. Bruffee explained, these complaints about the success of student outcome in higher education will persist until universities make changes to view themselves as “institutions of reacculturation” who “foster reacculturation” among students and who revise assumptions about classroom culture (p. xii). Gardner (1986) wrote, the *FYE* is a deliberate “attempt to provide a rite of passage” (p. 266) as well as “help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267). Intent to stay is important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2). Bruffee (1999) theorized, if freshmen students experience (a) a connected environment, (b) are exposed to boundary discourse, (c) reduced anxiety, (d) a trusting atmosphere, (e) where they can modify their beliefs to fit those of the new knowledge community, and (f) overcome their feelings of uncertainty or ambivalence, the result is *reacculturation* and they will have an increased intent to stay.

After researching, developing, and pilot testing an instrument to measure the desired variables, a final causal-comparative study was completed (Frankel & Wallen, 2003) to explore the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of incoming freshmen students

both before and after participation in a freshman orientation course to look for relationships that may exist between the variables of *reacculturation* and intent to stay. Results of this study seemed to show that *reacculturation* did not occur for the participants during the course in question. Results from analysis showed no statistical differences from Pre-test to Post-test. A correlation matrix showed statistically significant relationships, however not all significance had predictive value. Bivariate Linear Regression results suggested, of the six variables of *reacculturation*, Ambivalence was the best predictor of Intent to Stay. The inverse relationship between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay accounted for over a quarter of the variance in Intent to Stay, indicating that as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased. Additionally, a Cronbach's alpha analysis found all item-total correlations in this analysis were greater than .75 indicating the instrument is reliable.

Many authors have written about college student attrition as related to institutional policy (Astin, 1993; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bruffee, 1999; Durkheim, 1951; Noel, 1985; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975, 1986, 1987; Upcraft, Gardner & Associates, 1989). According to Bruffee (1999), one approach to institutional policy on persistence is to look towards modifying the social and intellectual environment of the institution and generating alternative means for the *reacculturation* of students into the pre-existing social and intellectual culture of the university. Determining the key components of the process of *reacculturation*, as this research has done, can be a good place to start for many institutions in restructuring the current social and intellectual integration process, i.e., their freshman orientation courses.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction to the Study

According to Gardner (1986), a phenomena known as the “*freshman year experience*” (*FYE*) (p. 261) has occurred “in American higher education” (p. 261) that has changed higher learning for freshmen students. For many years, experts have advocated for special attention, efforts, and resources to be shifted towards the first years of the higher education experience with several goals in mind for these students. The first-year experience or *freshman year experience* is a deliberate “attempt to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (Gardner, p. 266) into the university culture. The *FYE* has subsequently developed into a marketing tool used by institutions. The *FYE* “is a deliberate series of experiences which are provided for students after they have arrived during the time when they are making that second critical decision as to whether or not to stay or leave the institution” (Gardner, p. 267). The *FYE* is ultimately intended to help students make a smooth transition into higher education. Marketing the institution through the *FYE*, institutions also hope to increase the students’ intent to stay. Gardner (1986) explained that institutions are attempting *second sale*, a marketing term “in which institutions are trying to help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267). Intent to stay is important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

Since the *FYE* movement began, orientation programs have become mainstream in higher education. Courses or programs of this type go by various names but generally share common characteristics (Tinto, 1990). Some examples of similar courses are “freshman learning community (FLC) or freshman interest group (FIG)” (Jaffee, 2007, p. 65), peer cohort freshman orientation, freshman seminar, freshman mentoring program, retention program, and freshman transition.

Bruffee (1999) developed a theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of *reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, p. 298) as in moving from high school to college and all the complex learning and changing that such a process involves. To study the *FYE* from the perspective of the *reacculturation* process, this study examined the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee’s theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic factor of students’ intent to stay (Chasteen, 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999).

### *Background*

In 1550, “the word *freshman* first appeared in the English language” and was used to define any “newcomer or a novice” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 25). In the 1590s, the term became used in “reference to first-year students in an English university” (Dwyer, p. 26). The first young men who became freshmen lived in halls with other freshmen and organized, to strengthen their position through alliances. The organized freshmen gained power in negotiating with “landlords, merchants, city officials, and even the faculty” (Dwyer, p. 26). Incoming freshmen in European and American institutions were

“initiated [when] older students hoaxed and tormented the freshman, then welcomed him as a comrade” (Dwyer, p. 27). During the welcoming, freshman initiation was celebrated through symbolic ceremony. Unfortunately, freshmen were also often victims of “discrimination, humiliation, or pain” and such hazing became “a major concern for university officials” (Dwyer, p. 27). Changes began occurring in higher education during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and, based on changing knowledge, many European universities began to alter their curriculum and the experience for freshman students.

American universities developing in the 1600s were also influenced by technological changes of the times. The invention of movable type and the “increased availability of books” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 28) resulted in many changes in freshman life. Before the Revolution, colleges in America were intended to train young men to become civic leaders. Harvard began training the first American freshmen in the fall of 1638. After 1640, Harvard “arranged for a tutor or graduate student” (Dwyer, p. 30) to mentor the freshman students intending to ease the “transition from home to college” (Dwyer, p. 30).

College life during this period was quite personal; a freshman student “met his master, sought his advice and counsel, and moved from the study of one subject to another under the master’s singular direction” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 30). Typically, a group of young freshmen were taught “every subject, as a class, for four years” (Dwyer, p. 30). There was a sense of belonging and “togetherness” (Dwyer, p. 30) as the freshman class “spent four years living, working, and playing together, learning the same subjects from the same tutor, and eating at the same hall” (Dwyer, p. 30). The early American college

freshman experience consisted of hazing and exploitation by older students, but there was also a strong sense of camaraderie and belonging between fellow freshmen.

As colleges became more abundant in America, universities began restructuring; academic standards were increasing and freshman life was improving. Faculty members were becoming more involved with students; “tutors, masters, and professors became more specialized in their curricular offerings” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 32), giving freshmen more options and more contact with faculty, which led to greater faculty member interest in students. Faculty members at Harvard were able to reduce the exploitation of freshman students as servants and “to ameliorate the ordeal of hazing somewhat by arranging its concentration into the first days of the fall term” (Dwyer, p. 33), which became known as Freshman Week or Hell Week. Eventually, this practice, too, was abolished as faculty took other proactive positions on behalf of freshman students. Gradually, universities recognized the need for better services for freshmen.

The first female freshmen appeared in 1837, and colleges for women continued to spread across the nation. The first female freshmen were subjected to standards and curriculum similar to the men (Dwyer, 1989). By 1875, women’s institutions were already becoming more welcoming, making their freshmen “more members of a city community than a college campus” (Dwyer, p. 34). Into the 1900s, mainstream universities continued to recognize that the university atmosphere was changing but the social practices among students were resistant to change. Harvard tackled the freshman issue by constructing freshman living halls providing suites, common rooms, and dining halls where freshmen could share familiar experiences.

Early solutions to freshman problems were restricted to the areas of counseling and orientation courses (Dwyer, 1989). Despite the recognition and attempts to solve the problems that freshmen were experiencing, many attempts fell short of the mark. Universities have been providing some type of orientation for incoming freshmen students since Boston University implemented a freshmen orientation course as early as 1888. Other universities followed suit: Iowa State in 1900; Reed College in Portland, Oregon in 1911; Amherst College in 1913; and Brown in 1915. In 1911, the Carnegie Foundation made a recommendation that services be provided for all incoming freshmen (Gardner, 1986). Despite these much needed attempts, freshmen in the 1900s still identified many problems transitioning from home to school (Dwyer, 1989) indicating the programs in place were not providing the necessary solutions for freshman problems.

After World War II, the United States experienced a large increase in the numbers of students entering college (Siegel, 1968). During the 1950s, universities began again to take a more serious look at the problems with freshmen students. Many interventions were instituted at the high school level and others as early as junior high school. Programs included attempts to orient both students and parents to higher education through contact with high school and college representatives. Attempts to orient students continued with college coordinators becoming a specialized discipline within high school counseling (Siegel). In 1959, Harvard founded the most contemporary freshman seminar class to date (Gardner, 1986) showing that institutions continued to recognize and show concern for the experiences of entering freshman students.

During the 1960s, factors such as (a) as an influx of first generation college freshman, (b) increased complexity of freshman choices due to regulation and curricula

changes, (c) reduction in peer culture assisting freshmen to adapt (Dwyer, 1989), and (d) *acculturation* problems (Siegel, 1968), led to increased student hostility toward institutions of higher education in the 1970s (Gardner, 1986). In response, the University of South Carolina (USC) began a freshman course in 1972 that targeted student attitudes in an attempt to promote positive feelings and to decrease hostility toward the University (Gardner, 1986). This course was also intended as “a significant retention vehicle to combat the decline of traditional age high school graduates which would begin in the year 1981” (Gardner, p. 269). In the mid-1980s, “following the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in April of 1983” (Gardner, p. 261), the nation began to closely scrutinize undergraduate education. Several organizations published “reports which included scathing indictments of the current condition of undergraduate education in America” (Gardner, p. 261). These reports came from such institutions as: (a) The National Institute for Education, (b) The National Endowment for the Humanities, and (c) The Association of American Colleges. These reports and other similar reports made recommendations that became catalysts for a renewed emphasis on early intervention in higher education. This renewed emphasis paralleled the developing *FYE* movement. In February 1982, educators converged on USC-Columbia. This conference of educators discussed the nature of freshman orientation/seminar courses and provided “feedback that not only should such meetings be continued, but that the focus should be expanded” (Gardner, p. 262). In 1983, educators held the first National Conference on the *Freshman Year Experience*. By 1985, the conference had grown to include 700 participants from the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Gardner).

Experience over several decades has consistently indicated the need for freshman services (Dwyer, 1989; Gardner, 1986; Siegel, 1968). Many researchers and educators have recognized this need and attempted to define the problems and to develop responsive intervention programs (Bruffee, 1999; Dwyer, 1989; Gardner, 1986; Siegel, 1968; Tinto, 1990). In 1968, Siegel recognized that attempts to help students transition from high school to college needed careful and deliberate efforts on the part of universities for the following reasons:

1. Studies have shown that altogether too many freshmen lack real insight into what a college education really is.
2. The range of student motivation for entering college is very wide, and student goals are not always compatible with college expectations.
3. There is much that the entering student needs to know about the various phases of college study and college life if his attendance is to be productive.
4. Increasing numbers of entering students make all the more imperative some planned attention to the individual. (p. 132)

According to Siegel (1968), these considerations were part of an institution's task to help students make a smooth and "effective transition from high school to college [and the] device generally employed in this effort is the program of orientation" (p. 132). Siegel further noted entering freshmen are "beginning a new life in a relatively strange milieu" (p. 56), a milieu in which "he needs to be accepted; he needs to feel that someone cares.... And some reorganization of relative and self-image needs to take place" (p. 56). Siegel observed a student's social and cultural experiences in colleges are "usually much broader" (p. 56) than high school and that universities faced the task of helping to work

out freshmen “*acculturation* problems” (p. 56) while orienting them to college. In other words, universities need to be aware of and assist freshmen in the process of *reacculturation* from high school to college as part of facilitating a smooth transition into college life through some means, such as, freshman orientation.

In recent years, “the many and justifiable concerns over the costs and benefits of higher education have created an often intense dialogue” (Mazak & Manista, 2000, p. 226) often resulting in project and program developments which benefit students, faculty, and the fiscal bottom-line at colleges and universities. One such development is the integration of service learning into course content of first-year experiences (Jones, Stein & Kiser, 2008; Stavrianopoulos, 2008). “Service learning is an evolving pedagogy that incorporates student volunteering into the dynamics of experiential learning” (Stavrianopoulos, p. 703). Another area that has grown out of the financial necessity for university departments to cross borders as well as the financial necessity for increased student retention is the collaborative approach to orienting first-year students (Balasooriya, diCorpo, & Hawkins, 2010; Mazak & Manista, 2000). Jones et. al. (2008) focused on “key principles that helped...shift its academic service-learning program from the cooperative to the collaborative model” (p. 18) while Balasooriya et al. (2010) provided insight “into a key aspect of the collaborative learning and teaching process and the student behaviours that impact on it” (p. 31). In 2007, Jeong and Chi measured how much common knowledge increased after collaborative learning. Summers, Beretvas, Scinicki, and Gorin (2005) have proposed that collaborative learning supports feelings of community or connectedness as well as increasing learning, which Tinto (1990) said seems to increase student retention rates.

In his work on collaborative learning, Bruffee (1999) began to recognize the concept that freshman students arrived on campus and in “classes already deeply *acculturated*, already full-fledged, competent members (as we were, too) of some community or other. In fact, they were already members of several interrelated communities (as we were, too)” (p. 4). Individuals are usually *acculturated* to communicate and interact easily within their own crowd or their own neighborhood, family or ethnic group, limiting their ability to communicate and interact outside that realm (Sennett & Cobb, 1973). This being the case, Bruffee acknowledged that the way students “talked, wrote, and behaved” (p. 5) was entirely appropriate “within the community they were currently members of” (p. 5), and for the majority of traditional first-year freshman students, the most current membership was in the community of high school. However, in effect, their *acculturation* had “severely limited their freedom” (Bruffee, p. 6) to interact with or relate to other cultures or communities as well as limited their ability to discover their own potential. Their *acculturation* had “prepared them for social, political, and economic relations of only the narrowest sort” (Bruffee, p. 6). For these students, difficulties begin to arise when universities expect them as freshmen to talk, write, and behave as if they were members of the college community.

### *Conceptual Underpinnings*

This study arose out of the desire to understand to some degree what freshman students actually experience in a freshmen orientation course, as freshmen at a university, and interpersonally in areas affecting *reacculturation*. The philosophically conceptual task of *understanding experiences* was viewed as foundational not only to justifying the subsequent analyses of *reacculturation*, but also pivotal to creating a useful applicability

of the research. Perhaps clarification of the philosophy of *understanding experiences* “can be found in commonplace, culturally-shared definitions of these terms” (Alexander, Winter, Loughlin, & Grossnickle, 2012, p. 3). Simply, everyday individuals interpret and apply concepts and categories to experiences when they want to *understand experiences*. In order to interpret or apply concepts and categories, it was necessary to determine a framework to apply or *language* with which to interpret. The framework or conceptual underpinnings as explained in this chapter arose from the author’s interpretation of Bruffee (1999), as well as many other supplemental readings, and is strongly influenced by the author’s background in the study and practice of psychology and counseling.

According to Bruffee (1999), “knowledge is consensus: it is something people construct interdependently by talking together” (p. 133). If this assumption is to be held as true, then conversation is the key to knowledge. If conversation initiates knowledge, and the goal of education is to obtain knowledge, then, according to Bruffee, the goal of education is to stimulate conversation, which becomes transformed into thought and thought, in turn, becomes again conversation. This notion that conversation stimulates thought and vice versa is based on the philosophy of Thomas Khun, or the Khunian assumption, that society produces conversation that constructs that society’s knowledge and thought (Bruffee). The assumption that conversation is knowledge challenges the foundational understanding of knowledge. The foundational premise assumes that knowledge is based on there being a ground or base “beneath or behind what we know, on which all knowledge is built” (Bruffee, p. 294). Furthermore, the assumption that conversation is knowledge challenges the nonfoundational understanding of knowledge. The nonfoundational premise “assumes that knowledge has no foundations, internal or

external. People construct what we call knowledge out of the various languages available” (Bruffee, p. 294). If neither premise is accepted, an alternate assumption can provide a construct for interpreting and understanding freshman students’ experiences when entering into the new society or culture of higher education (Bruffee).

Bruffee (1999) contended “the school of thought called nonfoundational social construction” (p. 294) is most consistent with the notion that conversation is knowledge. Being a nonfoundational social constructionist implies the view that knowledge lodges “in the conversation that goes on among the members of a community of knowledgeable peers and in the conversation of mankind” (Bruffee, p. 153). Accepting this premise as true provides a unique basis for interpreting and ultimately attempting to understand what freshman students actually experience when entering into the society or culture of higher education. This study was strongly influenced theoretically by Bruffee’s definition of the “nonfoundational social constructionist understanding of knowledge” (p. 153).

This study was developed and can be understood best if the concepts are defined and understood through the nonfoundational social constructionist (Bruffee, 1999) lens. The nature of *reacculturation* as examined in this research was analyzed and conceptualized as the fundamental process which high school students entering college as freshmen undergo during their first freshman semester. This process is esoteric and complex, and therefore, must be dissected into measurable concepts for the purposes of collecting data.

First, to understand *reacculturation* requires defining the features. Not only is *reacculturation* defined as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 298), but it involves “giving up, modifying, or renegotiating the language,

values, knowledge, mores and so on that are constructed, established, and maintained by the community one is coming from, and becoming fluent instead in the language and so on of another community” (p. 298). This process involves many difficult to define and measure components that have been compartmentalized for the purposes of understanding and measuring the process. Specifically, *reacculturation* for this research has been conceptualized and defined in terms of six key variables. In addition to the six defining variables, a seventh variable has been linked to *reacculturation* to determine its projected implications for retention or persistence.

One facet of the process of *reacculturation* is ambivalence. Ambivalence in freshmen college students may be evidenced by feeling uncertain or being immobilized due to conflicting thoughts or fluctuating feelings which may manifest behaviorally as resistance to change. Anxiety is a second facet of *reacculturation* and refers to the stressful and uncomfortable nature of expressing one’s thoughts or opinions openly and honestly especially in disagreement with others or in a group situation. This anxiety often presents as nervousness about forming one’s own opinions or about accepting the opinion of others. The third component is the idea of connectedness. As a freshman college student, this might be demonstrated as feeling connected or that one *fits in*, enjoying interaction with others, sharing commonalities, and the presence of reciprocal acceptance. The fourth element is communication or the valuable oral exchange of information or ideas. Successful communication might be evidenced by comprehension, honesty and openness, ease of expression and understanding, or feeling that everyone *speaks the same language*, and the continual reflection on one’s oral interactions with others. The fifth facet is the notion that for one to be *reacculturated*, it is fundamental that one has first an

awareness of, and second comes to alter or modify, his/her beliefs to some degree. In freshmen students this could be visible as willingness to consider one's views or opinions and, through experience, be willing to change those views and think differently as necessary. The sixth component of *reacculturation* is trust. Trust implies confidence and dependability. Freshmen students often demonstrate their faith in others through allowing and accepting feedback from peers and instructors. Through offering their own opinion, they indicate they are trusting, and they believe others care about their thoughts and feelings. Freshmen also often display trust through depending or relying on others in various group situations.

A seventh variable has been linked to *reacculturation* to determine its projected implications for retention or persistence. This final variable is intent to stay. Whether first semester freshmen students intend to continue or persist at their institution of choice is related to Bruffee's (1999) theory that individuals who are sincere about gaining membership in a desired new knowledge community will persist until they are *reacculturated* into that community. If intent to stay at an institution and desire to be *reacculturated* are related, then the variable features of *reacculturation* may be indicators of students' intent to stay.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

In today's world, it is common to hear dialogue regarding the cost of colleges and universities (Fonte, 2011; Sparks, 2011; Vedder & Gillen, 2011). Individuals, as well as governments, have begun questioning whether the value of education is worth the price of student loans: "The cost of college is increasing faster than inflation with the government funding over 19 million student loans....Congress is demanding answers

from colleges and universities about the quality of their education and the return on the government's investment" (Sparks, p. 1). Parents might wonder also about the value of the education they are purchasing for their children. In the past decade, Bruffee (1999) considered the question: Are college and university educations worth it? If it is accepted that seeking an education is the pursuit of knowledge, then, in thinking about education, it is important to consider how individuals gain knowledge, what is the origin of knowledge, and why is knowledge important. To an individual, the nature of knowledge can be understood as philosophical or deeply meaningful, concrete or real, and personal or relative to each person. Given then the nature of knowledge, it starts to become evident that individual beliefs about knowledge influence and affect behavior, and define the construct of education and learning on the sides of both the students and the educators (Bruffee, 1999). When examining college and university educations through this lens, Bruffee identified as a problem that the current construct of education does not prepare graduates to interact with others on issues with practical importance.

According to Bruffee (1999), universities, professionals, and employers consistently complain that undergraduates and graduates are "authority-dependent, passive, irresponsible, overly competitive, and suspicious of their peers" (p. xi). Bruffee indicated typical college graduates are prepared to do well "at computers, in a library carrel, at a lab bench. What they cannot do is interact with other human beings on substantive issues. And, typically, a college or university education does not help them learn to do that" (p. xii). It is arguable that "one mission of educators is to help young people move into adulthood with the skills necessary to be successful members of society" (Montgomery & Hirth, 2011, p. 245). Tinto (1990) believes the key to retention

of college students is the commitment to student education. Yet college graduates cannot “interact with other human being on substantive issues” (Bruffee, p. xii) because they are not *reacculturated*. In fact, it seems to follow there is no value added through education, and the financial return on investment in college education may not be worth the risk (Sparks, 2011). Bruffee (1999) asserted “these complaints will persist” (p.xii) until universities make changes to view themselves as “institutions of *reacculturation* [who] foster *reacculturation*” (p. xii) among students and who revise assumptions about classroom culture. An effective time for institutions of higher learning to intervene with this pattern and begin to foster a more productive skill set seems to be the first semester of students’ collegiate experience (Disbro, 1995; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1987). History has made higher education more aware of the need to implement changes to the way incoming freshman students are initiated, most recently evidenced by the *FYE* movement from which the concept of the freshman orientation course has arisen.

Since the mid to late 1980s, the *FYE* movement has grown (Gardner, 1986). Some scholars and theorists have continued to write about and study the phenomenon of this movement, specifically the concept of freshman orientation courses. Many educators continue to give their perspective on why freshman orientation is such an important concept to arise from this movement, and some have examined if, why, and how freshman orientation courses are successful (Clark & Cundiff, 2011; Gardner, 1986; Howard & Jones, 2000; Jaffee, 2007; Miller, Dyer & Nadler, 2002; Schwitzer, McGovern & Robbins, 1991; Tinto, 1990). There seems to be general consensus among administrators and faculty that freshman orientation courses are necessary and helpful as they “have become an institutionalized feature of the higher-education landscape”

(Jaffee, 2007, p. 1). However, professionals sometimes disagree about what are the necessary components that make such courses successful in terms of the student's needs and in terms of student persistence (Astin, 1993; Astin, Korn, & Green, 1987; Clark & Cundiff, 2009; Miller et al., 2002; Schwizer et al., 1991). Additionally, research shows that freshman orientation courses can seem to take on the politics of an organization and the desires of the administration which might often be far removed from the actual social and academic needs of the students (Blimling & Whitt, 1998; Goodwin & Markham, 1996; Greenlaw, Anliker, & Barker, 1997; Lamadrid, 1999; Reason, Cox, Lutovsky Quaye, & Terenzini, 2010; Schroeder, 1999; Whitt, Nesheim, Guentzel, & Kellogg, 2008).

When administrators and educators are determining if freshmen are having positive first-year experiences and persisting at institutions, these individuals might consider whether freshmen are becoming *reacculturated*. Bruffee (1999) attempted to explain that *reacculturation* is an important academic and personal issue that plays out in college life, affects the way individuals think and behave, is important to the state of higher education and the productivity of graduates. Chasteen (2005) pointed out the important implications for marketing an institutions features and services. Accepting this as accurate, institutions are, regrettably, faced with the reality of a severely limited amount of research that exists about the *reacculturation* of college freshmen. This study proposes the following problems for research: (a) there is a lack of instrumentation designed to measure *reacculturation*, (b) there is a lack of research investigating whether taking a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and (c)

there is a lack of research examining the relationships between *reacculturation* and intent to stay.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to better understand students' experiences in a freshmen orientation course, as freshmen at a university, and interpersonally in areas affecting *reacculturation*. To achieve this, the goal is to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation*, to determine if taking a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and to assess what relationships exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay. Specifically, this study attempted to examine the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee's (1999) theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to students' intent to stay, important because administrators realize "it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one" (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

A specific purpose of this study is to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation*, to determine if a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay. To examine the research questions and test the hypotheses of this theory, an instrument was developed and pilot tested. After piloting, the instrument was re-evaluated and administered to matched subjects in a freshman orientation course at Midwestern University (a pseudonym chosen to protect the anonymity of the university).

### *Description of the Course*

The freshman orientation course at Midwestern University is a general education requirement that should be completed during the first semester of each student's enrollment. The course is one credit hour and can be waived in special circumstances. Honors students at this university take an alternate orientation course (University website, 2006).

Specifically, this freshman orientation course "supports students in the acclimation and adjustment to university life" (University website, 2006, Mission Statement). This freshman orientation course is designed to enhance student "appreciation of higher education, [help in] acquiring academic skills [instill] a positive attitude toward learning, [aid in] exploring career opportunities, [promote clarification of] personal values, [increase] critical thinking skills, [and] further the appreciation of diversity" (University website, 2006, Mission Statement). There are approximately 115 sections of this freshman orientation course, and each course seats approximately 10-20 students (University website, 2006).

### *Research Questions*

Within the format of this study, the following research questions were explored:

1. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of entering freshmen?
2. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of freshmen after a freshman orientation course?
3. Does taking a freshman orientation course improve *reacculturation* and intent to stay in college for college freshmen?
4. Which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay?

### *Limitations, Assumptions, and Design Controls*

This study is limited because it is based on the author's interpretation of the primary literature. Other interpretations of this literature are possible, thus limiting the understanding of this study and its results. Furthermore, as literature on the specific notion of *reacculturation* is scarce, it was quite difficult to triangulate and thereby validate definitions and constructs. This being the case, clearly there was no available instrument with which to measure the presented variables further limiting the design of the research. The researcher was faced with the desire and the necessity to design and to pilot a completely new instrument for measurement, i.e., The Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay. The design of the instrument is limited by the author's conceptualization of the topic, and the author's experience and ability as a statistician.

Furthermore, the orientation program studied is unique to the university involved, limiting the generalization of findings to other institutions and programs. The study was also limited to examining only the research questions over the duration of the course in question. If the study had been conducted longitudinally, the results may have had more reliability. Longitudinal research designs are relatively rare in the academic literature despite their tremendous methodological rigor and scientific utility. Campbell, Sprague, Cottrill and Sullivan (2011) expressed the benefits of longitudinal research as: "longitudinal designs offer the possibility of establishing causality by examining temporal effects and ruling out confounding explanations" (p. 434) resulting in increased validity and reliability. Finally, the statistical procedures involved, specifically multiple regression analysis, is limited in that it predicts variables according to their

intercorrelation with other variables, possibly causing significant variables to appear non-significant.

The author attempted to establish controls for the aforementioned limitations. First, the author attempted to become immersed in the primary literature in order to gain a clear and solid understanding while acknowledging personal biases through which the literature was interpreted. Second, the author has attempted to triangulate understanding through discussion with peers and experts and through additional literature supplemental to the primary sources. Third, when presented with the fact that no suitable instrument existed, the author began the quest to learn how to design a statistically valid and reliable measurement. Fourth, the author sought expert help in the design of said instrument. Fifth, the author pilot tested this instrument to determine the usability of the measure before conducting the study. Sixth, the author attempted to use the most suitable statically relevant methods despite the intrinsic limitations and present those results in the most user-friendly format. Finally, the author has maintained contact and collaboration with experts and colleagues to ensure this study is presented in such a way that readers are aware of the limitations, assumptions, and control attempts.

#### *Definitions of Key Terms*

As previously indicated, there is a scarcity of available literature and research involving the constructs presented in this study. The variables measured, and the instrument designed and used in measurement, have evolved from the author's understanding and conceptualization of the basic terms involved. Many of these basic terms and conceptualizations have not been discussed in conjunction with one another in the available literature. The complexity of the interconnections between variables

measured and their understanding for the purpose of this study indicated the necessity to concretely and operationally define the key terms.

### *Reacculturation*

For the purpose of this study, *reacculturation* is defined by Bruffee (1999) as “switching membership from one culture to another” (p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. Bruffee explained *reacculturation* as learning which involves “giving up, modifying, or renegotiating the language, values, knowledge, mores and so on that are constructed, established, and maintained by the community one is coming from, and becoming fluent instead in the language and so on of another community” (p. 298).

### *Culture*

For the purpose of this study culture is defined as “how individuals feel about an institution, the authority system, member’s involvement and commitment, and an institution’s climate” (Schein, 2000, p. xxiii). Culture is shared meanings and experiences that are interpreted and accepted as reality (Schein, 2000; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000) by the members of the organization.

### *Knowledge Community*

For the purpose of this study, knowledge community or discourse community is defined by Bruffee (1999) as a “sociocultural entity” (p. 296), “a group of people with similar interests and goals who constitute themselves with a characteristic language” (p. 296). Knowledge communities can be formally or informally organized but all have a characteristic language satisfying the salient “need to identify other members and the ability to do so unequivocally” (Bruffee, p. 296). According to Bruffee, the condition exists that there is “interdependence of community members” (p. 296) in that they

“depend on one another for our identity; some would say we even depend on one another for what we call our *self*” (p. 296).

#### *Standard or Normal Discourse*

For the purpose of this study, standard or normal discourse is defined by Bruffee (1999) as the “characteristic language of a knowledge community” (p. 296). The standard discourse may be “highly distinguished from other languages and easily recognizable by outsiders...or it may be distinguished only subtly from everyday speech” (Bruffee, p. 296). Bruffee wrote, “when we *speak the same language*, normal discourse is the language we speak” (p. 296). An example is the highly distinct language spoken within the computer information discipline.

#### *Nonstandard or Boundary Discourse*

For the purpose of this study, nonstandard discourse or boundary discourse is defined by Bruffee (1999) as what occurs in conversation or “negotiation between those who know and accept a community’s values and conventions and those who do not” (p. 296). An example of nonstandard or boundary discourse is a conversation between a high school student and a physics professor.

#### *Transition or Community Group*

For the purpose of this study, transition community or group is defined by Bruffee (1999) as “an ad hoc community that people organize in order to *reacculturate* themselves” (p. 298). This group offers support during the transition from a knowledge community one already belongs to and a community where they do not yet belong. A class orientating freshman students into college is an attempt by universities to mobilize

the creation of ad hoc community groups, for example independent social or study groups that evolve from students meeting in orientation courses.

*Definitions of Subscales of Reacculturation and Intent to Stay*

In order to interpret or apply concepts and categories, it was necessary to determine a framework to apply or *language* with which to interpret. The *language* or conceptual definitions as explained in this section arose from the author's interpretation of Bruffee (1999), as well as many other supplemental readings including everyday individual definitions. Clarification of the esoteric and complex terms "can be found in commonplace, culturally-shared definitions of these terms" (Alexander, Winter, Loughlin, & Grossnickle, 2012, p. 3). These concepts found repeatedly throughout document will be addressed in more detail from scholarly sources in future chapters.

*Connectedness.* For the purpose of this study, connectedness is defined as social and intellectual engagement (Bruffee, 1999) with something or someone. An example is the nature of relationships between members of a sports team.

*Communication.* For the purpose of this study, communication between humans "is said to occur when one organism encodes information into a signal that is transmitted to another organism that decodes the signal" (Shanker & King, 2002, p.605). According to Bruffee (1999), the conversation or communication of *reacculturation* occurs through language both externally as when individuals converse in a group, and internally when individuals talk to themselves and begin to "think productively, in a new way" (p. 11).

*Anxiety.* For the purpose of this study, anxiety refers to the stressful nature of "coming to terms with differences between firmly held beliefs and modifying them"

(Bruffee, 1999, p. 18). This anxiety often presents as apprehension or fear (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998).

*Trust.* For the purpose of this study, trust is defined as placing confidence in someone or something to the degree that one is willing to believe or have faith. According to Bruffee (1999), *reacculturation* requires trust to be willing to “grant authority to peers,” “accept the authority granted to oneself by peers,” (p. 12) and be interdependent with peers.

*Modification of beliefs.* For the purpose of this study, the modification of a person’s beliefs can be defined as a change in opinion and feelings brought about by negotiation which occurs in conversation (Bruffee, 1999).

*Ambivalence.* For the purpose of this study, ambivalence is defined as conflicting, inconsistent attitudes or feelings when evaluating an object or event (Baek, 2010) or “about engaging in conversation” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 12) which would ultimately lead to *reacculturation*. Ambivalence can result in delayed or hesitant behaviors (Baek), which Bruffee explained are manifested as resistance to change.

*Intent to stay.* For the purpose of this study, intent to stay is defined as having “attitude toward an action” (Fullerton, Kendrick & McKinnon, 2013, p. 34) in this case, the action to continue or remain. In terms of Bruffee’s (1999) theory of *reacculturation*, intent to stay can be explained as planning to persist until gaining membership into the desired new knowledge community.

### *Chapter Summary*

This chapter introduced the first-year experience or *freshman year experience (FYE)* in colleges as a deliberate “attempt to provide a *rite of passage* in which students

are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (Gardner, 1986, p. 266) into the university culture. The *FYE* is intended to help students make a smooth transition into higher education while institutions also hope to increase the students’ intent to stay. This chapter proposed there is a deficit in research examining what the *rite of passage*, assimilation, or transition into higher education is actually composed of or means to freshman students.

This chapter introduced Bruffee’s (1999) theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of *reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. This chapter proposed research is needed to better understand the experiences of students in freshman orientation courses from the perspective of the *reacculturation* process. This will be achieved by examining the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee’s theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic factor of students’ intent to stay. The research goal was to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation* and intent to stay in order to determine if taking a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and to assess which relationships, if any exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay.

In the decades since the *FYE* movement began, orientation programs have become mainstream in higher education. For many years, experts have advocated for special attention, efforts, and resources to be shifted towards the first years of the higher education experience with several goals in mind for these students. To better understand

freshman orientation programs, as well as the process of *reacculturation*, chapter two will thoroughly examine the past and current research available on these topics.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature review

According to Gardner (1986), a phenomena known as the “*freshman year experience*” (p. 261) has been taking place in this country. The *FYE* is ultimately intended to help students make a smooth transition into higher education. Marketing through the *FYE*, institutions also hope to increase students’ intent to stay (Chasteen, 2005; Gardner, 1986). Gardner (1986) explained that institutions are attempting *second sale*, a marketing term, “in which institutions are trying to help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267). For universities, it is more cost effective to retain a student rather than recruit a new one (Webb, 1987), and with recent emphasis on the expense of college and university education (Fonte, 2011; Sparks, 2011; Vedder & Gillen, 2011), students, parents, and government funding sources often ask the question is the “benefit or life-long economic return... worth the price tag” (Fonte, p. 1)?

Bruffee (1999) developed a theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of *reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 298). To study the *FYE* from the perspective of the *reacculturation* process, this study attempted to examine the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee’s theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important factor of students’ intent to

stay, it is more cost effective for universities to retain students vs. recruit new ones (Congos & Schoeps 1997; Webb, 1987).

To study the *reacculturation* of college freshmen, it is necessary to investigate at some level from where they came, where they are now, where they intend to stay and why, and where they desire to go in the future and how they will achieve this goal. To help the readers get a clear idea of the process of *reacculturation*, the literature review for this investigation included several concepts. First, is a brief look at the culture of American high schools to give a snapshot of where traditional college students have been before they become college freshmen. Second, to look at where students are now, a brief look at the culture of typical American colleges is provided including a short history of university guidance and the development of the freshman orientation course. Third is a review of the literature pertaining to college student retention and specifically their intent to stay at an institution. Finally, a review of literature is presented pertaining to *reacculturation*: the components, the process, its relationship to the other aspects reviewed here, and how it relates to collegiate future and goal achievement.

### *The Culture of American High Schools*

The American high school as an institution has preserved its culture and remained unbending in the face of the monumental restructuring of the society around it (Goodlad, 1984; Hoffman, 2002-2003; Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985; Sizer, 1984). American high school culture, indeed culture itself, is not a simple concept to assess (Martin, 2002: Silver, 2003), which may be precipitating the scarcity of literature specific to this topic. An institution's culture involves how individuals feel about an institution, the authority system, member's involvement and commitment, and an institution's climate (Schein,

2000, p.xxiii). Culture is shared meanings and experiences that are interpreted and accepted as reality (Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; Schein, 2000) and symbols within a culture “reflect underlying values or realities” (Rafaeli & Worline, p. 75).

Adams (1996) perceived the traditional role of American schools is “acculturation” (p. 2) of students. Adams (1996) and Sizer (1984) agreed school is a socialization process and Adams (1996) pointed out that in America social, political, and economic evolution has shifted the *acculturation* process through which students are indoctrinated and prepared for entry into the adult environment. In this country, “high school is a world of its own, with its own codes of conduct and its own rules of survival” (Owen, 1981, p. 261). Loveless (2002) agreed that high schools “function like mini-societies. A high school’s culture represents the shared values of the institution, and it shapes student behaviors as much as it reflects them” (p. 21). This being the case, high school culture and experiences facilitate choices for early adulthood (Adams, 1996). If it is accepted that societies’ “adult values grow directly out of high school” (Keyes, 1976, p. 182), then high school culture has widespread ramifications for the larger society: it “shapes American adults in such diverse ways-shapes our tastes, our feelings about ourselves in a crowd, and feelings about our bodies” (p. 185). For such an important concept that has implications for adults and society there is limited reliable and current research pertaining specifically to high school culture.

Adams (1996) researched high school culture looking in particular at extra-curricular activities that have become traditional aspects of the American high school experience. Particularly, Adams was interested in student behaviors which are associated with the extra-curricular events. Adams’s data sources included observation,

ethnographic accounts of students, colleagues, and school officials as well as literature on the maturation and *acculturation* of high school students, and the rites and rituals they experience. Adams's research found that co-curricular events have not only formal significance but also informal shared significances to the students often completely removed from the intentional, explicit significances. Keyes (1976) asserted that high school students will in fact institute their own "rituals of transition" (p. 181) to demonstrate their progression into adulthood.

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) and Adams (1996) agreed that high school extracurricular activities are "integrative structures" (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 133) to encourage students to become attached to the institution and its members or a means of building "social cohesion and integration" (Adams, p. 11) to facilitate the *acculturation* of students. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) further proposed that students who do not attach have an increased chance of attrition. Adams noted more than half of students often do not participate in extracurricular activities, which may be a social problem within the culture. Despite these and other statistics, Adams observed that co-curricular events continued to garner support and thrive, even in a "climate of declining academic scores" (p. 2).

According to the 2002 Brown Center Report on American Education (Loveless, 2002), "international comparisons of learning in the elementary grades cast U.S. schools in a favorable light. High school comparisons, on the other hand, are a national embarrassment" (p. 16). Previous Brown Center research attempted to investigate the "important aspects of U.S. high schools and American teen culture" (p. 16) by asking foreign exchange students and American students who have studied abroad to compare

their high school experiences. Results showed overall both groups found “classes in American high schools easier” (Loveless, p.18) and that “students in the U.S. spend less time on schoolwork” (p.18) and the American high school atmosphere is “less focused on academic learning” (p. 18). Authors of the Brown Center Report suggested “American students encounter two distractions in high school that other nations minimize, part-time work and sports” (Loveless, p. 18). This report suggested part-time work has become part of the American high school culture while “most countries discourage it” (Loveless, p. 18). Another strong aspect of American high school culture to emerge, not surprisingly, is the significance of high school sports in the U.S. Other countries avoid the association of sports with high school culture, in fact, “team sports abroad are often organized by clubs outside the school...teams represent the communities themselves, not local high schools” (Loveless, 2002, p. 20). Additionally, Loveless (2002) wrote:

a primarily American phenomena are the massive, costly high school stadiums and arenas in which sports are played, extensive press coverage of inter-scholastic competition, school wide rallies during the school day, extensive travel by student athletes, and high school coaches signing big dollar shoe contracts. (p. 20)

As early as the 1950s, researchers recognized the important cultural position of student athletes in American high schools. Coleman (1961) found American high school athletes are revered while good students are often cultural outcasts and warned that sports may negatively affect high school culture by discouraging the pursuit of scholastic goals.

Several researchers have contended that, to adolescents, high school is less about academics (Adams, 1996; Coleman, 1961; Loveless, 2002) and more of a format to carry out public rituals denoting their “emergence” (Adams, 1996, p. 172) into adult life. This

is apparent to such a degree that Adams claimed earning a high school degree has become less important to some parents and students than participating in the graduation ceremony itself. Crossing the stage during graduation has become symbolic for an adolescent entering the adult world after which they become included in the adult community and can proceed to college, employment, or marriage. It is possible however, emerging into the adult community has been reduced to merely a symbolic ritual and high school graduates are not actually becoming adults. Keyes (1976) proposed that all adults have issues lingering from high school and to “grow at all as an adult” (p. 185) it is necessary to revive and “exorcise lingering high school demons by putting them to work” (p. 194). If this is the case then the impact of high school culture has enduring implications for the adult world.

Psychoanalysts and other professionals have suggested many ways to process through the past experiences, but most concur that things must be worked through in some way to grow as adults. Getting past high school begins for many the first semester they become traditional college freshmen, at which time they typically experience a freshman orientation course. According Noel (1985),

recent high school graduates have spent four years putting into place a series of support systems in their high schools. There they were known, they performed, they were rewarded; suddenly, over night they are in a new environment. They have to start all over. (p. 13)

High school graduates preparing to begin their freshman year in college are individuals who are still the most *shaped* by high school. They have just experienced and are continuing to experience the effects of high school, and they have not yet encountered

much *real life* outside the high school culture. High school culture determines which “prior meanings, stereotypes, and expectations that can be understood only in a historical context” (Schein, 2000. p. xxiv) that high school graduates take with them into freshman year at a university and into freshman orientation courses.

### *The Culture of American Universities*

Disbro (1995) summed up university culture by clearly stating “college is very different from high school. In high school almost everything you did was planned by someone else.... In college- you’re on your own” (p. 3). College is so different from high school which, as described above, clearly has a unique culture; college can be a completely foreign territory for many freshman students. When attempting to assess the nature of university life it is necessary to answer the question proposed by Silver (2003): “Does a University Have a Culture?” (p. 1).

Silver (2003) described higher education as a “framework” (p. 158) with participants having “a strong sense of solidarity” (p. 158) but with the “constant likelihood of rival or conflicting values and allegiances” (p. 158). According to Silver (2003), researchers have been questioning the concepts of culture for many years, but only to a limited extent, and to many differing extents, forming many different conclusions. Silver found many university members interpreted their “culture as a *culture of research*” (p. 161), while Silver also found evidence of “a culture of tension or conflict” (p. 161). Silver also found there to be a strong “hostility toward innovator and their innovations” (p. 161), and that many members equated questions about culture with change, meaning they felt that changes “eroded a settled culture” (p. 161), and erosion resulted in “confusion and often bitterness” (p.162). Silver found “*culture of teaching*”

(p. 161) was not a description used by any institutional member questioned. It seemed that “conflict, uncertainty, and the difficulties of response have penetrated the daily lives of academic staff” (Silver, 2003, p. 165), and these issues have long-term implications for the institution and the students. Silver noted universities have to “serve powerful external recruitment, employment, funding, professional and disciplinary constituencies and a range of gatekeeper expectations” (p. 166), which has resulted in universities becoming a “collection of groups” (p. 166) rather than a congruent culture and has left “serious questions about, for example, the ambiguous position of students” (p. 167). Silver concluded in fact that universities “do not have a culture” as defined by past theoretical assumptions about the nature of culture (p. 167). Despite Silver’s findings, it can be useful to refer to universities as having culture to communicate ideas and concepts pertaining to higher education.

Cohen and March’s (1974) termed culture of higher education *organized anarchies*. Bensimon, Neuman and Biernbaum, (1989) defined a culture of organized anarchy as having “problematic goals, unclear technology and fluid participation in decision making” (p. 31). Bensimon et al. (1989) explained the model of the organized anarchy as an irrational model of organizational structure meaning in an organized anarchy, “when organizational choices must be made, problems, solutions, and participants may become connected to them because they are contemporaneous rather than because of any logical relationship” (p. 32). Bensimon et al. (1989) explained that this structure leaves problems as unresolved and decisions made by “flight...or oversight” (p. 32) while “cognitive biases and limits, and chance severely circumscribe the influence of leaders” (p. 32).

Having an atmosphere in which problems are not solved, decision making is irrational, and leaders have only symbolic power can be frustrating and confusing when coming from a culture that functions from shared values which shape and reflect student behaviors (Loveless, 2002). Not only can these issues be confusing and frustrating, but they affect student outcomes indirectly and directly through influencing organizational culture, individuals, and processes (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000; Morgan, 1997; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; Schein, 1996, 2000; Tierney, 1988; Yukl, 2002). Given that leadership in higher education is symbolic (Bensimon et al., 1998; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; Schein, 1996, 2000), as is the nature of educational policy (Mills & Hyle, 2001), and the organizational structure is that of *organized anarchy* (Baldrige, 1983; Bensimon, et al., 1998; Cohen & March, 1974; Mills & Hyle, 2001), the question remains as to which methods for dealing with student confusion, frustration and retention are appropriate. Simply put, Bruffee (1999) proposed that leaders in higher education must change their mission to establishing a culture and climate where students can be appropriately *reacculturated*.

A plethora of theory and research exists pertaining to the organizational culture and climate of universities (Bensimon et al., 1989; Bruffee, 1999; Cohen & March, 1974; Dwyer, 1989; Gardner, 1986; Mills & Hyle, 2001; Schein, 1996, 2000; Silver, 2003; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000). This literature pertains to the culture of the students in that, the leadership style, the policy-making style, the context and content of learning, and the research styles of universities directly affect the experiences of the students they enroll thereby directly affecting the way students view knowledge and learning and whether

students intend to stay long enough to become *reacculturated*. To help students navigate this often new, confusing, and frustrating environment, universities have developed and put into place mechanisms in order to serve the students in their journeys.

### *History of University Guidance in America*

Historically, the European college student has been viewed as an adult responsible for his/her own actions, while in contrast “the American college student is considered an immature adolescent, in need of constant supervision and guidance” (Siegel, 1968, p. 4). American universities often take the view that “any conduct on the part of a student that is considered a breach of morals reflects as much on the institution as on the student” (Leonard, 1956, p. 3). This mindset may have contributed to the need for and development of the many facets of university guidance programs and specialties. In addition to this mindset regarding college students, with the introduction of college elective subjects came the need for students to make more choices and to make them wisely. Initially, guidance came from friends and faculty. As colleges grew and came to have a dean, “the dean assumed guidance responsibilities” (Siegel, 1968, p. 9), and then as more deans were acquired, the dean of students became responsible for the curricular choices of students. Then came the development of vocational advisement, mental health assessment, and finally, psychiatric services for students. By the 1960s, “the college student personnel specialist [had] become a permanent part of the college scene” (Siegel, 1968, p. 11).

University administrators and faculty, with the mindset that they were responsible for guidance and supervision of students, recognized “that learning can best take place if disruptive factors are removed. Such factors may arise within the individual himself...or

may come from groups of students interacting with each other or acting with or against the school” (Siegel, 1968, p. 11). Each guidance service was developed to contribute “toward assuring that learning takes place under optimum conditions and that the rights of others to teach and learn are not damaged by the action of an individual or group of individuals” (Siegel, 1968, p. 11). According to Siegel, by the end of the decade, student personnel services was

a clearly defined framework within which the officers of the administration afford their staff members, both teachers and student personnel specialists, a chance to use their experience and training to help participating students grow and profit to the highest degree from all phases of college life. (p. 13)

The continued existence of programs and specialties seems to demonstrate that they are effective in improving the practical difficulties students face, but the question remains as to what degree, and whether all the guidance provided by student personnel specialists actually improve student personal problems. Some might take the perspective that if a school has a healthy environment, “it is up to the student to develop himself within this ambience” (Siegel, 1968, p. 17). However, this leaves unaddressed the condition that “we cannot assume that the college milieu exists which would fully reward the high expectations most students bring to the beginning, at least, of their experience in college” (Siegel, p. 17) and the condition mentioned previously, that universities in the U.S. viewed the students as immature, and needing guidance and supervision.

University guidance programs were the beginning of a movement to assist students in navigating appropriately and making appropriate educational decisions within their new confusing and frustrating culture. While guidance programs clearly had positive

benefits (Siegel, 1968), there was still the apparent need for institutions of higher education to do more to help their incoming students. Bruffee (1999) proposed that universities must change their mission to one of establishing a culture and climate where students can be appropriately *reacculturated* through collaboration. During this same time frame however, another movement began and has sky-rocketed into the forefront of student affairs and student development, namely the freshman orientation course.

#### *Development of the Freshmen Orientation Course*

Universities have been recognizing the need to provide some type of orientation for incoming freshman students since as early as 1888. This trend grew until events in the 1970s prompted a more contemporary version of a freshman course in 1972 at University of South Carolina (USC). This course targeted student attitudes, attempting to promote positive feelings and decrease hostility toward the university. This course was also intended as “a significant retention vehicle to combat the decline of traditional age high school graduates which would begin in the year 1981” (Gardner, 1986, p. 269).

Events in the early and mid-1980s spurred a renewed emphasis on early intervention in higher education. In February 1982, conference meetings began to discuss the nature of freshman orientation/seminar courses. The feedback from this conference expanded into the first National Conference on the *Freshman Year Experience* in 1983. By 1985, the conference had grown to include 700 participants coming from the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Gardner, 1986).

According to Gardner (1986), the *FYE* movement was based on several factors (Appendix A) which influenced society and particularly higher education. The *FYE* movement was not only about freshman orientation classes; there were many efforts to

make improvements for incoming freshman students (Appendix B). According to Gardner (1986), all of these programs were deliberate attempts “to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (p. 266). Gardner compared these programs to the *basic training* of the U.S. armed forces. These programs are thought to demonstrate concern about freshmen and attempt to provide each student with some significant “caring adult employee of the institution” (Gardner, 1986, p. 266). Chasteen (2005) cited the need for “formal rituals or ceremonies to help incorporate students into their social and academic systems” (p. 9) and referred to orientation programs as “a commencement ceremony that has introduced the student to the new educational community” (p. 9).

Institutions employing the *FYE* methods are also attempting to “sell the institution” (Gardner, 1986, p. 267). The *FYE* is deliberate in providing experiences for students during the crucial period where they are developing their intent to stay or their intent to leave that institution. The programs are designed with the knowledge and understanding that “the freshman year is the foundation on which the rest of the college experience is based” (Gardner, p. 267). For example, the freshman seminar course at USC, University 101, has specific goals to encourage retention (Appendix C).

Freshman orientation had been touted as the latest method to address students’ many first-year and ongoing dilemmas (Gardner, 1986). Disbro (1995) told students “college new student orientation sessions should not be missed” (p. 48), while Tinto (1987) suggested that freshman orientation programs are “the beginnings of integration” (p. 146). Levitz and Noel (1989) further asserted that “to make the freshman connection, institutions must adopt the concept of front loading: putting the strongest, most student-

centered people, programs, and services in the freshman year” (p. 79). Noel (1985) warned that, as freshmen, students are in essence starting over, “it is not difficult for them to become lost [they might decide] I’ll just retreat to my past group, unless we provide comprehensive, ongoing orientation activities that begin before the first class session and continue throughout the first year” (p. 13). Retreating to past groups (Noel, 1985) or dropping-out, is referred to in higher education as attrition. Institutions of higher education do not want high attrition rates; they want their students to be successful for many reasons. Successful students are often said to *persist* to graduation or it can be said the institution *retained* that student until graduation. Retention or persistence has become an extremely important topic in current higher education literature (Astin, 1993; Astin, Korn, & Green, 1987; Chasteen, 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999).

### *Retention of Freshman Students*

Student success has become an important topic in higher education but is difficult to operationally define. Many professionals and theorists have determined to define student success through the aspect of student retention or persistence which is operational and measurable. According to Astin et al. (1987), “retention has become a barometer of institutional effectiveness; it has been used as a measure of an institution’s commitment to the development and support of its students” (p. 38). Authors consistently agreed that universities have an obligation to enhance student success once they were admitted (Chasteen, 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999; Tinto, 1990) and particularly during the freshman year (Astin, 1993; Beal, 1980; Gardner, 1986; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1993; Upcraft, Gardner & Associates, 1989). As a measure of commitment

and effectiveness, this topic has been and remains an important concern for institutions in higher education. Biggs, Torres, and Washington (1998) suggested that in trying to determine how to better predict and increase student persistence, “theorists have changed their foci from psychological to environmental to interactional explanations during the past 50 years” (p. 80). Jones (1986) proposed that “successful retention programs” (p. 17) had common operation styles and service attitudes. Theorists agreed that the crucial time to implement retention these programs is during the critical freshman year (Astin, 1993; Beal, 1980; Gardner, 1986; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1993; Upcraft et al., 1989).

Congos and Schoeps (1997) felt retention of students is “a result, a by-product of effective educational programs and services” (¶ 3). Gardner (1986) claimed “the relationship of the freshman seminar/freshman orientation course to enhanced retention has been the most important motivating factor leading to the initiation of such courses at many post-secondary institutions” (p. 270). Empirical evidence of the positive relationship between “freshman seminars and subsequent enhanced retention has been reported consistently” (Gardner, p. 270) throughout the literature. Specifically at USC-Columbia, research has been overwhelmingly positive in indicating the relationship between freshman orientation and retention (Gardner). In 12 years of collected data, the difference was statistically significant for 10 of those years. At other USC branch campuses, data indicated retention to range from 8-15% higher in students enrolling in the freshman orientation course. At USC-Columbia research results also indicated positive results with at risk populations. For example, “students with a lower predicted potential for survival are surviving at a higher rate than [other] students” (Gardner, p. 271) and “the course has also promoted higher retention rates in such high risk student

populations as undecided students, two-year associate degree majors, and students in a new high risk program” (Gardner, p. 271). Additionally, “significant retention differences have also been reported by sex and race” (Gardner, 1986, p. 271).

There are many reasons why university administrators, professors, and other professionals are interested in student retention. Disbro (1995) explained:

the college actually is interested in having [students] succeed. Retention (keeping) of students is vital for many reasons. Some of the most important: colleges are evaluated by what they produce; faculty get retrenched (released from contract) without students; more students translates into more tuition and more financial aid dollars to work with. (p. 124)

Chasteen (2005), Congos and Schoeps (1997), and Sidle and McReynolds (1999) agreed financial implications are of great importance when addressing the issue of student retention, after all, “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, ¶ 2).

From the literature pertaining to student retention, Chasteen (2005) concluded retention efforts should be directed at specific groups, actions to promote retention should be multi-faceted, and failure to persist is the result of interaction among many variables which are not all academic. Despite all the detailed research and available theoretical information pertaining to retention, Chasteen (2005) found the task of identifying persistence in higher education to be “notoriously difficult” (p. 42). Astin (1993) reported that researchers were still experimenting with “ways of measuring retention” (p. 192), and Chasteen (2005) found “little agreement among institutions or researchers” as to the meaning but found that “persistence was generally defined in a way that met the need of

the individual institution” (p. 42). For instance, persistence could mean consistent enrollment until graduation, or might it mean inconsistent enrollment as long as there is eventual graduation. If a student’s goal was not to graduate but rather to take the necessary courses and then transfer to another institution to graduate, it could mean he or she did not persist. If a student is still enrolled after four years but has not attained a degree, it might mean that student did not persist. For the purpose of this investigation, the author has chosen to measure the simpler notion of student intent to stay.

### *Intent to Stay*

In terms of Bruffe’s (1999) theory of *reacculturation*, intent to stay can be explained as planning to persist until gaining membership into the desired new knowledge community. Defined as such, intent to stay is measurable in terms of what the student intends at any given moment in time. For instance, a student’s intent to stay can be measured before they take a specific course and after they complete that course to determine if their intent to stay has changed over time and why, and in what way, their intent to stay might have become altered.

According to Chasteen’s (2005) interpretation of Tinto (1975), “intention referred to a student’s values and willingness to work for degree attainment” (p. 7). Chasteen also interpreted commitment in terms of an individual’s “goal of studying at a specific school” (p. 7). Chasteen felt students’ intention and commitment were “modified and reformed on a continuing basis” throughout their experiences within the “academic and social systems” at their institution (p. 7). Following this model, positive interactions would result in greater intent to stay. Along this line of thought, intent to stay is somewhat synonymous with persistence or retention, in that it is the first stage of persisting or being

retained at an institution. Chasteen defined persistence in part as “any action taken by a student to associate with an institution” (p. 43), *any action*, would certainly include a student’s decision or *intent* to stay.

Tinto’s many works (1975, 1982, 1987, 1990, & 1993) indicated failure to persist is a multidimensional process involving students’ experiences within the academic and social systems at an institution and the degree of integration students experienced specifically during the first year. Tinto (1993) suggested specific areas of experience that would impact student intent to stay: (a) adjustment, (b) difficulty, (c) incongruence, and (d) isolation. Tinto (1975, 1982, 1987, 1990, & 1993) repeatedly found that as degree of integration increased so did commitment or intent to stay. This is similar to Bruffe’s (1999) theory that as students become *acculturated* into the knowledge community of their institution they feel more at ease and more committed to the environment, and are more likely to persist until they fully join the intended knowledge community, i.e., receive their intended degree. Conversely, Bean (1981a & 1981b) found students’ *intent to leave* (1981a & b) was one of the best indicators of failure to persist (Bean, 1981a & b).

Despite all the research and literature pertaining to retention or intent to stay, as recently as 1996, Brawer found “approximately 50% of the freshman enrolled in colleges and universities drop out before completing their programs” (p. 1). Most authors seemed to agree that intent to stay or retention were influenced by several interrelated factors including social integration, interactions, and relationships with peers, and other personal characteristics (Bruffee, 1999; Tinto, 1975, 1987; Upcraft et al., 1989). Many authors agreed retention and intent to stay was not only influenced by social integration, but it is

crucial to success and goal attainment (Astin, 1993; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Noel, 1985; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1986). The question still remains as to how freshman students become integrated (Tinto, 1987).

To answer the elusive questions regarding the process of integration requires assessing what occurs during the students' experiences and consequential development. Chasteen (2005) asserted "effective first-year orientation programs have enhanced student persistence through meeting individual social and academic developmental needs of the student. Crucial to meeting those needs was an understanding of student development" (p. 23). Chickering (1993) proposed a theory of student development that included seven vectors for individual growth: (a) developing purpose, (b) achieving competence, (c) managing emotions, (d) developing autonomy, (e) establishing identity, (f) developing integrity, and (g) freeing interpersonal relationships. Chickering felt experiences in higher education influenced student development through areas such as: (a) student participation and involvement, (b) policy, (c) programs and activities, (d) interactions with faculty and administration, (e) interactions with peers, (f) residence hall programs, and (g) curriculum design that involved students in their own learning, all seemingly key to the process of integration. Bruffee (1999) also proposed that students become integrated or *reacculturated* through their experiences and attempted to explain this process.

The following section attempted to define and summarize main points of Bruffee's (1999) theory of collaborative learning as the basis of *reacculturation*. Next, the main concepts of the *reacculturation* process have been defined and explained in terms of applicability to higher education, freshman orientation, and the overall freshman

experience, and in terms of measurability for the purpose of this research, the author attempted to describe the process of *reacculturation* through the variables deemed by this researcher as key to its definition. Finally, the entire concept of *reacculturation* and its variables relating to this research are summarized for the simplification of this complex theory.

As previously indicated, there is a scarcity of available literature and research involving the constructs presented in this study. The variables measured, and the instrument designed and used in measurement, have evolved from the author's understanding and conceptualization of the basic terms involved. Many of these basic terms and conceptualizations have not been discussed in conjunction with one another in the available literature. The complexity of the interconnections between variables measured and their understanding for the purpose of this study indicated the necessity to concretely and operationally define the key terms. The *language* or conceptual definitions as explained in this section arose from the author's interpretation of Bruffee (1999), commonplace definitions, as well as many other scholarly sources.

### *Reacculturation*

According to Chasteen (2005), there has been a "push for institutional effectiveness" (p. 4) in higher education and accountability as well as students' success has become increasingly emphasized. In response to the increased attention to these areas, Chasteen proposed that student integration methods should involve the entire campus community and "should portray a supportive atmosphere, a student-friendly environment, and the initiation of cooperative peer interactions to acquire the desired result of retention and student success at the institution" (p. 4). Astin (1993) also felt it

was the institution's responsibility to help freshmen make adjustments to college. Tinto (1987) felt retention programs should focus on combating possible "failure to become incorporated into the intellectual and social life of the institution" (p. 155); in other words, programs should focus on the process of *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

"College students are, after all, moving from one community or set of communities, most typically those of the family and local high school, to another, that of the college" (Tinto, 1987, p. 94). Tinto (1987) referred to this time as transition or, "a period of passage between the old and the new, before the full adoption of new norms and patterns of behavior and after the onset of separation from old ones" (p. 96).

For the purpose of this study, *reacculturation* is defined by Bruffee (1999) as "switching membership from one culture to another" (p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. For the purpose of this study, culture is defined as how individuals feel about an institution, the authority system, members' involvement and commitment, and an institution's climate (Schein, 2000, p. xxiii). Culture is shared meanings and experiences that are interpreted and accepted as reality (Schein, 2000; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000) by the members of the organization. Bruffee explained *reacculturation* as learning which involves "giving up, modifying, or renegotiating the language, values, knowledge, mores and so on that are constructed, established, and maintained by the community one is coming from, and becoming fluent instead in the language and so on of another community" (p. 298). Van Gennep (1960) referred to a similar process he termed the rites of passage.

According to Van Gennep (1960), life is a series of passages from one event, group, or status to another. Van Gennep argued the passage from one group to another

was marked by an individual fulfilling certain economic or intellectual conditions, and their transmission was marked by three distinct phases usually consisting of ceremonies or special acts. Van Gennep referred to these movements as rites of passage; specifically, he subdivided passages into: (a) *rites of separation*, (b) *transition rites*, and (c) *rites of incorporation*. Van Gennep's concern with the movement of individuals from one group to another is directly related to the process of freshman students entering the community of college. It is not so much that the career of a college student is one of rites and ceremonies but rather that "the notion of rites of passage...provides us with a way of thinking about the longitudinal process of student persistence" (Tinto, 1987, p. 93).

### *Connectedness*

For the purpose of this study, connectedness is defined as social and intellectual engagement (Bruffee, 1999) with something or someone. An example is the nature of relationships between members of a sports team or a transition group. For the purpose of this study, transition community or group is defined by Bruffee (1999) as "an ad hoc community that people organize in order to *reacculturate* themselves" (p. 298). This group offers support during the transition from a knowledge community one already belongs to and a community where they do not yet belong. A class orientating freshman students into the new knowledge community of college is an attempt to facilitate the growth of independent or ad hoc groups, such as social or study groups. For the purpose of this study, knowledge community or discourse community is defined by Bruffee (1999) as a "sociocultural entity" (p. 296), "a group of people with similar interests and goals who constitute themselves with a characteristic *language*" (p. 295). According to Bruffee, knowledge communities can be formally or informally organized, but all have a

characteristic language satisfying the salient “need to identify other members and the ability to do so unequivocally” (p. 296). Also, according to Bruffee, the condition exists that there is “interdependence of community members” (p. 296) in that they “depend on one another for [their] identity; some would say [they] even depend on one another for what [they] call [their] *self*” (p. 296).

According to Durkheim’s (1951) theory of *social integration*, being connected to a social system is vital for persistence within that system. Failure to persist within a social system such as college stems in part from lack of integration or connectedness (Spady, 1970). Disbro (1995) agreed and encouraged students to “take part in activities on campus” (p. 20), explaining that “networking is the process of making connections with other people” (p. 140). An essential component of student retention is personal contact or developing close relationships with other members (Spady, 1970) and the “product of that contact is the building of the interlocking chains of human affiliations that are the foundation of supportive communities” (Tinto, 1987, p. 157).

Like healthy families, effective institutions are “collectivities of persons concerned with each others’ welfare. They are communities whose primary concern is not merely that individuals stay, but that they grow socially and intellectually as a result of staying. Education, not retention, is their essential goal” (Tinto, 1987, p. 157). Bruffee (1999) “defines learning as *reacculturation*” (p. 298), therefore when an institution’s primary goal is education or learning, their primary goal is, by Bruffee’s definition, *reacculturation*.

## *Communication*

For the purpose of this study, communication between humans “is said to occur when one organism encodes information into a signal that is transmitted to another organism that decodes the signal” (Shanker & King, 2002, p.605). According to Bruffee (1999), the conversation or communication of *reacculturation* occurs through language both externally as when individuals converse in a group and internally when individuals talk to themselves and begin to “think productively - in a new way” (p. 11). Within a community, there exists a standard or normal discourse. For the purpose of this study, standard or normal discourse is defined by Bruffee (1999) as the “characteristic language of a knowledge community” (p. 296). The standard discourse may be “highly distinguished from other languages and easily recognizable by outsiders...or it may be distinguished only subtly from everyday speech” (p. 296). Bruffee said, “when we ‘speak the same language,’ normal discourse is the language we speak” (p. 296). An example is the highly distinct language spoken within the computer information discipline.

When entering a new community or transition community, new members are often unfamiliar with the standard discourse of that culture and must learn the language in order to fully join the new community. They must first begin to converse through nonstandard or boundary discourse. For the purpose of this study, nonstandard discourse or boundary discourse is defined by Bruffee (1999) as what occurs in conversation or “negotiation between those who know and accept a community’s values and conventions and those who do not” (p. 296) such as a conversation between a high school student and a physics professor.

## *Anxiety*

For the purpose of this study, anxiety refers to the stressful nature of “coming to terms with differences between firmly held beliefs and modifying them” (Bruffee, 1999, 18). This anxiety often presents as apprehension or fear (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). Entering a new community or culture, such as college, and leaving behind an old community, for example high school, produces uncertainty and anxiety for many. According to Tinto (1987), “the first stage in the college career, separation, requires individuals to disassociate themselves, in varying degrees, from membership in the communities of the past” (p. 95). Tinto (1987) agreed with Cutrona (1982) that virtually all students experience stress and isolation due to separation from the past during their transition into college, and this can often pose serious problems. This seems particularly relevant during the freshman semester as “the individual is least integrated into and therefore least committed to the institution and thus most susceptible to the pains and doubts which separation and transition evoke” (Tinto, 1987, p. 148).

According to Tinto (1987), for the individual, movements from group to group:

necessarily entail moving from a position as a known member in one group to that of a stranger in the new setting. As a result, they are often associated with feelings of weakness and isolation. Having given up the norms and beliefs of past associations and not yet having adopted those appropriate to membership in a new community, the individual is left in a state of at least temporary normlessness. (p. 93)

The problem of normlessness often provokes feelings of uncertainty of anxiety for freshman students. For this reason, Van Gennep (1960) discussed the need for rituals and

ceremonies of the rites of passage. Van Gennep felt rituals and ceremonies publicly announce the movement of an individual into a new community and provide structure for the individual to navigate the difficulties with that movement. In that manner, rituals and ceremonies help diminish psychological stress and function in a therapeutic way.

Tinto (1987) encouraged professionals to understand that although a student's intention may be to stay at their university, "intentions have much to do with a person's response to the stress of transition" (p. 98). Many students "voluntarily withdraw from college very early in the academic year, less from an inability to become incorporated in the social and academic communities of the college as from an inability to withstand the stresses that such transitions commonly induce" (Tinto, 1987, p. 98). Gideonse (as cited in Siegel, 1968) noted "maturity is anchored in the capacity to cope with tension and with polar values" (p. xviii). Until students achieve necessary maturity, if external assistance can help students persist until they gain a degree of maturity, they may be better equipped to respond to stressful situations and may have increased willingness to see through the adjustment period.

### *Trust*

Philosophically speaking, any attempt to define trust is often said to be "incomplete, arbitrary, or trivial" (Smolkin, 2008, p. 431); however, "trust is an important component of interpersonal relationships" (Shooter, Paisley & Sibthorp, 2012, p. 222) and has gained recognition as important in areas of business, leadership, group dynamics, education, as well as morality and value inquiry (Fraser-Burgess, 2011; Goodman, Hoagland, Pierre-Toussaint, Rodriguez & Sanabria, 2011; Kaye, 2005; Shooter et al., 2012; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). Smolkin (2008) stated "trust is a vital element

in personal, commercial, and political relationships” (p. 431) and defined and explained key elements of trust. First, “trust involves confidence” (Smolkin, 2008, p. 432) that an individual or entity will behave in a manner that is expected and will behave with a level of competence. Trust can be a matter of degree and the “scope of trust is typically limited” (Smolkin, p. 432). Smolkin additionally wrote, “trust is present (or absent) without being deliberately chosen” (p. 432); however, it can be fostered. Furthermore, “the absence of trust may not necessarily be distrust. There is arguably space for something in between” (Smolkin, p. 433). When an individual assesses that another will act as expected, in a competent manner, and with the appropriate motivations in given circumstances, it can be said that the individual trusts the other. For the purpose of this study, trust is defined as placing confidence in someone or something to the degree that one is willing to believe or have faith. According to Bruffee (1999), *reacculturation* requires trust, to be willing to “grant authority to peers [and] accept the authority granted to oneself by peers” (p. 12) and be interdependent with peers.

### *Modification of Beliefs*

For the purpose of this study, the modification of a person’s beliefs can be defined as a change in opinion and feelings brought about by negotiation which occurs in conversation (Bruffee, 1999). Tinto (1987, 1988) also proposed students had to give up the norms and beliefs of past associations and adopt ones “appropriate to membership in a new community” (p. 442). According to Tinto (1987), Van Gennep’s (1960) stages of passage provided “for the orderly transmission of the beliefs and norms of the society to the next generation of adults and/or new members” (p. 92) meaning that if beliefs are transmitted, they must be accepted, ultimately replacing previously held beliefs and

norms (Bruffee, 1999). Tinto (1987) determined rites of passage “served to ensure the stability of society over time while also enabling younger generations to take over responsibility (p. 92). Van Gennep (1960) described rites of passage as specific phases, which Tinto (1987) further simplified (Appendix D).

Disbro (1995) stated that as an adult “you will need to know yourself...have formed opinions...your thoughts, your feelings, your beliefs” (p. 52) and “have your own reasons for doing and becoming what you are” (p. 175). The first semester of college is the stage “which requires individuals to separate themselves from past associations and patterns of educational participation and make the transition to the new and possibly much more challenging life of the college” (Tinto, 1987, p. 148). Some students have “great difficulty either in separating themselves from past associations and/or in adjusting to the academic and social life of the college” (p. 148). Students making sense of their new surroundings is accomplished largely when they “draw on what they experience as their own backgrounds, their ‘selves’” (Peterson & Smith, 2000, p. 110). What a person “experiences as self has roots in meanings drawn from other sources” (Peterson & Smith, p. 110), but the self can become so routine it seems inherent. Some argue that the self is in fact derived from culture (Erez & Earley, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) or the process or *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

### *Ambivalence*

For the purpose of this study, ambivalence is defined as conflicting, inconsistent attitudes or feelings when evaluating an object or event (Baek, 2010) or “about engaging in conversation” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 12) which would ultimately lead to *reacculturation*. Ambivalence can result in delayed or hesitant behaviors (Baek), which Bruffee explained

are manifested as resistance to change. Freshman college students are *newcomers* (Dwyer, 1989) who have yet to achieve their final state or complete the term or period, and are due to experience many changes, in other words, they are immature. Gideonse (as cited in Siegel, 1968) noted maturity is anchored in the capacity to cope with tension and with polar values” (p. xviii); therefore, immature *newcomers* likely do not have the capacity to cope with tension displayed as ambivalence and resulting in failure to *reacculturate* or integrate into one’s new group. The goal for individuals would be to reduce ambivalence thereby increasing the ability to cope with change and growth in order to *reacculturate*.

#### *Intent to Stay*

Tinto (1975) previously suggested, and Upcraft et al. (1989) agreed, that if students were fully integrated there would be a resulting commitment to the institution and goal achievement, and as the commitment increased, persistence would also increase. “Crucial to the success of many students was the motivation to persist through the good and the bad. Removing one’s self from a situation or environment before failure occurred was a defense mechanism” (Chasteen, 2005, p. 36), and persistence leads to goal achievement and ultimately becoming *reacculturated*. Tinto (1987) described completed passage from one group to another or *reacculturation* in the following way:

Full membership or incorporation in the new group is marked by special ceremonies which announce and certify not only the rewards of membership but also the responsibilities associated with it. Though the persons may begin to interact once again with past group members, they will now do so as members of

the new group. They have completed their movement from the past and are now fully integrated into the culture of the new group. (p. 93)

Through the use of transition groups in freshman orientation courses, students experience rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960). Freshman students begin to experience *preliminal rites* or “separation from a previous world” (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 21), most commonly the world of high school. If the freshman students experience a connected environment, are exposed to boundary discourse, reduced anxiety, and a trusting atmosphere where they can modify their beliefs to fit those of the new knowledge community; and overcome their feelings of uncertainty of ambivalence (Bruffee, 1999), they experience transitional or *liminal rites* (Van Gennep, 1960) and become incorporated through *post-liminal rites* (Van Gennep, 1960) resulting in *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

Spady (1970) agreed with the importance of students feeling their personality, attitudes, and interests were of a similar nature or *fit* with the institution and the institutional environment and members. This *fit*, is the condition of *normative congruence* (Spady, 1970). Spady further suggested that *social integration* (Durkheim, 1951) produces satisfaction which produces institutional commitment or intent to stay, which “may lead to changes in attitude, interest, goals, or motivation” (Spady, p. 79) that will affect the process of *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

There has been a push in the last several decades for university campuses to take more interest in helping freshmen adjust to college life (Astin, 1993; Chasteen, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Bruffee (1999) explained this adjustment as “switching membership from one culture to another” (p. 298) and called the result of successful switching,

*reacculturation*. Certain facets of the *reacculturation* process seem key to understanding and ultimately measuring *reacculturation* for this study. In summary, according to Bruffee (1999) the following are necessary for *reacculturation* to occur: (a) connectedness or social and intellectual engagement, (b) communication which occurs through language both externally as when individuals converse in a group and internally when individuals talk to themselves and begin to “think productively- in a new way” (p. 11), (c) reduced anxiety (d) trust or placing confidence in someone or something to the degree that one is willing to “grant authority to peers”, “accept the authority granted to oneself by peers” and be interdependent with peers (p. 12), (e) modification of a person’s beliefs defined as a change in opinion and feelings brought about by negotiation which occurs through conversation that happens during *reacculturation*, and (f) reduced ambivalence. The additional concept of intent to stay is important to university interests in freshman *reacculturation* to college life (Astin, 1993; Chasteen, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Research indicated that if students were fully integrated there would be a resulting commitment to the institution and goal achievement, and, as the commitment increased, persistence would also increase (Tinto, 1975; Upcraft et al., 1989).

#### *Chapter Summary*

Research overwhelmingly indicated integration into the college culture is crucial to feeling and being connected to the institution, and as the connection increased, so did intent to stay or the likelihood of retention (Bruffee, 1999; Chasteen, 2005; Tinto, 1990; Upcraft et al., 1989;). Aside from retention, Tinto (1993) pointed out that education is the most important reason for instituting freshman orientation courses, and Bruffee (1990)

would agree that it is the instructors' task to educate or *reacculturate* the student above all else.

Institutions of higher education established freshman orientation programs in the hopes of ultimately helping students make a smooth transition into higher education thereby increasing their intent to stay (Chasteen, 2005; Gardner, 1986). To explore freshman transition and the *reacculturation* process, the literature review included a brief look at American high school culture and its large impact on emerging individuals and their shared meaning and experiences. The literature review also included a look at the culture of typical American colleges and the many differences freshmen experience going from high school culture to university culture. This section included a short history of university guidance and the mindset of freshmen as adults vs. freshman students as needing supervision and guidance. This section also included the development of the freshman orientation course and the progression since 1888 until the present day freshman orientation courses which focus on integration and retention of students. The literature review chapter, examined college student retention, specifically students' intent to stay at an institution as the outcome of successful educational processes, and the financial ramifications of retention vs. recruitment. Finally, the literature review chapter included a synopsis of *reacculturation* including: the components, the process, and the relationship to intent to stay.

When exploring the concept of *reacculturation*, this work defers to the writing of Bruffee (1999) who defined *reacculturation* as “switching membership from one culture to another” (p. 298). Bruffee and others encourage colleges and universities to focus on the process of *reacculturation* (Astin, 1993; Chasteen, 2005; Tinto, 1987). The literature

review also included clarification of the constructs of: (a) *reacculturation*, (b) connectedness, (c) communication, (d) anxiety, (e) trust, (f) modification of beliefs, (g) ambivalence, and (h) intent to stay. These constructs are crucial to understanding the conceptualization of *reacculturation* as well as the following chapter on research design and methodology, and the following findings specific to this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Design and Methodology

In today's world it is increasingly more common to hear dialogue regarding the cost of colleges and universities (Fonte, 2011; Sparks, 2011; Vedder & Gillen, 2011). "The cost of college is increasing faster than inflation with the government funding over 19 million student loans....Congress is demanding answers from colleges and universities about the quality of their education and the return on the government's investment" (Sparks, 2011, p. 1). In the past, Bruffee (1999) wondered if college and university educations were worth the expense.

If education is the pursuit of knowledge, it is important to consider how individuals gain knowledge, what is the origin of knowledge, and why is knowledge important. Knowledge can be understood as philosophical or deeply meaningful, concrete or real, and personal or relative to each person. Given the nature of knowledge, it starts to become evident that individual beliefs about knowledge influence and affect behavior, and define the construct of education and learning on the sides of both the students and the educators (Bruffee, 1999). When examining college and university educations through this lens, Bruffee identified as a problem that the current construct of education does not prepare graduates to interact with others on issues with practical importance.

According to Bruffee (1999), universities, professionals, and employers consistently complain that undergraduates and graduates are "authority-dependent, passive, irresponsible, overly competitive, and suspicious of their peers" (p. xi). It is arguable that "one mission of educators is to help young people move into adulthood with

the skills necessary to be successful members of society” (Montgomery & Hirth, 2011, p. 245). The key to retention of college students is the commitment to student education (Tinto, 1990). Yet college graduates cannot “interact with other human beings on substantive issues” (Bruffee, p. xii). Then, it seems to follow there is no value added through education and the financial return on investment in a college education may not be worth the risk (Sparks, 2011).

Bruffee (1999) asserted “these complaints will persist” (p. xii) until universities make changes to view themselves as “institutions of *reacculturation* [who] foster *reacculturation*” (p. xii) among students and who revise assumptions about classroom culture. An effective time for institutions of higher learning to intervene with this pattern and begin to foster a more productive skill set is the first semester of students’ collegiate experience (Disbro, 1995; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1987) as this is when students begin getting past high school (Keys, 1996; Noel, 1985) and are exposed to university culture (Bruffee, 1999; Bensimon et al., 1989; Cohen & March, 1974; Disbro, 1995; Silver, 2003). History has made higher education more aware of the need to implement changes to the way incoming freshman students are initiated. This is most recently evidenced by the *FYE* movement since the late 1980s from which the concept of the freshman orientation course has arisen and remains successful (Clark & Cundiff, 2011; Gardner, 1986; Howard & Jones, 2000; Jaffee, 2007; Miller et al., 2002; Schwitzer et al., 1991; Tinto, 1990). Freshman orientation courses “have become an institutionalized feature of the higher-education landscape” (Jaffee, 2007, p. 1). However, professionals often disagree on the necessary components that make courses successful in terms of the students’ needs and in terms of student persistence (Astin, 1993; Astin et al., 1987; Clark & Cundiff,

2009; Miller et al., 2002; Schwitzer et al., 1991). Additionally, research shows that freshman orientation courses can appear to take on the politics of an organization and the desires of the administration which might often be far removed from the actual social and academic needs of the students (Blimling & Whitt, 1998; Goodwin & Markham, 1996; Greenlaw et al., 1997; Lamadrid, 1999; Reason et al., 2010; Schroeder, 1999; Whitt et al., 2008).

What is the relationship between colleges and students? Are freshmen having positive first year experiences and persisting at institutions? Bruffee (1999) attempted to explain that *reacculturation* is a very important academic and personal issue that plays out in college life, affects the way individuals think and behave, is important to the state of higher education and the productivity of graduates, and carries important implications for institutions' marketing (Chasteen, 2005). Accepting this as accurate, institutions are, regretfully, faced with the reality of a severely limited amount of research that exists about the *reacculturation* of college freshmen. This study proposes the following problems for research: (a) there is a lack of instrumentation designed to measure *reacculturation*, (b) there is a lack of research investigating whether taking a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and (c) there is a lack of research examining the relationships between *reacculturation* and intent to stay.

The goal of this project is to better understand the experiences of students in freshman orientation courses. Information was gathered regarding students' experiences as freshmen at a university and in an orientation course. Specifically, this study has attempted to examine the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables

fundamental to Bruffee's (1999) theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic factor of students' intent to stay.

A specific purpose of this study was to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation*, and to determine if a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation*, or intent to stay and which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay. To examine the research questions of this theory, an instrument was developed and pilot tested. After piloting, the instrument was re-evaluated and administered to matched subjects in a freshman orientation course at Midwestern University.

For this research, a causal-comparative study was chosen to explore the differences that already exist among groups of freshman students at Midwestern University (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). The group difference variables of *reacculturation* as defined by Bruffee (1999), and intent to stay cannot be readily and ethically manipulated and thus cannot be examined by means of an experimental study (Frankel & Wallen). A causal-comparative study allows the researcher to form explanations and make predictions about the variables and their relationships. A causal-comparative study allows the researcher to look at differences in gender and age as well.

#### *Research Questions*

Within the context of this study, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of entering freshmen?
2. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of freshmen after a freshman orientation course?

3. Does taking a freshman orientation course improve *reacculturation* and intent to stay in college for college freshmen?
4. Which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay?

### *Ethics*

This project complied with the IRB requirements of University of Missouri-Columbia at the time of data collection. Permission was granted by the Midwestern University Office of Sponsored Research at the time of data collection (Appendix E). Permission to complete research was granted by the Office of Student Success Director at the Midwestern University at the time of data collection (Appendix F). Permission to enter the classroom was granted by individual instructors at the time of data collection (Appendix G). Research participants were each provided with an Informed Consent Letter prior to participating in data collection (Appendix H).

### *Pilot Study Design*

A causal-comparative study was chosen to explore the differences that already exist among groups of freshman students at Midwestern University (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). The group difference variables of *reacculturation*, and intent to stay cannot be readily and ethically manipulated, and the complex definition and nature of the variables make them difficult to measure. The literature was researched to determine if an instrument to measure *reacculturation* as defined by Bruffee (1999) was in existence. It was determined that no measurement instrument existed that fit the nature of the current study or that measured the specific topics or key terms as related to Bruffee's definition of *reacculturation* and its relationship to college freshmen, their experiences, or their intent to stay at an institution.

### *Pilot Study Population and Sample*

The total population for the pilot study consisted of all freshman students enrolled at Midwestern University in the summer session of 2006. A cluster sample was selected randomly from four sections of a freshman orientation course. Each section enrolled approximately 20 students each.

### *Pilot Study Data Collection and Instrumentation*

Students enrolled in a freshman orientation course were given informed consent documents explaining the purpose of their participation in the research. Students wanting to participate in the study were read standardized instructions (Appendix I) by the researcher, and then subjects completed the self-report instrument (Appendix J) on one occasion in the last few weeks of the summer semester. A total of 54 students completed the self-report pilot survey.

### *Pilot Survey*

A new survey instrument was developed, based on tips from Frankel and Wallen (2003), to be administered to all incoming freshman students involved in the pilot study. Survey items were derived from six key elements translated from Bruffee's (1999) theory of *reacculturation*. Additional items were developed based on student persistence data and were intended to measure student intent to stay. The intent of the research was to develop an instrument and identify a set of variables that would be of value in measuring the process and necessary elements of *reacculturation*, the degree of students' intent to stay at an institution, and which variables related to *reacculturation* would be of value in predicting students' intent to stay.

Decisions about initial survey items, demographic variables, and other data collected were based upon the likelihood of their potential value as variables that might relate to *reacculturation* as interpreted by the researcher. The researcher developed items based on professional judgment making sure that each was logically valid and consistent with the definition of the variable. The researcher tried to ensure that the vocabulary was appropriate for the intended subjects. After compiling the initial items, the researcher had a colleague review the items for logical validity. The researcher and colleague reviewed the variable definitions and assessed the vocabulary of the items. The researcher then revised the instrument based on feedback.

The pilot test instrument consisted of 120 items across seven subscales on a self-administered Likert scale (Appendix J). The items were based on a six-point scale which ranged from *strongly disagree* scored as 1 to *strongly agree* scored as 6. Additional information gathered consisted of: (a) the last four digits of a subject's social security number (for matching purposes), (b) gender, (c) age, and (d) the date the instrument was completed. At least every fourth item on the scale was reverse coded in an attempt to ensure reliability of the results. Development of the instrument was based on readings from Frankel and Wallen (2003).

#### *Pilot Study Data Analysis*

Data were entered into SPSS, and scale statistics as well as frequency and reliability statistics were run. Additionally, item total correlations were completed to determine the weakest items on the instrument. The items with the weakest correlations, meaning they had the weakest relationship to the other items (Frankel & Wallen, 2003), were removed (Appendices K-Q). After removal of the weakest items, leaving each

subscale with 8-10 items, a Cronbach's alpha analysis (Frankel & Wallen) was completed to calculate an alpha coefficient on the revised subscales and to check the internal consistency of the instrument (Table 1). The findings from the pilot process were considered, and minor changes were made to the final questionnaire as necessary.

Table 1

*Cronbach's Alpha Results from Pilot Study*

Subscale Name	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Alpha
Connectedness	45.36	70.41	8.39	$\alpha=.91$
Anxiety	25.56	70.98	8.43	$\alpha=.87$
Communication	45.87	52.16	7.22	$\alpha=.87$
Modification of beliefs	38.64	75.26	8.68	$\alpha=.89$
Trust	43.58	69.57	8.34	$\alpha=.88$
Ambivalence	24.41	65.85	8.12	$\alpha=.88$
<u>Intent to stay</u>	47.61	99.37	9.97	$\alpha=.91$

*Pilot Study Summary*

After pilot testing to determine the usability and validity, the survey instrument was named the Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation*. The instrument version is comprised of the major themes arising from the pertinent literature as well as the research questions and hypotheses. This study highlights the importance of using the appropriate instrument to collect the intended data for a research project (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). When measuring the human social and cultural environment; developing a survey instrument that assesses the human social and cultural environment is "indispensable" (van de Vijver

& Leung, 2000, p. 38). In the larger context of the author's study on identifying and examining the key characteristics of *reacculturation* as defined by Bruffee (1999) and the relationship to college freshmen, this pilot study on developing the necessary instrument became primary.

### *Study Design*

As previously stated, a causal-comparative study allows the researcher to explore the differences that already exist among groups to form explanations and make predictions about variables and their relationships, and to explore differences in gender and age as well (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). After exploring the relevant literature and determining no viable instrument existed, a new measurement instrument was created for this study. The survey instrument, i.e., The Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay, was used to measure the variables of *reacculturation* as defined by Bruffee (1999) and intent to stay.

### *Study Population and Sample*

The total population of the study consisted of all incoming freshman students at Midwestern University in the fall semester of 2006. The total freshman enrollment at this university the previous year was 2583 with 58.2% female and 41.8% male. The retention rate at this university from fall 2004 to fall 2005 was 72.4% (University website, 2013). A cluster sample was selected randomly from the available sections of a freshman orientation course. The pre-test sample consisted of 18 class sections with 219 participants. The post-test sample consisted on 12 class sections with 82 participants. Subjects were matched on pre- and post-tests resulting in 56 matched pairs. All surveys were administered in the fall semester of 2006.

### *Study Data Collection and Instrumentation*

Students enrolled in a freshman orientation course were given informed consent documents explaining the purpose of their participation in the research. Students wanting to participate in the study were read standardized instructions (Appendix I) by the researcher or instructor and then subjects completed the self-report instrument (Appendix R) once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. Survey items were derived from six key elements translated from Bruffee's (1999) theory of *reacculturation* as well as the variable intent to stay. After both administrations, surveys were matched according to social security numbers provided by participants.

#### *Litchy Scale of Reacculturation and Intent to Stay*

The final instrument consisted of 70 items across seven subscales on a self-administered Likert scale (Appendix R), an attitude scale commonly used in educational research (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). The items were based on a six point scale which ranged from 1-*strongly disagree*, to 6-*strongly agree*. Additional information collected consisted of demographic information: (a) the last four digits of a subject's social security number (for matching purposes), (b) gender, (c) age, and (d) the date the instrument was completed. Certain items on the scales were reverse coded in an attempt to ensure reliability of the results, meaning how consistent the scores obtained are for each individual and from one set of items to another (Frankel & Wallen, 2003).

### *Study Data Analysis*

To respond to research question 1: What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of entering freshmen, a descriptive analysis of the two variables, *reacculturation* and intent to stay, for all freshmen in the study,  $N=219$ , was completed

using mean and standard deviation, and percentages in respect to age and gender.

Subscale scores were calculated for the six *reacculturation* subscales and the intent to stay variable. Descriptive analysis included means and standard deviations for all seven subscales.

To respond to Research Question 2: What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of freshmen after a freshman orientation course, a descriptive analysis of the two variables, *reacculturation* and intent to stay, for all freshmen who completed the post-test administration,  $N=82$ , was completed using mean and standard deviation and percentages in respect to age and gender. Subscale scores were calculated for the six *reacculturation* subscales and the intent to stay variable. Descriptive analysis included means and standard deviations for all seven subscales.

To respond to research question 3: Does taking a freshman orientation course improve *reacculturation* and intent to stay in college for college freshmen, a paired samples t-test was completed for all matched pairs of pre- and post-tests completed,  $N=56$ , for all seven variables using  $\alpha=.05$ . A table of means for pre- and post-test results assisted with the interpretation of any differences revealed by the *t*-test.

To respond to research question 4: Which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay, a correlation matrix was produced showing relationships between all seven variables. These results were used to identify and explore additional analysis using multiple regression. The purpose of possible multiple regression was to explore best predictors of intent to stay from *reacculturation* using pre- and post-tests to create a prediction model.

### *Study Summary*

After researching, developing, and pilot testing an instrument to measure the desired variables, a causal-comparative study was completed to explore the differences that already exist among groups, and form explanations and make predictions about variables and their relationships, and to explore differences in gender and age (Frankel & Wallen, 2003) among college freshmen at Midwestern University. Specifically, this study explored: (a) the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of incoming freshmen students both before and after participation in a freshman orientation course, (b) differences in gender and age among participants, (c) changes occurring as a result of taking the freshman orientation course, and (d) it also looked for relationships that exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay.

### *Chapter Summary*

In higher education, freshman orientation courses are intended to help students make a smooth transition into higher education while institutions also hope to increase the students' intent to stay. Bruffee (1999) developed a theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of *reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 298), as in moving from high school to college. This research is an attempt to better understand the experiences of students in freshman orientation courses in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee's theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic factor of students' intent to stay.

The goal was to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation* and intent to stay in order to determine if taking a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay and to assess which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay by investigating the research questions.

After developing the instrument, it was pilot tested to determine the usability and validity, and restructured as necessary to address the research questions. The items on the final instrument are comprised from the major themes arising from the pertinent literature as well as the research questions. This study highlights the importance of using the appropriate instrument to collect the intended data for a research project (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). When measuring the human social and cultural environment; developing a survey instrument that assesses the human social and cultural environment is “indispensable” (van de Vijver, & Leung, 2000, p. 38). In the larger context, this study is the first of its kind to specifically measure the concept and key elements of *reacculturation* as defined by Bruffee (1999) and the relationship to college freshmen.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Introduction

According to Gardner (1986), a phenomena known as the “*freshman year experience*” (*FYE*; p. 261) has changed higher learning for freshman students. Since the *FYE* movement began, orientation programs have become mainstream in higher education in a deliberate “attempt to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (Gardner, p. 266) into the university culture. The *FYE* has subsequently developed into a marketing tool used by institutions in hope of increasing students’ intent to stay. Gardner explained that institutions are attempting *second sale*, a marketing term, “in which institutions are trying to help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267). Intent to stay is important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

Bruffee (1999) developed a theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of *reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. To study the *FYE* from the perspective of the *reacculturation* process, this study examined the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee’s theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic

factor of students' intent to stay (Chasteen, 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999).

This chapter contains the findings of the study and the statistical analyses used to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of entering freshmen?
2. What is the *reacculturation* to college and intent to stay of freshmen after a freshman orientation course?
3. Does taking a freshman orientation course improve *reacculturation* and intent to stay in college for college freshmen?
4. Which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay?

A causal-comparative study was chosen for this research because it allowed the researcher to explore the differences that already exist among groups to form explanations and make predictions about variables and their relationships (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). Data analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.Ink.

#### Demographics

The total population of the study consisted of all incoming freshman students at the Midwestern University in the fall semester of 2006. The total freshman enrollment at the university in fall 2006 was 2775 with 56.4% female and 43.6% male. The retention rate at this university from fall 2006 to fall 2007 for first-time, new in college, non-transfer students was 74.79% (University website, 2013). A cluster sample was selected randomly from the available sections of a freshman orientation course. The pre-test sample consisted of 18 class sections with 219 participants. The post-test sample consisted of 12 class sections with 82 participants. Subjects were matched on pre- and

post-tests resulting in 56 matched pairs. All surveys were administered in the fall semester of 2006.

### Research Questions Findings

The purpose of this study is to better understand students' experiences in a freshman orientation course, as freshmen at a university, and interpersonally in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee's (1999) theory of *reacculturation*. The way these key variables are related to students' intent to stay is important because administrators realize "it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one" (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2). A specific purpose of this study was to develop and administer an instrument to measure *reacculturation*, to determine if a freshman orientation course improves *reacculturation* or intent to stay, and which relationships, if any, exist between *reacculturation* and intent to stay. After pilot testing, the revised instrument was administered to matched subjects in a freshman orientation course.

#### *Research Question One*

An investigation of the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of college freshmen included a descriptive analysis of the two variables, *reacculturation* and intent to stay, for all freshmen in the study,  $N=219$ . Of these participants, 35.6% were male and 60.7% were female, the mean age of participants was 18.66 years.

Pre-test means on the Connectedness, Communication, and Trust Subscales indicated participants mostly *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. Means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs subscale indicated

participants somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Reacculturation of Pre-Test Participants*

Subscale Name	<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
Connectedness	203	4.72	0.72
Communication	200	4.71	0.60
Trust	205	4.45	0.66
Anxiety	208	2.45	0.80
Modification of beliefs	200	3.68	0.88
Ambivalence	200	2.39	0.76
Intent to stay	210	5.02	1.00

*Note.* Likert Scale ratings were 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*

*Research Question Two*

An investigation of the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of freshmen included a descriptive analysis of the two variables, *reacculturation* and intent to stay, for all freshmen who completed the post-test administration, *N*=82. Of these participants, 36.6% were male and 57.3% were female, the mean age of participants was 18.40 years.

Post-test means on the Connectedness, Communication, and Trust subscales indicated most participants *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted persons in the class and at the university. Means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated respondents *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs subscale suggested participants

somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean indicated participants mostly *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Reacculturation of Post-test Participants*

Subscale Name	<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
Connectedness	80	4.76	0.50
Communication	78	4.64	0.75
Trust	76	4.45	0.72
Anxiety	77	2.42	0.69
Modification of beliefs	76	3.59	0.89
Ambivalence	78	2.36	0.75
Intent to stay	76	4.92	1.00

*Note.* Likert Scale ratings were 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*

*Research Question Three*

An investigation of the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of freshmen included a descriptive analysis of the two variables, *reacculturation* and intent to stay, for all participants who had matched pair results, *N*=56.

Pre-test and post-test means had very minimal differences that were not statistically significant. Means on the Connectedness, Communication, and Trust Subscales indicated participants somewhat *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. Means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs

subscale indicated participants somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university. The lack of statistically significant changes indicated participants had no significant changes to their self-reported responses during the course of the semester. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Reacculturation of Pre-and Post-test Participants*

Subscale Name	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Stand. Error of the Mean
Connectedness (pre)	4.72	50	0.77	0.11
Connectedness (post)	4.64	50	0.79	0.11
Communication (pre)	4.79	51	0.43	0.06
Communication (post)	4.81	51	0.48	0.07
Trust (pre)	4.52	49	0.63	0.09
Trust (post)	4.52	49	0.71	0.10
Anxiety (pre)	2.47	50	0.69	0.10
Anxiety (post)	2.42	50	0.61	0.09
Modification of beliefs (pre)	3.59	47	0.83	0.12
Modification of beliefs (post)	3.57	47	0.87	0.13
Ambivalence (pre)	2.24	50	0.61	0.09
Ambivalence (post)	2.24	50	0.67	0.09
Intent to stay (pre)	5.08	49	1.06	0.15
Intent to stay (post)	5.04	49	0.99	0.14

*Note.* Likert Scale ratings were 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*

An investigation of the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of freshmen included a paired samples *t*-test for all participants who had matched pair results, N=56, for all seven variables using alpha=.05. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Reacculturation of Pre-and Post-test Participants*

Subscale Name	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
Connectedness	.986	49	.329
Communication	-.371	50	.712
Trust	.052	48	.959
Anxiety	.561	49	.578
Modification of beliefs	.259	46	.797
Ambivalence	.111	49	.912
Intent to stay	.373	48	.711

The results indicated lack of statistical significance across all subscales. For Connectedness subscale, pre-test M=4.72 and post-test M=4.64; for Communication, pre-test M=4.79 and post-test M=4.81; for Trust pre-test M=4.52, post-test M=4.52, these scores indicated a response between *Slightly Agree* and *Agree* on the Likert Scale. Scores for the Anxiety subscale, pre-test M=2.47, post-test M=2.42; and for Ambivalence, pre-test M=2.24, post-test M=2.24 all indicated a response between *Disagree* and *Slightly Disagree* on the Likert Scale. For the Modification of Beliefs subscale, the pre-test M=3.59 and post-test M=3.57 indicated a response between *Slightly Disagree* and *Slightly Agree*. Pre-test Intent to Stay M=5.08 was not statistically different from post-

test Intent to Stay  $M=5.04$ , and these scores represented *Agree* on the Likert Scale (Figure 1).

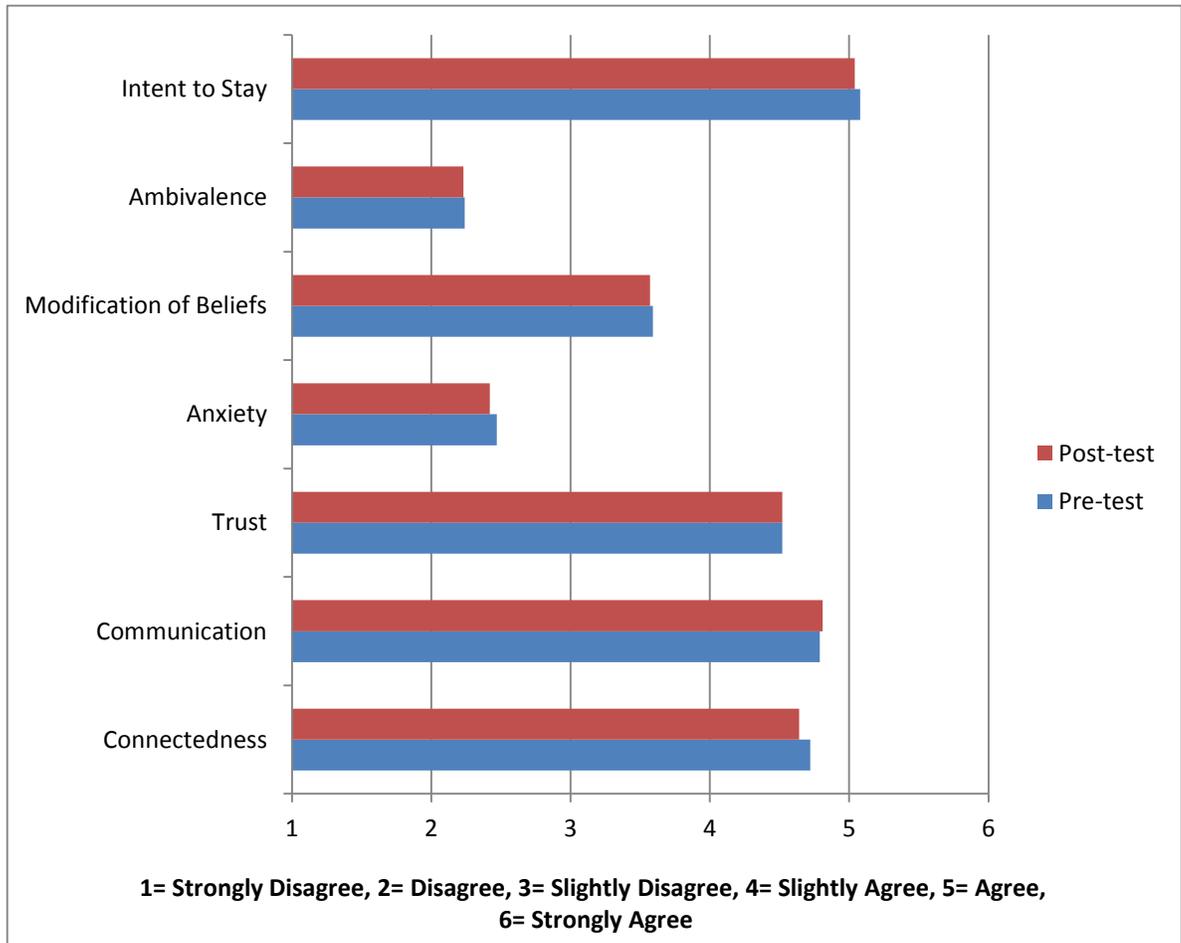


Figure 1. Pre-test and Post-test Likert Scale Results

#### Research Question Four

An investigation of the *reacculturation* and intent to stay of freshmen included a correlation matrix showing relationships between all seven variables (Table 6). These results were used to identify and explore additional analysis using Bivariate Linear

Regression to explore best predictors of intent to stay from *reacculturation* using pre- and post-tests to create a prediction model.

Table 6

*Correlations of Reacculturation Subscales*

	Communication	Anxiety	Modification of Beliefs	Connectedness	Trust	Ambivalence	Intent to Stay
<b>Communication</b>							
Pearson	1	-.432**	.371**	.818**	.766**	-.502**	.259**
<i>N</i>	200	192	186	188	191	185	195
<b>Anxiety</b>							
Pearson	-.432**	1	.102	-.559**	-.549**	.545**	-.302**
<i>N</i>	192	208	192	195	197	192	202
<b>Modification of Beliefs</b>							
Pearson	.371**	.102	1	.281**	.285**	-.151*	.111
<i>N</i>	186	192	200	186	189	186	193
<b>Connectedness</b>							
Pearson	.818**	-.559**	.281**	1	.846**	-.591**	-.374**
<i>N</i>	188	195	186	203	190	187	197
<b>Trust</b>							
Pearson	.766**	-.549**	.285**	.846**	1	-.594**	.370**
<i>N</i>	191	197	189	190	205	190	200
<b>Ambivalence</b>							
Pearson	-.502**	.545**	-.151*	-.591**	-.594**	1	-.529**
<i>N</i>	185	192	186	187	190	200	193
<b>Intent to Stay</b>							
Pearson	.259**	-.302**	.111	-.374**	.370**	-.529**	1
<i>N</i>	195	202	193	197	200	193	

*Note.* \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

According to Frankel and Wallen (2003), “correlation coefficients below .35 show only a slight relationship between variables” (p. 347). The data showed only slight relationships between the Communication and Intent to Stay, between Anxiety and Intent to Stay, between Modification of Beliefs and Connectedness, Modification of Beliefs and Trust and between Modification of Beliefs and Ambivalence. Furthermore, Frankel and Wallen wrote correlations between .40 and .60 “may have theoretical or practical value” (p. 347), but a correlation of .50 is necessary to make even crude predictions. The data showed minimal predictive value for relationships between Anxiety and Connectedness, Anxiety and Trust, Anxiety and Ambivalence, Connectedness and Ambivalence, Trust

and Ambivalence, and between Ambivalence and Communication. According to Frankel and Wallen (2003), correlations of .65 or higher indicate reasonably accurate predictive value, as evident in relationships between Communication and Connectedness, Connectedness and Trust, and Communication and Trust. The only variable with even minimal predictive value with Intent to Stay was Ambivalence at .529. All correlations, even those with little predictive value, were statistically significant except between Anxiety and Modification of Beliefs, and between Modification of Beliefs and Intent to Stay.

Bivariate Linear Regression results suggested, of the six variables of *reacculturation*, Ambivalence was the best predictor of Intent to Stay (Figure 2). The correlation between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay was -.529. Approximately 28% of the variance in Intent to Stay was accounted for by the linear relationship with Ambivalence (Green & Salkind, 2008)

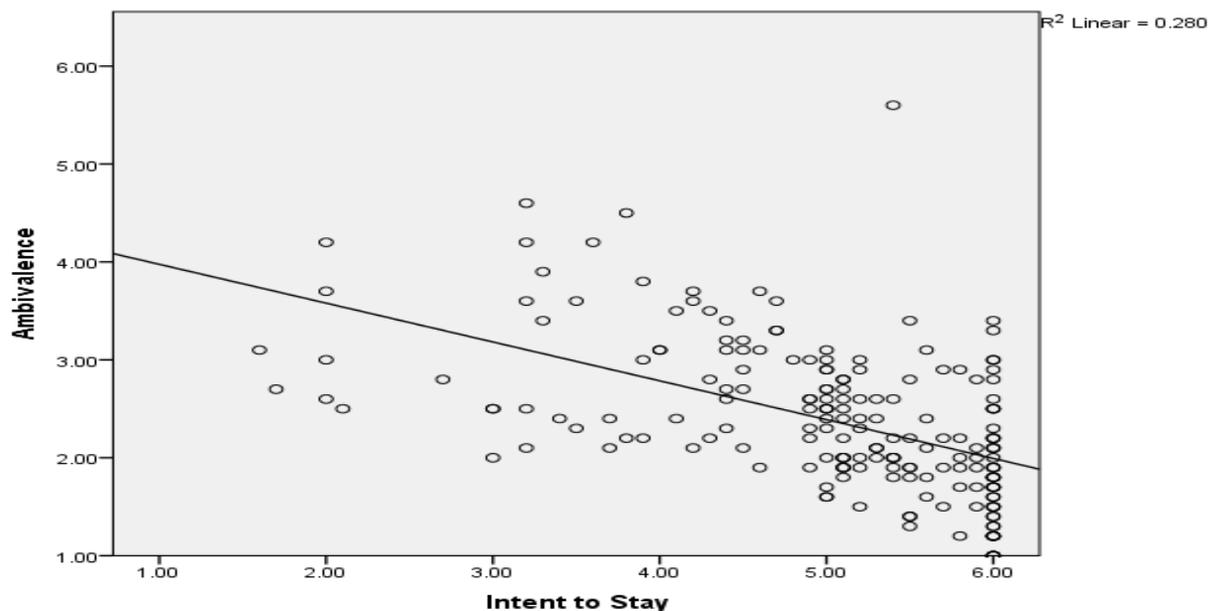


Figure 2. Bivariate Scatterplot Indicating Ambivalence as Predictor of Intent to Stay

Additional analysis included a Cronbach’s alpha analysis (Frankel & Wallen, 2003) to calculate an alpha coefficient on the subscales. This analysis was to check the internal consistency of the instrument with an increased number of participants, 219 from current Study vs. 54 participants in original Pilot Study. According to Frankel and Wallen, “when used to check reliability of scores, the coefficient should be at least .70” (p. 347). All Item-total correlations in this analysis were greater than .75 (Table 7).

Table 7

*Cronbach’s Alpha Results for Revised Litchy Scale of Reacculturation and Intent to Stay*

Subscale Name	Alpha
Connectedness	$\alpha=.90$
Anxiety	$\alpha=.87$
Communication	$\alpha=.81$
Modification of beliefs	$\alpha=.90$
Trust	$\alpha=.83$
Ambivalence	$\alpha=.76$
Intent to stay	$\alpha=.94$

Summary

Participants completed a self-report Likert Scale on two occasions during a semester in a freshman orientation course at Midwest University. Results on a Likert Scale from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* indicated, on average, pre- and post-test participants mostly *agreed* they felt Connectedness to the class and the university. Participants’ pre- and post-test scores indicated they mostly *agreed* they felt able to

Communicate with others in the class and at the university. Participants' pre- and post-test scores suggested they mostly *agreed* they Trusted others in the class and at the University. Participants' pre-and post-test self-ratings indicated they *disagreed* with having Anxiety about the class or the university. Participants' pre-and post-test Likert ratings suggested they slightly *disagreed* about being willing to Modify their Beliefs and about having Ambivalence toward the class and the university. Participants' scores both pre- and post-test indicated they *agreed* to having Intent to Stay in the class and at the university. Results seem to indicate that minimal changes occurred in participants self-reports of data collected at the beginning of the semester compared to data collected at the end of the semester (Figure 1).

Results from analysis showed no statistical differences from pre-test reports to post-test reports which is consistent with the indication of only minimal changes occurring in participants' self-reports of data collected at the beginning of the semester to data collected at the end of the semester. A correlation matrix (Table 6) was used to show which relationships, if any, existed between *reacculturation* variables and intent to stay. Results showed statistically significant relationships between all variables except Modification of Beliefs and Anxiety, and between Modification of Beliefs and Intent to Stay.

Bivariate Linear Regression results suggested, of the six variables of *reacculturation*, Ambivalence was the best predictor of Intent to Stay. The relationship between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay was inverse, indicating as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased. Additionally, a Cronbach's alpha analysis was calculated to check the internal consistency, found all item-total correlations in this

analysis were greater than .75 indicating the instrument is a reliable measure of *reacculturation* and intent to stay.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

#### Introduction

According to Gardner (1986), the “*freshman year experience*” (*FYE*; p. 261) has changed higher learning for freshman students. The first-year experience or *freshman year experience* is a deliberate “attempt to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (Gardner, p. 266) into the university culture. Since the *FYE* movement began, freshman orientation programs have become mainstream in higher education (Jaffee, 2007; Tinto, 1990).

Gardner (1986) wrote the *FYE* has developed into a marketing tool used by institutions. The *FYE* “is a deliberate series of experiences which are provided for students after they have arrived during the time when they are making that second critical decision as to whether or not to stay or leave the institution” (p. 267). The *FYE* is ultimately intended to help students make a smooth transition into higher education, but marketing through the *FYE*, institutions also hope to increase the students’ intent to stay. Gardner explained that institutions are attempting *second sale*, a marketing term, “in which institutions are trying to help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267). Intent to stay is important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

Bruffee (1999) developed a theory regarding the nature of student experiences in higher education and defined a process he termed *reacculturation*. The concept of

*reacculturation* can be simply understood as “switching membership from one culture to another” (Bruffee, p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. To study the *FYE* from the perspective of the *reacculturation* process, this study examined the evolution of college freshmen in terms of six key variables fundamental to Bruffee’s theory of *reacculturation* and the way these key variables are related to the important economic factor of students’ intent to stay (Chasteen, 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999).

### Conclusions

Pre-test means on the Connectedness, Communication, and Trust Subscales indicated participants mostly *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. The means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs subscale indicated participants somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university (Figure 1).

Post-test means on the Connectedness, Communication, and Trust subscales indicated participants mostly felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. The means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* about feeling Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the University. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs subscale indicated respondents somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean

indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university (Figure 1).

Pre-test and post-test means had minimal differences (Figure 1) that were not statistically significant (Table 6). Pre- and post-test means on the Connectedness, Communication and Trust Subscales indicated participants mostly *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. Pre- and post-test means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. Pre- and post-test means on the Modification of Beliefs subscale indicated participants somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The pre- and post-test Intent to Stay means indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university. Lack of statistically significant changes indicated participants had no change to their self-reported responses during the course of the semester. The results indicated lack of statistical significance across all subscales (Table 6).

The data showed only a slight positive correlation between the Communication and Intent to Stay, between Modification of Beliefs and Connectedness, and between Modification of Beliefs and Trust. The data showed minimal predictive value for positive correlations between Anxiety and Ambivalence. Reasonably accurate predictive value was evident in positive correlations between Communication and Connectedness, Trust and Connectedness, and between Communication and Trust (Table 8).

Table 8

*Predictive Ability of Positive Correlations*

Slight Positive Correlation	Minimally Predictive Positive Correlation	Reasonably Accurate Predictive Positive Correlation
Communication and Intent to Stay	Anxiety and Ambivalence	Communication and Connectedness
Modification of Beliefs and Connectedness		Trust and Connectedness
Modification of Beliefs and Trust		Communication and Trust

Slight correlations are less than .35, Minimally Predictive correlation are .50 to .65, Reasonably Accurate Predictive correlations are greater than .65

The data showed only a slight negative correlation between Anxiety and Intent to Stay, and between Modification of Beliefs and Ambivalence. The data showed minimal predictive value for negative correlations between Anxiety and Connectedness, Anxiety and Trust, Connectedness and Ambivalence, Trust and Ambivalence, and between Ambivalence and Communication. The only variable having even minimal predictive value with Intent to Stay was the negative correlation with Ambivalence (Table 9). All correlations, even those with little predictive value, were statistically significant except between Anxiety and Modification of Beliefs and between Modification of Beliefs and Intent to Stay (Table 6).

Table 9

*Predictive Ability of Negative Correlations*

Slight Negative Correlation	Minimally Predictive Negative Correlation
Anxiety and Intent to Stay	Anxiety and Connectedness
Modification of Beliefs and Ambivalence	Anxiety and Trust
	Connectedness and Ambivalence
	Trust and Ambivalence
	Ambivalence and Communication
	Intent to Stay and Ambivalence

Slight correlations are less than .35, Minimally Predictive correlation are .50 to .65, Reasonably Accurate Predictive correlations are greater than .65

Of the six variables of *reacculturation*, Ambivalence was the best predictor of Intent to Stay. The inverse correlation between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay accounted for over a quarter of the variance in Intent to Stay, showing that as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased (Figure 2). Additional analysis showed the internal consistency of the instrument to be high (Table 7), meaning the instrument is reliable (Green & Salkind, 2008).

### Discussion

Researchers and professionals must be cautious and not oversimplify what is a complex and fluid process. In defining and discussing the variables and stages of *reacculturation* as presented here, it should not be assumed these aspects are always distinct and sequential. All students experience the *reacculturation* process individually, some being hardly aware, others experiencing a stage or variable only partially or in conjunction with other stages and variables. Nevertheless, Bruffee (1999) has provided a

unique conceptual framework from which to define and measure, to some degree, the experiences of freshmen college students.

### *Reacculturation*

According to Chasteen (2005), there has been a “push for institutional effectiveness” (p. 4) in higher education, and accountability as well as students’ success has become increasingly emphasized. In response to the increased attention to these areas, Chasteen proposed student integration methods should involve the entire campus community and “should portray a supportive atmosphere, a student-friendly environment, and the initiation of cooperative peer interactions to acquire the desired result of retention and student success at the institution” (p. 4). Astin (1993) also felt it was the institution’s responsibility to help freshmen make adjustments to college. Tinto (1987) wrote, retention programs should focus on combating possible “failure to become incorporated into the intellectual and social life of the institution” (p. 155); in other words, programs should focus on the process of *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999). “College students are, after all, moving from one community or set of communities, most typically those of the family and local high school, to another, that of the college” (Tinto, 1987, p. 94). Tinto (1987) referred to this time as transition, “a period of passage between the old and the new, before the full adoption of new norms and patterns of behavior and after the onset of separation from old ones” (p. 96).

For the purpose of this study, *reacculturation* was defined by Bruffee (1999) as “switching membership from one culture to another” (p. 298) as in moving from high school to college. Culture is defined as how individuals feel about an institution, the authority system, members’ involvement and commitment, and an institution’s climate

(Schein, 2000). Culture is shared meanings and experiences that are interpreted and accepted as reality (Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; Schein, 2000) by the members of the organization. Bruffee (1999) explained *reacculturation* as learning which involves “giving up, modifying, or renegotiating the language, values, knowledge, mores and so on that are constructed, established, and maintained by the community one is coming from, and becoming fluent instead in the language and so on of another community” (p. 298). Van Gennep (1960) referred to a similar process he termed the rites of passage (Appendix D). It is not so much that the career of a college student is one of rites and ceremonies, but rather, “the notion of rites of passage...provides us with a way of thinking about the longitudinal process of student persistence” (Tinto, 1987, p. 93).

### *Connectedness*

For the purpose of this study, connectedness was defined as social and intellectual engagement (Bruffee, 1999) with something or someone. An example is the nature of relationships between members of a sports team or a transition group. For the purpose of this study, transition community or group is defined by Bruffee (1999) as “an ad hoc community that people organize in order to *reacculturate* themselves” (p. 298). This group offers support during the transition from a knowledge community to which one already belongs and a community to which one does not yet belong. A class orientating freshman students into the new knowledge community of college is an attempt to facilitate the growth of independent or ad hoc groups, such as social or study groups. For the purpose of this study, knowledge community or discourse community was defined by Bruffee (1999) as a “sociocultural entity” (p. 296), “a group of people with similar interests and goals who constitute themselves with a characteristic *language*” (p. 295).

According to Bruffee, knowledge communities can be formally or informally organized, but all have a characteristic language satisfying the salient “need to identify other members and the ability to do so unequivocally” (p. 296). Also, according to Bruffee, the condition exists that there is “interdependence of community members” (p. 296) in that they “depend on one another for [their] identity; some would say [they] even depend on one another for what [they] call [their] *self*” (p. 296).

According to Durkheim’s (1951) theory of *social integration*, being connected to a social system is vital for persistence within that system. Failure to persist within a social system such as college stems in part from lack of integration or connectedness (Spady, 1970). An essential component of student retention is personal contact or developing close relationships with other members (Spady, 1970) and the “product of that contact is the building of the interlocking chains of human affiliations that are the foundation of supportive communities” (Tinto, 1987, p. 157).

### *Communication*

For the purpose of this study, communication between humans “is said to occur when one organism encodes information into a signal that is transmitted to another organism that decodes the signal” (Shanker & King, 2002, p.605). According to Bruffee (1999), the conversation or communication of *reacculturation* occurs through language both externally as when individuals converse in a group, and internally when individuals talk to themselves and begin to “think productively - in a new way” (p. 11). Within a community, there exists a standard or normal discourse. For the purpose of this study, standard or normal discourse is defined by Bruffee (1999) as the “characteristic language of a knowledge community” (p. 296). The standard discourse may be “highly

distinguished from other languages and easily recognizable by outsiders...or it may be distinguished only subtly from everyday speech” (p. 296). Bruffee said, “when we ‘speak the same language,’ normal discourse is the language we speak” (Bruffee, p. 296). An example is the highly distinct language spoken within the computer information discipline.

When entering a new community or transition community, new members are often unfamiliar with the standard discourse of that culture and must learn the language in order to fully join the new community. They must first begin to converse through nonstandard or boundary discourse. For the purpose of this study, nonstandard discourse or boundary discourse was defined by Bruffee (1999) as what occurs in conversation or “negotiation between those who know and accept a community’s values and conventions and those who do not” (p. 296) such as a conversation between a high school student and a physics professor.

### *Anxiety*

For the purpose of this study, anxiety referred to the stressful nature of “coming to terms with differences between firmly held beliefs and modifying them” (Bruffee, 1999, 18). This anxiety often presents as apprehension or fear (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). Entering a new community or culture, such as college, and leaving behind an old community, for example high school, produces uncertainty and anxiety for many. According to Tinto (1987), “the first stage in the college career, separation, requires individuals to disassociate themselves, in varying degrees, from membership in the communities of the past” (p. 95). Tinto (1987) agreed with Cutrona (1982) that virtually all students experience stress and isolation due to separation from the past during their

transition into college, and this can often pose serious problems. This seems particularly relevant during the freshman semester as “the individual is least integrated into and therefore least committed to the institution and thus most susceptible to the pains and doubts which separation and transition evoke” (Tinto, 1987, p. 148).

According to Tinto (1987), for the individual, movements from group to group:

necessarily entail moving from a position as a known member in one group to that of a stranger in the new setting. As a result, they are often associated with feelings of weakness and isolation. Having given up the norms and beliefs of past associations and not yet having adopted those appropriate to membership in a new community, the individual is left in a state of at least temporary normlessness. (p. 93)

The problem of normlessness often provokes feelings of uncertainty or anxiety for freshman students. Tinto (1987) encouraged professionals to understand that although a student's intention may be to stay at their university, “intentions have much to do with a person's response to the stress of transition” (p. 98). Many students “voluntarily withdraw from college very early in the academic year, less from an inability to become incorporated in the social and academic communities of the college as from an inability to withstand the stresses that such transitions commonly induce” (Tinto, 1987, p. 98). Gideonse (as cited in Siegel, 1968) noted “maturity is anchored in the capacity to cope with tension and with polar values” (p. xviii). Until students achieve necessary maturity, if external assistance can help students persist until they gain a degree of maturity, they may be better equipped to respond to stressful situations and may have increased willingness to see through the adjustment period.

## *Trust*

Philosophically speaking, any attempt to define trust is often said to be “incomplete, arbitrary, or trivial” (Smolkin, 2008, p. 431); however, “trust is an important component of interpersonal relationships” (Shooter, Paisley & Sibthorp, 2012, p. 222) and has gained recognition as important in areas of business, leadership, group dynamics, and education, as well as morality and value inquiry (Fraser-Burgess, 2011; Goodman, Hoagland, Pierre-Toussaint, Rodriguez, & Sanabria, 2011; Kaye, 2005; Shooter et al., 2012; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). Smolkin (2008) stated “trust is a vital element in personal, commercial, and political relationships” (p. 431). Smolkin defined and explained key elements of trust. First, “trust involves confidence” (Smolkin, p. 432) that an individual or entity will behave in a manner that is expected and will behave with a level of competence. Trust can be a matter of degree and the “scope of trust is typically limited” (Smolkin, p. 432). Smolkin additionally wrote, “trust is present (or absent) without being deliberately chosen” (p. 432); however, it can be fostered. Furthermore, “the absence of trust may not necessarily be distrust. There is arguably space for something in between” (Smolkin, p. 433). When an individual assesses that another will act as expected, in a competent manner, and with the appropriate motivations in given circumstances, it can be said that the individual trusts the other. For the purpose of this study, trust is defined as placing confidence in someone or something to the degree that one is willing to believe or have faith. According to Bruffee (1999), *reacculturation* requires trust, to be willing to “grant authority to peers [and] accept the authority granted to oneself by peers” (p. 12) and to be interdependent with peers.

### *Modification of Beliefs*

For the purpose of this study, the modification of a person's beliefs was defined as a change in opinion and feelings brought about by negotiation which occurs in conversation (Bruffee, 1999). Tinto (1987, 1988) also proposed students had to give up the norms and beliefs of past associations, and adopt ones "appropriate to membership in a new community" (p. 442). According to Tinto (1987), if beliefs are transmitted, they must be accepted, and Bruffee (1999) felt new transmitted and accepted beliefs ultimately replace previously held beliefs and norms. Disbro (1995) agreed and wrote that as an adult "you will need to know yourself...have formed opinions...your thoughts, your feelings, your beliefs" (p. 52) and "have your own reasons for doing and becoming what you are" (p. 175). The first semester of college is the stage "which requires individuals to separate themselves from past associations and patterns of educational participation and make the transition to the new and possibly much more challenging life of the college" (Tinto, 1987, p. 148). Some students have "great difficulty either in separating themselves from past associations and/or in adjusting to the academic and social life of the college" (p. 148). Students making sense of their new surroundings is accomplished largely when they "draw on what they experience as their own backgrounds, their *selves*" (Peterson & Smith, 2000, p. 110). What a person "experiences as self has roots in meanings drawn from other sources" (Peterson & Smith, p. 110), but the self can become so routine it seems inherent. Some argue that the self is in fact derived from culture (Erez & Earley, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) or the process or *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

### *Ambivalence*

For the purpose of this study, ambivalence was defined as conflicting, inconsistent attitudes or feelings when evaluating an object or event (Baek, 2010) or “about engaging in conversation” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 12), which would ultimately lead to *reacculturation*. Ambivalence can result in delayed or hesitant behaviors (Baek), which Bruffee explained are manifested as resistance to change. Freshman college students are *newcomers* who have yet to achieve their final state or complete the term or period, and are due to experience many changes, they are immature. Gideonse (as cited in Siegel, 1968) noted “maturity is anchored in the capacity to cope with tension and with polar values” (p. xviii); therefore, immature *newcomers* likely do not have the capacity to cope with tension displayed as ambivalence which results in failure to *reacculturate* or integrate into one’s new group. The goal for individuals would be to reduce ambivalence thereby increasing the ability to cope with change and growth in order to *reacculturate* (Bruffee).

### *Intent to Stay*

Tinto (1975) suggested if students were fully integrated there would be a resulting commitment to the institution and goal achievement, and as the commitment increased, persistence would also increase. “Crucial to the success of many students was the motivation to persist through the good and the bad. Removing one’s self from a situation or environment before failure occurred was a defense mechanism” (Chasteen, 2005, p. 36), and persistence leads to goal achievement and ultimately becoming *reacculturated*. Through the use of transition groups in freshman orientation courses, students experience rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960; Appendix D). Freshman students begin to

experience *preliminal rites* or “separation from a previous world” (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 21), most commonly from the world of high school. If freshman students experience a connected environment; are exposed to boundary discourse, reduced anxiety, and a trusting atmosphere where they can modify their beliefs to fit those of the new knowledge community; and overcome their feelings of uncertainty of ambivalence (Bruffee, 1999), they experience transitional or *liminal rites* (Van Gennep) and become incorporated through *post-liminal rites* (Van Gennep) resulting in *reacculturation* (Bruffee, 1999).

Results of this study seemed to show that *reacculturation* did not occur for the participants during the course in question. Some possible explanations include but are not limited to the following. It is possible participants had not yet begun the process of *reacculturation* as it occurs later in college than the freshman year. In his work on collaborative learning, Bruffee (1999) began to recognize the concept that freshman students arrived on campus and in “classes already deeply *acculturated*, already full-fledged, competent members (as we were, too) of some community or other. In fact, they were already members of several interrelated communities (as we were, too)” (p. 4). Individuals are usually *acculturated* to communicate and interact easily within their own crowd or their own neighborhood, family or ethnic group, limiting their ability to communicate and interact outside that realm (Sennett & Cobb, 1973). Maybe the participants’ current *acculturation* was so ingrained, there was no change in *acculturation*, or *reacculturation*, in their first semester in college as evidenced by the lack of significant change between pre-test and post-test scores.

It may be the course in question had no impact on participants’ *reacculturation*. It is conceivable that although a freshman orientation course is a deliberate “attempt to

provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully), assimilated” (Gardner, 1986, p. 266) into the university culture, it does not work. This may be because it focuses on collaborative learning (Balasooriya, et al., 2010; Bruffee, 1999; Jones et al., 2008; Mazak & Manista, 2000) to support feelings of community or connectedness rather than focusing on reducing students’ levels of Ambivalence to ultimately increase retention.

The findings of this study indicate the best predictor of Intent to Stay was the variable of Ambivalence. Freshmen college students are *newcomers* (Dwyer, 1989) who likely do not have the capacity to cope with tension displayed as ambivalence. The goal of *reacculturation* would be for individuals to reduce ambivalence thereby increasing the ability to cope with change and growth to become *reacculturated* (Bruffee). The inverse correlation between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay accounted for over a quarter of the variance in Intent to Stay, showing that as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased. Tinto (1975) previously suggested if students were fully integrated there would be a resulting commitment to the institution and goal achievement, and as the commitment increased, persistence would also increase.

Given the high reliability (Green & Salkind, 2008) of the instrument used in this study and the results indicating Ambivalence as having an inverse predictive relationship with Intent to Stay, it seems plausible that if practitioners can focus efforts on decreasing student’s Ambivalence, then student’s Intent to Stay would increase, and the result may be increased retention. These results are ultimately important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

Perhaps Bruffe's theory of *reacculturation* is incorrect. Perhaps *reacculturation* is not switching membership from one culture to another (Bruffee, 1999) or study participants may have already had high levels of *reacculturation*. Pre-test means on the Connectedness, Communication and Trust Subscales indicated participants mostly *agreed* they felt Connected, able to Communicate, and Trusted individuals in the class and at the university. Means for Anxiety and Ambivalence indicated participants *disagreed* they felt Anxious or Ambivalent about the class and the university. The mean on the Modification of Beliefs subscale indicated participants somewhat *agreed* they were willing to modify their beliefs. The Intent to Stay mean indicated most participants *agreed* they were planning to continue in the course and at the university. Maybe programs from the 1950s which included attempts to orient both students and parents to higher education through contact with high school and college representatives (Siegel, 1968) were effective with these participants, and they were already *acculturated* to college by college coordinators, a specialized discipline within high school counseling (Siegel) and therefore did not need to *reacculturate* as college freshmen.

It is possible the researcher's understanding of the *reacculturation* process was incorrect and the process was defined inadequately and therefore measured inadequately. If the author's understanding of the necessary components of *reacculturation* as the need (a) to experience a connected environment, (b) be exposed to boundary discourse, (c) have reduced anxiety, and (d) experience trusting atmosphere where an individual can (e) modify his/her beliefs to fit those of the new knowledge community, and (f) overcome feelings of uncertainty or ambivalence (Bruffee, 1999) was incorrect, then the research may have measured something other than *reacculturation* and the relationship to intent to

stay. Additionally, if the above constructs were conceptualized and defined incorrectly, then any inferences may have no validity.

Given the above conclusions, it is worth noting again that all correlations, even those with little predictive value, were statistically significant except between Anxiety and Modification of Beliefs and between Modification of Beliefs and Intent to Stay. Of the six variables of *reacculturation*, Ambivalence was the best predictor of Intent to Stay. The inverse correlation between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay accounted for over a quarter of the variance in Intent to Stay, showing that as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased. Additional analysis showed the internal consistency of the instrument to be high meaning the instrument is reliable (Green & Salkind, 2008).

#### Limitations

This study is limited by its basis on the researcher's interpretation of the primary literature. Other interpretations of this literature are possible, thus limiting the understanding of this study and its results. Furthermore, as literature on the specific notion of *reacculturation* is scarce, it was quite difficult to triangulate and thereby validate definitions and constructs.

The scarcity of research being the case, there was no available instrument with which to measure the presented variables, further limiting the design of the research. The author was faced with the desire and the necessity to design and to pilot a completely new instrument for measurement, i.e., The Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay. The design of the instrument is limited by the researcher's conceptualization of the topic and the author's experience and ability as a test designer and statistician.

Furthermore, the freshman orientation course studied is unique to the university involved, limiting the generalization of findings to other institutions and programs. The study was also limited to examining only the research questions over the duration of the course in question. If the study had been conducted longitudinally, the results may have had more reliability.

Longitudinal research designs are relatively rare in the academic literature despite their tremendous methodological rigor and scientific utility. Literature expressed the benefits of longitudinal research as offering “the possibility of establishing causality by examining temporal effects and ruling out confounding explanations” (Campbell et. al., 2011, p. 434) resulting in increased validity and reliability. Finally, the statistical procedures involved specifically multiple regression analysis, is limited in that it predicts variables according to their intercorrelation with other variables, possibly causing significant variables to appear non-significant.

The researcher attempted to establish controls for the aforementioned limitations. First, the researcher attempted to become immersed in the primary literature in order to gain a clear and solid understanding while acknowledging personal biases through which the literature was interpreted. Second, the researcher attempted to triangulate understanding through discussion with peers and experts, and through additional literature supplemental to the primary sources. Third, when presented with the fact that no suitable instrument existed, the researcher began the quest to learn how to design a statistically valid and reliable measurement. Fourth, the researcher sought expert help in the design of said instrument. Fifth, the researcher pilot tested this instrument to determine the usability of the measure before conducting the study. Sixth, the researcher

attempted to use the most suitable statistically relevant methods, despite the intrinsic limitations, and present those results in the most user-friendly format. Finally, the researcher has maintained contact and collaboration with experts and colleagues to ensure this study is presented in such a way that readers are aware of the limitations, assumptions, and control attempts.

### Implications for Future Practice

Many authors have written about college student attrition as related to institutional policy (Astin, 1993; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bruffee, 1999; Durkheim, 1951; Noel, 1985; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975, 1986, 1987; Upcraft, Gardner, & Associates, 1989). One approach to institutional policy on persistence is to look toward modifying the social and intellectual environment of the institution, and generating alternative means for the *reacculturation* of students into the pre-existing social and intellectual culture of the university. Determining the key components of the process of *reacculturation*, as this research has done, can be a good place to start for many institutions in restructuring the current social and intellectual integration process, i.e., their freshman orientation courses.

Schlossberg (2011) wrote “it is not the transition per se that is critical, but how much it alters one’s roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions” (p. 160). Schlossberg developed a model that suggested steps for understanding and coping with transitions. Schlossberg developed the 4S System for coping. In this model, *Situation* “refers to the person’s situation at time of transition” (p. 160); *Self* “refers to the person’s inner strength” (p. 160); *Supports* refers to “support available” (p. 160); and *Strategies* refers to techniques for coping. Schlossberg proposes this framework as a means of describing and

understanding the “process of leaving one set of roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions and establishing new ones” (p. 160), as in transitioning from high school to college.

Intellectuals interested in the occurrence of continuing patterns of departure from universities can also refer to Durkheim’s (1951) theory of egotistical suicide. Specifically, interested parties can examine the social and intellectual character of an institution, and what mechanisms are in place to enable individuals to become *reacculturated* at that institution. According to Durkheim’s (1951) theory, experts can expect institutions with low departure rates are more able to fully *reacculturate* students into their social and intellectual culture. Conversely it can be assumed, institutions with high attrition rates are less able to do so. Familiarizing oneself with Bruffee’s (1999) theory of *reacculturation* with Schlossberg’s (2011) transition model and Durkheim’s (1951) theory of institutional character gives practitioners a basis from which to view and perhaps gain insight into student development and persistence.

The findings of this study indicate the best predictor of Intent to Stay was the variable of Ambivalence. For the purpose of this study, ambivalence was defined as conflicting, inconsistent attitudes or feelings when evaluating an object or event (Baek, 2010) or “about engaging in conversation” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 12) which would ultimately lead to *reacculturation*. Ambivalence can result in delayed or hesitant behaviors (Baek), which Bruffee explained are manifested as resistance to change. Freshman college students are *newcomers* who have yet to achieve their final state or complete the term or period, and are due to experience many changes, they lack maturity. Gideonse (as cited in Siegel, 1968) noted maturity is anchored in the capacity to cope with tension and with

polar values” (p. xviii); therefore, immature *newcomers* likely do not have the capacity to cope with tension displayed as ambivalence. The goal of *reacculturation* would be for individuals to reduce ambivalence thereby increasing the ability to cope with change and growth to become *reacculturated* (Bruffee).

The inverse correlation between Ambivalence and Intent to Stay accounted for over a quarter of the variance in Intent to Stay, showing that as Ambivalence increased, Intent to Stay decreased. Tinto (1975) previously suggested, if students were fully integrated there would be a resulting commitment to the institution and goal achievement, and as the commitment increased, persistence would also increase. “Crucial to the success of many students was the motivation to persist through the good and the bad. Removing one’s self from a situation or environment before failure occurred was a defense mechanism” (Chasteen, 2005, p. 36), and persistence leads to goal achievement and ultimately becoming *reacculturated*.

In recent years, “the many and justifiable concerns over the costs and benefits of higher education have created an often intense dialogue” (Mazak & Manista, 2000, p. 226). It is common to hear dialogue regarding the cost of colleges and universities (Fonte, 2011; Sparks, 2011; Vedder & Gillen, 2011). Individuals, as well as governments, have begun questioning whether the value of education is worth the price of student loans: “The cost of college is increasing faster than inflation with the government funding over 19 million student loans....Congress is demanding answers from colleges and universities about the quality of their education and the return on the government’s investment” (Sparks, p. 1). Parents might wonder also about the value of the education they are purchasing for their children. Gardner (1986) explained, after freshmen arrive,

institutions are attempting *second sale*, a marketing term, “in which institutions are trying to help students overcome *buyers’ remorse* and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution” (p. 267).

Given the high reliability (Green & Salkind, 2008) of the instrument used in this study and the results indicating Ambivalence as having an inverse predictive relationship with Intent to Stay, it seems plausible that if practitioners can focus efforts on decreasing student’s Ambivalence, then student’s Intent to Stay would increase, and the result may be increased retention. These results are important to practitioners because while authors consistently agreed that universities have an obligation to enhance student success once they were admitted (Chasteen 2005; Congos & Schoeps, 1997; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999; Tinto, 1990) and particularly during the freshman year (Astin, 1993; Beal, 1980; Gardner, 1986; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1993; Upcraft, Gardner, & Associates, 1989), according to Astin et al. (1987), “retention has become a barometer of institutional effectiveness; it has been used as a measure of an institution’s commitment to the development and support of its students” (p. 38). Retention is ultimately important because administrators realize “it costs more to recruit a student than it does to retain one” (Congos & Schoeps, 1997, ¶ 2).

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Literature consistently indicated there are benefits to freshman orientation courses (Chasteen, 2005; Disbro, 1995; Gardner, 1986; Jaffee, 2007; Levitz & Noel, 1989; Siegel, 1968; Tinto, 1987, 1990); however, according to Jaffee (2007), “the literature on the first-year experience has largely ignored the unique social-psychological dynamics of the FLCs [Freshman Learning Communities] that can produce problems and unintended

outcomes” (p. 66). Balasooriya et al. (2010) wrote with concerns about actions and behaviors of some students that could “actually harm individuals and the learning climate” (p. 31). Additionally, despite the available research into the role of leadership in higher education (Bensimon et al., 1998; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Cohen & March, 1974; Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2000; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; Schein, 1996, 2000; Webb, 1987; Yukl, 2002), as recently as 2012, Basford, Offermann, and Wirtz continued to be concerned regarding the impact leadership support has on follower outcomes. This concern indicates more research regarding how university and classroom leadership affects student outcomes could benefit the field of higher education.

Additional research regarding *reacculturation* could be enhanced by the benefits of longitudinal approaches. Simply put, “longitudinal designs offer the possibility of establishing causality by examining temporal effects and ruling out confounding explanations” (Campbell et al., 2011, p. 434). Longitudinal research could examine the actual outcomes for the students involved in this study by matching their reported intent to stay at the university to their actual persistence at the university, thereby giving additional information regarding the *reacculturation* status. Retrieving longitudinal data for all initial participants in this study could further validate the instrument designed for this study and check for consistency or reliability of results. Longitudinal research could further validate the research questions as well as narrow the concepts and definitions of the variables involved in measuring *reacculturation*.

Tinto (1987) stated the importance of *reacculturating* freshman college students in asserting

college students are, after all, moving from one community or set of communities, most typically those of the family and local high school, to another, that of college. Like other persons in the wider society, they too must separate themselves, to some degree, from past associations in order to make the transition to eventual incorporation in the life of the college. In seeking to make such transitions, they too are likely to encounter problems of adjustment whose resolution may well spell the difference between continued persistence and early departure. Those difficulties are not, however, solely the reflection of individual attributes. They are as much a reflection of the problems inherent in shifts of community membership as they are either of the personality of the individual or of the institution in which membership is sought. They are rooted in the structure of persistence and in the passage successful persistence entails. Lest we forget, it is a situation of movement from a youthful association to more mature ones which is common to many other human experiences, not just those associated with education. (p. 94)

If not measured longitudinally, then at a minimum, students could be administered the Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay, or another such instrument, at the beginning of their university experience and again upon exiting the institution to determine any changes in their level of *reacculturation*. This could further investigate Tinto's (1987) premise that successful retention programs would "stay with students throughout the college years...in a coordinated manner so that energies and actions...are channeled...toward the incorporation of students into the social and intellectual life of the institution" (p. 173), the process Bruffee (1999) termed *reacculturation*.

When thinking about practical implications and future research in areas of student development it is important to distinguish reliability and validity of instruments, both of which can come from multiple sources of evidence. According to Frankel and Wallen (2003), “reliability refers to the consistency of the scores obtained” (p. 165). This research was able to establish subscale reliability with *Cronbach’s* alpha levels greater than .75 on the Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to stay. Reliability is required for a measurement to be valid, but reliability does not guarantee validity.

Validity is often thought of as whether an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. According to Frankel and Wallen (2003) “a more accurate definition of validity revolves around the defensibility of the inferences researchers make from the data collected through the use of an instrument” (p. 199). Frankel and Wallen (2003) explained the current standards of validation involve the “appropriateness, correctness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect” (p. 158). The burden of validity is no longer on the instrument but rather “the inferences about the specific uses of an instrument” (Frankel & Wallen, p. 158). “Validity, therefore, depends on the amount and type of evidence there is to support the interpretations researchers wish to make concerning data they have collected” (Frankel & Wallen, p. 159).

According to Frankel and Wallen (2003) three kinds of evidence can provide necessary validity. Content-related evidence refers to (a) appropriateness of content, (b) comprehensiveness, (c) logic, (d) adequate representation of content to be assessed, and (e) appropriateness of format. Criterion-related validity refers to the relationships between scores obtained using more than one instrument, the strength of these

relationships and the predictive ability of the scores. Construct-related validity refers to whether or not an instrument correctly measures the psychological construct being measured. In designing the instrument for the current research, the author attempted to achieve construct validity by carefully defining the psychological constructs involved and developing questions directly from the construct definitions. However, future research could enhance the validity of the inferences presented here.

## References

- Adams, P. A. (1996). *Homecoming to graduation: The cycle of co-curricular social activities in an American high school*. Ann Arbor, Maryland: University of Maryland College Park.
- Alexander, P. A., Winter, F. I., Loughlin, S. M., & Grossnickle, E. M. (2012). Students' conceptions of knowledge, information, and truth. *Learning and Instruction*, 22(1), 1-15.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A., Korn, W., & Green, K. (1987). Retaining and satisfying students. *Educational Record*, 68, 36-42.
- Baek, Y. M. (2010). An integrative model of ambivalence. *Social Science Journal*, 47, 609-629.
- Balasooriya, C., di Corpo, S., & Hawkins, N. J. (2010). The facilitation of collaborative learning: What works? *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 22(2), 31-44.
- Baldrige, J. V. (1983). *The dynamics of organizational change in education*. Berkley, CA: McCutchen Books.
- Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R. & Wirtz, P. W. (2012). Considering the source: The impact of leadership level on follower motivation and the intent to stay. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 19(2), 202-214.
- Beal, P. E. (1980). *What works in student retention*. Iowa City, IA & Boulder, CO: American College Testing Program and National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

- Bean, J. P. (1981a). *Student attrition, intentions, and confidence: Interaction effects in a path model. Part I, the 23 variable model*. Lincoln, NE: Office of Institutional Research and Planning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED202443).
- Bean, J. P. (1981b). *Student attrition, intentions, and confidence: Interaction effects in a path model. Part II, the ten variable model*. Lincoln, NE: Office of Institutional Research and Planning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED202442).
- Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A conceptual model of non-traditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Education Research*, 55, 485-540.
- Bensimon, E. M., Neumann, A., & Birnbaum, R. (1998). *Making sense of administrative leadership: The "L" word in higher education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1. Washington, DC: School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University.
- Biggs, S. A., Torres, A., Jr. & Washington, N. D. (1998). Minority student retention: A framework for discussion and decision-making. *The Negro Educational Review*, 48, 71-72.
- Blimling, G. S., & Whitt, E. J. (1998). Principles of good practice for student affairs. *About Campus*, 3(1), 10-15.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1997). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brawer, F. B. (1996). *Retention-attrition in the nineties*. Eric Digest. (Report No. ED393510). Los Angeles: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges.

- Bruffee, K. A. (1999). *Collaborative learning: Higher education, interdependence, and the authority of knowledge* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Campbell, R., Sprague, H. B., Cottrill, S., & Sullivan, C. M. (2011). Longitudinal research with sexual assault survivors: A methodological review. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(3), 433–461.
- Chasteen, B. C. (2005). *A new student orientation program: It's relationship to retention and academic performance*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 2005). Dissertation Abstracts International, 66-09(A), 3228.
- Chickering, A. W. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, M. H., & Cundiff, N. L. (2011). Assessing the effectiveness of a college freshman seminar using propensity score adjustments. *Research in Higher Education, 52*, 616-639.
- Cohen, M. D., & March, J. G. (1974). *Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Coleman, J. S. (1961). Teen-Age Culture. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 338*, 33-43.
- Coleman, J. S., & Hoffer, T. (1987). *Public and Private high schools: The impact of communities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Congos, D. H., & Schoeps, N. (1997). A model for evaluating retention programs [Electronic version]. *Journal of Developmental Education, 21*, 2-24.
- Cutrona, C. E. (1982). Transition to college: Loneliness and the process of social adjustment. In L. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of*

- current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 291-310). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Disbro, W. (1995). *100 things every college freshman ought to know*. Williamsville, NY: Cambridge Stratford Study Skills Institute.
- Durkheim, E. (1951). *Suicide*. (J. Spaulding & G. Simpson, Trans.). Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Dwyer J. O. (1989). A historical look at the freshman year experience. In M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner, & Associates (Eds.), *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college* (pp. 25-39). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Erez, M. P., & Earley, C. (1993). *Culture, self-identity, and work*. New York: Oxford University.
- Fonte, R. (2011). The community college alternative. *Academic Questions*, 24, 419-428.
- Frankel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2003). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Fraser-Burgess, S. (2011). Deliberating through group differences in education for trust and respect. *Journal of Thought*, 6(3), 45-61.
- Fullerton, J. A., Kendrick, A., & McKinnon, L. M. (2013). Advertising ethics: Student attitudes and behavioral intent. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 68(1), 33-49.
- Gardner, J. N. (1986). The freshman year experience. *College and University*, 61(4), 261-274.
- Goodlad, J. (1984). *A place called school*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Goodman, J. F., Hoagland, J., Pierre-Toussaint, N., Rodriguez, C., & Sanabria, C. (2011). Working the crevices: Granting students authority in authoritarian schools. *American Journal of Education, 117*(3), 375-398.
- Goodwin, G. J., & Markham, W. T. (1996). First encounters of the bureaucratic kind: Early freshman experiences with a campus bureaucracy. *Journal of Higher Education, 67*, 660-691.
- Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2008). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Greenlaw, H. S., Anliker, M. E., & Barker, S. J. (1997). Orientation: A student affairs or academic affairs function? *NASPA Journal, 34*, 303-313.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1999) Can leadership enhance school effectiveness? In T. Bush, L. Bell & R. Bolam (Eds.), *Educational management: Redefining theory, policy and practice* (pp. 178-190). London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hoffman, L. M. (2002-2003). Why high schools don't change: What students and their yearbooks tell us [Electronic version]. *High School Journal, 86*(2), 22-37.
- Howard, H. E., & Jones, P. W. (2000). Effectiveness of a freshman seminar in an urban university: Measurement of selected indicators. *College Student Journal, 34*(4), 509-515.
- Jaffee, D. (2007). Peer cohorts and unintended consequences of freshman learning communities. *College Teaching, 55*(3), 65-71.
- Jeong, H., & Chi, M. T. H. (2007). Knowledge convergence and collaborative learning. *Instructional Science. 34*(5), 367-397.

- Jones, R. A. (1986). *Emile Durkheim: An introduction to four major works*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Jones, A. L., Stein, J. & Kiser, P. (2008). Making the transition to collaborative service-learning. *Planning for Higher Education*, 36(4), 17-22.
- Kaye, S. M. (2005). True friendship and the logic of lying. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 39, 475-485.
- Keyes, R. (1976). *Is there life after high school?* Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Lamadrid, L. (1999). Putting Descartes before the horse: Opportunities for advancing the student affairs link with academic affairs. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 19(1), 24-34.
- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (2000). Changing leadership: A menu of possibilities. In K. Leithwood, D. Jantzi, & R. Steinbach (Eds.) *Changing leadership for changing times* (pp. 3-20). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Leonard, E. A. (1956). *Origins of personnel services in American higher education*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Levitz, R., & Noel, L. (1989). Connecting students to institutions: Keys to retention and success. In M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner, & Associates (Eds.), *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college* (pp. 65-81). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Loveless, T. (2002). *The 2002 Brown Center report on American education: How well are American students learning?* Houston, TX: The Brookings Institution.

- Markus H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation [Electronic version]. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253.
- Martin, J. (2002). Organizational culture: Mapping the terrain. In D. A. Whetten & P. C. Godfrey (Eds.), *Foundations for organizational science* (pp. 55-92). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mazak, J., & Manista, F. (2000). Collaborative learning. *The Reference Librarian*, 32(67-68), 225-242.
- Miller, M. T., Dyer, B. G., & Nadler, D. P (2002). New student satisfaction with an orientation program: Creating effective learning transitions. *The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 10(1), 51-57.
- Mills, M. R., & Hyle, A. E. (2001). No rookies on rookies: Compliance and opportunism in policy implementation. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(4), 453-477.
- Montgomery, G. T., & Hirth, M. A. (2011). Freshman transition for at-risk students: Living with HEART. *NASSP Bulletin*, 95(4), 245-265.
- Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Noel, L. (1985). Increasing student retention: New challenges and potential. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, D. Saluri, & Associates (Eds.), *Increasing student retention* (pp. 1-27). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Owen, D. (1981). *High school*. New York: The Viking Press.
- Peterson, M. F., & Smith, P. B. (2000). Sources of meaning, organizations, and culture. In N. M., Ashkanasy, C. P. M., Wilderom, & M. F., Peterson (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational culture and climate* (pp. 101-115). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Powell, A., Farrar, E., & Cohen, D. (1985). *The shopping mall high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Rafaeli, A., & Worline, M. (2000). Symbols in organizational culture. In N. M., Ashkanasy, C. P. M., Wilderom, & M. F., Peterson (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational culture and climate* (pp. 71-84). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Reason, R. D., Cox, B. E., Lutovsky Quaye, B. R., & Terenzini, P. T. (2010). Faculty and institutional factors that promote student encounters with difference in first-year courses. *The Review of Higher Education*, 33(3), 391-414.
- Rosen, J. B. & Schulkin, J. (1998). From normal fear to pathological anxiety. *Psychological Review*, 105(2), 325-350.
- Schein, E. H. (1996). Culture: The missing concept in organization studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41, 229-240.
- Schein, E. H. (2000). Sense and nonsense about culture and climate. In N. M., Ashkanasy, C. P. M., Wilderom. & M. F., Peterson (Eds.). *Handbook of organizational culture and climate* (pp. xxiii-xxx). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 48, 159-162.
- Schroeder, C. C. (1999). Partnerships: An imperative for enhancing student learning and institutional effectiveness. *New Directions for Student Services*, 87, 5-18.
- Schwitzer, A. M., McGovern, T. V., & Robbins, S. B. (1991). Adjustment outcomes of a freshman seminar: A utilization-focused approach. *Journal of College Student Development*, 32, 484-489.
- Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. (1972). *The hidden injuries of class*. New York: Knopf.

- Shanker S. G., & King, B. J. (2002). The emergence of a new paradigm in ape language research. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 25, 605-656.
- Shooter, W., Paisley, K. & Sibthorp, J. (2012). Fostering trust in outdoor leaders: The role of personal attributes. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 35, 222-237.
- Sidle, M. W., & McReynolds, J. (1999). The freshman year experience: Student retention and student persistence. [Electronic version]. *National Association of Student Personnel Administration Journal*, 36, 288-300.
- Siegel, M. (Ed.). (1968). *The counseling of college students: Function, practice and technique*. New York: The Free Press.
- Silver, H. (2003). Does a university have a culture? *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(2), 157-170.
- Sizer, T. R. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Smolkin, D. (2008). Puzzles about trust. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, XLVI, 431-449.
- Spady, W. G. (1970). Dropouts from higher education: An interdisciplinary review and synthesis. *Interchange*, 1, 64-84.
- Sparks, R. J. (2011). A value-added model to measure higher education returns on government investment. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 4(2), 15-21.
- Stavrianopoulos, K. (2008). Service learning within the freshman year experience. *College Student Journal*, 42(2), 703-712.

- Summers, J. J., Beretvas, S. N., Svinicki, M. D., & Gorin, J. S. (2005). Evaluating collaborative learning and community. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 73(3), 165-188.
- Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 2-21.
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of current research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45, 89-125.
- Tinto, V. (1982). Limits of theory and practice in student attrition. *Journal of Higher Education*, 53, 687-700.
- Tinto, V. (1986). Retention: An admission concern. *College and University*, 61, 290-293.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59, 438-455.
- Tinto, V. (1990). Principles of effective retention. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, 2, 35-48.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Associates. (1989). *The freshman year experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- van de Vijver, F. J. R., & Leung, K. (2000). Methodological issues in psychological research on culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 31, 33-51.

- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage* (M. Vizedon & G. Caffee, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Van Quaquebeke, N., & Eckloff, T. (2010). Defining respectful leadership: What it is, how it can be measured, and another glimpse at what it is related to. *Journal of Business Ethics, 91*, 343-358.
- Vedder, R. K., & Gillen, A. (2011). Cost versus enrollment bubbles. *Academic Questions, 24*(3), 282-290.
- Webb, E. M. (1987) Retention and excellence through student involvement: A leadership role for student affairs. *NASPA Journal, 24*, 6-11.
- Whitt, E. J., Nesheim, B. E., Guentzel, M. J., & Kellogg, A. H. (2008). “Principles of good practice” for academic and student affairs partnership programs. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(3), 235-249.
- Yukl, G. (2002). *Leadership in organizations* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

## Appendix A

Factors which influenced the *FYE* movement in higher education.

1. Altruism
2. Financial exigencies
3. Increased attention to the poor quality of high school graduates.
4. The aging of the American higher education professoriate and the need for faculty development.
5. The decline of enrollment.
6. Increased attention the consumer rights.
7. A sort of scholarly revival taking place.
8. Increased competition for students.
9. Declining institutional revenues.
10. Federal desegregation compliance.
11. A dramatic change in the nature of freshman students. (Gardner, 1986, p. 263)

## Appendix B

### Efforts made to improve conditions for incoming freshman students

1. Reform of the entire undergraduate experience including curriculum.
2. Enhancement of advisement.
3. Freshman orientation/seminar courses.
4. Faculty training.
5. A faculty reward system.
6. More faculty teaching freshmen.
7. Continuing orientation.
8. Improvement of undergraduate housing.
9. Expanding extracurricular activities to improve involvement and investment in the institution.
10. Peer counseling and advising.
11. Special administrative units for freshmen.
12. Career counseling for freshmen.
13. Tutoring and study programs.
14. Early warning and intervention systems.
15. Mentoring programs.
16. Special programs for non-traditional students.
17. Special programs for parents of freshmen.
18. Improvements in instruction.
19. Improvements in library orientation. (Gardner, 1986, p. 264)

## Appendix C

### USC, University 101 Goals to Promote Student Retention

1. Extended or continuing orientation.
2. Introduction to higher education as a discipline.
3. Teaching academic survival skills.
4. Improved attitudes toward faculty and learning.
5. Providing a support group and a sense of community.
6. Providing a mentor.
7. Teaching and requiring use of support services.
8. Making friends.
9. Providing career counseling and assistance.
10. Getting involved in University life.
11. Improving compliance with federal desegregation mandates.
12. Making freshmen feel significant.
13. Generating enthusiasm for the institution.
14. Exploring the cultural life of the University.
15. Making student informed consumers. (Gardner, 1986, p. 269)

## Appendix D

### Van Gennepe's (1960) Rites of Passage as Simplified by Tinto (1987)

#### *The rites of separation:*

The separation of the individual from past associations. It is characterized by marked decline in interactions with members of the group from which the person has come and by the use of ceremonies whose purpose it is to mark as outmoded the views and norms which characterized that group.

(Tinto, 1987, p. 92)

#### *The transition rites:*

A period during which the person begins to interact in new ways with members of the new group into which membership is sought. Isolation, training, and sometimes ordeals are employed as mechanisms to ensure the separation of the individuals from past associations and the adoption of behaviors and norms appropriate to membership in the new group. It is during this transitional stage that individuals come to learn the knowledge and skills required for the performance of their specific role in the new group (Tinto, 1987, p. 92)

#### *The rites of incorporation:*

“Involves the taking on of new patterns of interaction with members of the new group and the establishing of competent membership in that group as a participant member” (Tinto, 1987, p. 92).

Appendix E

Human Participants Protection Review

University Office of Sponsored Research

DATE: June 29, 2006

TO: Cindy MacGregor

Educational Administration, University

FROM: Director Office of Sponsored Research

**HUMAN PARTICIPANTS PROTECTION REVIEW**

Your project, "*Reacculturation of College Freshman*," was approved by the Protection of Human Participants Institutional Review Board as submitted. Copies of your application and proposal will be on file in the Office of Sponsored Research & Programs. Please note that your project has a starting date of July 1, 2006, and that it was approved until June 30, 2007.

If you find it necessary to extend your project beyond this date, it will be necessary for you to reapply to the Protection of Human Participants Institutional Review Board. The application form for this may be obtained on the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs web page <http://www.srp.smsu.edu>.

Please feel free to contact our office if we can be of additional assistance. This project has been assigned the number #06343. Please reference this number when asking any questions regarding this project.

Appendix F

Request to Enter Department

Thank you for considering participation of students in your department in this study about the *reacculturation* of college freshman. This study is being conducted to complete my doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The project is being supervised by Dr. Cindy MacGregor, Associate Professor, Educational Administration (417-836-6046).

The purpose of this study is to better understand what occurs as incoming freshman are *reacculturated* into university life. This information will be useful for educational planning and student retention.

**Informed Consent Procedures**

The following information will be communicated to the students before data collection as part of the informed consent procedure:

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point without penalty.
- You need not answer all of the questions.
- Your questionnaire will not ask for your name and results will be presented without any identifying information.
- Your participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes. During this time you will answer questions about your experience in this class and at this university.
- No extra credit will be given for participation

Students not participating in the research will be allowed to continue studying their coursework.

I give permission for Michele Litchy to enter my department for data collection for the *reacculturation* of college freshman research project. I understand this will take 20-25 minutes of classroom time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.  
Michele Litchy  
University of Missouri – Columbia  
417-882-7924

Appendix G

Request to Enter Classroom

Course name \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor name \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for considering participation of your students in this study about the *reacculturation* of college freshmen. This study is being conducted to complete my doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The project is being supervised by Dr. Cindy MacGregor, Associate Professor, Educational Administration (417-836-6046).

The purpose of this study is to better understand what occurs as incoming freshmen are *reacculturated* into university life. This information will be useful for educational planning and student retention.

**Informed Consent Procedures**

The following information will be communicated to the students before data collection as part of the informed consent procedure:

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point without penalty.
- You need not answer all of the questions.
- Your questionnaire will not ask for your name, and results will be presented without any identifying information.
- Your participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes. During this time you will answer questions about your experience in this class and at this university.
- No extra credit will be given for participation

Students not participating in the research will be allowed to continue studying their coursework.

I give permission for Michele Litchy to enter my classroom for data collection for the *reacculturation* of college freshman research project. I understand this will take 20-25 minutes of classroom time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor ‘s signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.  
Michele Litchy  
University of Missouri – Columbia  
417-882-7924

## Appendix H

### Informed Consent Letter

Dear research participant:

Thank you for considering participation in the study about the *reacculturation* of college freshmen. This study is being conducted to complete my doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri.

The purpose of this study is to better understand to experiences of students in freshman orientation courses.

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point without penalty.
- You need not answer all of the questions.
- Your questionnaire will not ask for your name, and results will be presented without any identifying information.
- Your participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes. During this time you will answer questions about your experience in this class and at this university.
- No extra credit will be given for participation.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The project is being supervised by Dr. Cindy MacGregor, Associate Professor, Educational Administration, MSU (417-836-6046).

If at this point you are still interested in participating and assisting with this important research project please continue with the questionnaire. Keep this letter for future reference. You can contact me at 882-7924 if you have questions or concerns about your participation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michele Litchy  
University of Missouri – Columbia

## Appendix I

### Standardized Instructions

Please read the informed consent letter: if you have any questions you may contact me at any time.

Please look at the first page of the questionnaire. You will note that you are to answer the questions by placing a mark in the appropriate column. Answers range from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Please consider each question and choose your answer truthfully.

When you finish answering all items, please be sure to fill in the important demographic information on the final page. Demographic information is very important to the statistical analysis of the collected data. All identifying information will be kept anonymous.

Thank you for your participation. Are there any questions? You may begin.

Appendix J  
Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I am nervous about being at this university.						
2	I feel supported at this university.						
3	The people at this university “speak the same language.”						
4	I feel comfortable at this university.						
5	I trust that this university really cares about the students.						
6	Attending this university has led me to consider some of my views.						
7	I am hesitant about attending this university.						
8	I do not “fit in” at this university.						
9	I plan to continue at this university for at least the entire semester.						
10	I am nervous about being in this class.						
11	I feel supported in this class.						
12	I frequently misunderstand what others are talking about at this university.						
13	The members of this class “speak the same language.”						
14	I trust that people in this class really care about each other.						
15	Being in this class has led me to consider some of my opinions.						
16	I do not trust that this university really cares about the students.						
17	I am hesitant about being in this class.						
18	I am nervous about being part of a group of students at this university.						
19	Attending this university has not led me to consider my opinions.						
20	I feel accepted at this university.						
21	I “speak the same language” as others at this university.						

Appendix J

Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	I willingly let faculty/staff at this university critique my work.						
23	I am certain that I should be attending this university.						
24	Interacting with others at this university has led me to consider my opinions.						
25	I am undecided in my thoughts about attending this university.						
26	I plan to continue at this university for at least the entire year.						
27	I intend to leave this university before the end of this semester.						
28	I am nervous about being part of a group in this class.						
29	I feel accepted in this class.						
30	I “speak the same language” as members of this class.						
31	I feel comfortable in this class.						
32	I willingly let others in this class critique my work.						
33	Interacting with others in this class has led me to consider my opinions.						
34	I am undecided in my thoughts about this class.						
35	I do not “fit in” in this class.						
36	I plan to continue at this university for at least the next two years.						
37	I feel nervous participating in discussions with my peers at this university.						
38	I accept others at this university.						
39	I frequently misunderstand what others are talking about in this class.						
40	I usually understand what others at this university are talking about.						
41	I willingly accept feedback from faculty/staff at this university.						

Appendix J

Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
42	Attending this university has encouraged me to consider my beliefs about myself.						
43	I do not trust that people in this class really care about each other.						
44	I am unsure if I should be at this university.						
45	I plan to continue at this university for at least the next four years.						
46	I feel nervous about participating in class discussions.						
47	Being in this class has not led me to consider my views.						
48	I accept others in this class.						
49	I usually understand what others are talking about in this class.						
50	I willingly accept feedback from others in this class.						
51	I am certain that I should be in this class.						
52	This class encourages me to consider my beliefs about myself.						
53	I am unsure if I should be in this class.						
54	I plan to continue at this university for the duration of my degree program.						
55	I feel nervous when people at this university ask what I think or believe.						
56	I have things in common with others at this university.						
57	I can easily communicate with others at this university.						
58	I am not nervous when considering my thoughts and beliefs about this university.						
59	I am willing to tell faculty/staff at this university what I really think.						
60	Attending this university has encouraged me to consider my beliefs about others.						
61	My thoughts about attending this university fluctuate.						
62	I do not feel connected to others at this university.						

Appendix J

Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
63	I plan to leave this university before completing my degree program.						
64	I am nervous if asked my opinion in this class.						
65	I have things in common with others in this class.						
66	People at this university use jargon or lingo that is unfamiliar to me.						
67	I can easily communicate with others in this class.						
68	I am willing to tell others in this class what I really think.						
69	This class encourages me to consider my beliefs about others.						
70	I can not rely on others at this university.						
71	My thoughts about being in this class fluctuate.						
72	I plan to continue at this university until I graduate.						
73	I am nervous knowing others are considering what they think about me.						
74	I have not changed any of my views since attending this university.						
75	I connect with most people at this university.						
76	I speak openly and honestly with others at this university.						
77	I trust others at this university enough to willingly participate in group activities.						
78	I have clear feelings and thoughts about attending this university.						
79	I have formed some strong opinions since attending this university.						
80	I feel unable to take action due to uncertainty about attending this university.						
81	I plan to leave this university before I graduate.						
82	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the entire year.						
83	I am nervous knowing people in this class are considering what they think about me.						

Appendix J

Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
84	I connect with most people in this class.						
85	I speak openly and honestly with others in this class.						
86	I trust others in this class enough to willingly participate in group activities.						
87	I unable to take action due to uncertainty about being in this class.						
88	I have formed some strong opinions because of this class.						
89	I am unable to take action due to uncertainty about being in this class.						
90	I do not feel connected to others in this class.						
91	I am nervous about disagreeing with my instructors.						
92	I like interacting with others at this university.						
93	After interactions with other I continue to think about what was said.						
94	People in this class use jargon or lingo that is unfamiliar to me.						
95	I can rely on others at this university.						
96	I have changed some of my views since attending this university.						
97	I oppose attending this university.						
98	I can not rely on others in this class.						
99	I am nervous about disagreeing with my peers in this class.						
100	I like interacting with others in this class.						
101	When I leave class I continue to reflect on class discussion and content.						
102	I think about things differently because of this class.						
103	I can rely on others in this class.						
104	I have changed some of my beliefs because of this class.						

Appendix J

Pilot Survey Instrument

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
105	I oppose being in this class.						
106	I have clear feelings and thoughts about being in this class.						
107	I am afraid to speak openly and honestly with others at this university.						
108	I feel a sense of agreement with others at this university.						
109	I can depend on others at this university to look out for my best interests.						
110	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the next two years.						
111	I think about things differently since attending this university.						
112	I feel immobilized due to conflicting thoughts about attending this university.						
113	I am afraid to speak openly and honestly with others in this class						
114	After interactions with others I do not think about what we discussed.						
115	I feel a sense of agreement with others in this class.						
116	When I leave class I do not think about the class content.						
117	I can depend on others in this class to look out for my best interests.						
118	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the next four years.						
119	I feel immobilized by conflicting thoughts about taking this class.						
120	I have not changed any of my views because of this class.						

**Please fill out the following demographic information, all identifying information will be kept anonymous!**

Class Section:

Last four digits of Social Security Number:

Gender:

Age:

Date:

## Appendix K

### Item Total Correlations for Connectedness Scale of Pilot Study

q8cnurc	Pearson Correlation	.581(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q20cnu	Pearson Correlation	.591(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q29cnc	Pearson Correlation	.772(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q56cnu	Pearson Correlation	.743(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q65cnc	Pearson Correlation	.767(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q75cnu	Pearson Correlation	.827(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q84cnc	Pearson Correlation	.884(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q90cnrc	Pearson Correlation	.744(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q92cnu	Pearson Correlation	.717(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42
q100cnc	Pearson Correlation	.785(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	42

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## Appendix L

### Item Total Correlations for Communication Scale of Pilot Study

q3cmu	Pearson Correlation	.643(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q13cmc	Pearson Correlation	.500(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	44
q21cmu	Pearson Correlation	.591(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q30cmc	Pearson Correlation	.570(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q49cmc	Pearson Correlation	.480(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	44
q57cmu	Pearson Correlation	.579(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q67cmc	Pearson Correlation	.705(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q76cmu	Pearson Correlation	.719(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q85cmc	Pearson Correlation	.635(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
q114cmurc	Pearson Correlation	.501(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	44

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix M

### Item Total Correlations for Anxiety Scale of Pilot Study

q4anurc	Pearson Correlation	.646(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q28anc	Pearson Correlation	.606(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q55anu	Pearson Correlation	.722(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q64anc	Pearson Correlation	.785(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q73anu	Pearson Correlation	.649(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q83anc	Pearson Correlation	.708(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q91anu	Pearson Correlation	.631(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q99anc	Pearson Correlation	.595(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q107anu	Pearson Correlation	.670(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q113anc	Pearson Correlation	.663(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## Appendix N

### Item Total Correlations for Trust Scale of Pilot Study

q32tc	Pearson Correlation	.722(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q43tcrc	Pearson Correlation	.732(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q50tc	Pearson Correlation	.699(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q59tu	Pearson Correlation	.514(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q77tu	Pearson Correlation	.742(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q87tc	Pearson Correlation	.749(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q95tu	Pearson Correlation	.820(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q109tu	Pearson Correlation	.785(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q117tc	Pearson Correlation	.687(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q16turc	Pearson Correlation	.466(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	43

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix O

### Item Total Correlations for Modification of Beliefs Scale of Pilot Study

a6mbu	Pearson Correlation	.555(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q15mbc	Pearson Correlation	.750(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q24mbu	Pearson Correlation	.630(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q33mbc	Pearson Correlation	.667(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q60mbu	Pearson Correlation	.721(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q69mbc	Pearson Correlation	.621(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q96mbu	Pearson Correlation	.777(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q102mbc	Pearson Correlation	.720(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q104mbc	Pearson Correlation	.710(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43
q111mbu	Pearson Correlation	.664(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	43

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix P

### Item Total Correlations for Ambivalence Scale of Pilot Study

q25amu	Pearson Correlation	.678(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q34amc	Pearson Correlation	.543(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q44amu	Pearson Correlation	.668(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q61amu	Pearson Correlation	.709(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q71amc	Pearson Correlation	.679(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q78amurc	Pearson Correlation	.742(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q80amu	Pearson Correlation	.650(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q89amc	Pearson Correlation	.739(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q105amc	Pearson Correlation	.638(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46
q119amc	Pearson Correlation	.649(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix Q

### Item Total Correlations for Intent to Stay Scale of Pilot Study

q36isu	Pearson Correlation	.815(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q45isu	Pearson Correlation	.887(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q54isu	Pearson Correlation	.817(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q63isurc	Pearson Correlation	.770(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q72isu	Pearson Correlation	.778(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q81isurc	Pearson Correlation	.797(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q110isurc	Pearson Correlation	.657(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48
q118isurc	Pearson Correlation	.678(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	48

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix R  
Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The people at this university “speak the same language”.						
2	I feel comfortable at this university.						
3	Attending this university has led me to consider some of my views.						
4	I do not “fit in” at this university.						
5	The members of this class “speak the same language”.						
6	Being in this class has led me to consider some of my opinions.						
7	I do not trust that this university really cares about the students.						
8	I feel accepted at this university.						
9	I “speak the same language” as others at this university.						
10	Interacting with others at this university has led me to consider my opinions.						
11	I am undecided in my thoughts about attending this university.						
12	I intend to leave this university before the end of this semester.						
13	I am nervous about being part of a group in this class.						
14	I feel accepted in this class.						
15	I “speak the same language” as members of this class.						
16	I willingly let others in this class critique my work.						
17	Interacting with others in this class has led me to consider my opinions.						
18	I am undecided in my thoughts about this class.						
19	I plan to continue at this university for at least the next two years.						
20	I do not trust that people in this class really care about each other.						
21	I am unsure if I should be at this university.						

Appendix R  
Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	I plan to continue at this university for at least the next four years.						
23	I usually understand what others are talking about in this class.						
24	I willingly accept feedback from others in this class.						
25	I plan to continue at this university for the duration of my degree program.						
26	I feel nervous when people at this university ask what I think or believe.						
27	I have things in common with others at this university.						
28	I can easily communicate with others at this university.						
29	I am willing to tell faculty/staff at this university what I really think.						
30	Attending this university has encouraged me to consider my beliefs about others.						
31	My thoughts about attending this university fluctuate.						
32	I plan to leave this university before completing my degree program.						
33	I am nervous if asked my opinion in this class.						
34	I have things in common with others in this class.						
35	I can easily communicate with others in this class.						
36	This class encourages me to consider my beliefs about others.						
37	My thoughts about being in this class fluctuate.						
38	I plan to continue at this university until I graduate.						
39	I am nervous knowing others are considering what they think about me.						
40	I connect with most people at this university.						
41	I speak openly and honestly with others at this university.						
42	I trust others at this university enough to willingly participate in group activities.						

Appendix R  
Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
43	I have clear feelings and thoughts about attending this university.						
44	I feel unable to take action due to uncertainty about attending this university.						
45	I plan to leave this university before I graduate.						
46	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the entire year.						
47	I am nervous knowing people in this class are considering what they think about me.						
48	I connect with most people in this class.						
49	I speak openly and honestly with others in this class.						
50	I trust others in this class enough to willingly participate in group activities.						
51	I am unable to take action due to uncertainty about being in this class.						
52	I do not feel connected to others in this class.						
53	I am nervous about disagreeing with my instructors.						
54	I like interacting with others at this university.						
55	I can rely on others at this university.						
56	I have changed some of my views since attending this university.						
57	I am nervous about disagreeing with my peers in this class.						
58	I like interacting with others in this class.						
59	I think about things differently because of this class.						
60	I have changed some of my beliefs because of this class.						
61	I oppose being in this class.						
62	I am afraid to speak openly and honestly with others at this university.						
63	I can depend on others at this university to look out for my best interests.						

Appendix R  
Litchy Scale of *Reacculturation* and Intent to Stay

	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
64	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the next two years.						
65	I think about things differently since attending this university.						
66	I am afraid to speak openly and honestly with others in this class						
67	After interactions with others I do not think about what we discussed.						
68	I can depend on others in this class to look out for my best interests.						
69	I do not plan to continue at this university for at least the next four years.						
70	I feel immobilized by conflicting thoughts about taking this class.						

**Please fill out the following demographic information, all identifying information will be kept anonymous!**

Class Section:

Last four digits of Social Security Number:

Gender:

Age:

Date:

## VITA

Michele Litchy was born Michele Foraker in Missouri. She grew up in the Branson, Missouri area. Michele received her B.S. in Psychology from Southwest Missouri State University, her M.S. in Counseling and her Ed.S. in Counseling from Pittsburg State University. She married in 2000 and had one daughter in 2004. Michele began pursuing her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 2003. Due to a medical condition known as a Retinal Vein Occlusion as well as Optic Nerve and Macular Edema she took a medical leave of absence from the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis graduate program at the University of Missouri in 2006. While her medical condition has not entirely remitted and symptoms persist, she has completed this research and degree.