Abstract

BOWMAN, KERITH M. Expectations of the Advising Process. (Under the direction of Audrey Jaeger.)

In today’s difficult economic times, it behooves every program to be prepared to defend its worth. In the higher education arena, evidence of the attainment of our goals for student learning and development are best attained through the assessment of learning and development. Advising is a useful learning, development and retention tool that many in higher education recognize as useful for the undergraduate student population. Much has been written about successful advising and satisfaction with advising services, but how does an adviser address student’s learning and development for the funding and worth of the advising program? Beginning the discussion about establishing a standardized set of outcomes for advising is the goal of this research, to see what each of the constituents expects from the process of advising. Once expectations are established, the discussion about deliberately focused and articulated outcomes can occur, leading the way for assessment of these to be undertaken.

The findings indicate that expectations do not differ that much between students, advisers and administrators. Relationships, information and clarity in roles are core expectations for the different constituents, each player’s understanding of the process is influenced by past experiences and relationships, and awareness of development and learning style affects expectations about the process.
Expectations of the Advising Process

by

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Dedication

This research is dedicated with all the love in my heart to my two daughters, Abigail and Bella. Abigail already knows all she will ever need to know. It is my hope that Bella will know that there is nothing unattainable if she puts her mind to it. I know she will do great things; she already amazes me.


**Biography**

Keri Bowman works on a team of professional advisers as the Associate Director in the Office of Advising Support, Information and Services. She has worked in higher education for more than 10 years and loves the atmosphere and energy that surround college campuses. She earned her Master of Science degree in Higher Education from North Carolina State University and continued on to finish the Doctor of Education in the same program.

Keri’s most preferred role in life is that of wife to Keith Johnson and mother to Bella. She is most happy to soon have more time to spend with them and her cat, Nina.
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- God, for seeing this to its conclusion.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Academic advising and assessment are two areas that have steadily been gaining importance in the higher education arena. Academic advising is growing as a retention effort and assessment as a method of proving education’s goals and outcomes are actually being met. Along with an increased importance placed on accountability and assessment in higher education (Bresciani, 2006, Maki, 2004; Peterson & Augustine, 2000; Shavelson & Huang, 2003, Lingenfelter, 2003, U.S. Board of Education, 2006), there has also been an additional importance placed on helping students learn, grow, and graduate through both curricular and co-curricular services (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004; McMurtrie, 2000; Keeling, 2004, 2006, U.S. Board of Education, 2006).

Assessment of student learning from the advising process as a whole is underrepresented in the literature, as this is a relatively new topic (Lynch, 2000). Previously, student learning was assessed in the classroom. This left programming outside of the classroom, academic and cocurricular, lacking in data to support its benefits to student learning and growth (Schuh, Upcraft & Assoc., 2001). An increase in the understanding of how the various cocurricular components of higher education contribute to the learning, growth, retention, and graduation of the student holds these other components to the task of assessing their affects on student learning and developmental growth (Schuh, Upcraft & Assoc., 2001).

The literature illustrates an effort by various constituents to make higher education accountable to the whole student population, traditionally aged, non-traditionally aged and students coming from underrepresented and widely represented backgrounds (Lingenfelter,
This wide range of students represent a wide range of abilities, interests, and backgrounds. Each of these differences makes the job of higher education more complex, as needs are different, different methods to enhance and establish learning and development must be employed. Evidence of student learning is one way that this accountability can be addressed—by producing an assessment process that documents both the intended learning outcomes and the results of the interventions implemented. If the student intends to gain something out of college other than career marketability, what better way to show that higher education is providing what is promised than to demonstrate student learning? Additionally, assessment of learning and development across campus in co-curricular arenas allows the academic side of higher education freedom not to be the only producers of learning. This would illustrate an across campus culture of a learning centered institution (Bresciani, 2006, p.21). Additionally, this assessment of learning in different areas of an institution helps to legitimize the need for and benefits of such programming both for the student’s learning and the institution’s accountability measures (Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004, Schuh, Upcraft, & Assoc., 2001).

Assessment of advising and other non-classroom programming has in the past consisted of a series of satisfaction based self report surveys (Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004, Lynch, 2000, Grites, 2000). Many times questions represented the amount of satisfaction that the student had with the relationship between him or her and the adviser, the student’s satisfaction with the process, and the adviser’s knowledge of requirements that lead the student to graduation (Grites, 2000). There was little reflection of the advising process as
a teaching process, one that promotes learning and developmental growth. This advising as teaching premise was neither present in the intentions of advising process, nor in the assessment of what was occurring at the time (Habley, 2000).

Recent literature exemplifies the advising process as one that facilitates more learning than is implied through the traditional prescriptive process of fulfillment of requirements for graduation (Creamer, 2000; Frost, 2000; Broadbridge, 1996; Hurt, 2007; Vander Schee, 2007). Trends in advising literature are illustrating the role of advising as a more developmental teaching process than a simple meeting in which prescribed coursework is outlined and signatures granted (Creamer & Creamer, 1994; Creamer, 2000). Advising is now being equated more with teaching, and the trend in higher education is moving toward assessing student learning. Therefore, it is time to assess advising through the same type of outcomes that reflect learning and development (Creamer, 2000; Hurt, 2007).

Background of Problem

Definitions of academic advising have been as diverse as the students that higher education serves (NACADA, 2003). Many still feel that advising is solely framed by forming the student’s course schedule, ensuring that the schedule fulfills what remains in the student’s curriculum requirements. Prescriptive advising is the type of advising that checks courses off of a checklist and takes little, other than major, about the student into account. Since faculty have been required to take on more responsibilities, the time available for students has diminished, making a faster advising meeting necessary. This pressure on faculty for time has perpetuated prescriptive advising (Frost, 2000; Tuttle, 2000) as
developmental advising takes longer and has further demands (Dickson & Thayer, 1993 as cited in Grites, 2000).

The professional aspect of advising developed as the demands on faculty time have increased and the needs of the students have also increased. The resulting lack of faculty time precipitated the emergence of professional advisers. These are staff members who do not hold faculty positions and focus their time on advising (Tuttle, 2000). These advisers currently are required to have graduate level training with many specializing in student learning and development (Tuttle, 2000). This graduate level training in student development fields precipitated the phenomenon of developmental advising.

In developmental advising, the process is recognized as a format for facilitating growth of a student— it should help to develop the student cognitively and behaviorally (Creamer, 2000)—not solely helping the student to sign up for the correct coursework to lead to graduation, but to help the student explore what interests and skills she or he holds and to what career and studies these skills and interests lend themselves best (Broadbridge, 1996; Frost, 2000). Developmental advising, in contrast with prescriptive advising, is the type of advising that looks at the student holistically and adds a responsibility for the adviser to foster genuine thought provoking interaction during advising sessions (Creamer, 2000). Because these professional advisers act solely as advisers, the premise is that they will have the time to utilize their understanding of students’ developmental stages during their contacts with the students.

Students who receive developmental advising will ideally exhibit increased critical thinking and reasoning skills and will act on the advice garnered from the advising meeting
(Crookston, 1972). They will progress along the continua and be more able to think for themselves and will be more confident in their abilities to locate resources needed to find answers. Developmental advising considers the relationship one of mutual learning, where both the adviser and the student learn from each other (Crookston, 1972). Additionally, the student shares a responsibility and commitment to the learning process that is undertaken during the advising process (Crookston, 1972). Ideally, the student and the adviser together will facilitate growth, both through academic learning and through various cognitive developmental stages yielding a more confident, self-assured student whose ability to formulate knowledge and judge resources is enhanced. Ideally, the student and adviser expect to share responsibility for the relationship and dissemination of information as Lowe & Toney (2000) have found. To address the concerns that Smith & Allen have found (2006) of students needing information, relationship cannot be the only concern with developmental advising.

The need for graduate level training has helped to legitimize advising as a profession within the academy. Additionally, a professional organization (NACADA) was formed. This organization has been instrumental in promoting further education and publishing research on various focus areas of academic advising through the NACADA Journal (Gordon, 1998; Tuttle, 2000). The combination with a push to equate the advising process with the teaching process (Creamer, 2000; Kramer, 2003), aims to consider advising on the same level of campus function as teaching. There is more than one reason for this push: to help faculty justify their time spent in the advising process as legitimate and worthy of evaluation and recognition, and to help the professional advisers gain justifiable recognition as educators,
and finally, it necessitates the assessment of the intended teaching and learning from this advising process.

Assessment in higher education is generally completed to help understand what the student learned from the program or academic function studied. Assessment should be linked to the mission of the program, to the goals of the program and finally to learning outcomes that the program has established from the beginning (Bresciani, Zelna and Anderson, 2004). The focus on student learning or development outcomes is at the center of the intention behind assessment in higher education.

Assessment of student learning has been growing in importance in higher education for the past several years. In an era of accountability and shrinking budgets (Lingenfelter, 2003), assessment results that indicate increased student learning helps to secure a program’s funding and necessity to the campus environment and student population. It is difficult to ensure that higher education is working without illustrating that student learning takes place. Additionally, assessment can be formative, allowing for improvements in the content or methods while the program is in progress, instead of waiting until the end to prove that learning outcomes were not attained.

Endorsements for assessment from both inside and outside the academy have established learning and development outcomes for many of the functions that higher education serves, cocurricular learning and development—not just traditional classroom learning. It is now widely recognized that co-curricular learning is as important as classroom learning for growth of students and for retention purposes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), and the purpose of assessing student learning and development from a co-curricular
standpoint is illustrated in recent literature (Schuh, Upcraft & Associates, 2001; Bresciani, 2006; Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004).

Unfortunately, academic advising is not one of these functions that has established and recognized learning and development outcomes. Traditionally, evaluation of adviser success was on the basis of student satisfaction, not student learning or development. There was not actual recognition of learning to take place when advising was seen as more prescriptive. However, now that the responsibility for learning through developmental advising is becoming recognized as more appropriate, there is a need to develop measurable learning and development outcomes for academic advising.

Problem of the Research

The problem that this research addresses is that academic advising has yet to establish recognized measurable learning and development outcomes for advising processes and programs. In this way, the advising programs have fallen behind their counterparts in the academy. Most all accredited academic programs have some type of established student learning outcomes. The need for this research is twofold: first, in order for students to learn and develop the most from the advising process, it would be beneficial to establish standardized advising goals and outcomes so that students and advisers hold the same expectations for what will occur and be produced from the advising the process. To accomplish this task, intended expectations need to be explored from the perspective of each constituent, and then documented. Once these steps are completed, outcomes for learning and development can be fleshed out. This research intends to take the initial step toward establishing measurable outcomes for both learning and development through the advising
process. An effort needs to be made to ensure that there is not a disconnect between what a student expects from the advising process and what the adviser expects. Many times the roles of advisers and students in the advising process are not clear to the student.

The current literature does little to address this potential disconnect in expectations. In fact, Smith and Allen (2006) call for further study in a qualitative genre to examine the results of their quantitative findings about student preferences and expectations of the advising process. This study aims to examine the questions of what students expect of the process in addition to what advisers (Allen & Smith, 2008) and administrators expect of the process.

The second intention of the research is to start the process of establishing learning goals or outcomes that will help to legitimize academic advising as an academic profession. By standardizing and communicating the expectations of students, advisers, and administrators into student learning outcomes for the process, adequate expectations will be held and learning will be attained. Entering into a relationship in which one party is uninformed about expectations can be less than beneficial. Each party in the advising process holds his or her own expectations about what should occur, who is responsible and what outcomes should be attained. The problem is that many times, these expectations are not articulated and without an understanding of what each party expects, someone will be disappointed with the outcome (White, 2000). Students may hold the idea that advisers are responsible to them for the process, while administrators and advisers may hold the view that the student is ultimately responsible for his or her own education. These conflicting ideas of responsibility are an example of how lack of communication can mire the process of learning
and disgruntle all parties involved. Through promoting an understanding of what each party in the process expects, students will ultimately gain the most from the relationship and process of advising and advisers will operate from a standard base of expectations with both of the constituents they serve, administrators and students.

What is currently available in learning outcomes for advising does not, for the most part, take into account the student perspective on what is expected, what should be learned or gained from the advising process. The student perspective, when solicited, generally has been relegated to satisfaction-based responses (Feilstein, Scoles, & Webb, 1992). This limits students’ input to the process to what makes them happy or unhappy—not an adequate contribution for the expectations placed on both the student and the process.

Without adequate academic advising, students may not choose the appropriate coursework for their interests or degree, causing longer time to graduation. Students may lose sight of the purpose behind higher education and leave school. Finally, students’ cognitive development may not reach its fullest potential, the goal being the reaching a higher ability to construct and evaluate knowledge and resources (King & Kitchener, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 1992; Perry, 1970, 1981; Belenky et al, 1997).

While it is certainly possible for a student to grow and develop without intervention, guidance through an established professional relationship is beneficial (Habley, 1981). The progression through the tasks of cognitive development can be facilitated through intervention with academic advisers, professors and other administrators in the academy. Interaction between faculty, staff and students outside of the classroom has been established as advantageous for both the institution and the student (Kapraun & Coldren, 1982; Tinto,
Students are more likely to matriculate if they have established relationships with representatives of the institution, whether they are faculty or staff (Tinto, 1987). This matriculation, time to graduation and retention rates are each separately part of the accountability or rating factors mentioned in many of the college ranking processes. It is to everyone’s advantage to have the highest retention and graduation rates, and it is to the benefit of society to graduate individuals who have developed to their highest potential so they can exemplify and uphold the mission of the institution from which they graduated.

Developmental advising processes are one step in reaching the goal of more interaction and stronger relationships between students and professionals on campus. As stated previously, developmental advising meetings consist of more than one-way communication, fostering a give and take relationship between the student and adviser. The end goal of this research is that there will be increased understanding of the process that will benefit the student first, but secondarily, will benefit the institutions through better retention.

**Purpose of the Research**

This research project aims to better understand the expectations that students, advisers and administrators intend as a result of the academic advising process. The intention is that through understanding the expectations of each of the various players, a specific set of guidelines or recommendations will emerge as will an understanding of how they overlap and differ among different advising models and disciplines. This will allow a better understanding and, as a result, each of the constituents and each to gain more from the process. These recommendations should move to help establish academic advising as a legitimate teaching and cocurricular activity that promotes student learning and development.
It aims to recognize not only the contributions that both faculty and professional advisers make through advising to both student learning and development, but also illustrate the contributions that students bring to the process. As of right now, students are largely uneducated about their role in the process, particularly upon entry to college. This makes expectations about the process precarious and often unrealistic. The specific guidelines will take into account and advocate for the students’ perspectives and expectations, permitting multiple perspectives on how to improve advising programs. It will also begin to establish legitimate and attainable student learning and development outcomes for the process that are meaningful for each constituent. The researcher hopes that appropriate student learning and developmental outcomes will emerge as a result of these recommendations.

**Research questions.**

In an effort to examine what learning and development outcomes are established (or not established) for the academic advising process, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
- How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
- How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

Through looking at the students’ intentions for the advising process, this research can begin to establish the foundations for learning and development outcomes that can inform advisers about the process from the consumer end. This can be used to establish academic
advisers as professionals within the higher education arena, after all, who better to start with than the population who are served? By taking into account all three players’ perspectives no single perspective will be dominant, allowing for genuine and attainable and measurable student learning outcomes or goals to emerge and the overarching developmental process to be standardized, which will ensure each person knows his role.

**Significance of the Study**

This study will be of interest to those who are being studied, first and foremost. The university setting is one who will benefit most from this examination of what students, advisers and administrators feel are important facets of the advising process. This is not the complete extent of the significant impact this study will have, however.

This research will inform the advising profession as a whole. As the push for better assessment of student services and learning grows, the examination of what students expect from their educations will also have to be explored. This is one step in that direction.

The examination of student learning should not take place without starting first with the very constituents who higher education seeks to serve. One cannot fully estimate what goals outcomes are necessary for student learning and development without considering the intentions of the student. It is the researcher’s intention to deliberately include all responsible parties in this examination of expectations held and to give each a voice. After reviewing this research, advisers and administrators will have a better understanding of what processes their students expect to undergo and what they expect to learn from the advising experience.
Finally, administrators will be better able to facilitate student learning and development by implementing policies that exhibit a better understanding of the intentions that both of the adviser and the student hold. One of the first “Assessment Essentials” (Palomba & Banta, 1999) is to agree on goals and objectives for the learning being assessed. This research hopes to develop an agreement – or at least the first step toward an understanding of what goals and objectives should be for academic advising—from the student, the adviser and the administrator perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

This research will be conducted at one doctoral degree granting university with high research activity in the southeastern United States. This university has several different colleges housing over 300 different degree tracks. There is considerable diversity within this university and for the purpose of keeping this study manageable; sampling of some of the different departments within the colleges will be employed. A clear picture of the overall tone of the college’s offerings and expectations for advising will be deliberately sought for each of the research questions. Further information on sampling techniques is forthcoming in Chapter Three.

The researcher is a full time professional currently employed as an advising administrator of an advising program that provides cross-curricular advising. This is a position that allows her to understand two of the three sought after perspectives, administrator and adviser. Her professional history in addition to the current position has influenced her perspective as a student advocate and helper. This student advocacy permeates her professional interactions with students and with staff and influences her
thought process on policies and actions affecting students. Confidentiality will be ensured in an attempt to eliminate any uneasiness with questioning. The questions and subject matter are fairly innocuous, however, the possibility for discomfort is noted. Further discussion on researcher subjectivity is forthcoming in Chapter Three.

The fact that one institution provides the setting for this research is mitigated by the fact that there are several very different colleges represented. These colleges differ in advising model, philosophy, and by governing structure and funds available. These differences will allow for a full spectrum of ideas to be considered and contrasted and will not adversely affect the data gathering and analysis.

**Summary of the Introduction**

Advising is an integral part of the academic process for many students. The relationship established can affect the student’s time to graduation, decision to remain at the institution, or even to stay in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Moreover, students’ intellectual development can be facilitated through the advising process. A better understanding of what each participant expects from the advising process will benefit the advising relationship by identifying the expectations that each party involved holds.

Benefits of the advising process are best illustrated through the establishment of learning and development goals or outcomes for the process. Deliberately stating the expectations of each participant into outcomes will facilitate the communication between each of the players and streamline the process for everyone involved. A better understanding of the components involved for the administrator, the student and the adviser will provide a blueprint for what works and what does not work from each perspective. The results will help students also to
gain a better understanding of how to prepare for an advising meeting particularly upon entry into higher education.

In the next chapter, a more full definition of the process and history of both assessment and advising will be provided. In addition, a broad background of cognitive developmental and learning theories will provide the framework for this examination of academic advising, the constituents’ expectations, and developmental perspectives.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the previous chapter, I outlined the focus of this research. I intend to examine the expectations that students hold about the advising process, as well as those that advisers and administrators of advising hold. The questions that guide this research are:

1. What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
2. How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
3. How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

The exploration of students’ intentions for the advising process will allow inform the conversation about learning and development outcomes. Standardizing outcomes by finding common expectations of these outcomes across university and across the profession will facilitate the assessment of advising, which can help to inform areas that require improvement. The end goal is better service to the student, a more participative and developmental advising process, which causes growth and could improve a student’s retention, matriculation, and graduation rates. Additionally, sharing the ultimate goal for higher education, better prepared, well adjusted and developed students.

In this literature review, I will give an overview of the history and definitions of academic advising. This includes the development of academic advising as a profession and the progression of this profession necessitated by the changing needs of the student population. The construct of developmental advising and its need in higher education follows with an outline of key cognitive development theories. Finally, I present the history
of the assessment of learning outcomes movement as well as key theories of learning to illuminate the path toward establishing learning outcomes for academic advising.

### History of Academic Advising

Academic advising has changed in mission and purpose over the history of American higher education. It continues changing to this day. Society and the student population’s reflection of society have necessitated these changes. The needs that collegiate education fulfills change with the society for whom it exists. The services and curriculum of higher education and other social institutions are no different.

The need for academic advising as it is understood today began in the United States at Harvard University in the late 1800s. The president of Harvard implemented the elective system, giving students a choice in course curricula (Rudolph, 1990). This change in curriculum illustrated a change in the philosophy of higher education. A change from completely prescribed curricula to curricula with choice of electives allowed students freedom, a new freedom that necessitated guidance about learning goals and career interests. The first academic advisers were faculty members that assumed many responsibilities (Frost, 2000; Rudolph, 1990). They served not only as academic guides, but also as moral role models, teachers, housefathers, and academic guides.

Before elective courses were available for students, curricula were completely prescribed. At this time, the intention behind higher education was to prepare a privileged young man to participate in the then newly formed democracy (Rudolph, 1990). Academic advising as a means to choose coursework was not needed. However, the need for social and personal guidance was considered necessary. Faculty served as these guides. These social,
moral, and personal advisers were the precursor to the current student affairs professionals, once there was a split between student affairs and academic advising (Gordon, 1998).

Harvard implemented the elective system and other schools in the United States followed suit (Rudolph, 1990). Johns Hopkins University is another notable case. Gordon (1998), Frost (2000) and Tuttle (2000) cite that Johns Hopkins devised a deliberate system of faculty academic advising. Harvard University assigned each student a faculty member to advise him about all aspects of collegiate life, including but not limited to the choice of courses. Faculty members at Johns Hopkins were intentional about career and major curricula and assisted students with the formulation of academic schedules and course selection; it is obvious that Johns Hopkins placed particular emphasis on the academic side of academic advising.

An example of academic advising as a blend of student affairs and academic affairs is best illustrated by Wesleyan College in 1938, (Frost, 2000) where cocurricular programming for students included exploration of vocational interest and career guidance. This programming involved faculty, and had a focus on developing the student into a career-minded, liberally-educated professional. This model of faculty advising students is still utilized in many universities today (Johns, undated; Tuttle, 2000).

The need for holistic education to contribute to the personal and professional growth of students was recognized as beneficial to students as early as 1937 (Evans, Forney & Guido-Dibrito, 1998). As the student affairs profession began to move toward more theory-based personal, emotional, and intellectual development, a divide emerged between the student development professionals and faculty members (Evans et al., 1998). The growing
demand on faculty members to research, publish, and contribute to their fields’ knowledge bases, not to just teach, further emphasized this divide. There was less time for faculty to dedicate to cocurricular issues and personal development of students. However, an understanding of the need for such education remained (Evans et al., 1998).

As the divide between academic affairs and student affairs widened, faculty and student affairs professionals see further division in foci, changes in career directions, and job responsibilities (Evans, Forney & Guido-Dibrito, 1998). The diverse demands on faculty increase exponentially as enrollment continually increased. In addition to the larger enrollment in higher education, those enrolling are more diverse and display greater need than ever before (Frost, 2000). Finally, after World War II, the Cold War and competition increased focus on the scientific areas made research and the quest for research dollars another very important demand on faculty time (Tuttle, 2000). Linking receipt of grant money to progress toward tenure made grant writing and research more important functions of faculty jobs. Because of this importance, they devoted more time to those (Frost, 2000). This trend is still visible at many universities. Milem, Berger, and Dey (2000) indicate that faculty research time has increased since the early 1970’s. Indeed, Habley (2003) states that only 31% of all institutions recognize, compensate, or reward faculty for their academic advising responsibilities.

The increased responsibilities are problematic for all of higher education, as students’ demand for academic guidance continues to increase and time for academic advising assistance does not increase (Broadbridge, 1996; Tuttle, 2000). This demand by a diverse population for academic advising created a void (Frost, 2000). The void consisted of
increased faculty workload and the apparent lack of importance assigned to academic advising for tenure and promotion, though it is reported (Allen & Smith, 2008) that administrators value the work that advisers undertake and complete and recognize that advisers should place an equal weight on advising (Ramos, 1994). These, coupled with the increasing demands and needs of students as consumers for more guidance and more advising attention, have helped lead to the development of a professional adviser position. A professional adviser is someone who is not a faculty member, but rather a staff member for whom the majority of time is dedicated to advising students on academic, personal, and career development issues (Tuttle, 2000).

As the increase in faculty responsibilities limited time for academic advising and other developmental co-curricular tasks, the need for these did not wane. The student population was reflecting society’s reactions to the Vietnam war, civil and women’s rights movements (Evans, et al. 1998). The professionalization of student affairs and student development professionals were born from a movement of social science professors (Evans, et al, 1998). The need for attention to development of students a whole people, and to the processes that they undergo in development was understood and illustrated the need for a set of professionals who could allot the time to attend to these matters with students (Evans, et al. 1998). It was around this time that the notions of developmental advising were being published (Crookston, 1972; O’Banion, 1972). The formalization of student development as a profession appears to have precipitated the split from faculty as advisers to professional academic advising.
Of further influence to the development of professional adviser positions was the emerging view that the academic advising process requires attention to both the student as a whole person and to the student’s learning and development (Broadbridge, 1996; Frost, 2000). Prescriptive advising, a philosophy of advising which consists of one-way communication directing what courses are necessary for the degree (Crookston, 1972), was losing favor and was no longer the most accepted method of academic advising. Students demanded more control, choice, and input into their educations. Advisers grew to recognize that the academic advising process was an important venue for the student to learn about herself, become more self-aware, and fulfill her goals (O’Banion, 1972). Developmental advising, a philosophy in which the adviser recognizes the shared responsibility for guidance toward the goal of not only degree attainment but also personal fulfillment and development, became more accepted with the onset of staff members who were able to dedicate the time required for the process (Crookston, 1972; O’Banion, 1972; Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1982; Frost, 2000; Tuttle, 2000). The movement toward developmental advising appears to emerge with Crookston’s and O’Banion’s (1972) articles about developmental advising and the model best suited to embody this developmental advising philosophy. The trend of writing about and emphasizing the developmental advising philosophy continued well into the 1990s, and even the millennium (Winston, Ender, & Miller, 1982; Winston, Miller, Ender, Grites and Associates, 1984; Ware & Millard, 1987; Burton & Wellington, 1998; Gordon, Habley & Associates, 2000).

Professional advising positions were established to address students’ needs and to alleviate the strain on faculty. The advisers in these professional advising positions are
viewed as more able to devote the time that developmental advising requires (Tuttle, 2000; Frost, 2000). They also have more in-depth knowledge about student development, and as many as 80% of posted academic adviser positions preferred a graduate level degree (Tuttle, 2000). Many professional advisers hold degrees in human development fields such as college student personnel, counseling, higher education or psychology. As more and more professional adviser positions are funded and put into organizational structures, the need for a common professional advocacy group begins to arise.

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the professional association for academic advising, was formed in 1979 (Frost, 2000; Gordon, 1998; Tuttle, 2000). The formation of this professional organization is significant in illustrating the recognition of professional academic adviser as a legitimate position. As an association, NACADA has consistently increased its membership since its formation, illustrating both the increasing interest in academic advising, and the formation and recognition of many diverse areas of interest in the field (Gordon, 1998). Finally, NACADA has been instrumental in promoting further education and publishing research on the various focus areas of academic advising through the *NACADA Journal* (Gordon, 1998; Tuttle, 2000).

The demands on faculty inhibited the amount of time they had available for in-depth developmental student relationships (Ender, Winston & Miller, 1982). This fact, coupled with the increased expectations of students and families for personal as well as academic growth (Ender, Winston & Miller, 1982, Gordon, 1998), and a recognition by advisers and administrators for a more holistic advising process (Crookston, 1972; O’Banion, 1972, 1994; Burton & Wellington, 1998; Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1982) that contributes to the growth
of the individual, elevated advising from a clerical function to pick courses and check progress for graduation. Because advising remained largely unevaluated at the time, scholars knew little about the effects of services on students (Frost, 1991). In spite of the lack of assessment on advising outcomes, literature does exist that cites the positive effects of both relationships between students and faculty (Pascarella and Ternzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987, Boyer, 1987) and of advising (Grites, 1977) on retention and student development.

While it is true that the holistic view of students in developmental advising embodies the commitment to growth that student affairs engenders (Evans et al. 1998), some (Ender, 1994; Winston, 1994; Brown & Rivas, 1994; Strommer, 1994) identify that it may be a difficult ideal to attain. In reality, even with professional positions dedicated completely to advising, the ideal of a personal relationship and key developmental conversations and guidance may not be the practice. This is due to the sheer numbers of students to whom an adviser must attend (Winston, 1994; Ender, 1994 and Strommer, 1994) and the different preferences and experiences of students served (Brown & Rivas, 1994). It must be addressed, though. The continued enrollment of students and commitment to student learning and development has not diminished. Further examination on the advising process that demonstrates the benefits of developmental dialogue will only assist in illustrating the weaknesses that can be addressed in every institution. Developmental advising processes may require some reexamination, but it is certainly attainable. An examination of the models of academic advising will help inform this conversation.
Theories and Models of Academic Advising

In this section, I will summarize and define the differences between the two major schools of academic advising, developmental advising and prescriptive advising. Additionally, I will define and illustrate the primary organizational models practiced in higher education currently and will compare and contrast the benefits and costs of each.

Developmental versus prescriptive advising.

Recognizing the student as a whole being that would benefit from more than what courses for which to register, coupled with the understanding of developmental stages that a student encounters, precipitated the onset of what is called developmental advising (Broadbridge, 1996; Frost, 2000, Crookston, 1972). In this theory of advising, advising is recognized as a format for facilitating growth of a developing student, not solely helping the student to sign up for the correct coursework to lead to graduation, but helping the student explore what interests and skills she or he holds and to what career and studies these skills and interests lend themselves best (Crookston, 1972).

In previous eras, the advising function was mostly clerical; checking requirements and listing appropriate coursework that would fulfill requirements for graduation (Broadbridge, 1996). In prescriptive advising, the advising relationship is less an exchange between student and adviser than the adviser dictating a schedule for the student (Crookston, 1972). With this advising philosophy, little attention is necessary about the student as an individual, let alone his or her developmental growth or areas of skill and interest. A shift in focus from a prescriptive view to a view of students as whole beings, who
are participants in the educational and advising process, emphasizes the developmental advising philosophy (Frost, 2000).

Preference of increased education on student development eventually culminated in a required graduate degree to secure a position as an academic adviser. This preference of increased education helped solidify the establishment of developmental advising as a philosophy and has helped shape academic advising into a profession in the academy (Tuttle, 2000). Developmental advising has helped develop more than students’ cognition and identity; it has also assisted with the development of a professional image for nonfaculty advisers. The ultimate goal of developmental advising is to make the student independent and aware enough to not need the adviser but to recognize the importance of utilizing available resources (Crookston, 1972; O’Banion, 1972) which coincides with the directives outlined in the Student Learning Imperative (1996) provided by the student affairs side of higher education. Student learning should be seen as a goal of educating the whole person, both academically and through personal development.

**Organizational models.**

Advising structures vary among different institutions depending on the mission and resources of the institution. Habley (as cited in Pardee, 2000) suggests that models can be organized into three different categories: centralized, decentralized and shared. In centralized advising models, there is one unit, usually an advising center that provides advising services. In decentralized models, each academic unit, either departments or colleges, provides its own advising by faculty or professional advisers. The faculty-only model, in which only faculty advise, and the satellite model, in which each academic unit
houses professional advisers, are examples of decentralized advising organization (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000).

Shared advising organizes is just as it implies. There are centralized services that compliment the academic units’ advising services. There are several different models that represent shared organization. In the *Supplementary Model* of advising, students are served by both a centralized office and by departmental advisers, either professional or faculty (Habley, as cited in Pardee, 2000, Johns, n.d.). In this model, the primary student advising responsibility rests with faculty advisers. The professional advisers in the advising center provide information, training, and guidance to advisers and preliminary and general information to students. The dedication of professional advisers to advising only allows the departmental faculty advisers to spend more time with developmental advising tasks and mentoring on major and career and other professional issues and less time on the general administrative and technical work that can be less desirable to faculty. Often enforcement of graduation requirements and policy information are housed within and meted out from the professional advising at the supplemental center. Benefits of this model include that the student receives specialized and discipline-related attention from faculty, the faculty adviser has a specific academic policy resource at their disposal, and faculty have fewer advising responsibilities of which to keep track. Students receive specific attention for both discipline specific career related information and for policy and institution specific graduation requirements. Additionally, development of the student can be addressed through both the professional adviser and the faculty adviser, so the student receives the benefit of personalized attention from two distinctly different sources. The downside can be financial.
As with many of these models, without the recognition of the career and discipline and mentoring component, advising from a professional in a center and from a faculty member in the department is potentially duplicative and may be seen as cost prohibitive. Though the duplicity may not be a reality, it may need to be considered in days of tight budgets.

In the Split Model of advising, again, the responsibilities are split between a center of professional advisers and the faculty in the student’s department (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000). The key difference between Supplementary and Split models is that in the split model, the advising center has a more formally defined role with the student. Early in the students’ education, the center may help with exploration of interests allowing the departmental advisers more time to serve in a focused career development and professional mentoring capacity. Many times, the Split Model has an assigned adviser and advisee relationship, with assignment of both a faculty member and a professional adviser at the same time. Generally, the professional adviser is emphasized in the early years of education, precipitating the declaration of the student’s major (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000). Advantages for the student are that he or she receives both career related faculty advising and broad based developmental advising, potentially during the same time frame. Disadvantages for the institution are much the same as with the Supplementary Model and can be seen as having double the number of staff to advise students. Budgetary concerns can prohibit or limit the Split Model of advising.

The Dual Model is quite the same as the Split Model except the relationship between the advising center and the student is more clearly defined and the student is co-advised between the departmental faculty adviser and the advising center for the whole of his
education (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000). The Dual Model can have a duplication of services between faculty and professional advisers though the design is intended to allow for more career development and mentoring by faculty and developmental academic advising by the professional adviser (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000). Unless the relationships and roles are clearly defined and the institution’s mission closely aligns with the personal, academic and career development of the student, the Dual Model can be cost prohibitive. Of course, the student benefits from having extra attention, more and closer relationships, and potentially more intrusive advising, which can result in additional potential for retention of the student (Astone, et. al, 1989; Backhaus, 1989; Kapraun & Coldren, 1982), arguably a benefit for both student and institution. Institutions would choose this model if the mission is to truly focus on development of careers and mentor students within their disciplines. The time allowed for faculty to mentor and guide students into careers within their disciplines is a distinct benefit of this model.

Finally, there is a model called the Total Intake Model (Johns, n.d.; Pardee, 2000). In this model, all students are taken in and advised in an advising center. When they have decided on a major or met some criteria set by the governing body of the school, they are referred to the appropriate academic department for advising guidance. Many colleges and universities that have a general college, whose students are not required to declare a major upon admission, utilize this model. The disadvantages are that from an organizational standpoint, it is difficult to track students into a major. Funding for full time equivalents and course seats can become difficult when the different departments have no control over the advising of the newest students (Ambrose, personal communication). The benefits to the
student are that she does not have to declare a major upon entry to the university and can, instead, explore options via general education requirements and guidance through developmental advising via the *Total Intake Model*. This can be of benefit to the student in that no student will be required to declare a major until some guided introspective developmental examination is completed. This examination can be fundamental in the selection of a major. Selection of a student’s best fit career choice can help ensure timely graduation and academic, personal and professional success. In this model, all students are advised in the same manner and with the same philosophy, insuring the same quality advising for each student at the beginning of her education.

Depending on the mission of the institution, the institution’s advising, and the availability of staff, there are different strengths and weaknesses attributed to each model. As is illustrated, each has different requirements of the university and carries different benefits to the student and the institution. Benefits of the model and type of advising to the institution and the student can be illustrated only if the outcomes intended are measured and assessed.

**Assessment.**

Factors from both within and outside the university setting are making assessment and evidence of student learning necessary. In this section, the assessment movement and its importance within higher education is outlined. Key components and terms are defined and the importance of assessment in higher education and relevance to academic advising is connected.
Two important definitions and distinctions must be presented at the forefront of this section: assessment and evaluation. These two terms are similar, yet have different foci. Assessment looks particularly toward outcomes, specifically learning and development outcomes that are deliberately established in the mission and goals of a program (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004; Schuh, Upcraft, & Assoc., 2001; Maki, 2004; Walvoord, 2004). Ideally assessment is systematically linked from institution’s mission to objectives or goals and then to measurable learning outcomes (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004; Schuh, Upcraft, & Assoc., 2001; Maki, 2004; Walvoord, 2004). Assessment is undertaken to determine what the student learns from the program or academic function that is being assessed. In evaluation, student learning outcomes are not necessarily the particular focus, but there is still an emphasis on improvement. Evaluation does not always depend on deliberately illustrated outcomes—particularly student learning outcomes, but one can use assessment data for evaluative purposes (Palomba & Banta, 1999). While improvement is the spirit of both evaluation and assessment, student learning is not the only imperative that evaluation can address. Evaluation is how good one did on an appraisal, not what one learned from the intervention—whether that is a class, a program or an advising session.

**Definition of Key Terms and Connection to Advising**

Both assessment and academic advising mean different things to different people. Depending on the intention and the purpose behind advising, different roles for advisers can exist. Along those same lines, assessment is individually designed, conducted, analyzed and reported, so the language used to describe the processes and components can be completely unique.
Assessment of student learning or development outcomes strives to link the institution’s mission to broad ranging goals, which are then linked to measurable, clearly defined, and predetermined outcomes of student learning or of student development (Bresciani, Zelna, and Anderson, 2004, Bresciani, 2006). Outcomes should stem from the program, course, or learning activity’s intention. Clear delineation of outcomes also helps students to know what to expect from a course or program. Student learning outcomes answer questions such as: What does the facilitator intend for the students to learn from this course? At what level should students be able to demonstrate knowledge of the material; should they recognize, recall, or demonstrate understanding of the material? (Bresciani, Zelna, and Anderson, 2004, Bresciani, 2006).

Not unlike with research, an explanation of the methods used to conduct the assessment is of key importance in an assessment report. Good assessment should show the rigor of good research, with sound methods of data collection and analysis (Bresciani, Zelna and Anderson, 2004). Rigor of procedure helps to legitimize both the practice of assessment to faculty and the results of the inquiry. Use of results for formative decision-making purposes allows the assessor to drive the process of improvement internally and promotes a culture of constant improvement through the use of assessment results. In institutions of higher learning, what greater aim is expected than to model the appropriate learning strategies that are desired of the students that are served?

**Purposes of assessment.**

One reason assessment in higher education is generally implemented and completed is for the purpose of decision-making. Pressures to complete assessment plans and to
conduct assessment stem from many different places, both inside an institution and outside the academy (Schuh, Upcraft & Associates, 2001; Lingenfelter, 2003).

Decision-making that stems from assessment can be a defendable way to implement change. This is the case even in an institution that resists change (Peterson and Augustine, 2000). Results gleaned from the assessment of student learning outcomes process are arguably strong evidence needed for changing the institution’s practices or programming; though this evidence may not always be heeded (Peterson and Augustine, 2000). If assessment results reveal that a student hasn’t learned what the program intended for him to learn, decisions need to be made about how to better promote the intended learning within the scope of the programs. On the other hand, if the assessment results reveal student learning, the programs’ outcomes and objectives are being met, given the linkage between mission and objectives, the institution’s mission is therefore being upheld (Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004). If there’s a break in the above mentioned link of evidence of student learning, it can be seen by constituents, both internal and external as weakness or institutional “mission creep” (Burke and Minassians, 2002, p. 10).

Assessment results can also be used to indicate areas that need improvement. Successful assessment is internally driven by the curiosity of faculty and other professionals within the university to ensure a commitment to student learning is evident (Maki, 2004; Walvoord, 2004). Ideally, negative results do not culminate in punitive actions, but serve as indicators of areas to focus on for improvement, amending teaching methods or delivery of service methods (Lingenfelter, 2003; Shavelson & Huang, 2003). Accountability is to the student and to the assessor him or herself.
There are, however, many sources of external pressure and many different reasons that make assessment a requirement (Lingenfelter, 2003). In addition to the academy’s motives for conducting assessment, there are numerous outside pressures to assess student learning and prove that learning is taking place within the institutions. Reasons for these pressures vary. Primarily, there is a general call from the federal government, particularly Secretary of Education Spelling in the Action Plan for Higher Education: Improving Accessibility, Affordability and Accountability, to attend to the success of the academy’s graduates (U.S. Board of Education, 2006). This plan states that it is higher education’s responsibility to ensure that we graduate students who are academically prepared to enter the workforce. Additionally, calls from professional organizations and employers have lead to the establishment of accreditation standards for assessment, as these bodies continue to look for evidence of the skills that students need to acquire for the profession, the need for assessment data stays in the forefront.

It is difficult to ensure that we are doing our jobs and producing successful graduates without ensuring that learning takes place. The United States government cites (U.S. Board of Education, 2006) the inability of college graduates to read and think critically as indicators of the lack of quality of education that institutions of higher learning provide. If these needs of the constituents of higher education are not addressed, the economy will be affected. There will not adequately prepared graduates and that will weaken their employability. Governmental funding could be withheld from institutions of higher education, diminishing the offerings that are available.
These reasons, and the external pressure to complete assessment, can bring about suspicion regarding the motives of those promoting assessment and how the results of this assessment will be used (Burke and Minassians, 2002). Will there be an effect on programs’ funding and viability? The intended use of results can affect more than the actual delivery of the program; it can affect the motivation to complete assessment and also the possibilities for improvement. One is far less likely to want to complete assessment if she feels her programs’ worth is being measured or tested. If the intention behind the assessment is truly to ensure that the students are learning, not to determine funding, there may be far less resistance to assess. The reluctance to complete forced assessment is related to the external link of assessment data with funding, accreditation by outside agencies, and proof of worth (Burke and Minassians, 2002). As accreditation by professional organizations and governmental agencies aligns itself with proof of student learning outcomes, there is greater urgency to illustrate attainment of learning outcomes. Ideally, the desire to assess should stem from an intellectual curiosity and desire to improve student experiences, and a “…way of knowing about our work…” (Maki, 2004, p.2). The idea of honing the natural curiosity of faculty to see their programs are working in the intended manner allows a certain freedom and promotes the innate culture of the academy (Maki, 2004).

A defensive stance is not generally a good starting point for proving worth or seeking funding (Walvoord, 2004). It can skew the interpretation of result data and mask the purest intention behind learning outcomes assessment; do students learn from what and how we teach them and at what level? It can also damage the sharing spirit of academic freedom. To allow the freedom for assessors to illustrate a level of learning, accreditation agencies and
higher education institutions must take into account the formative nature of assessment. This understanding will allow the assessors freedom to not feel threatened and to truly understand how their program assists students with learning and development.

**Importance of assessment.**

Even though there are many external pressures to assess student learning, as stated previously, the most important reason to assess student learning in programs is to determine efficacy of programs and courses and levels of learning. There is a trend within higher education to address not just the teaching of students, but their learning also (Schroeder, 2003). Additionally, assessment of student learning in programs can be both formative and summative. That is, it can be a work in progress, allowing for changes and alterations when concurrently implemented in programs and courses for the purpose of improvement in student learning. Summative assessment gives information about student learning at the conclusion of the program or course or other learning activity (Maki, 2004). Formative assessment is ongoing and can be seen as a mid-term for the learning facilitator to seek effectiveness of her or his tactics. The goal of summative assessment is to inform for effectiveness for the next iteration of the learning activity (Palomba and Banta, 1999).

Constant and consistent improvement of programs can help retain students, a goal of most institutions of higher education. Furthermore, improvement of programs helps to ensure compliance with constituents outside of the academy.

The importance of governmental approval is a prelude to the ever-present discussion of funding. Without evidence of successful student learning, at least those with the ability to read and think critically, there will be a question of the priority of funding from the federal
government (Burke and Minassians, 2002; U.S. Board of Education, 2006). In an era of belt tightening due to lack of state funds, threats of decreased funding from the federal government can make administrators take heed and become assessment conscious. The problem with this forced assessment to provide evidence of worth for funding is that it makes the assessor someone who may be the terminator of a program instead of the improver of the program regardless of when the assessment is conducted within the program. It can seemingly place the facilitators of the program, course, or learning activity under a microscope and can make the atmosphere very defensive. Therefore, it is important to try not to make decisions in a negative or punitive manner (Lingenfelter, 2003). The number and amount of programs offered are many times contingent upon funding received. The limitation of offerings because of lack of funding can affect access to the programs.

Access and accountability color the lenses through which government looks at higher education today (U.S. Board of Education, 2006). Access has to do with both admission and affordability. The government’s view of access, coupled with the current trends of students as consumers looking for the best value, leads to institutions’ attempts to keep tuition affordable in addition to trying to provide evidence of learning to potential students that employers look on students with a degree from the institution favorably enough to secure employment (US Board of Education, 2006). Additionally, accountability to constituents reflects the need of the academy to maintain standards that are put forth by both governmental and professional organizations.

Accreditation by government and discipline-specific agencies helps to provide employability. These agencies increasingly rely on evidence of student learning outcomes
for their blessing of accreditation (Burke and Minassians, 2002; McMurtrie, 2000). Failure to meet accreditation standards, either by discipline-specific agencies or by regional governmental accrediting agencies, can be extremely damaging, if not fatal to the institution’s reputation, marketability, and fundability.

Assessment is key in proving learning for all programs in higher education, regardless of motive for the assessment. Tangible evidence of learning is key for the continued success of academic and co-curricular programs, and academic advising is not exempt from this collective. By not knowing what our students learn or do not learn from the academic advising process, our profession does not have the ability to improve services for students. Establishment of learning and developmental outcomes for academic advising is the first step toward assessment and the ability to improve service.

**Cognitive Developmental Theories of College Aged Students**

There is a growing understanding that academic advising is a form of teaching at the university level (Crookston, 1972; Frost, 2000, Appleby, 2001, Hurt, 2007). According to Creamer (2000), effective advising depends on proper use of theory. Developmental advising, it follows, requires use of developmental theories. If, according to NACADA core values (2005), the goals of academic advising exist to help a student grow academically and personally, it reinforces the necessity of putting developmental theories to use. Timely use of theory during appointments will allow accommodation for students’ desires for adviser availability (Lowe and Toney, 2000). Theories can help to provide explanations for complex phenomena (Creamer, 2000). It must, however, be mentioned that Laff (1994) suggests
developmental theories suggest a snapshot in time whereas actual development occurs over time. Advisers and assessors of advising need to be mindful of this.

In the following section, I provide a descriptive overview of four particular theories of intellectual development: Perry; Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger and Tarule; Baxter Magolda; and King and Kitchener. The understanding of intellectual development is critical to the practice of developmental advising. These four theories will be useful in the understanding of the student perspective as it relates to an adviser’s ability to promote development within the advising meetings. Each of these theories informs each other and generally builds on the gaps formed from Perry’s work. Perry’s Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development informed higher education about the ways that Caucasian, typically wealthy, academically high achieving men formed knowledge. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule opened this vein up to women and addressed specific women’s cognitive formation. Baxter Magolda and King and Kitchener come full circle and fill gaps that the two single sex studies leave, with King and Kitchener taking an interesting look at how students deal with difficult situations. Each of these uniquely addresses student development and adds to the understanding that will inform how students understand the advising process. I believe these apply to everyone that undergoes the advising process, and do not exclude certain populations, regardless of race or sexual orientation. In essence, these theories were chosen because everyone who is a student identifies as either male or female. As stated previously, Perry’s study deals with male intellectual development.
Perry’s theory of intellectual and ethical development.

Perry was a pioneer in the research of intellectual development; many other studies were built off of his original work (Perry, 1970, 1981). Perry conducted research to examine ways students look at the world and make sense of their points of view (Perry, 1970, 1981; Evans, et al. 1998). Perry conducted his research on a limited sample of Caucasian male students at a prestigious university but many other studies have sprung from this on more diverse populations. Its impact is noteworthy if only from a heuristic perspective (Perry, 1970, 1981; Evans, et al., 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999).

In Perry’s theory, a student transitions through nine different positions in three major categories as his perception of fact and information changes. The first of these three major categories is dualism. In dualism, a student sees information in terms of right/wrong or good/bad (Evans, et al., 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999). There is no gray area; the information is either right or wrong. Knowledge is seen as a set of facts that are passed from an authority to the student. Questioning the integrity of the fact is not necessary; it is a given if the authority says so (Perry, 1970, 1981; Evans, et al., 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999). Basic Duality and Full dualism are represented in this category. In basic dualism, all problems have a solution; therefore, the student's task is to learn the right solutions. In full dualism, students are aware that some authorities agree on correct answers and others do not completely concur on one correct answer. It is the student's job to learn the correct answers and ignore challenges to those.

The second of the three major categories is multiplicity. Multiplicity splits into two stages, early and late multiplicity and occurs when the student progresses to see that more
than one point of view is recognized as legitimate (Perry 1970, 1981; Evans, et al., 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999). In early multiplicity, students see that there are different types of problems, those that have solutions and those that do not have clear-cut solutions. In late multiplicity, students move to seeing that many problems do not have clear solutions. Also in this stage, the student sees that there may be more than one possible correct answer, depending on point of view. Transitions begin to move the student toward more independent thinking and learning, and allow the student to seek potential answers from peers and other previously perceived unworthy sources. The validity of peer opinions is recognized versus the dualistic thinker’s belief of authority and the passing of knowledge.

The third major category, relativism, acknowledges the quality of evidence in supporting opinions (Perry, 1970, 1981; Evans, et al. 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999). The quality of evidence supporting an opinion determines the quality of the opinion. In relativism, knowledge is subjective and its veracity and correctness is based on which argument for the opinion in question provides the best evidence for its legitimacy. In contextual relativism, students start to evaluate the reasons for believing in certain answers, either empathetically, asking questions such as: why do I believe this; or objectively, asking questions such as: what’s the best way to analyze this? Knowledge is looked at in relation to the context in which it is presented. Precommitment is the next stage in relativism, it is a precursor to the final stage of commitment (Perry, 1981).

Finally, commitment is achieved (Perry, 1981). In the final commitment category, students commit to the answer they believe in. They then may experience challenges to this commitment and further realize the implications of their commitment to the answer that they
have chosen. The realization that commitment is an ongoing and constantly challenging process is made.

If the goal of developmental advising is to help students progress from passively receiving information to taking an active stance on what they believe is true, then awareness of Perry’s theory will help advisers recognize stages and encourage students into other stages. Many advisers of new students will recognize dualistic thinkers by the way they prepare for an advising session. If a student enters the meeting and appears interested but waits for the direction of what to take, it may be a dualistic student. Advisers can mistake this as laziness or lacking ownership, but it may be the student’s level of thinking. Additionally, if students question the adviser about certain suggestions that are made, it could be mistaken as obstinacy when in reality, the student is trying to gather evidence to defend the choice.

Clearly, the perspectives that traditionally aged Caucasian males at a prestigious university do not always reflect the experiences and development of the mainstream of higher education. This fact has lead other researchers to build upon Perry’s work to include more populations that also hold substantial representation throughout higher education, particularly women.

**Women’s ways of knowing.**

The next theory builds on the work of Perry (1970) and it illuminates women’s intellectual development. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1997) sought out in what ways women develop differently than the men examined in Perry’s positions. Only female college student and agency user perspectives were sought. However, the perspectives
presented by the theorists may also be genderless and consist of other socially significant differences such as socioeconomic status and areas of upbringing (Love and Guthrie, 1999). With that qualifier, they presented five perspectives on how women know information through which women report they view the world.

Silence is the first perspective (Clinchy, et al, 1985; Belenky, et al, 1997; Evans, et al., 1998; Love & Guthrie, 1999). In the silence perspective, every piece of knowledge is received from an external authority. The learner recognizes no power, contribution or voice in the learning process, possibly in any other process. This perspective was not represented with in the student sample that was researched, these women were found in social service agencies (Belenky, etal 1997; Clinchy, et al 1985, Evans, et al., 1998). Received knowledge is the next perspective, which would equate with Perry’s dualism (Love and Guthrie, 1999).

In received knowledge, learning is characterized by the listening to others as experts and knowledge is gained from listening to an authority. As development progresses along this continuum, subjective knowledge is the next in the sequence. Opposite in nature from the received knowledge perspective, in subjective knowledge, the self is recognized as the owner and holder of knowledge and what the individual “knows” is more valuable than what any other can teach. In this perspective, a sense of voice begins to take hold and one recognizes her knowledge and experience as legitimate. While the authority is less recognized as the only valid source of knowledge, right answers are still accepted from others (Belenky et al., 1997; Clinchy et al, 1985; Evans, et al., 1998), yet one’s own opinions are seen as legitimate knowledge. It seems a large turnaround from the received knowledge
Two final perspectives of women’s ways of knowing are procedural knowledge, consisting of using objective methods for receiving knowledge. In challenge to the previous ways of knowing, by not removing but recognizing and separating the “self” from the knowing process, known as separate knowing, the woman feels as though she is establishing truth and an objective reasonable fact. The women in this stage want a balance between self and others as sources of knowledge. Also maintained within this perspective is a method called connected knowing through which knowledge is linked and established within the bounds of personal experience. Constructed knowledge is the final of the perspectives explained in the Belenky group’s theory (1985, 1997). In this perspective, the women recognize that the truth is constructed and one cannot separate self from the perception of knowledge. This echoes the qualitative way of thinking in that everyone perceives their own facts through their own lenses.

As female students move through the stages of knowing in this theory, different manifestations could appear in the advising meeting. Students in the received knowledge stage reflect Perry’s first stage of duality. They may want the adviser to tell them what they need to know and will appear to be unprepared and possibly uninvested in the process. Subjective knowers may be seen as combative and defensive of their own thoughts. In recognizing this, advisers can use examples of the experiences they have had with other students and their own educations to alleviate tension. As female students move through the stages of knowing in this theory, confidence and openness appear to both gain. In the end,
when knowledge is constructed, it is recognized that it incorporates both the student’s and the adviser’s input, a situation for which developmental advising strives.

**Model of epistemological reflection.**

Baxter Magolda sought, in a longitudinal study, to expand upon these two previously outlined theories by including the recognition of gender’s effects on cognitive development to include both males and females (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Bock, 1999). This model reflects four different stages, with gender-related differences in the first three, though the similarities between genders outweigh the differences (Bock, 1999). The first stage, absolute knowing, reflects the similar perspective that knowledge is right or wrong and is handed down from an authority (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Bock, 1999; Evans et al., 1998). Within this stage, receiving knowledge, represented by more female participants, is characterized by a lack of interaction with the authority or knowledge holder; whereas mastering knowledge, characterized by men particularly, expects a more vocal and critical relationship with instructors or authorities.

In the second stage, transitional knowing, the students accept that some truths are not absolute; there are some gray areas (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Bock, 1999; Evans et al., 1998). The students expect more from the instructors than presentation of ideas. They expect more facilitation of knowledge through presentation of potential applications. In this stage, there are two gender specific differences: interpersonal knowing and impersonal knowing. As one may expect, more women use interpersonal knowing which utilizes more involvement of and interaction with peers in the formation of knowledge, whereas the impersonal method is more
by men and centers around debate with instructors, research and logic (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Bock, 1999; Evans et al., 1998) and less around communal representation.

Independent knowing is the stage at which the student recognizes that knowledge is mostly uncertain (Bock, 1999; Evans et al., 1998). Instructors that allow for respectful exchanges among and with students are esteemed. At this stage, interindividual learners and individual learners identify and differentiate from each other. Not surprisingly, the females prefer the more communal interindividual approach, which values both their own ideas and the ideas of others. Male students prefer the individual learning style where more attention is assigned to one’s own thinking. Finally, contextual knowing represents a way of knowing in which the individual constructs knowledge but values it only when she is able to support it with unbiased evidence. Gender related differences “merge” together in the final stage of knowing (Bock, 1999). It should be noted that Baxter Magolda found this stage evident very rarely in undergraduate level students (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Evans, et al., 1998).

As students move from being passive absolute knowers toward being more independent knowers, it will be noteworthy that students may take an interindividual approach to the advising and learning process or one that honors his or her own thoughts more. This can affect the advising process in two ways: in the interaction between the adviser and the student, and in the choice of coursework for the student to be most successful. The advising meeting will have very different dynamics if the student values his or her own ideas more than the adviser’s. Additionally, recognition of the different stages of knowing in this theory may need to affect suggestions in coursework. If a student is not at the point of valuing other’s opinions or knowledge as much as his or her own, it may prove
difficult to place a student in a course where working in groups is a focus. In each case, individual consideration is appropriate. Baxter Magolda (2001) updated the Measure of Epistemological Reflection in 2001 to incorporate a more constructivist qualitative paradigm. She suggests that in creating opportunities for students to find their own voices, higher education professionals are actively contributing to students’ development, a goal of developmental advising. Finding their own words in an advising setting may exhibit as students being able to articulate goals and why they may want to take a particular course, why it will inform their career goals, and what information they seek from the course.

**Reflective judgment model.**

Characterization of problems and problem solving is a key component in higher education; critical thinking relies on problem solving ability and is a goal in most academic settings. In their exploration of how people look at and characterize problems, King and Kitchener (King & Kitchener, 1994, Kitchener & King, 1981; Evans et al., 1998; Love and Guthrie, 1999) developed the Reflective Judgment Model building again, on Perry’s (1970) research. In this model there are seven stages housed in three major categories, each building on the previous category. The first of the three categories is prereflective thinking (King & Kitchener, 1994, Kitchener & King, 1981; Evans et al., 1998; Love and Guthrie, 1999). In these three stages, there is always a correct answer in remedy to a problem. There is no problem without one correct remedy. The accepted veracity of answers generally stems from the fact that the information had been gained from authority or by direct observation. This absolute understand is made possible because no other perspective is recognized (King & Kitchener, 1994). In stage two, knowledge can be obtained through the senses or through
authority, it is true if the authority confirms it is true (King & Kitchener, 1994). In stage three, the gray areas start to emerge. In the absence of a completely confirmed truth, one’s own beliefs will suffice until confirmation by an authority confirms (King & Kitchener, 1994).

In the quasi-reflective thinking stages, the fourth and fifth stages of reflective judgment, knowledge ranges from uncertain with evidence involving real evidence or first hand accounts, to knowledge being subjective with credence given to interpretations of evidence (King & Kitchener, 1994, Kitchener & King, 1981; Evans et al., 1998; Love and Guthrie, 1999). This stage recognizes that people attack the problem differently. In the fourth stage, the understanding that there is an element of vagueness around knowledge emerges. Beliefs are justifiable by giving evidence but the evidence has to correspond with previously held beliefs to be given credence (King & Kitchener, 1994). Stage five knowledge is sifted through a person’s own judgment before being deemed worthy of belief. All proof is subject to interpretation (King & Kitchener, 1994).

In reflective thinking, stages six and seven, evaluation of opinions based on reputation of the holders becomes important. In stage six, individuals conclude knowledge about problems by evaluating a variety of resources and by comparison of evidence and solutions that have been posed (King & Kitchener, 1994). This comparison is individually constructed after individual introspection. Finally in stage seven, individuals evaluate and find suitable solutions based on their personal resources and what is reasonable. Beliefs are justified by weight of evidence, allowing for personal interpretation (King & Kitchener, 1994).
As students move from trusting knowledge that they have actually experienced to evaluating truth based on evidence, the adviser should plan to help students extract evidence from different sources. Students may be mistakenly judged as closed to new sources of knowledge and evidence, but advisers need to assist students with making adequate estimations of what evidence to trust and what to question further. In an advising meeting, this may mean that the adviser appreciates the choice of a course but probes further to find the student’s understanding of the purpose for taking the course.

Relevance to Academic Advising

Academic advisers need to be aware of student development theories because student needs change as they develop (Creamer, 2000). To accurately serve the students to whom advisers are accountable, the adviser needs to be able to identify characteristics of behavior that pertain to different developmental stages and address the needs of the student accordingly. Without the ability to recognize intellectual development, advisers may be less than helpful in aiding students toward the end goal of academic and personal development.

Dualistic thinkers, silent or received knowers may be perceived as uninterested and not engage and the advising process may be adversely affected. Additionally, as stated in the previous section, as students progress through the stages of knowing in each theory, students start to recognize that evaluating evidence is necessary becomes noteworthy. As the evaluation of evidence may include questioning, the adviser may perceive this as challenge to his or her experience and or a lack of respect on the student’s part. Problems may occur when the theory does not seem to fit the situation or practice that the adviser must undertake.
Laff (1994) identifies that development does not occur in isolation and tends to occur over time and Hofer and Pintrich (1997) identify several areas that cognitive developmental theories need to attend for the purpose of becoming more easily used and translated.

In *Use of Theory in Academic Advising*, Creamer (2000) suggests that developmental theory should influence the interaction of the adviser with each student. Given the goals of developmental advising, to help students develop academically and personally, the use of teachable moments and deliberately formulated and posited questions could help spur the individual student to his next developmental task. Without knowledge of developmental theories, these teachable moments could be lost and the relationship with the adviser could be less than advantageous.

The requirement of extensive training on developmental theory can prove problematic, given that some of the models of academic advising utilize faculty as the student’s primary and in many cases, only, adviser. The problem is that student development theory is not included in the discipline of many faculty. The theories about which they hold interest and in which they are trained can be far removed from these developmental disciplines (Ender, 1994). Without significant professional motivation, training, and reward, the need for faculty advisers to learn these theories to the extent of familiarity necessary is not going to be evident to them (Ender, 1994). An inability to recognize developmental progresses can lead to an antagonistic and less than productive relationship (Miller & Alberts, 1994). In the advising session, rapport and engagement could be stifled if, as mentioned above, students are mistaken as lazy or uninterested in the process. This ignorance on the adviser’s part could miss the opportunity to assist the student with
empowerment and growth. Each of the previous theories holds particular importance in the formation and pursuit of academic and career goals.

In addition to assisting the student with personal development, the use of theory in developmental academic advising can also assist with career goal formation, major declaration and course selection (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1982). Helping a student become aware of his or her academic strengths and weaknesses can translate into personal empowerment and development. Both academic and personal arenas inform each other, which is why the importance of developmental advising has become evident. Take the following example: If a student has successfully completed the majority of the coursework in a major, has progressed academically to the end of his junior year, and decides to change his major, who was served by the adviser who helped with the selection of proper courses? No one is best served. The student will not graduate with in the desired timeframe and he does not help the institution. The student may have lost less time had he been served better by a developmental adviser that could have helped him see what his interests and strengths were earlier in his or her college career (Winston, 1994).

The structure of an advising session can improve the amount of guidance given or the openness of interaction between the adviser and advisee. In accordance with the Perry (1970) developmental schemes, the amount of control that a student has over the process should vary from low control in the beginning to higher exertion of control in both directing the conversation and the selection of courses (Brown & Rivas, 1994). Permitting, and at times requiring, students to assert more influence as they progress along the stages or positions of the previously explained theories will add to confidence and promote further
academic and cognitive growth (Strommer, 1994). Diversity in points of view should be
given at increasing levels as the adviser sees the student’s ability to recognize the validity of
other opinions (Perry, 1970). Additionally, Belenky et al. (1998) identify certain other
perspectives that would affect student learning in an advising situation. Silence and received
knowledge (p.22) would require drawing out and empowering the student to make her
choices and voice her opinion.

Experiential learning should be encouraged in either the variation types of
coursework selected or by the actual seeking of hands-on experience by the student
(Strommer, 1994). This encouragement to take responsibility allows and requires the student
to recognize a relationship with the adviser that encourages true and honest empowering
exchange, not pressure to conform to adviser’s or other authority’s wishes. An adviser can
recognize and legitimize the students’ experiences as relevant to the knowledge that they
hold and allow the expression of the students’ own ideas.

Learning Theory

Learning theory is a broad and wide ranging category. In an effort to keep these
theories relevant to assessment and academic advising, my research interests. I have focused
on specific areas of learning styles. How people learn and levels of learning exhibited by
critical thinking are most relevant to this study. Three different theories will be outlined and
critiqued, and then I will provide examples of application to the topic of advising. I have
chosen these theories because of their applicability to both assessment of advising and the
practice of advising itself. One can use learning theories as a basis for wording learning
outcomes. These theories can inform the advising process not only in structuring of the
advising interaction with the student, but also in guiding the choice of coursework for the student.

In the next section, I include information on learning styles (Kolb, 1984; Gardner, 1993), relevant to address for advisee learning, and information on levels of depth of learning (Bloom, 156), relevant to address as an instrument that informs that assessment process.

**Kolb’s theory of experiential learning.**

David Kolb’s Theory of Experiential learning (1984) aims to explain the different ways that people make sense of experience. Building on the work of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, Kolb explains a cycle of information processing that translates into a quadrant based learning preference chart (Kolb, 1984; Evans, Forney and Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Kolb’s belief that the formation of knowledge is inextricably linked to holistic personal functioning is reflected in his theory (Kolb, 1984). Each of the four stages in his learning cycle represents an interaction with an experience, with a different focus on the experience.

Concrete experience (CE) represents the affective dimension, allowing for the observation of the experience, building a basis for reflective observation (RO). The observations result in a mental synthesis and reflection culminating in linking the experience to other experiences and making new sense of each. This abstract conceptualization (AC) linking concepts and experiences, leads to active experimentation (AE), which by definition is an action phase (Evans, et al., 1998; Miettinen, 2000; Kolb, 1984). This active experimentation builds on the links to new knowledge. By undertaking a new experience one can build off of the progress made through the previous three stages in the theory. True
learning or new knowledge is only formed when advancement through each of the four stages in the cycle is undertaken.

Learners make choices as to their preferences for a way to look at an experience. Though experiences must filter through each stage to form new knowledge, each learner chooses a particular ability through which to examine the experience. These preferences lead to the definitions of learning styles that Kolb (1984) delineates in his theory. Each style illustrates particular aspects of the abilities that are represented in the four stages.

Kolb’s learning styles are linked to the abilities noted earlier. These abilities can be represented on the four different areas of a square, making a quadrant style model (Evans, et al., 1998; Kolb, 1984). Each of the styles is a mix of two particular learning abilities mentioned earlier. Convergers are a mix of AC and AE and they are good problem solvers and decision makers. Convergers like to apply previous knowledge to make new solutions (Evans, et al., 1998; Kolb, 1984). Divergers are a mix of CE and RO, and they are concerned with the affective domain, more feelers than other styles. They take into account other’s perspectives and values. People oriented, divergers are skilled at coming up with alternative solutions and seeing the implications or larger pictures of decisions (Evans, et al., 1998; Kolb, 1984). Assimilators, a mix of AC and RO, can “assimilate” different ideas into new theories. They respect logic and value logical solutions and are less interested in the human side of things. Accommodators are a mix of CE and AE. These learners are the “doers.” They take action and are unthreatened by new experiences. They are risk takers and easily adapt.
Ideally, learners exhibit skills from each of the four quadrants, as in this theory no learning can be complete without completing the cycle (Evans, et al., 1998; Kolb, 1984). Certain strengths and preferences can be identified as typical, but anyone who spends all of his or her time in one quadrant will not learn to his or her fullest potential. The use of nondominant styles is important for both adequate learning and development (Evans, et al., 1998, Kolb, 1984).

Students will react differently to learning situations depending on their preference within Kolb’s cycle. This will affect the advising meeting, possibly requiring the adviser to meet the student in his or her preference to facilitate the communication. If a student is a reflective observer, for instance, the adviser will want to provide concrete examples of the benefits of a class or a policy and then allow the student some reflection time to process the information. Additionally, students with different preferences will excel in different types of coursework. Concrete experience would be most accommodated in hands on coursework such as labs or physical activities, for example.

**Gardner’s multiple intelligences.**

Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences is the next theory of learning preferences that I outline. In his theory, it is not just what we know that forms learning preferences and intelligence, but how we come to know things. Everyone uses different skills and methods to solve problems and confront new experiences, and intelligence is not something that takes place in absence of the environment around the person (Gardner, 1993; Shearer, 2004).
While all the intelligences in the theory are shared, certain and definite innate preferences for one or a couple can be noted in learners (Gardner, 1993, Shearer, 2004). These learning styles should be addressed beginning in the lower education arenas because everyone can exhibit more than one style (Gardner, 1993). Gardner (1993) identified seven styles of intelligence influencing learning: visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical/mathematical. In 1999, Gardner added naturalistic as a separate intelligence (Shearer, 2004). Inclusion of a ninth intelligence, existential, is under consideration (Gardner, 2004). Each of these exhibits unique characteristics described in the following paragraphs. These characteristics are innate and people are born with these preferences (Gardner, 1993), while all styles can be exhibited and honed, certain styles come more naturally to a person without deliberate enhancement or effort.

Logical/mathematical is the type that most often is accommodated in schools and is therefore the most successful (Gardner, 1993; Shearer, 2004). It deals with reasoning and conceptual thought processes. Learners who are comfortable in this intelligence are experimenters and like to form broad concepts before dealing with details, they reason deductively (Lane, n.d.; Shearer, 2004, Williams, 2008). Linguistic intelligence emphasizes the use of words and language to accomplish goals (Lane, n.d.; Williams, 2008). These students prefer reading and books, are auditory learners, and use language to remember and learn information. These learners too are successful in the traditional school settings, but exhibit particular success with those subjects/disciplines that emphasize word use and language interpretation, and excel at speech and reading comprehension (Shearer, 2004).
Intrapersonal learners can appear as introverts (Gardner, 1993; Lane, n.d.; Shearer, 2004) and excel in the areas of introspection and self-understanding (Williams, 2008). They are good goal setters and tend to be self-motivators. As they tend to learn best on their own, they are independent and successful at being so. Interpersonal learners, on the other hand, tend to be those who manage relationships and learn through interacting with others. They excel at recognizing and accommodating others’ emotions, perspectives and motivations (Gardner, 1993; Shearer, 2004, Williams, 2008). Those who are quite able to see things through others’ eyes and who are very people oriented are interpersonal learners. These students can have hard times in the traditionally lecture-centered classroom, as many lectures do not accommodate their need for interaction.

Visual/spatial learners are hyper-aware of their environments, and view the world in terms of their surroundings in patterns of open and confined spaces (Williams, 2008). They excel at mental imagery (Gardner, 1993; Shearer, 2004). These learners are artists and use visual descriptions to communicate or learn effectively. Learners exhibiting musical intelligence are aware of sounds, rhythms, and music (Gardner, 1993; Lane, n.d.; Shearer, 2004; Williams, 2008). Two distinct aspects of this learning style are creativity and technical skills. Learners can be musically creative but at the same time, lack the technical skills to master instruments. More over, musical learners are not just in tuned to “musical” sounds, but the sounds in their environment also (Lane, n.d.). Similar to linguistic learners, learning aids for these students can include making tunes for memorization or setting lessons to music.
Bodily/Kinesthetic learners are tactile and use their bodies in helping them learn, using mental ability to coordinate movement (Gardner, 1993; Williams, 2008). They like to touch things and excel in hands-on settings such as laboratory courses and physical activities. This category encapsulates large scale, full body motions like dance and athletics, but also intricate works with the hands and the ability to move around during the class time. Finally, the newest intelligence added by Gardner in 1999 (Denig, 2004, Williams, 2008), naturalistic intelligence. Learners of this style respect the nature of the world and draw on features of the environment. There’s a certain amount of empathy for living and natural creatures, giving rise to skills needed by a natural scientist or farmer. Understanding systems in nature, whether they are animal kingdom, earth science or humanity, is a skill exhibited by naturalistic learners (Lane, n.d.; Shearer, 2004).

Existential is the concern with spiritual or grander issues of life and death and is lacking in the area of empirical evidence. Gardner has not chosen to officially add it into the list of learning styles at this time (Gardner, 2004) due to this fact.

Gardner’s styles appear relatively transparent, with possible course choices and even career guidance influences readily evident. Accommodating preferences within an advising meeting could also be apparent. If a student exhibits a visual or bodily learning preference, then handouts and papers to take away from the meeting will be important to include. If a student shows an intrapersonal preference, then the communication between the adviser and student may entail examining the student’s planned coursework and building from that point. An interpersonal learner may have planned his or her schedule with his or her friends, or may want to do the actual planning in the meeting itself.
**Blooms’ taxonomy of educational objectives.**

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom, 1956) is a tool that can be used to measure learning, and without such a theoretical tool, a review of theories on learning would be incomplete—particularly one that is focused on assessment of and learning objectives of an educational program. It has been revised by various authors (Krathwohl, 2002; Whitton, 2000). The original taxonomy looks at the level of understanding produced from a program or exercise, using action verbs. The taxonomy requires students to build on the exhibited behaviors from the previous level of learning (Bloom, 1956). In establishing learning objectives for advising programs, the administrator should always take into account the levels of learning illuminated in the taxonomy. With the hope that the deeper the students learn the advising information, the more developed and engaged the student will be. The six major classifications of learning from Bloom’s Taxonomy are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956). The knowledge level consists of simple recognition or recall of the subject matter (Bloom, 1956; Huitt, 2004). Comprehension is the level of understanding in which a student recognizes what is being said and can make use of the material but doesn’t necessarily link it with other material or facts (Bloom, 1956; Whitton, 2000). Application is the next stage of learning in which the student is able to use the comprehended material in different settings or in a different manner than was previously used, linkages are made and the utility of the information is understood (Bloom, 1956; Huitt, 2004; Whitton, 2000). Analysis is the next level of understanding, in which the information is categorized and thought through, the parts of the material are identified and the relationships between these parts are recognized.
individually and compared. The actions encompassed in analysis are a prelude to the
evaluation level of learning (Bloom, 1956). Synthesis takes the analyzed parts and
reintegrates them back together, possibly in a different way that reflects or maintains the
same meaning (Bloom, 1956; Whitton, 2000). Evaluation is the highest level. This level of
understanding represents the students’ informed opinions about the validity and usefulness of
the information (Bloom, 1956; Huitt, 2004; Whitton, 2000).

Bloom’s explanation on levels of learning informs the advising process by allowing
advisers to recognize the level of understanding that a student exhibits. This can be
beneficial if the student wants to take an upper level course in a discipline that he or she does
not exhibit synthesis or evaluation, even if he or she has taken the prerequisite coursework.
Guiding the student toward a more adequate learning experience will allow the student to
remain successful and gain valuable learning skills. Additionally, Bloom’s theory could
assist advisers with articulating what they expect students to take from the advising process.

Linking the Theories to Advising

Each of the learning theories outlined looks at learning through a different lens. How
a student learns best and what preferences or particular skills he has that enhance his learning
are the focus of the first two but the third focuses on levels of learning different content.

Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) of learning is important to advising because, as with any
educational program, it is important for students to develop to a higher level of understanding
of the presented information than that with which they entered. Without this, a student would
leave a university with the same ability as when he or she entered. If a developmental
approach to advising is employed, development is one of the grander objectives of the
process. Without higher-level understanding, development into an engaged and understanding student is improbable. The language used in Bloom’s taxonomy assists with articulating learning outcomes for an advising program and with evaluating the levels of the students’ mastery of advising material.

Learning preferences and styles such as Gardner’s and Kolb’s are important to the advising relationship because accommodating different methods for promoting understanding can prove invaluable in reaching educational objectives. Much the same as these preferences are important to traditional classroom teaching situations (Miller & Alberts, 1994; Hurt, 2007). Without the exploration of different methods of imparting knowledge, teaching in college will not change and, as a trickle down effect, advising methods will not change (Hurt, 2007). Prescriptive, one-sided relationships in advising do not promote the understanding between the adviser and the student, nor do they take into account different learning preferences (Hurst & Pratt, 1984). Learning preferences are also important when selecting coursework. Certain disciplines, courses, and teachers align better with different learning preferences and these strengths, weaknesses and preferences should be understood about both the student and the discipline to adequately guide students toward proper course and eventual career choice. Additionally, certain groups of students, such as millenials or first generation students will be expecting or requiring different levels of accommodation for their preferences (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Rhiels, 1994; Pascarella et al, 2004; Kohler, Giancola, Munz, & Trares, 2008).

Assessment of advising and establishment of outcomes are not possible without understanding the developmental and learning theories that influence the learner and advisee.
By looking at advising through a cognitive development and levels of learning point of view, I hope to start the process of establishing appropriate outcomes for the process. These outcomes, coupled with the expectations of students for the process will help inform both advisers and the students they serve. The shared outcomes and expectations will, in turn, help in providing better service to students. Better services to students affect retention (Artman & Gore, 1992), matriculation, and graduation rates—not to mention facilitating proper development into fulfilled, educated persons.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This study focused on the expectations that the different constituents in the advising process hold. Emphasis is placed on the expectations and not the actual process involved. A qualitative methodology, specifically interpretive instrumental case design as identified by Stake (2005), served best to answer the following research questions:

1. What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
2. How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
3. How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

In the following chapter, I outline the process through which I examined the previously stated questions. I have explained my choice of qualitative methods and interpretive case design, my role as the researcher in this process, the data collection and analysis methods. I have delineated the methods I employed to ensure that the methodological rigor and the credibility of this proposed study are of the utmost ethical standards and quality. A summary of the chapter and the proposal conclude the chapter.

Research Design

Qualitative Paradigm.

I chose qualitative methodology in the effort for several reasons. Primarily, given my feeling that understanding student experiences are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure (Glesne, 1999), qualitative methodology allows me to investigate for subjective information, gathering empirical evidence in rich detail, in order to analyze and share what is
learned in more than simply objective terms. The central theme of thick description and analysis in qualitative research provided both the researcher and the reader with a more complete picture of the investigated questions; in this case, focusing upon the participants’ perspectives of his or her experiences with advising, what he or she feels is important in the process, and how that knowledge helped all involved to create stronger and more meaningful advising support structures. Qualitative research also permits the researcher, the participants, and the readers to interpret the information with which they are provided, giving the study’s audience the ability to translate and explain for them what exactly is being said (Glesne, 1999). Qualitative methods were used in this study because it affords the:

- Ability to investigate for subjective information.
- Ability to illustrate the different participants’ perspectives through direct quotes.
- Ability to allow for multiple interpretations, which is important, as I believe in constructed knowledge.

**Interpretive instrumental case design.**

**Interpretive Design.**

As stated previously, qualitative methodology was best for examining the research questions at hand because it allows for an in-depth description of each constituents’ expectations of the advising process. I chose interpretive design (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 2002) formed in instrumental cases (Stake, 2005) to answer the research questions for two reasons, the nature of the questions and answers sought and the nature of the setting for the study. Merriam (2002) defines interpretive qualitative research as a design that investigates the meaning that something has for those involved. She further identifies that constructivism
is key in this type of interpretive qualitative design (Merriam, 2002). The main goal of interpretive design is to interpret the meanings that people make of the subject being studied, in the context of the situations in which they find themselves (Merriam, 2002). Geertz (1973) identifies it as trying to see the meaning from the participant’s eyes. That is, looking at the expectations for the advising process through the angles of the different players in the process.

This study’s design worked best in conjunction with the instrumental case method, due to my epistemology as a constructivist, the nature of the questions asked, and the participants sought lend themselves to case method as discussed later in this section. I believe that construction of knowledge is an ongoing process that happens globally. Because of this, looking at expectations for advising through the various constituents’ eyes one at a time helped this study and each participant illuminate how the advising process can be improved to reflect each expectation. As the study unfolded, changes in expectations likely occurred just from the reflections that participants had from answering interview questions. Much the same, my interpretation and thoughts were influenced after asking the interview questions and hearing the participants’ answers.

Interpretive design uses interviews, observation or document analysis for data collection. Smith (1993) identifies that investigating individual’s actions has to take into account an interpretation from his or her point of view, thus echoing Geertz’s aforementioned idea of seeing the meaning through another’s eyes. I interpreted the information collected via the interviews and document analyses while accounting for the angle of the participant. I
drew from my experiences in the positions of each participant: student, adviser, and administrator to adequately interpret their answers and points of view.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), knowledge is transactional and subjective because the research topic and researcher are “interactively linked” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111). This link, in addition to the constructivist epistemology, has forced me to identify my past and current experiences that link me to the information gathered and provided when analyzing for the dissertation. These ideas may have influenced both my view of the information sought and the analysis of the data. Identifying these previous experiences also notifies the reader to the nature of researcher biases and permits the reader draw his or her own conclusions about the analysis and reporting methods. Because I interpreted and analyzed the information I received, my past experiences that may have influenced this interpretation are illustrated for the reader to ensure full understanding of how the questions, data gathering, findings, analysis, and conclusions were reached. I believe the benefits of incorporating my experiences into the study add credibility to both the questions asked and the analysis of the data. Without identifying the researcher’s background, subjectivity, and epistemology, the reader cannot fully identify from where the analysis begins.

The Instrumental Case Design methodology informed this study’s use of basic interpretive design. It provided the framing structure to select participants by providing bounding structures. It also helped shape the methods of data collection, analysis, and description of findings.
**Instrumental Case Design.**

Instrumental case design is the most appropriate method for this study within qualitative research methodologies because the setting for the research has naturally bounded individual cases, in which the aim is to seek out common themes, examine assertions and describe the bounded system (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1989). According to Yin (2003), a case study is an inquiry “that investigates a contemporary phenomenon…” advising in this case, “…within its real life context…” each representative college in this case (p.13).

Furthermore, Yin states that one would use a case method when the contextual conditions are pertinent to the study (2003), as with the differences between college advising programs and with the differences between college administrators’, advisers’, and students’ expectations. The difference of advising model and subject matter may indeed have influenced the expectations of the advising from both ends of the spectrum and, as is discussed later, is why participants will be sought from the different disciplines and models.

Finally, Yin (1989, 2003) and Stake (1995) identify the time boundaries of the case. In this study, the cases were bound by what was the current time, no longitudinal information was or will be sought, that is, a snapshot in time has bound the cases to the current semester in which the study took place. This study does not intend to follow the participants in advising sessions or track for future development and changes with the cases or participants. I state this with the understanding that nothing is static and processes are constantly changing and unfolding.

The study was conducted at a large doctoral university with high research activity. It houses ten colleges that operate as individual units. Each college defined a case perfectly,
allowing for easy identification of where one case stops and the next begins. It also allowed for easy identification of participants from each of the cases. Smith (1978, as cited in Merriam, 2002) suggests that cases are systems with clear and definite boundaries. The colleges represented these boundaries very clearly and allowed for little confusion between cases. Because the expectations for advising by different constituents were the focus of this research—not the actual cases, Stake (1995) would refer to this type of examination as an instrumental case. This type of case study examines a case for the purpose of categorical aggregation, allowing the reader and researcher to learn about more than just the specific examined case, in this study the colleges. Interpreting these different cases together was also important in this study as there were two groups of cases: those with natural or hard science disciplines that represent dual/split models or those with faculty advising models, and those with humanities/human science disciplines representing each of the two different models.

Because I sought an understanding of the expectations of each of the participants about the advising process, interpretive qualitative study informed my method. Aspects of case study method, such as having bounded cases and seeking common themes, as identified previously in this section informed the structure of the study, and gave it a concrete basis on which to build. Case study as a stand-alone method would require a far more in depth look at each case than was intended by this study (Merriam, 2002, Bracken, personal communication).

**Role of Researcher.**

The qualitative tradition dictates that I identify my interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22) as constructivist, this is particularly important given my position as an
advising professional and given the nature of the data being researched: viewpoints of students and advising professionals. This understanding of knowledge exemplifies the view that all knowledge is subjective and no one is capable, nor should strive for, completely removing his or her personal viewpoints from data collection and analysis. Because the perspective that the researcher holds inherently influences the gathering and analysis of data, deliberately stating the researcher’s whole philosophical paradigm, which describes the way one thinks and which influences all thought processes is necessary (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This paradigm includes the ontological, epistemological and methodological stance of the researcher.

**Subjectivity.**

Constructivism is the belief that past and previous experiences influence thought, action and reaction, and interaction of the present and future (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Additionally, constructivism incorporates that knowledge is co-created, in social interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is my belief that nothing can be separated from past experience, as everyone draws from previous experience to interpret the situation in which she is currently. It is impossible to forget previous experience, and therefore our experiences serve as the beginning point of interpretation for questioning, expectations, opinions and actions. Just as nothing can be separated from past experience, the future’s experiences depend upon interactions occurring right now. I believe that social interactions and belief systems influence perceptions of all experience, past, present, and future. This position is important for me to identify, as the belief is that not only my thought processes are affected by this position, but the thoughts, answers, and experiences of the participants may also have
been affected in this manner. As was my interpretation of the meanings of their answers and all data collected.

I hold strong feelings about the necessity of developmental academic advising and the benefits of intervention to students, both. This belief reaches from my experiences as an undergraduate with a university advising system that was not particularly helpful or developmental in ways other than providing signatures for scheduling sheets. My experiences as an undergraduate student influenced my choice of career path so that I could assist students in ways that were unavailable to me at that time in my life. Believing that I would have benefited by having some developmentally appropriate guidance has influenced not only the way I interact with students but my expectations for the advising process.

This history may provide some insight as to how I view the process of advising, my shared view with many other advising professionals that developmental advising is not only helpful but necessary for the academic and personal growth of students, and my views that professional staff and faculty within higher education are responsible to the students enrolled at the institution. These views may have affected the way I asked questions of the participants in this study and even my choice of questions. Careful attention was paid to wording and phrasing to ensure that leading or biased questions were minimized. Before each interview I reviewed my intentions for the research, recognizing how I feel about the advising process. This process of recognizing my personal feelings allowed me to be aware and mindful of how the biases that I hold could have been exhibited through the questions.

In the reflection process, I specifically addressed how each question was to be asked and tried to anticipate how each question was to be interpreted by the participant.
Additionally, I rehearsed questions in advance with professional colleagues who are not a part of the study to gain further insight into potential interpretation on the participants’ parts.

I have identified that I believe in the benefits of developmental advising for students. My analysis of the data was framed in this light. Additionally, I believe that people who are in positions of academic advisers, particularly professional advisers, hold expectations that students will benefit from their advising. As I listened to and initially interpreted the answers to interview questions and the documents that I found, this subjectivity was evident. Without question, my subjectivity was evident in the implications and suggestions that came from the findings. My own expectations about the process were modified from the interaction with the participants. This was outlined in analysis and implications.

**Positionality.**

Positionality refers to the influence of the researcher’s social location in the context of the research being conducted (Sands & Krumen-Nev, 2006). I work in an office dedicated to the support of undergraduate advising throughout a large research intensive campus. I am an adviser who helps the director to administer the advising program. Our advising philosophy and mission illustrate the developmental approach for advising. The students we generally serve are those who do not know what major or career path they would like to pursue. We employ professional advisers who have all of their time dedicated to advising and advising programs.

My office provides training and acts as a resource to those advisers who request our services. In short, we offer services to both students and advisers; we espouse the
tenets of developmental advising and assistance in all of our programs and advising
meetings.

Merriam (2002) discusses insider and outsider positionality affecting studies. In this
study, I am both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider in that I know the academic
advising process from practice. I am an outsider because I am not affiliated with any of the
academic colleges in this study.

To guard against my subjectivity and positionality unduly influencing the study, I
employed various methods including reflexivity. Reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, in Denzin &
Lincoln, 2005) is the critical self-examination that takes place during the research process.
As I have encountered through previous research, introspection throughout the process,
informed my own awareness of how who I am and how my opinions affect the study. Self-
awareness during the time of interviews allowed me the ability to ascertain that I fully
understood the participants’ answers and to determine if further explanation was necessary
for better understanding. External review of interview questions provided another guard
against leading or biased questions, particularly with the advisers and administrators who
likely exhibited a better base knowledge of advising vocabulary and processes. In
summation, I addressed my subjectivity and positionality by 1) concurrently collecting and
analyzing the data, 2) using member checks, 3) using peer review, 4) and finally using
reflexive memoing. Further details on how I specifically used these are outlined later in the
chapter.
Conceptual Framework

This research sought to examine three different research questions from the angle of cognitive development. Perry’s Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development loosely informed this study. The other theories outlined in chapter two also informed the study and contributed to the discussion and implication sections.

The research questions asked about student, adviser, and administrator expectations of the advising process. These expectations were framed from the standpoint of what each constituent wants or expects a student to gain or learn from the advising experience, if there is or should be developmental advising or prescriptive advising. Do the constituents expect learning to entail anything other than coursework advice? This research sought to pave the way for improving development and learning resulting from the advising process from understanding the thoughts of each constituent. Learning, teaching and development are, after all, aims of higher education in the first place.

Looking at advising expectations allows the reader to start the process of categorizing the expectations of students, advisers and administrators into specific and measurable development or learning outcomes. By asking interview questions loosely connected to Perry’s work, I intended to understand the students’ process of knowledge construction and identify how these understandings may influence their intentions for the advising process. Additionally, adviser and administrator understanding of and possible presence of these theories in the advising process were sought through interview questions. Though the outcomes were not delineated in this research, the foundation of the path will be paved by
examining expectations through different learning and cognitive/intellectual development theories and these thoughts were outlined in the discussion.

**Data collection.**

Yin (2003) suggests using multiple sources of information during data collection. In this research I conducted semi-structured interviews and also analyzed web and paper documents to collect data. The information gleaned from each of these sources was compared against each other to ensure reliable data gathering and analysis techniques.

**Site Selection.**

I chose this research site for several different reasons. The first reason is that I hold extensive knowledge about the advising practices and close physical proximity assisted with accommodating preferences for meeting times, gaining access, establishing rapport, and choosing appropriate participants.

Secondly, the university setting is such that the samples are bound neatly in disciplinary colleges, each operating independently and with different disciplinary foci. Finally, the setting of the university is influenced by convenience. As stated earlier, physical proximity allowed easy appointments and familiarity with the setting though not such that my familiarity influenced answers of the advisers and administrators. I clarified that my intent was to examine, not judge. As the students had not yet attended, concerns about their being able to speak freely were alleviated.

I picked a sample of participants from within the nine academic colleges in a large research university with very high research activity, predominantly in the science, technology and mathematical fields (Carnegie Foundation, 2007). Several of these colleges
shared advising models, therefore, I actually chose two colleges from hard science and two from humanities or human sciences—one who represented a dual model of advising, in which advising responsibility is shared by a professional adviser and then faculty advisers at different times, and one for a faculty only advising model. Each college housed academic undergraduate degree programs into which a student can enter as a freshman student and graduate from as a senior because expectations of students for the process may differ. This represents within case dimensional sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It was “within” (p. 29) as it was located in one overall university setting which helped me to illustrate advising on one campus in depth. Sampling for the site was “dimensional” (p. 29), as I established the criteria, or dimensions, for inclusion. These dimensions illustrated the different models and disciplines within the research setting.

Cases representing the different disciplines were delineated because I wanted to portray the perspectives of quite different disciplines. There is the possibility that, as with graduate advising, undergraduate students, advisers and administrators of undergraduate advising may exhibit quite a different level of expectations about the advising process illustrated within different academic disciplines (Bowman, 2002). In this study, I found that students in the harder sciences were more apt to expect less developmental and intrusive advising and were less than pleased when this occurred. However, the students in the liberal arts majors were expecting more of an advising relationship and were disappointed and less productive when this relationship did not occur (Bowman, 2002). This interpretive case design sought to understand expectations from student, adviser and administrator
perspectives. I anticipated a range of expectations as reflected by the different disciplines housed at the site of the research exhibited due to the sought after disciplinary differences.

One college at the institution was not considered for inclusion into the study as it is designed specifically as an intrusive advising model for students to promote career exploration and personal development before declaring a major from which the student can graduate. This model is unusual within the range of university advising models sought and would not represent a typical view of advising expectations, for anyone involved. The advisers within the omitted college are professional advisers who teach sections of university orientation or first year experience courses to have intensive and intrusive contact with their students, not a typical model used in other colleges on this university’s campus. Additionally, this college employs a great deal of assessment and exhibits well established learning outcomes. The data gathered from this college would not present the same type of information as the other nine cases from which information will be sought.

The site intended for this research was selected because: the institution is divided into nicely bound colleges that operate relatively independent of one another, making easy case bounds and the institution is physically convenient for me to access. Colleges intended for the cases were sought because: 1) each operates independently, 2) each exhibits the different models of advising, that is faculty only and dual or split models, that were sought for examination, and 3) different disciplines sought, hard sciences and humanities or human sciences, were present. Participant selection from each of these cases is outlined next.
Participant Selection.

Participants consisted of advising administrators, advisers, and students from each of the four colleges. The level of the administrator interviewed was dictated by where the advising administration lays within the college, and time and willingness to participate. This information was useful, as the level of administrator who is responsible for the program may have been an illustration of the amount of importance placed on advising. The caveat was the willingness and time to participate. I am unsure which of the administrators who referred me to lower ranking administrators were simply not able to participate due to time constraints or interest level. The administrators were asked to identify advisers who will be able to speak about their views of the advising process. The administrator was asked for names to help me identify advisers who typified the college’s philosophy of advising, in a snowball sample method (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This allowed identification of potential participants from a network who knows what the research seeks to answer. I was then be able to compare the data collected from the administrator and the advisers for verification purposes. Two advisers were identified and interviewed within each college participating, and one administrator.

First year students new to college were identified and interviewed before their first meeting with an adviser at orientation. Criterion samples (Miles and Huberman, 1994) from each participating college were identified and solicited via e-mail and facebook before the scheduled attendance at orientation. The particular criteria that these participants required was that they had not interacted with a college adviser yet, and that they were entering the participating college. The criterion sample (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of students were
interviewed before the initial advising session to ensure that the views and expectations they held were not influenced by experiences they have had on campus at the university. This was an attempt to keep the expectations pure and unaltered by any previous experience with advising. This is the main reason that the students were interviewed before having contact with an academic adviser, as any previous interaction may have changed expectations. An initial unchallenged view was what I sought as many students who enter higher education do not have previous experience with a college level academic adviser and this was hoped to enhance the credibility of the study. It additionally protected the student from having to make any uncomfortable judgments about his assigned adviser when advising does occur. It is possible that expectations about advising are defined differently once one is familiar with the campus’s accepted advising practices.

Student solicitation began after the students were accepted and deposited. Two students from each college were identified, solicited, and interviewed before their initial contact with an adviser at orientation. All efforts were made to not influence these students’ expectations about what would occur in the advising process for the college in which the student was enrolled before the interview. However, after the interview I answered questions about the students’ academics and continue to serve as a general resource for some of them.

Participants were chosen for this study because 1) they were in the position of administering advising programs within the participating colleges, 2) they were aware of the process of advising, 3) advisers were chosen by snowball sampling method—identification by and suggestion of the administrator, 4) students were chosen by criterion method, 5) their inexperience with the process, 6) and their admission to a participating college. No intention
of particular representation of student groups, academic ability, or race or gender was employed.

**Interviews.**

This research employed semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews with students, advisers, and administrators provided insight into their thoughts on and expectations for the advising process in the initial gathering of information in this study. A semi-structured interview format proved useful with new students who were definitely less familiar with terminology and needed more prompts, follow up questions, and leading to draw out a more complete estimation of their expectations. The semi-structured format allowed for immediate interpretation and possible clarification on either my part or that of the student, should it be necessary. Knapik (2006) identifies that a certain allowance for spontaneity is beneficial for participant expression. Conversely, semi-structured interviews allowed me to maintain control of the interview when the need for refocusing occurred.

Finally, Stake (1995) identifies that because each person’s experience is individual and this research seeks individual perceptions and expectations, the interview schedule must reflect some flexibility. Roulston, DeMarrais, and Lewis (2003) recognize that while researchers anticipate certain information from the participants, one can never be assured that the responses will be anticipated, lending another reason for utilizing semi-structured interviews. Having a semi-structured protocol allowed and maintained a controlled flexibility and consistency for different participants who had differing levels of knowledge and different abilities to talk about the process. Seidman (1998) identifies that role playing can assist with getting to important information. This particular strategy was useful in
determining what interactions take place between an adviser and a student. Having the adviser interact with me as if I were a student illuminated unspoken expectation for both the adviser participant and myself. While it was useful to use with advisers, this method proved more useful in interviews with students who were apt not to have the understanding of vocabulary that the other participants had. It was a useful tool to be able to employ and it enhanced the outcome of the interviews.

Each participant was interviewed once. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) assert that the interview takes shape with participation from both the interviewer and participant. Because I sought the initial impressions for expectations of the advising process, there could have been only one interview that successfully gleaned this view. Participation in the interview process likely began to influence the participants’ expectations of the process just from the reflection that took place during the first interview.

Interpersonal communication is integral for establishing new relationships and modifying existing relationships (Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007). In an effort to facilitate interpersonal communication and ease tensions for the participants’, sites for the interview were suggested, but the participants were asked for their preference and allowed to choose where they wanted conduct the interview. Each interview’s length was intended to be one hour, with the schedule of the participant dictating. Several interviews were 45 minutes. I intended to conduct no more than three interviews in a day and in fact, did not have to complete more than two per day.

Each interview was audiotaped by cassette recorder with the permission of the participant. Audiotaping allowed me to listen more fully to the participants’ answers and
observe more closely the nonverbal factors that informed the study. Copious notes were still taken to supplement the audiotaped information. The tapes were professionally transcribed.

**Document Analysis.**

Hodder (2003 p.166) notes the “…importance of material evidence in providing insight into other components of lived experience.” This study did a search for web based and hard copy documents relevant to the advising experience in each case. An examination of each college’s process included reviews and analysis of any documentation that indicated what type of incentives and rewards are granted for faculty and professional advisers who provide advising services and what emphasis is placed on advising for developmental purposes. An examination for documents that illustrate what types of training and professional development are funded or provided for faculty members who become advisers or who have been advisers and want further training on developmental advising was requested and received from the colleges and reviewed. I sought out any training materials and schedules of training that may be distributed to new and returning advisers. Absence of material was also noteworthy. The intent was to establish any similarities between and among the different cases, warranting both a within case and cross case analyses.

To attain the goals stated previously, I examined the college’s public and internal documents that were provided to me, including:

- Website to examine any advising related information and it’s ease of availability
- Advising training manuals
- Advising forms text information used in the advising meeting and relevant courses
- Forms given to students upon initial advising contact
• Procedure manuals or publicized instructions if available

• Assessment of advising documents

Data Analysis.

This study employed within interpretive instrumental case analysis to find themes in answer to the stated questions (Creswell, 1998) to completely analyze each question through the perspective of the administrator, adviser, and student. Analyzing data within each case kept the details and data bounded with the system and did not include data from outside the case (Creswell, 1998). In essence, I looked at one of the participating colleges at a time. By analyzing the information within the individual cases first, I was able to identify particulars for each college utilizing within case analysis methods, including open and axial coding through a process of reading and rereading (Creswell, 1998).

Analysis occurred in three phases, with each phase narrowing and refining the data. Initial analysis began during the interview when notes were taken by thinking about the answers and mentally noting different themes or important issues. Thereafter in the formal coding process, I read through the transcribed data to find pieces of information that recurred or stood out among the others. This information was “tagged” (Baptiste, 2001) and labeled with an appropriate code and profile. After the first level of open coding and analysis was completed, the process was undertaken again. This time the codes or tags were categorized into groups that housed similar information. These categories were continually reviewed and changed according to the information that the categories provided. As this stage of the analysis concluded, I then wove the categories together to describe the analyzed data that will illuminate the participants’ expectations about the advising process.
Stake (1995) speaks of aggregating information to make the information gathered fit into a class, “categorical aggregation” (p.74). This is not unlike the method that I chose to analyze the collected data. In this method, interpretation of the information must include that each piece of information is weighed against the other to categorize or code (Stake, 1995).

Transcripts were read and re-read with the intention of identifying and pulling out the recurring themes or pattern matching as identified by Yin (2003), an open coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), or tagging (Baptiste, 2001). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest having a list of codes thought up before the coding begins. I did not employ this method, as the codes emerged on their own from the collected data. In doing so, I attempted to minimize any risk of my subjectivity forcing data into preconceived coding structures. I wanted the initial coding structure to come forward from the data collected. I categorized initial codes and these were assembled into a codebook (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). As stated previously, I avoided preconceived categories of organization as Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 61) identify, so that the commonalities in the collected data delineated the categories. There were, however, categories that were obvious, quickly and easily identified from my work with the data.

Serial coding, as identified by Baptiste (2001), means that each transcript is read and coded separately, one at a time. This was the most appropriate method for this research for organizational and time purposes. There were times in the writing process, though, that parallel coding allowed comparisons, so a combination of the two was used. Parallel coding (Baptiste, 2001) allows for different transcripts to be coded at the same time. Additionally, I employed an inclusive coding process, including everything that seemed of interest to the
study, not just those things that strictly answer research questions (Baptiste, 2001). These inclusive codes were systematically aggregated by considering the weight of data support for each and relevance to the study’s inquiry. Those patterns that recurred were coded and grouped with similar themes providing a pattern of identified recurrences, a process of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or similar to labeling as identified by Baptiste (2001). I conducted this review of the data within each case first.

After the initial pattern matching review, an additional review for the purpose of grouping the themes into an explanation (Yin, 2003) or categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995) of what is expected in each case, Baptiste (2001) identified this process as defining and refining. As I completed the analysis of each individual case and each pattern was fleshed out sufficiently, I began again by reviewing each of the established patterns and explanations across the cases. I searched for common explanations and themes across each case until such time as certain common themes or patterns were determined for the whole picture. The intent was to get a picture of each individual case’s patterns first and then illustrate the patterns across the whole of the research, illustrating the dynamic of each participants’ expectations for each case.

Utilizing cross case analysis allowed for triangulation between the data gained from each case. Specific research questions were addressed with cross case analysis, and it allowed me to identify similarities and differences among and between the cases which informed my thoughts on implications and heuristic value for the findings. I hope that these findings and suggestions lead the way toward establishing standardized outcomes that may
be applicable across the many different curricula within higher education institutions. I personally completed the analysis by hand and did not use any software to assist.

**Data Handling.**

Interviews were taped in addition to manual note taking, allowing me to include information that was not reflected in the tapes. Information such as the mannerisms of interviewees, setting of the interview, my impressions and thoughts during the interview could be missed if taping is the only method of record for interviews. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Audiotaping was conducted at each interview, at the discretion of the interviewee.

No one preferred not to be audiotaped. Taping allowed me to listen better rather than concentrating on taking notes. I knew I could verify on the tapes or check for more information. It also helped with rapport, allowing me to make better eye contact and listen to the participant speaking more completely. Tapes were professionally transcribed. Notes kept included personal thoughts on codes and categories and also included “emerging ideas” (Richards, 2005, p.74).

Interview data were in transcript form, both hard copy and electronic file. All electronic files, interview transcripts, and typed notes, were kept on a specific USB port dedicated to this data for portability and ease of access. A back up of all data was kept on my computer at home; I am the only one who uses the home computer. Richards (2005) suggests naming and describing all documents for identification and ease in finding. All hard copies of notes and transcripts were titled and then chronologically filed.
Strengths and Limitations

On a whole, one does not expect to find generalizable results in a qualitative study and this study solely aims to illuminate the processes at one university setting. Lack of generalizability does not compromise the reliability of the information gathered, in fact, quite the opposite. As there may be some similarity between this setting and others, some information may be transferable or recognizable for different colleges and universities, but this research boasts no intention for generalizability. The fact that this research included four cases allowed the reader to examine the full scope of advising from the student, adviser, and administrator angle in each of the different disciplines and colleges at a large university.

As noted previously, I am familiar with both the setting and the subject matter being studied. Yin (2003, p. 61) states that this may be a benefit as well as a potential hindrance, as case study data collection is a matter of interpretation as well as collection. Decisions about further probing to investigate contradictory nuances in answers are only possible when the interviewer holds a base knowledge about the subject being investigated.

To ensure that participants felt comfortable answering the stated questions, I reminded them that I was there in a student capacity and their information will be held in confidence. Informed consent reassured the participants that this was a dissertation research activity, not a specific assessment of the college’s commitment to or interest in advising. I still maintain the data as confidential and have assured the participants that every attempt would be made to mask identities, though I could not promise anonymity.
The subject knowledge that I brought to the study adds to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Stake, 1995) by ensuring that appropriate participants were selected, the best questions were asked in the most appropriate language to glean the most accurate and forthcoming information, and that the participants and campus community exhibited support for the research conducted. In the same vein, the knowledge that I have about the subject may have influenced the data collection and analysis. To combat the affect on data collection, I used peer review for the interview protocol to ensure that I did not lead participants too strongly toward an answer.

Each participant was only interviewed once. This may have affected the completeness of the data. Every effort was made to give the participants adequate time for thoughtful response during the interviews. Participants were also given the opportunity to contact me if they thought of anything else they wanted me to know, or felt would inform the study.

Finally, the study took place all at one university. While this may be a limitation, it was addressed by using four different colleges that exist independently of each other and has its own identity. This helped to mitigate the scope of the study to include different disciplines and models of advising as each case reflected unique disciplines of study.

**Quality of the Research Process**

**Trustworthiness.**

Trustworthiness is the way qualitative research proves its rigor or validity. To ensure this study held true to standards of trustworthiness, verification strategies as identified in Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) were employed. Verification strategies are
considered more formative than summative, that is, they occur during the research process and keep a check on the processes as they are being done (Morse et al., 2002). Methods of verifying trustworthiness are important to employ while the study is in progress. These, combined with more traditionally summative verifications helped ensure that the study is trustworthy and improved the trustworthiness of the end product.

Responsiveness of the investigator is identified as integral to the concurrent verification strategies (Morse et al., 2002). As the researcher in this project, I maintained an awareness of appropriateness of participant selection, interview questions, further resources from which information and even analytical categories were sought. By maintaining sensitivity to the nature of the data, participants and questions, I ensured that the research was reflective of the support gathered from the participants and grounded in the analytical methods.

In addition to the requirement of responsiveness, I employed two of the four verification strategies identified by Morse et al. (2002). By ensuring that the sample was appropriate, or “consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the topic…” (Morse et al., 2002. p 12), I was certain that each perspective of the three sought was adequately represented. By “collecting and analyzing data concurrently” (Morse et al. 2002, p.12), I analyzed the data as it is collected. As the study’s interviews were in progress, my interview notes reflected the thoughts that I had about where the information fits in the scheme of the study and research questions. This strategy guided the construction of probing questions while the interview was in progress.
Those methods that Morse et al. (2002) consider more summative demonstrations of rigor that I attempted to employ during this research were: member checks and peer review. Though none of the participants expressed interest in checking his or her data, these were offered. I suspect time constraints and professional obligations were a factor limiting member checks. Peer review was used extensively throughout the process. Reviews by different area experts, administration of advising, practice of advising, and research methods were all performed. I did not use the audit trail method to ensure rigor as I felt it could compromise the promise of confidentiality that I gave to the participants.

**Credibility.**

The credibility of this study was enhanced through the methods listed above, but was addressed additionally by the following means. Audiotape reviews have allowed me to verify information collected in the interviews for a second level of insurance that the intended meanings have been conveyed in the analytical coding process. My position as an adviser and my understanding of the processes and advising literature and practices helped shape the data collection to gather the most fruitful and useful information (Yin, 2003) and distinct familiarity with the subject has been illustrated (Charmaz, 2005).

Peer review has been utilized throughout the study, including review of interview questions, categorical assignments, and final assumptions. Review upon conclusion is a verification strategy established by Morse et al. (2002). The colleagues that have reviewed are in the advising field and are aware of the nature of the questions and the nature of my potential biases. Additionally, input and thoughts have been sought from the content area
specialists who are committee members in accordance with the dissertation process, a process recognized as “investigator triangulation” by Stake (1995, p. 113).

To combat the possibility that interviewees were telling me what they thought I wanted to hear, I employed several strategies. First and foremost, I established at the outset that I was interested in getting information about their advising practices and philosophies if they were able to articulate them. I made clear that I was acting as an impartial observer, in the capacity of a researcher, and had no interest in evaluating their methods, practices or philosophies. If I felt there was awkwardness or unease, I would redirect and rephrase, a strategy recognized by Morse et al. (2002). Questions were rephrased in a way that would not produce defensiveness or emotion to put the participant at ease. Each participant was assured that the responses would not be identified and every effort would be made to keep the identity of the participant anonymous. A process of examining and analyzing more than the interviews also allowed for “data source triangulation” (Stake, 1995, p.112) or at least comparison between the two. And finally, I would probe further to find information that either confirms or negates the primary answer. For example, if an adviser proposed that her philosophy of advising incorporated developmental practices and that she wanted to meet students where they are, a common theme throughout these participants’ answers, I would probe further and ask how they would discover the student’s position.

Finally, I personally reflected about my stance and the data after each interaction with the participants and data, from the inception of the interview process to the conclusion of data analysis. This process made my thought process deliberate and explicit.
Ethics

Marshall and Rossman (1999) identify that ethical considerations should be noted for each study. While this study seems to have had no outright adverse affect on students, with students being interviewed before meeting with advisers, and advisers and administrators not being identified in the study, affects may be possible.

Affects on Participants.

At every part of this study, I have adhered to the University’s Institutional Review procedures. Informed consent forms are maintained for each participant and Board approval was secured before the inception of the study.

Students sought as participants did not have previous knowledge of college advising experiences so I was attentive to interpreting the lingo for them, but with the same caution as to not influence their answers. In recognizing my desire for students to be self-advocates I was cautious not influence their answers about expectations of the process and their responsibilities for the process. Through the aforementioned reflexivity process, I became and maintained an awareness of my own thoughts and expectations about the process and was therefore more able to curtail influence with my questions or demeanor. I did, however, intend for students to come out of this process with a better understanding of what they expected and what their role was to be in the process, if only by enticing them to think about it. I offered to be a resource for them and answer questions about the process after the interviews were concluded. Some student participants took advantage of this offer and asked questions. Finally, to curtail the concern about students possibly making comments that would affect the advising relationship; these students were interviewed before any contact
with university advisers. They did not have any adviser experience and were not be able to affect their relationship with the adviser to whom they were assigned. Additional assurances of confidentiality completely alleviated concerns of affecting the advising relationship.

Student affects may have included a different understanding of the process after interviews. Giving the student a different perspective and understanding may have made them a more informed participant in this process, altering how the advising process proceeded for them. Indeed some of the students mentioned not having thought about advising in such a way as they did after the interviews. I absolutely did not attempt to delay any student from receiving advising services until such time as that of the initial interview, all students were sufficiently before interacting with their adviser or attending orientation.

No participant was compensated for his or her participation and it was made clear that participants may leave the study at any time. As stated before, every effort was made to minimize any adverse effect for the participants. Some identified benefits included an increased awareness of expectations about the advising process. Each different participant may have benefited from knowledge about their own expectations and this may have had an affect the quality of advising services offered. Students who participated were made aware that I would be glad to serve as a general advising resource for them if they had questions to which they did not know whom to address.

Asking questions about various processes may have caused advisers to feel self-conscious and administrators to feel defensive. I was very clear when soliciting participants that I solely undertook this as an examination of expectations and the study was not be used to inform anyone about specific practices or values of the participants. The setting for
interviews seemed to be important to alleviate concerns for advisers and administrators. I allowed them to pick the site for the interviews, giving these participants the comfort of their own offices or choice of setting. Most picked their own offices. Finally, to alleviate adviser and administrator concerns of identification, I continue to work diligently to maintain their identities in confidence and did not use their names to help disguise who they are.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity.**

The site of the research was limited to ten colleges and though each was not included in the study, identification of views may still be possible. Promises of anonymity have not be made because of the close location of the site and the interrelated nature of advising across campus.

Neither participants nor cases have been identified in this study, when necessary I have assigned pseudonyms for cases and participants. All efforts have been made to maintain confidentiality with regard to every participants’ answers and positions. Interview tapes were stored locked and have been destroyed after the transcription was received.

**Data Display**

I have intended to paint a picture of each case in as much detail as confidentiality will allow. Each case was described in narrative form and patterns identified will be summarized. A list of patterns identified in each case was displayed in a diagrammatic fashion to illustrate the relationships between the patterns and how I related them to each other (Baptiste, 2001), illustrating whether the relationships were contextual or by constituent expectation.
Summary of chapter

The research described sought to examine expectations about the advising process from three of the different perspectives involved with the process. The adviser and administrator represent the higher education/teaching side and the student represents the learner. From the expectations that each participant demonstrated, I intended to form the basis of a research agenda that includes further exploration of advising practices, intentions, expectations, and learning outcomes from all the varying constituents’ perspectives.

Each participant was representative of a discipline and advising model. He or she was asked questions from a semi-structured interview guide. This semi-structured format allowed for elaboration and probing while also providing the structure that was needed in an interview with someone inexperienced with the terminology of higher education and academic advising. Data were coded and reviewed in several layers over several iterations with constant awareness of researcher subjectivity and positionality. Serial open and axial coding of data yielded patterns or categories of expectations that crossed case bounds. I have established patterns between these expectations laying the foundation for learning and development outcomes to be established.

This research intended to examine the expectations about advising held by the administrators, advisers and students involved in the process. By examining and seeking unique and commonly held expectations of advising administrators, practitioners, and receivers, I have hoped to inform the field of advising. I also hoped to inform the learning and development that occurs as result of the advising process. These efforts eventually hope to identify a set of commonly held expectations across discipline and level of participation.
that will help categorize and define the advising process. Through this research, I aimed to make advising services to students a more uniform and fulfilling experience, which lead to the greater development of intellect and academic success.
Chapter Four: Findings of the Study

I undertook this study in an effort to illuminate the path toward establishing outcomes for the assessment of academic advising. As the expectations of each of the players in the process of advising become clearer, a common set of outcomes will begin to emerge. The research questions that guided this study are: What do students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process? How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations? And finally, how do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of the expectations for the advising process?

Method

I conducted one hour in-depth interviews with administrators, advisers, and entering students from four different colleges. I selected students who had not had contact with their adviser before the interview to ensure that expectations were not influenced by such an interaction. Students’ advising status and college of admission were the only criteria used. There was no influence of gender, first generation, race or student or parental income on the selection for participation. Several students were, however, representative of first generation status. Additionally, participation was guided by students’ level of interest and willingness to participate in an interview about their expectations for college and the academic advising process. While most of the students were Caucasian by appearance, one student was of African origin, having moved to the United States a couple of years before our interaction. Another student self identified as being of Hispanic origin and first generation American. All student participants were entering for their first year of study and had not previously attended college.
Advisers and administrators were solicited in the same way by college affiliation and availability and willingness. Willingness in each of these cases may indicate a deeper awareness and greater advising knowledge. In all, four advising administrators (ranging in rank from Assistant Dean to Coordinator), eight advisers, and eight students from four different colleges were interviewed. I chose particular colleges to focus upon to illustrate the two types of disciplines represented at the university: hard sciences and the social and human sciences.

I also sought out information about the colleges’ practices for advising and resources offered to both students and advisers via the websites and literature that the administrators and advisers provided. The amount and quality of information or lack of information observed helped me to understand the level of commitment of the college to easy access of information which speaks to both the expectations of the administrators and advisers in the college and also to the understanding that each of these holds for the advising process.

Data

The interview tapes were transcribed and the transcripts were read and coded as was described in Chapter three. Tags and labels (Baptiste, 2006) were assigned to pertinent information and the resultant categories were analyzed in accordance with the frame that the research question provided. These categories and supporting themes yielded several interesting thoughts, most not surprising to those who are familiar with the advising environment. Some on the other hand, were disconcerting and cause concern.

After a descriptive profile of each of the cases, I present the findings for expectations of the process, the initial research question, split by student, adviser, and administrator
expectations. This illustrates the commonalities, gaps, and differences with more clarity and reinforces the need for a common understanding about advising among the three groups.

**Case Profiles**

To protect the identities of the individual participants, I present profiles of the cases to illustrate the points of view, backgrounds, and priorities of the different perspectives in this study. Due to the nature of the setting, the benefit lies in understanding the perspective of the case and the discipline rather than the individuals who make up the case. Using this method of introducing the reader to the participants allows them to get to know the outlook of the participants without making their identities too transparent. While anonymity was not promised, I feel a responsibility to the individuals who contributed their time and perspectives to mitigate the chances of being recognized. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the setting where this study takes place is a large research intensive university. To protect the identities of the participants and cases, I employ additional safeguards for protection of individual’s identities such as identifying and outlining only cases and not mentioning colleges by name. Diagram one which follows on the next page illustrates a snapshot of the case profiles. Case profiles were assigned pseudonyms to protect participant identities.

**Case I: College of Mining* (names have been changed)**

The College of Mining represents a large college on the university’s campus, one of its flagship colleges. It offers a large number of majors, all are in the hard science category and many lead to graduate level research and study. The administrator, advisers and students interviewed for this study were all eager to participate, even given busy schedules and looming deadlines. This college offers many layers of administration and services for
students that not all of the colleges are able to offer. Many resources are available for these students at the college level, in addition to what the university offers. Themes were common among the advisers and administrators, but the students in this case – though sharing thoughts with the other students did not necessary exhibit the understanding of the process that other entering students did.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Mining</th>
<th>College of Consumer and Family Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Majors offered: 23</td>
<td>Undergraduate Majors offered: over 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary information: Hard Sciences</td>
<td>Disciplinary information: Human Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Intro course offered:</td>
<td>First Year Intro course offered:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable information:</td>
<td>Notable information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising loads run from 10-300+</td>
<td>• Advising loads run to well over 400 students per adviser in one department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diverse advising models represented</td>
<td>• Diverse advising models represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive information about expectations provided to students at New Student Orientation</td>
<td>• Information about course registration given to students at New Student Orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Communications</th>
<th>College of Earth and Mineral Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Majors offered: 23</td>
<td>Undergraduate Majors offered: 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary information: Human Sciences</td>
<td>Disciplinary information: Hard Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Intro course offered:</td>
<td>First Year Intro course offered:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable information:</td>
<td>Notable information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising loads less than 150 per adviser</td>
<td>• Advising loads are unbalanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One model for advising</td>
<td>• Diverse models of advising represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive information about expectations provided to students at New Student Orientation</td>
<td>• Information about course registration e-mailed to students before New Student Orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Case Outlines
The evidence indicates that advising is a priority for most of those involved with the College of Mining. Not unique, it has a first year introductory seminar course, which covers many developmental, career, and university policy topics. These courses are a requirement for all first year students and different sections are taught by professional staff and faculty.

The College of Mining’s commitment to advising is evident through the planning, organization, and maintenance of this course. Students may have difficulty finding information about advising and policies regarding advising if they look on the College of Mining’s website. What information there is in the website is buried several layers down and is not easily accessible. While this may seem contradictory, it is certainly not uncommon amongst the colleges participating in this study. And, as with large colleges that exhibit many different models of advising, representation in a website proves difficult. That being said, the College of Mining provides students with a good overview of what is expected of them and what they should expect from advising in the text for their introductory course, which students receive at New Student Orientation. The College of Mining provides information for advisers in training sessions before New Student Orientation. New policies, classes, and pertinent timely information are revealed to those advisers participating.

As mentioned previously, this case represents a large college with dozens of majors and varying concentrations within these majors offered. The number of advising models is almost the same as the number of majors offered. These range from professional advisers in an advising center for one major to faculty only models for many of the majors. Advising loads can range from 200 down to fewer than ten students per adviser. Some of the majors serve many students, some have very few represented, some students have the same adviser
from their freshman to their senior years; others have a new adviser every year. Each of the
students, though, is brought together through the introductory course that the college requires
students to attend and shares that common experience.

Assessment is mentioned as a priority for the case, and online adviser evaluations can
be found on the colleges’ webpage. Evaluations in this case offer less of a learning outcome
based than a satisfaction based resource. Priorities for learning and development are
established through student learning outcomes established for the first year course.

Developmental problem solving, community building, and goal formation are
mentioned as outcomes in this graded course, which indicates the priorities that Mining has
established for their students. Otherwise, assessment of learning outcomes for advising is not
a priority in this college. Clearly, this does not, indicate that learning does not take place;
however, without assessment of learning outcomes, there may be less tangible and
deliberately sought evidence of learning. Nor does lack of established outcomes or
assessment indicate that those students who are one in 12 students assigned to an adviser
receive better quality advising than those who are assigned as one of 200, but it would be
interesting to know if there is a difference. They acknowledge that more needs to be done
with respect to advising and deliberately orchestrated learning and developmental outcomes
from advising. This deficiency is illustrated in that advising is not even mentioned in the
posted 2007-2008 annual report.

While the College of Mining has a more manageable student population than other
participating colleges to serve, there is a lack of established learning and development
outcomes for advising. I do not believe that this indicates a lack of interest in students’
learning or development, perhaps funding for advising has never been an issue due to smaller number, or perhaps it simply has not been visited yet.

**Case II: College of Consumer and Family Sciences* (names have been changed)**

In the second case, the college represents a more human science side of higher education, offering many majors and many concentrations to go along with those majors. Also offered in this college are varying professional degrees, as well as some graduate level studies. Students for this case were the easiest to contact and most eager to participate, indicating to me their interest in and eagerness for all things dealing with college. Each was very articulate, thoughtful and able to provide good data for me to use. Administrators and advisers were keen to help, but more pressed for time than the students. Many common themes emerged between the administrator, advisers, and students, which indicates to me that participants in the discipline share like values with respect to expectations for advising.

The administrator has been in the position for a relatively short period of time and was eager to help and discuss this topic with me. However, due to her limited tenure in the position, I did not feel that I got the depth of information and understanding from her that I did from other participating administrators. Advising is a difficult affair to discuss in this case, as there are so many different types of majors and many models for advising represented.

As with Mining, each department has its own model, including using graduate students from the department to advise undergraduates. Some departments have faculty only and some have professional advisers holding primary advising responsibility. Loads can run well into the hundreds for an adviser, which definitely affects the level of interaction and
relationship that a student can expect. Additionally, there is no one required introductory
course to offer the consistency of organization, point of contact, developmental and career
information, and policy information that students may need. Absence of any common
advising process for students does not ensure that the policies and messages that the college
deems important are communicated.

Advisers in Consumer and Family Sciences were articulate and professed a desire to help students in their academic, career, and personal development. The administration of advising does not show the same commitment to the development of the student; this is not to say the desire for a supportive, developmental environment is not there – quite the contrary. This college recognizes excellent advising annually with a college sponsored advising award and has a committee of undergraduate advising representatives that meets monthly to discuss policies, procedures and pertinent information. That being said, the commitment to learning and development of students is not represented through assessment of learning and development outcomes. Nowhere online can I find any information posted about the assessment commitment for the advising process, nor was any requested information about assessment provided. I strongly suspect that there are departments that assess their advising, but because advising is such a decentralized process in Consumer and Family Sciences, any information garnered from such assessment may be kept within the department for utility’s sake.

An information booklet provided to students at New Student Orientation contains less deliberate information about clarifying expectations for the student than in the other case. It does provide resources and helpful hints for course registration. However, the document is
cumbersome and does not illuminate procedures about selecting classes or what to expect from their adviser and the advising process. This lack of explanation at the very beginning of the students’ experiences can lead to an academic career of misunderstanding.

The College of Consumer and Family Sciences’ difficulty with assessment of learning and developmental outcomes for advising could be in part due to its large size and decentralized nature. Assessment and advising have no standard procedure in Consumer and Family Sciences, and the communication between departments and administration about advising appears to be encompassed in the monthly advisers meeting. Consumer and Family Sciences does not exhibit a common thread of goals or outcomes for advising, even though common themes have emerged from the participants.

**Case III: College of Communications** *(names have been changed)*

The College of Communications represents the less hard science side of higher education and offers fewer but more specialized degrees than the others. All of the participants in this case were tremendously helpful and provided thoughtful and clear information that has proven useful in my analysis. Of marked importance, though, is the difference between the reported expectations of the students and the advisers/administrator. Neither of the students interviewed indicates that she or he intends to graduate from the degree to which she or he was admitted.

Advising is a large priority for Communications. The administration has committed to promoting a college-wide model for undergraduate advising in which advising is provided by a professionally staffed advising center until the student matriculates into a major. The professional advising staff members carry loads of approximately 150 advisees and practice
developmentally intrusive advising. They are particularly clear with the expectations that they hold for the student and are proactive about posting these expectations on the website. Student responses did not reflect that they were aware of these resources, perhaps because the students are not entirely sure about their majors. Information offered by this college at New Student Orientation is clear about procedures and expectations regarding advising appointments, scheduling, intended student learning outcomes and responsibilities of the student.

This case provided assessment documents that indicate there is a strong priority for evaluating the adviser. Emphasis is placed on adviser knowledge and communication instead of student learning. This college may reserve the student learning outcomes for the introductory courses in the matriculated majors. In lieu of offering one college wide intro course, this college provides students with these courses when they are degree specific.

Adviser loads are slightly heavy but manageable in the professional advising center and the faculty loads reported are relatively low. This most likely is due to the heavy involvement and observation that the faculty member has to provide in the student’s professional development after matriculation, more so than in the other cases.

Case IV: College of Earth and Mineral Sciences* (names have been changed)

Earth and Mineral Sciences is a small college with dozens of hard science majors. There are more research based graduate degree programs in this college than undergraduate majors. This being said, it is apparent that undergraduate education is a priority for them and advising is not withstanding. The advisers and the administrator who participated in this study were articulate, pensive and helpful with their responses. Advisers knew less about
developmental theory and more about the discipline related questions, but this did not indicate a lack of intention to helping the student develop professionally and academically.

    The priority for undergraduate advising is clear due to the administrative positions dedicated to the coordination of undergraduate advising. The maintenance of such a position in times of budgetary examination indicates a true commitment and recognition of a need for such coordination.

    While there is no one model espoused in Earth and Mineral Sciences, the faculty members appear to do most of the advising, though there are also some professional adviser positions. However, some departments are large enough to have their unmatriculated students advised by a professional adviser, not unlike the model used in Communication. In Earth and Mineral Science, though there is a required introductory course that all incoming first year students must take. This course focuses on resources and policies and procedures of which a new student at the college should be aware. The Dean’s Office coordinates this course, which is taught by graduate students. That the Dean’s Office maintains responsibility and ensures resources for the administration of advising functions illustrates a high level of commitment by Earth and Mineral Sciences to undergraduate student advising, learning, and development.

    Information about policies and academic procedures is prominent on the student section of the college’s website. Links of information that are pertinent to a new undergraduate student are also listed in easily reached places. However, no mention of advising is present in the annual report on their website, nor am I able to locate information about assessment of student learning and development outcomes for advising.
Understanding the cases represented in this research helps enlighten this research about expectations grounded in both disciplinary and college level thinking. No generalizations are sought with this research but a commonality between the disciplinary themes is noted as a possibility. In the next section, the findings are organized separately by student, adviser, and administrator responses to the research questions. Students will be the first group I present. The categories and supporting themes are represented in following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Learn &amp; Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influences on understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>How I learn best</td>
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<td>Previous advising relationships</td>
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<td>Support</td>
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<td><strong>Understanding of the process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Judging Veracity</td>
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<td>Maintaining progress</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other Dev. Insights</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Student Categories and Themes by question

**What do students expect from the advising process?**

Some of the students had experiences with high school counselors that may have had an influence on what they want from a college academic adviser, and some of these same experiences influenced what they do not want. Two major thematic categories emerged from the student perspective on expectations, personal relationships and information. The following are descriptions of these two categories, illustrated through the themes and supported by student quotes.
Personal Relationships.

The personal relationships category embodies the desires that students have to make a connection on campus with a professional to whom they can turn when they need information. Students identified that three themes integral to the category of personal relationships are trust, the notion of feeling supported, and mutual respect between the student and his or her adviser. Trust is the first theme examined.

Trust.

Of utmost importance to incoming students who participated in my research is a personal relationship with an adviser, in which the student can trust the adviser. A range of desired number of contacts or levels of interest by the adviser are reported, but each of the students recognized that there is a definite need for trust between the student and her adviser. Students' quote, “… [the adviser] is my best hope…” and “…I pretty much just take[s] for granted…” that the adviser will know what she is talking about illustrates the level of trust she places in her adviser for knowing the policies, procedures and pertinent information she needs to know.

There is a range in levels of trust from blind trust in which the student believes that the advisers’ role is to take into account his or her personality and guide him or her unequivocally. Such a position is illustrated as with the student placing her “best hope” in the adviser, but also when another student identifies that:

- “[advisers] should help you no matter what... No matter what you are going through.”
- “I know its not fair, but I expect them if I needed help above and beyond what they could give that they would try and do that.”
“If I have to trust someone, I need to know that person is really close to me and I can tell them stuff.”

“...he will be able to direct me through everything.”

“am I going to be overwhelmed? Am I trying to do too much?”

“I don’t want to get lost.”

The next level from blind trust indicates a less personally intimate and all encompassing trust. There is less of a personal vulnerability articulated in this type of trust. It is trusting the adviser to take care of procedural and policy issues. This would be illustrated in the students expressing that they trusted the adviser to:

“...[get] me into courses I wanted to take.”

“What do you think I should do?”

“...I expect them to basically tell me what I need to do, what classes I need to take...”

“I need to ask them what I need to do for that...”

“I would probably go directly to the adviser to ask them questions.” instead of other campus resources.

“I will tell them what I am looking for. They tell me what’s wrong with what I am looking for.”

Finally, there is the example that one student indicated that this relationship had not really entered his realm of thought. This is best illustrated by his repeated answers of “…I haven’t really thought about it...” And another student respects what the adviser can and cannot do: “There is only so much they can do and some of it I’ll have to shoulder myself...” Clearly this student does not have the same level of trust that the adviser will be able to maintain all of her information and needs in addition to the other responsibilities that he or she is assigned. She appears to recognize that she holds responsibility in the process.
An interesting note for an expectation of trusting communication is method of delivery. One student expressed that while she did not expect to meet one on one with an adviser, face-to-face interaction is much preferred, “…I just can’t trust someone through e-mails. Um… I’ve got to see them.” On the other hand, many students expressed a keen desire not to have to meet with their adviser in person, but preferring e-mail interaction.

Virtual interaction seems to be the preference for the majority of students, but only for questions and not for advising appointments. I believe that students want to be able to access their adviser for questions virtually, but still hold interest in face-to-face meetings for registration advising. Evidently students need to personally interact with an adviser to be able to trust the information they receive from the adviser.

**Respect.**

Also indicated in this relationship category is the notion of mutual respect. Some students indicate their desire to be respected.

- One expects someone who “…sincerely cares…” and who is able to “… be present and show interest.”
- “I would like from them to actually take interest in the students.”
- While another indicates the understanding of the student’s role is to respect their adviser:
- “My responsibility is to actually respect that person.”
- And “… if you are respectful and more disciplined, I think your adviser is going to like you…”

The notion of honesty recurs throughout the theme of respect. Students understand that the relationship built on trust necessitates that they act with integrity and honesty: that it is necessary to “…be honest of my capabilities, um, to be honest what I could actually do in
regards to classes.” They feel an obligation to honestly express their abilities and interests to the adviser, respecting the adviser to guide them appropriately. Students expect this same respectful honest communication from the adviser in return. Indeed, it is clearly expressed that by being honest about their expectations and their abilities, students expect honest and respectful communication back from the adviser:

- “I would tell them what I am looking for. They tell me what’s wrong with what I’m looking for.”
- “I want my adviser to be able to tell me, ok, this isn’t high school anymore.”

Finally, they want to know that their honest interaction with the adviser will yield the appropriately balanced and challenging schedule: “…don’t want to overbook myself so that I’m not doing well…”

The desire for a mutually respectful relationship with the adviser is something that most of the student participants indicate will enhance their relationship and communication with their advisers. Dictionary.com (2009) defines respect as “…esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person…” which the students intend to receive as well as exhibit in their interaction and communications with advisers.

**Support.**

Finally, in the personal relationship category, the notion of support is prominent. Students expect and trust that they will be supported in their educational and, in some cases, personal endeavors. There is a concern about becoming overwhelmed:

- one student would like to “fulfill my requirements and still not like kill myself getting there.”;
• “I don’t want to overbook myself.”; and
• “tell me like if I am taking too many classes. Am I going to be overwhelmed?”

Students express that advisers should practice intrusive advising and maintain consistent contact with what students are doing and how their semesters are progressing:
• “…keep me from being overwhelmed but still challenged.”
• “they should check up on you,” and
• “…help out the student in any way possible…”
• “…show me the way…” and “…answer all my questions…”
• “…I’ll need tips not to get screwed up…”
• “…classes that will help me go to where I want to be and not take something that is not going to direct me to my goal…”
• “…Get me where I need to go…”
• and that it is the “…adviser’s responsibility to recognize the students’ potential…” and encourage and monitor them appropriately.

Support is more than the personally relevant trust and respect; it is the understanding that the student is on the right track, is aware of opportunities and pertinent policies. Trust and respect build the notion that the student feels supported, students trust they will be supported. One student expressed that advisers should be “…encouraging but at the same time keep me in the real world…” Others want to be sure that the adviser makes sure they maintain the appropriate balance of challenge and fun: “I’m not afraid of failing, I’m afraid of not doing my best…”

Finally, it is the notion that they have a resource to approach when they need help: one student wants “… just to be able to go to them and say hey, I have a problem with this.
Is there anything we can do about that?” Having a place to go for trusted knowledge, for assistance and for direction segues nicely into the next category of student expectations: Information.

**Information.**

Not surprisingly, students expect that, in addition to a relationship with someone on campus whom they trust and respect, and from whom they expect respect and support, the majority of their interactions with an adviser are to inquire about, gain and understand information. This includes information about degrees, about policies and procedures, and about options available. The information that students need from advisers varies as much as the students do, with the common themes of details and maintaining progress. Students report that they intend to “…go directly to the adviser to ask them questions.” They are counting on advisers to be sure that the information they receive is both timely and accurate.

**Details.**

Students require big picture advice as well as the detail-oriented information that is not always obvious to the outside eye. One student called it the “tricks of the trade,” the important information that advisers know that the students need to know and expect to gain from their advisers. Students identify detailed information about classes, where they are located and what is good to take together as imperative to know: “…make sure I’m prepared for my classes... what I need to do to like get through them…” Procedural knowledge is key to students, many report that they want to know “what I need to do…” in many different contexts:

- from “what classes do I need to take?” and
• “what’s good to take together?” to
• “…technical, nitty gritty like schedule organization…”
• “how long will it take me to get there from this class?” and
• “what do I need to do?”

It is this kind of knowledge that professionals on campus hold and may have become so familiar with that they take for granted and that may, as a result, go unarticulated. Students may not always know automatically which classes are near the others and which classes are most appropriate with which to fill their schedules.

Even though they are relying on the adviser for this type of detailed information, students are aware that advisers may not always volunteer this information: “they would kind of like give you an overview and if you have more detailed questions, they’ll help you with that…” Additionally, one student recognizes that “advisers have way too many students to be worrying about the details for everyone. So every student is responsible for their own details.” These students understand that there is a need for them to be assertive and drill down to the details they need and inquire about them: “…be willing to ask questions when I need to ask them...” The information may not be volunteered by the adviser for various reasons: they are too busy to recognize the need to pass such information on, want to place the responsibility on the student, or they just take for granted that students know the details on their own.

Other students believe that the adviser will be able to guide them with detailed information for options that will enhance their educational experience, and in turn their resumes at the conclusion of their degrees. The interest expressed is in getting information
from advisers about options outside of the curriculum: advisers should be ready to “…answer questions about things that interest me or that are going to help me out…” and “should I be taking care of scholastic things instead of the extras?” The expectation is that advisers will “…help me make the right decisions that will get me where I need to go…” The precarious balance of academics and extracurricular interests is a concern for students: one expresses he wants to “…socialize and keep the grades…” Students are expecting advisers to help them balance between not wanting to be overwhelmed while still wanting to entertain personal interests and graduate in a timely fashion. They are also expecting detailed information on options to enhance their experience and the worth of their education, and they want it all while making sure it happens in a timely fashion. Maintaining progress is the next theme that supporting the information category.

**Maintaining Progress.**

As I mentioned previously, students express an interest in graduating in a timely fashion. These concerns arise not only from parental pressure, but also from personal conviction: “I’m not looking to be valedictorian in college at all. But I am looking to do well… Um, for four years… Again, like I did the last four.” By far, this is the answer that students responded with most assuredly and with the most conviction. They want to be sure that

- “…they will keep me on track for the entire time”,
- that advisers “…make sure I graduate on time”
- “…get me where I need to go....”,
and offer, “like what I need credits-wise and stuff to be prepared, or like, you know, graduate.”

Adding to the pressure of making a “…smooth transition for high school to college…” students are aware that they do not know all of the pertinent information that they need to graduate, thus reinforcing their need to be able to trust their adviser will provide the information they need. One student expresses, “I don’t think that students should be picking out their classes without being able to interact with someone that knows what they are doing.” Clearly indicating that they do not know what they are doing and need reassurance that they are “…actually doing enough…” or that they are progressing toward graduation without taking classes that do not count:

- “What if I put the wrong class and so I work for it and it wasn’t doing anything for me? I don’t want to do things that will hurt me in the long run.”
- In short, they want “…tips not to get screwed up…”

and to ensure they maintain the best possible progress toward graduation. This expectation for unsolicited guidance and follow up may not lead to a satisfaction for these students.

It is evident that students expect a lot of guidance and intrusive interaction from advisers in college. These expectations will most likely not be met for the participants. What makes these students expect these things from advisers? The next section will address the foundations of what may affect expectations of the advising process: students’ understanding of the academic advising process.
How does students’ understanding of the process affect their expectations?

There is a vast range of understanding of both the processes of college and the process of academic advising. Several students have immediate family members who have attended a four-year university or college; some actually have family who has attended the study’s university. There are a lot of levels of expectation and understanding within each of those populations, but the most prolific answer I received in questions that addressed these issues is “I don’t know”. Many students don’t know what to expect about the whole college process: leaving home, getting courses, extracurricular activities, scheduling, not being “overwhelmed”, peer pressure. They certainly do not know what to expect from college and the advising process.

Influences on understanding.

Family.

The influences that surround these students bring different information to the table. As mentioned previously, some of the students have parents, siblings and friends who have attended or are currently attending this university. Most of them have different experiences:

• “…my older sister had horrible advisers…” and

• “I know from experience…my boyfriend for two semesters has been one of the last 15 people in the entire campus to sign up for classes because of his adviser.” And

• “…My mother, her adviser um let her take too heavy of a load and when she tried to drop a class, she wouldn’t let her…”

Another student has a parent who works here. Certainly she will have a far different set of expectations than that of the student whose single mother attended a few semesters of
community college. Additionally, some of the participants report being the first in their families to go to college.

Several students report that an adviser’s role is to:
- “keep me on track”,
- “keep me from being overwhelmed”, and
- give students “tips to not get screwed up.”

These reports indicate that students are going to put the fate of their educations in the hands of the adviser, they trust the adviser to support them personally and academically through the process. Moreover, some of the students interviewed think that advisers are going to help them prepare for the classes for which they are registered. This includes the proper placement into said courses, and then the communication of how to succeed in the courses. This passivity is echoed through one student’s statement expecting the adviser will “…make available the resources or help necessary.” This would mimic a parental relationship. Indeed, one student even expresses that she needs to “…take that person as a parent so that he will be able to direct me through everything…” Given that these are all traditionally aged first year students it is not surprising to find this expectation for a high-level guidance and intrusion.

**Previous advising relationships.**

Relationships with other who have acted in an advisory capacity can definitely affect expectations on future advisers. A lack of respect for the high school counselor may affect the expectations for a relationship with a college adviser for one student participant. She
intimates that, “he didn’t do anything…” and that as far as a college adviser she “…has no idea…” what to expect, “…I have no idea. Um, I don’t know… “

Others who reported strong positive relationships with their high school counselors appear to expect positive relationships with the college adviser,

- “…honestly, I feel bad for my college adviser...” having to live up to the standard her high school counselor set.
- “…My counselor is more like a father...We are more like family members than just a counselor or a student…”
- “He is like my friend. He is my only friend I have in this school.”

Additionally, they expect the same types of interaction with their college adviser:

“she called me down to her office and like go through helping me to figure out which colleges I was looking at… I figured this would be, like, the same…” One student suggests that the counselor helped him “get into courses [I] wanted that I couldn’t get into…” and that college advisers will do “…probably the same thing as far as the scheduling and all…”

**Understanding of the Process.**

The differences in understanding of the advising process that students explain to me are vast. This affects students’ preparedness for the initial advising meeting and the students’ anxiety level—the unknown always raises apprehension. Some of the students had their own motivation and had received communication from their departments about how to access degree audits and how to look up coursework on line. Others who had already done this received guidance from their family members. Some students never even looked at the website or had any notion of how to prepare for orientation advising or how to familiarize themselves with classes. Such lack of information causes great anxiety for these students-
exhibited either through outright nervousness or through a defensive stance, “I’ve never been to college before so I don’t know what to expect…”

Meetings.

Most students report that they believe there should be a one on one meeting with the adviser at least once: “I’d like to meet at least once a semester.”; and “I guess it’s like definitely at the beginning of the semester…” Most expect personal interaction, “I would hope a one on one… If it’s more than four or five, I’m going to feel like a number.” and are willing to meet advisers in the formal settings such as their offices but also in informal settings like coffee shops and library, “a public environment is more relaxed.”

One student participant hopes to meet with an adviser “significantly more often earlier in my college career than later. So, a couple of times my freshman year, especially when time for signing up for classes and getting schedules and such…” Others expect there will be group meetings, less advising in the one on one setting: “It’s probably a group…”; “it’s like totally going to be impersonal. Um, just the amount of students an adviser sees…” One student reports: “I don’t expect to have a one on one meeting with my adviser unless there is a problem with finance or classes.” There is an understanding that there will be limits on the advisers’ time, but the hope is that the adviser “shouldn’t put you off just because, you know, they only had 30 minutes to, um, give you…”

The range of understanding about how students understand the advising meeting matches the range of examples of advising meetings. Different models espouse many different meeting settings, numbers, and structures. Indeed, some offer group advising and some are strictly one on one.
Students also offer a range of understanding for what they are supposed to be addressing with their advisers. The majority of students understand that coursework will be addressed, and as I reported earlier, many of these students expect that the adviser will keep them on the correct path toward graduation. But there are also many who are planning on taking questions to their adviser about extracurricular information such as:

- “I want to be able to be on the swim team,”
- “do I get with a tutor?”
- “extra things I can do other than sitting in my room…”

Students want the freedom to be able to pick their coursework and their time schedule.

- “I expect them to treat me like a university student… I’ll be living off campus, I don’t want times all over the place…” and
- “I want to be able to take marching band” and
- “… there are a lot of things I would like to take classes about but they probably won’t help me graduate…”

One student reports, “I want to be able to say here’s my problem, can we fix this?”

Most report they understand they will hold responsibility in the advising process, but this responsibility lies in requesting help where needed,

- “what needs to be taken care of, what options are mine?”
- “I would tell them what I’m looking for…”
- “If I had problems with like my schedule or anything that they could be there to help me if I get confused…”

Content.
Ideally, students understand how the process works before they embark on their first year. As the previous information indicates, this understanding of what goes on in an advising meeting and the responsibilities that the students and advisers have is not always as clear as hoped. The disconnect that students may experience can have an adverse affect on not only their retention but also their learning and development.

**Effect on expectations.**

Clearly the understanding that a student holds about the advising process will affect the expectations that he has for both the process itself and the outcomes of the process. Those students who have had less than close relationships with their high school counselors expect less of a personal relationship and interaction with a college adviser than students who report a close interpersonal relationship. Students’ speculation about college advising, regardless of past experiences, evokes the mental image of the harried adviser, with a few minutes to talk to the student and tell them what they should take. This is not the expectation of a lot of the students, but there is recognition that they will most likely not have the same type of relationship with their college adviser as they did with their high school counselor because of the time available to them.

The students report expecting a one-on-one meeting with their adviser at least once a semester. One student, however, does not expect to meet personally with her adviser unless there is a problem. This student’s understanding of the advising process is influenced by her boyfriend’s interaction with his adviser-rare, completely virtual, and impersonal. Parental, familial and friend influences on understanding are many and deep-rooted. Though they may not be accurate for the setting at hand, students bring these influences on their understanding
unconsciously. These need to be addressed before students come to campus by providing
students with the university’s expectations. The next research question addressed through
the student perspective is their understanding of their learning style and developmental level.

**How does students’ understanding their own developmental level and learning styles
affect expectations?**

It is notable but not surprising that students reported far different levels of
understanding about their own learning and beliefs about knowledge formation and judgment
of quality. I do not suspect that this is solely because of a different level of development or
understanding, but a difference in the ability to communicate about this type of thing. Those
students who were enrolling in majors that reflected the more human side of science were far
more articulate and thoughtful about their answers that addressed these questions. Whereas
those students who were enrolling in the hard sciences seemed to understand the questions,
they had a more difficult time verbalizing or expanding upon how they learned and judged
the veracity of information. One student particularly spoke fairly passionately about his
career goal but then collapsed into one-sentence answers about this topic. I outline the
learning styles and knowledge categories in this section. Additionally, the demonstration of
understanding about other developmental aspects emerged from the data and this is included
at the end of this section.

**Learning.**

Of all of the questions, though and regardless of discipline, it was easiest for students
to tell me how they learned best. How I learned best emerged as the supporting theme in the
learning category.
Most students report their learning preferences as visual or auditory. “Um, so I guess audio and visual.” Clearly they are familiar with this information and able to recognize what works best for them in a learning setting.

- “Lecturing and application, but I am very good at learning any way…even hands-on as well…”
- “it’s sort of a combination of audio and visual”.

While one student does not express that she is a visual learner, she mentions,

- “I do a lot of note taking in different colors… and it helps me picture it when I take the test…”
- and another tells me “…if I draw a diagram, I can locate the pieces…”
- or “I prefer the hands-on rather than reading it out of books.”

Many students report that learning and knowledge are “…based on one experience or another…” and “knowledge is formed through your experiences…”

There are a couple of obvious discipline differences in the learning preference arena. Students who are in the hard sciences, while they report being visual or auditory, also report that they enjoy labs and are skilled at the “hands-on” part of learning too “instead of reading a book, you’ve got to get out there and do it…” While the others identify different strategies of learning like,

- “…learning from people…”
- “there is just something about, like, crafting a well worded paper or answer… speaking you can hear inflection…”
- “…language is very important…”
- “I have to read stuff… I don’t remember anything I hear. At all…”
Knowledge.

In judging the veracity of information, these students come up with a variety of answers. This indicates a range of understanding; some students paused and looked unsure before trying to respond. Answers illustrate developmental levels mostly ranging in the dualistic and beginning levels (Perry, 1970), recognizing right and wrong answers. No student identified that there was the possibility that there is more than one answer that can be correct and true.

Students responded to the question about how they judge or verify the quality of answers in the following ways.

- “if they’re a teacher, they must know what they’re talking about”
- “comparing it to any previous knowledge you might have and also comparing it with what you see visually…”
- “…If I watch someone do it even, this and this equals this. Ok, I believe you completely…”

Other students need to compare the information with what they already know to be true, comparing it to “…you know, any previous knowledge you might have…” The majority of students report that they compare the information and seek veracity from others by asking friends, family members and other research:

- “…internet. You know, it’s 2009…”
- “…talk to my parents… talk to some of the people I know around me and come up with an informed opinion.”
- And trusted sources are “…parents and friends…”

Of interest, while I was educated about the extent of “Google, you know I would probably go look at it…” one student mentioned that, “…if it’s WIKI, it’s wrong…” Some
students judge the veracity of information through its completeness: “If I have written down or said everything that came to mind…” while others also use the visual method of verification: “…if it’s all put together professionally, odds are it has professional information inside of it…”

**Other developmental insights.**

The students interviewed hope to gain independence through college, “I see college as a … time for independence and kind of figuring out who I am…” and “…I hope it will make me a more independent person…” Learning how to live on their own is a large concern, “growing up, getting out of the house, getting on my own…” “my mom and I have always been really close…I know I am going to have to kind of let her go…” and hope that it will “…transition me into adulthood maybe…”

One student recognizes that she wants to become “…a more rounded person, well-rounded person…who can communicate with like other people and understand where they are coming from.” One student mentions the need to deal with “…all the wonderful peer pressures…” and “trying to decide what I want to do…” in terms of socially and extracurricularly. One particularly introspective student hopes that the college experience will “make me more stable…and become more chilled…” Finally, the other end of the spectrum—where the expectations appear quite minimal—is offered, “College is just something you’ve got to do.”

**Effect on expectations.**

Students’ ranges of developmental level and learning affect their expectations of the advising process as much as it affects every other expectation that they hold. Students have a
range of understanding about how they learn and seem to grasp the importance of the type of class and taking the necessary steps to accommodate how they learn best. Recognizing that they need to take notes during an advising meeting, keep handouts from a class and that they perform best with hands on activities will help in great strides to properly advise them into successful matriculation. Dualistic students may not participate as eagerly in the advising process, but each of these students appears to have the assertiveness to communicate desires and hopes for the advising process. The following figure illustrates the categories and themes that the advisers’ data produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Learn &amp; Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Relationship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influences on Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>Knowledge about</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Roles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding of the process</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Role</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Devel. vs prescriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser Role</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Adviser Categories and Themes by Question

**What do advisers expect from the advising process?**

This next section of the chapter focuses on what the Advisers’ perspectives are about the research questions. I will present the adviser information in the same way I did the student information, by question, with categories as headings and themes supporting the categorical assignment. Interestingly, there are similarities in the expectations of advisers and of students.

Some of the advisers had experiences with advising that may have an influence on how they want to be as an academic adviser, and by the same token some of these same
experiences influenced what they do not want. Two major thematic categories emerged from the adviser perspective on expectations: personal relationships and roles. The following are descriptions of these two categories, illustrated through the themes and supported by quotes from the advisers who participated.

**Personal Relationship.**

It is safe to say that advisers are generally in their positions because they want to help students. They do not make a fortune doing what they do and, in some cases, encounter frustration and difficulty with policies and procedures when advocating for students. Their jobs are grounded in “…wishing to be helpful…” and fostering student success.

Undoubtedly support is one of the key aspects that advisers identify in the relationship that they want to foster with the students with whom they work. It is not only important to be “…friendly and supportive…” but “…to make students feel like I remember them….” Advisers also mention the importance of a student feeling understood and cared about, “…they understand that I am listening and I understand what they are going through…” because they “…see students come in who are extremely stressed and it’s taken a lot for them to come in…” Also of interest is the trust and honesty in an advising relationship, without this, the feeling of support is minimized: “building trust is most important…” and “…trying to set up honesty in the relationship or else she won’t believe what I am saying…” Overall, the consensus is that they “…want to let the students know that we are here for them… we want you to be helped but when you need it…”

Within the notion of support there is a devoted interest for “…meeting the student where they are…” when taking a “…holistic view with the whole student…” approach to
advising, as some of the advisers do, it is important to “…take them for [who] they are and what they, where they are at…” This means getting to know them a bit and what they are bringing to the advising meeting. That is:

- “…asking them probing questions to figure out…is there some history that is going on there?”
- “I try to talk about um, I ask them first how their plan is going…”
- “…What’s really going on as far as the academics or whatever it is…” and finally,
- “you tell me where you would like to maybe talk about the reality of the situation…”

It is imperative for this holistic approach to “have reasonable expectations of the student…” They may have baggage, issues, whatever…” and all of those things affect life, college and therefore, advising.

Finally, they exhibit an interest in making sure that the student feels respected. Just as students mentioned respecting the advisers was important, the advisers want the students to know that they are

- “…trying to know this person in front of me and what’s important to them…” and
- “…I am respectful in knowing that different people come to things in different times…”
- Students need to know “… that I am listening and I understand what they’re going through…”

A feeling of support does not occur unless there is an honest and trusting relationship established. These advisers want the student to know that they have his best interest in mind. They are going to try to understand what is going on in his life and meet him where he is.
The end goal is to eventually match the student up with what he or she needs academically and give the best information they have.

**Roles.**

**Student role.**
Advisers expect that students will bring something to the advising process. There are varying levels of expectation depending on the adviser. Students may be required to bring plans for their schedule:

- “…I’d like for them to have at least made an attempt to plan their work…”
- “…I want them to come with, with a plan of course…”

for their educational aspirations or career; they may be expected to be able to articulate their interests, and definitely advisers expect students to bring questions about things that confuse them, about things that they hold concerns over, and about things which they feel they need to know.

These expectations point to the fact that the advisers who participated expect the student to be engaged and to be an active participant in their advising process. Those expectations that the adviser holds for the student can also illustrate the amount of time and availability that the adviser has for the student, “It puts more of the advising burden on the students, you know?” and one adviser reports saying to a student, “Look, prepare beforehand…”

To facilitate being able to support the student, the adviser expects honest and open communication with and from the student: “…is there anything affecting your ability to succeed? You know, affecting your learning ability?” It is important for the adviser to know
“what do you want to do? What’s important to you?” and “…it’s, you know, really helping them figure out what is best for them…”

**Adviser role.**

As was mentioned earlier, the advisers who participated intend to guide the student and help them achieve their personal and academically driven goals. Advisers mention that it is their responsibility to understand the student and be part of establishing a trusting and honest relationship through with the student can gain information that will lead to her attaining her goals. Educational goals cannot be attained if there is discontent: “if the student is not doing well um, emotionally or personally, I think that can greatly affect your academics… If they are not happy here, they are not going to succeed…”

One adviser expressed concern that students hold preconceived notions when they come to an advising meeting that need battled before the business of advising can really begin: “…try to recognize what students might be thinking when they’re coming in… and put myself in their shoes…” Part of the adviser role is to understand what the student has in his history that may affect his actions: “most important thing I can do is listen to what they are saying and ask them questions…” and another states, “…talking to a person that’s there, I mean…get a complete picture of the person. Because everybody’s different…” Additionally, it is important for the adviser to prepare and know who the student is before she enters: “…I just try to refresh my memory about the student and what their story is…”

Those participating express the desire to present appropriate options that match the students interests and goals so the student knows what else is out there: “…your degree
brings you to the table…your experiences are the things that build your resume up…” Others mention:

- “If I have suggestions…then I can give that to them…”
- “…whether it be a course that they are thinking about or … a coop experience or internship…”
- “…sometimes they want to declare a concentration or a minor…”

One also addresses the importance of using the options for preparation, “…what do you need to do now so that you can get there?” It is also important to “…help them find a way to balance it all together…” so that the extracurricular activities enhance the students’ educational and career goals.

The biggest priority for advisers is to have accurate and timely information for the students. “…I think having the answers is what’s important then…” If the trusted adviser gives incorrect information, whether knowingly or not, the basis for trust is nullified. The depth of feeling about correct information and guidance is best summed up by the quote: “it all ties back to the paranoia of making sure everything counts…” in the students’ degrees. “…I’m very flattered by what they think I know…” The advisers participating in this study all take very seriously their role in the students’ educational experience and put forth a strong effort to serve the students’ interests fully.

**How does advisers’ understanding of the process affect their expectations?**

This section of the chapter addresses the information I received from the advisers about their understanding of the academic advising process. Two major categories of information emerged from analysis: Influences on their understanding, and the actual
description of the advising process and tasks involved with the process. In other words, why they feel the way they do about advising and what they feel advising is.

**Influences on understanding.**

The theme that seems to most affect the advisers’ understanding of the advising process is their previous experiences. Those experiences that they had with an adviser or advisers when they were undergraduates in college are the most prominent. However, there are experiences that they also share from graduate programs and even some from professional experience.

Advisers identify a range of activity with their undergraduate advisers. Their previous experiences definitely seem to have an effect on their current advising practices and expectations. Quotes span from:

- “I don’t have a specific memory of meeting with an adviser.”
- “…I don’t remember anything… I barely remember being advised…”
- “I didn’t have such a great adviser…I think my roommate advised me…”
- “…first semester, there was someone there to kind of guide the advising and registration process. Then after that, it was a faculty member and so all of that kind of guidance was gone…”

to:

- “…a lot of group…we probably had two on one meetings…”
- “smaller groups, but were given a faculty adviser… I don’t remember actually seeing him…”
- One adviser participant expressed she was fully prepared without advising, “I went in with my four year plan my freshman year…my adviser just chuckled…”
Once they did meet with advisers, there was a different range of experiences of how the interactions went.

- “I really didn’t know what academic advising was as an undergraduate student. I was just getting my [pin]…”
- One reports as far as general education requirements, “…my adviser didn’t really know anything about that… It was incumbent upon me to know what I needed… My advising meetings were more about, you know, career kinds of things…”
- Another describes her undergraduate advisers as “…pretty much I was looking for…big picture stuff… Just kind of double check my back…”

There were good experiences reported:

- “He introduced me to a summer experience… pushed me in that direction… so he definitely gave me some valuable experience.”
- “he seemed to remember everything. Things that he should have forgotten that I said to him, you know, career goals, you know when I was in freshmen level classes…”
- “…but you could definitely tell that he cared…”
- “…friendly and supportive…I always felt he was there for me as much as I needed or wanted him to be…”
- “…He helped…”
- “We did develop a relationship in that he was very interested in who I was as a person, how I was developing…”
- “…he was so encouraging and helpful…”

There are also reports of less than desirable experiences:

- “…found out that I had taken a class twice and didn’t have to…”
- “I didn’t really think I needed an adviser…it was just something I had to do…”
- “…I had one dangling class to take… and so I did not graduate…”
- One adviser reported that she, “was not comfortable coming here at all…” when she spoke of her interaction with the adviser.
It is apparent that many of the advisers have been influenced by their previous advising experiences. Some use what their former advisers taught them by example and others know what to avoid as a result of their interactions.

**Understanding of the process.**

The adviser participants explain two different aspects of the academic advising process in their interviews. First is the piece of meetings and the procedural side of the advising process. The second is the aspect of content of those meetings and the interaction that occurs during the meetings.

**Meetings.**

The participants described three different types of meetings to me. Each has different time constraints, expectations of the student and requirements for the adviser. The three are: registration advising-academic warning, and interest in major or informational meetings.

Students can schedule a meeting or, many times, walk in and ask advisers questions. These types of meeting are considered interest in major or “…informational advising meetings…” meetings. These meetings consist of the adviser answering questions like, “how do I do this, what can I do with this course,” or if the student has “…advising questions to clarify…” They generally take a few minutes but usually last “…around 15 minutes…” Advisers many times do not have preparation for these meeting, as they can be unscheduled. These are the meetings in which it is important that the adviser be aware of campus options. If he or she does not know the answer, one adviser identifies that she refers students to other resources often, “…Here are some of the places you can go to get more answers if you need to…”
Registration advising appointments are required by University policy and run the gamut in length from 15 or 20 minutes to an hour:

- “I have to keep it to 15 minutes or I’ll never to take that 2 minute break to run to the restroom…”
- “Um, generally it’s 20 minutes but you book in 25 minute intervals and sometimes it runs over…”
- “We’re supposed to keep it to 45 minutes, but I usually take an hour…”

These are the meetings in which students go over their schedules and plans for the upcoming semester. Many advisers mentioned that there are forms and plans that students have to prepare for the meeting. Advisers also prepare ahead when at all possible, “…I try to have myself prepared with the student’s degree audit, previously reviewed…” Additionally, one adviser mentions that her department, “…send [s] out the information…” to the student, “…ahead of time…”

Academic warning meetings are required by University policy and run from 30 to 45 minutes. Because these are a requirement of the university, there is a form that must be signed by the adviser to prove that the meeting took place. Otherwise, the student would have a hold placed on her registration. These meetings are meant to ensure that the student is not performing poorly because of lack of guidance. They are an attempt to salvage the students’ academic career. Advisers, when possible, report preparing for these meetings by reviewing student records and reviewing policies that may help the student’s standing.

**Content.**

The content of the meetings outlined earlier is guided by one overarching principle and practice: establishing a connection, rapport, or an environment in which the student is
willing to open up and talk freely. Regardless of meeting type or intent, adviser participants, across the board mention starting with and icebreaker type interaction, in which the end result is meant to be an inviting, comfortable and put the student at ease,

- “I’ll sit down and, you know ask them how their term is going and how are their courses going?”
- “I know who you are and greet you by name… how are things going? What’s exciting happening this semester?”
- “we have the small talk…make some connection, something to draw them out. We talk about interests and connect on that level…”

Once the rapport is established, the advisers generally report that they clarify the purpose of the meeting,

- “I want clarification… want to make sure I understand…”
- “um, questions, what are we talking about today, what are your objectives for this meeting?”
- “What do you hope to get out of our discussion?”

This is to ensure that the questions the student has, and may not have thought of yet, are going to be addressed. Then, the business of advising begins: “I ask them first how their plan is going…”

Many advisers assert that they have a checklist of sorts, to remind them all of the things that need addressed, particularly in registration advising meetings.

- “I have a little quickie note with a checklist of reminders”
- “I have a mental list in my mind of everything that I need to discuss.”

Others want to make sure that the students are best prepared for registration and provide checklists for that purpose.
• “I try to give them a list of structure as to how the session is going to go.”
• “I run through the checklist first just to make sure that they haven’t forgotten anything…”

Most of the adviser participants equate the advising process with a teaching process. Conditions are great when “…You are teaching somebody how to navigate the educational process and how to kind of synthesize the academic realm with the person they are becoming…” One adviser identifies that, “I would rather teach them how to push than give them a push…” And in recognizing that it is slightly different, one adviser says, “So I am not teaching a course, but I am looking at a particular question that someone brings to me…” Advising is teaching because “…it’s a real educational process. I mean they are, they are learning in large part…” and advisers are actually, amongst other things, “…trying to teach skills…”

Effects on expectations.

By far, the majority of the advisers interviewed attest that the experiences they had with advising affect their expectations for their own advising process. While most of the advisers report a good relationship with their own advisers as was reported earlier, some definitely learned what not to do and make every attempt not to reproduce the same situations. Particularly one adviser mentioned the need to set “…Boundaries, don’t push. Relate to students as people.” The good relationships that the advisers report gave a good advising foundation on which the advisers can build. One adviser states, “…he gave me the space I needed and wanted but he was there for me as much as I um, wanted him to be... I think I try to mirror that.” Interest in the student as person and meeting them “where they
are” was another expectation that advisers espoused, which echoes the statement, “We did develop a relationship in that he was very interested in who I was as a person, how I was developing”.

Awareness of options and helping students set goals have been mentioned as tenets that participants want to support,

- “…I did expect him to make sure that I knew what was going on around the campus and community…”

- “He introduced me to a summer experience… pushed me in that direction… so he definitely gave me some valuable experience.”

- “…he was after us to make goals for ourselves.”

Advisers believe that availability and welcoming environments, and appropriate use of time are important,

- “we do try to make ourselves as available to students as they need us to be…we try to let students know we are here for them…”

- “I would always go and find the information on my own… I would take the advising appointments to take time to talk about career goals and getting to know each other.”

Experiences and understanding of the process have a notable effect on expectations of the advisers who participate. University policy and procedures also exhibit an effect, making certain types of meetings mandatory and guiding the content of some types of meetings. Evidence indicates that the past experiences with advising take on an enhanced meaning when the adviser applies them to his or her advising practice. The next section addresses the third question about developmental and learning styles theories.
How does advisers’ understanding of developmental and learning styles theories affect expectations?

Learning.

Advisers exhibit a range of understanding of learning styles theories. This is notable as most of the advisers who were interviewed hold degrees in Higher Education or College Student personnel. Those who hold disciplinary degrees mention their attendance at University wide training sessions that address development and learning styles but they appear unable to articulate particulars about these theories.

Knowledge about learning is the supporting theme for this category. Knowledge about learning styles appears to be limited to mostly audio and visual style recognition. There are learning styles inventories that focus on processing styles available to the students that are free. Indeed, some advisers mention the “Gregoric” and “Kolb” but without articulating the styles they indicate or measure. That being said, there was better recognition of some learning styles types than there was in general of cognitive development theory.

Examples of definitions given include:

- “...People have a preferred way of receiving information that helps them facilitate their learning best.”
- “...you know the way that maybe I learn. Whether it’s giving me it all step by step or visual learner or video hands-on…”
- “How they are going to process the information”
- “what kind of information works with their brain and how they see the world…”
- “different people learn different ways.”
Additionally, there were even some advisers who could report understanding of specific theories such as:

- “active learning, reflective learning, global…”
- “Auditory learning where when they hear stuff, they get it… Visual learner so when they see stuff that helps them understand…”
- “um, like visual and [auditory]?…I am drawing a blank on the other types, I guess…”

Finally, the understanding that learning styles theories do not completely dictate the way students learn

- “…everyone has a preference but that doesn’t mean that’s the only way you learn.”
- “…Everyone will use different areas at some point in time and can adapt to those areas…”

It seems reasonable to expect that since advisers have some knowledge about learning styles, this knowledge would affect communication with students about course choice. The learning style recognition, how it affects adviser interaction, suggestions, and other advice they give to the students, is represented well in these quotes:

- “you should present it a different way because you are going to have more people… You can recognize what your preference is…”
- “there are always going to be classes certainly where things are not presented in maybe your preferred way.”
- “…Everyone has strengths…”
- and one has to “…get a balance between those…”
Development.

Developmental vs. Prescriptive.

Many advisers maintain in the earlier sections of this chapter that they espouse a holistic view of the student and hold interest in “…meeting the student where they are…” This brings to mind the notion of developmental advising versus prescriptive advising. Participating advisers were asked to describe their knowledge about cognitive development theory. As well, they were asked to discuss their personal philosophy of advising as it pertains to developmental tenets or prescriptive beliefs. By far, the advisers report aspiring to a developmental tenet, when time allows. Most know the difference between the two and can articulate that developmental “… is very much looking at where the person is in the process…” and prescriptive is “…I am just telling you what I think and telling I think you should do, um, telling you what I know…” The theme awareness illustrates the participants’ answers about cognitive development theory.

Awareness.

The majority of advisers’ answers illustrated that they are not as aware about developmental theory as was expected. Answers range from those showing some understanding of developmental theory such as:

- “A student may come in and have a full black and white view of things and as they grow, um, as a person, they are going to um, realize some of the complexities…”
- “you can’t judge them for doing it, at the same time personally… they are not there yet as far as seeing things on the grander scheme…”
- “…more independent they come to hopefully moving to intradependent. They behave differently or come in with a different expectation of the advising meeting…”
“I think initially they need a lot of guidance and come to you with a lot of questions…focused on specific tasks or policies…but then they start exploring the different facets of these areas and coming up with more fruitful questions…”

to those who clearly do not know how to answer:

- “…I would say, um, how to make a decision…that’s what it’s really about…”
- “Umm. I’m thinking Chickering baseline and then they build on those skills. That’s about the extent on that one…”
- “…in some areas I am sure… you know… levels and stuff…”
- “…I am really having a brain fart. I apologize.”

Of considerable note is that the advisers who cannot discuss developmental theory claim to espouse meeting a student where they are developmentally and practicing holistic advising. Unfortunately there does not appear to be a good understanding of the theories that guide the developmental aspect of advising. More disturbing is the fact that they are unable to apply or recall situations where student’s developmental stages affect their advice and/or lead to remarks or course selection for students. The participating advisers’ answers exhibit somewhat better knowledge about learning styles theory than about developmental theories. I will now discuss the effects of this knowledge, or lack of knowledge on their expectations.

**Effect on expectations.**

Though limited formal knowledge of cognitive development and limited knowledge of learning styles is evident, there is considerable information about how what knowledge these advisers do have affects their expectations of the advising process. They do intend to make allowances for development, as these statements indicate:
“…think about the level they show you they are functioning at and their knowledge. Kind of connecting at some level thinking that’s going to mean something to them…”

“…hold their hands for a little while and then I try to get them to be a little more independent…”

“…expect responsibility…”

“…I expect my sophomore students to not ask me questions that a freshman would ask me…”

“I’ll try to identify how does the student seem to be approaching this issue and how can I better connect with them?”

“trying to help them quickly become independent because they aren’t going to be able to be where they need to be….”

Learning styles also affect advising expectations. One adviser reports that

“…try to provide them with either a worksheet where they can write it out themselves and they can see the whole year at one time.”

“…try to show you where to look up the information, um, and let’s draw it out…”

Another says she addresses learning styles specifically:

“I’m going through, I’m highlighting, I’m making notes, I’m calculating numbers…”

“… I try to go over everything so I’m reinforcing…”

One more adviser uses technology to help address learning styles, “I think that as you are advising, learning styles, that’s where the computer will help them with auditory, verbal and um, visual…”

The identification of learning style is reached through different means, as advisers note:

“Sometimes we just talk about it directly…”

“…when I am aware of those learning styles, I try to be sensitive to them.”

“…The potential for richer discussions if they are, when the adviser is aware of the um styles.”
Advisers have a sense of their own learning and how that may affect the process, “I do try to look at the perspective that everyone’s different…and what works best for me may not work best for another student…” The sense that I get from the adviser information is that advisers want to help the students—regardless of how, “…My goal is that when they leave, no matter how I have delivered that information, they understand it…”

Administrators are the final group of participants in this study. Their perspectives are captured and illustrated in the figure and text that follows.

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Figure 4: Administrator Categories and Themes by Question

**What are administrators’ expectations for advising process?**

The themes that emerge from the data for this question can be organized into two categories: Relationships and Information. The relationship category stems from the intentional positioning of advisers to have a rapport with the student and to be someone on whom they can rely. Information addresses the content of their interactions and what the administrators hope that the advisees gain from interacting with advisers.

**Relationship.**

Much the same as students desire a relationship with advisers; advisers desire to promote a relationship with students, administrators desire for the students to have
relationships with advisers within their departments. In many of the cases, the administrators who participated both administered advising programs and also interacted with students in an advisory capacity.

Connection is the supporting theme in the relationship category. One administrator reports, “…they have to have a connection…” It is clearly understood that it helps students to succeed when they have a personal connection on campus. This priority is not unique; other administrators concur:

- “we hope that students develop relationships with advisers …”
- some even go as far as to state, “I get to know my students intimately.”
- And they “…let them know I am interested in them as more than just a student…”

An open atmosphere where students can drop by is an expectation that one administrator advocates, “…Occasionally someone will just stop by…” Furthermore, students have to be aware of the role and responsibilities of the adviser. As another administrator mentions, “The adviser needs to be the person at the gate that says, you know, here’s how we’ll help you through the maze…”

The assurance that the connection provides for the student is a main concern for many of the administrators. In addition to having a personal connection, one administrator explains, “I want students to know they have an advocate, there is reassurance in knowing I have a one stop shop.” One administrator goes further than desiring advocacy, in this case, there is an expectation for the adviser to:
• “…find out where that student is…in terms of their academics and what I call the progress toward degree… It may be social, emotional, medical, psychological…”

• and to be aware that “…There has to be a little bit of triage every time students and advisers meet…”

This connection with an adviser does not exclude the student from responsibility, but part of the connection is to let them know what is expected:

• “we try to set our expectations…This is what advising is. This is how I expect you to approach this relationship. This is how I can help you…”

• “…we want to see them in person.”

Finally, as one administrator notes, “…it’s important to have that relationship but it is important that you have good information…” Information is a category that emerged from the interviews with administrators. This is illustrated in the next section, with its supporting theme, Adviser responsibilities.

**Information.**

In addition to a relationship with students, the administrators want the advisers to be able to help students by providing information that is pertinent to the student’s situation. Moreover, they expect advisers to be approachable and available for the student.

The supporting theme that emerged from the data is the adviser responsibility. A key role of the adviser, according to administrators is to disseminate accurate and timely information. One administrator explains, “…Everything is a big question initially. Who do you go to to get problems solved?” The hope is that the adviser is the person the student will go to and, “…that they are given accurate information and they can trust their adviser to
provide the guidance…” Administrators want advisers to give information on policies and procedure and how to go about doing things on campus:

- “we expect advisers… to be that communicator to students. Those policy and any changes like that…”
- “…A person who is going to really seek to given the accurate information…to help them problem solve. Find solutions…”

More than just proprietors of information, administrators want the advisers to be

- “…an explainer of options, encouragers, as a resource of students more than anything…”
- “…a support layer for what classes do you take and when, how are you doing and just checking in with them…”
- for students to “…see us as a resource.”

The administrators express that they want advisers to:

- “… [equip] them to make a good decision, become good consumers of their experience…”
- “I’m hoping they’re taking away some reflective skills from their advising sessions as well…”

Finally, the importance of the student understanding the process is observed, “…we talk about what advising is and how it is valuable to you…”

Administrators recognize the importance of communication with advisers, noting that administration has to “…help advisers prepare…we have ah, a meeting with them to start orientation…” Assessment of the interaction is also mentioned by one administrator, “…We look to see is that student are saying my adviser is helpful to me…my adviser provided information that I could use…they, you know, assisted me with course decision…”
Does the administrators’ understanding of the process appear to affect expectations?

This section of the chapter addresses the information I received from the administrators about how they understand the academic advising process. Two major categories of information emerged from analysis: Influences on their understanding, and the actual description of the advising process and administrative information encompassing the process, such as the assessment of advising and advising loads.

Influences on understanding.

Much the same as with the students and advisers, administrators bring their past advising experiences to the table when expressing expectations. These personal experiences with undergraduate advising are outlined in this section.

Personal experiences appear to have a profound effect on the understanding that administrators hold. In the four administrators, there is an array of experience. One administrator attended a large state university a lot like where she works, whereas the others attended smaller colleges and universities. Most report experiences that are positive when relating information about advising, but there are concerns that can be noted here.

One administrator mentions,

- “I don’t recall an adviser until I was actually in my major…”
- “…it seems to me it was mainly hit or miss, other students kind of helping others out…”

After semesters of general education, this administrator found her major and developed an extensive personal relationship with her adviser and the departmental faculty.

- “…Once I decided that was my intended major, my adviser and mentors were really great in helping me and directing me…”
• however, “They weren’t as knowledgeable in terms of policies and requirements as they should have been…”

As she approached graduation she learned that she did not have all of the requirements. It is notable that she mentions that the “…students were as helpful as anyone…”

Another administrator attended a smaller university and was given a general adviser with no real continuity in advising,

• “…each semester you would see a different person or graduate student…”

• she states that she doesn’t “remember that anyone really stood out for [me] as particularly providing excellent guidance…”

• but acknowledges that somehow, “That might have been [my] fault…”

• She counted on the advisers she interacted with to be “…people who planned out my schedule and everything was okay and I was on the right track…”

• Given her experiences with advising, she mentions that she, “…just figured things out all on [my] own…”

Administrator 2 was able to utilize the services of other campus resources such as the “career center.” And she also expresses that she:

• “…got a lot of advice actually from, you know…I went to my scholar adviser…”

• The scholar department “…knew me better. They had more interaction with me…and would have more time for me…”

She does not report any problems with the information she received from anyone nor was there any mention of difficulty with requirements.

Administrator 3 reports that at the large state university she attended:

• “…the freshman class was probably 10,000 students…”

• there was a “…kind of general college approach. There was a random adviser chosen…”
• The adviser you were assigned “…had some experience in your area…”

• She reports that she “didn’t really have any expectations. And I don’t think I appreciated it…”

• “I guess I got to go talk to that person about some classes I need…”

As she changed advisers semesterly, the relationships she reports were “…stronger along the way…”. She notes she missed the importance of advising because there was no real definition of adviser, “nowhere in orientation do I ever remember anybody saying, now this person is really important to you…”

Her experience with her last adviser solidified her major choice and helped with her progression as a student:

• “…turned my experience around…”

• “…got me involved…”

• “…hadn’t it been for those people…I probably would have gotten out…”

Administrator 4 went to a small college and had an adviser who offered encouragement, motivation and had a real influence both personally and academically:

• “had a real impact and really, I think, turned me on even at a younger age to the value of advising…”

• “…step outside my comfort zone…”

• “…valued … advising time with her students…”

• “she had that great impact on me… I’ve thought about her a lot of times…She’s the person that got me thinking, planted that seed and wow, that’s pretty cool.”

• “…a leader as an undergrad…”

• “keeping my gpa up…”
Understanding of the process.

The process of advising is undertaken differently within each of the cases. The understanding of the advising process is illustrated through two different themes: Roles in the process and the administrative issues or administration of the process.

Roles.

One administrator states the understanding that, “The process is just that mutual agreement that we are going to work together and you have certain responsibilities to come prepared.” While advisers are certainly expected to take on the lion’s share of responsibility within the process, it should be noted that administrators also expect students to play a role:

- “…this is how I expect you to approach this relationship…”
- “I see advising as interactive and everybody’s bringing something to the table…”
- “It really is an exchange…”

Additionally, it is noted that advisers should “…help them out and help them, ah, problem solve…Not necessarily provide the solution but help them find solutions…”

Administration.

As was mentioned in the case profiles earlier in the chapter, many different models of advising are represented within each case. In some, there are first year courses that supplement the advising process; in others there are professional advisers and graduate students. Each case has its own way of handling the advising process. Advising loads range from “10, ah, all the way up to 300…” and “…75-100 students per adviser…” One
administrator recognizes the importance of availability and states, “the queue can’t be so long that the student doesn’t ever seek advice or can’t give advice…”

Assessment of advising is equally individualized within the cases: “…it really varies from department to department…” One case is making assessment a priority through college administrative channels, “…teaching and advising effectiveness committee… that’s going to look at the advising assessment. It’s a formative process…” Other administrators mention that there are strides being made toward proper assessment, before this administrator came, “there was no standard… there was no advising related to student satisfaction, related to learning…” and online assessment, used to be “a paper scantron… we put the form online and I would e-mail it out to students…” Questions still appear to revolve around satisfaction as one administrator says the case employs questions like

- “do you feel that your adviser is knowledgeable about campus resources…”
- “…Likert type scale with an open ended… you know, comments…”

The understanding of the process that administrators hold as well as the experiences they have lived appear to have an effect on their expectation of the advising process. These effects are outlined next.

**Effects of expectations.**

It is notable that administrators mention the emulation of how their undergraduate advisers undertook the process. This administrator took a direct quote from what his adviser told him and still uses it today with students as do other administrators,

- “…step outside my comfort zone… That’s the first thing I say with my students…”
“I do try to go a little bit further than my advisers went with me…”
“I can let them know about things that are of interest to them…”

Others mention mimicking their advisers in that they

“expand the role as an adviser to encompass more than just classes…”
“…I get to know my students intimately.”

Just as their advisers did.

Finally, one administrator notes, “I am proactive, I notified those who I thought were eligible for [an award]…” encouraging the students by making growth options available. On the other hand, one administrator recognizes the difference that technology has made in the process of advising communication, “…e-mail me and the response is instantaneous… I respond much quicker to the students…”

Many times hands are tied due to budgetary constraints so the effects this has on the expectations are noteworthy. Advising loads of up to 300 are difficult to maintain and have an effect on the expectation for personal relationships and meaningful connections, “…there’s no one to hook up with. There is no one to build a relationship with…” Regardless of budgetary constraints, one case still makes communication and training for accurate information dissemination important as:

“…things that we...have to clarify, you know, at the adviser’s meeting…”
“…it’s in the training…”
“I, um, also think it’s really important that we stay well informed about what’s happening…”

Finally, assessment of advising is being recognized as more important than it used to be. "It’s something we’re working on, quite honestly.” One adviser notes that the sense of
“consistency” is important and the maintenance of this sense, “…I think it’s in the evaluations…”

The final section of the chapter concludes with the report of how administrators understand developmental and learning theory and if their understanding of these theories appears to affect their expectations for the process.

**Does administrator’s understanding of developmental and learning theory appear to affect expectations?**

As with the student and adviser sections of this question, the administrators offer a range of responses about learning styles and developmental theories. These varying levels of ability to articulate knowledge about theories may be due to some administrators possessing a more intensive advising history. Some administrators report, “I do have a Master’s in Higher Ed.” And almost all of the administrators were primarily advisers before administering their programs. Additionally, some advisers actually currently advise students more often than others.

**Learning.**

Administrators, much like the students and advisers, explain an array of understanding about learning styles theories. Many show a perfunctory understanding of some different types and there are a couple that mention specific learning styles inventories. This indicates a broader knowledge than is articulated.

Definitions are the supporting theme for the learning category. Administrators mostly express their understanding of learning styles theories as being:

- “These are the ways that people learn…”
• “different ways of knowing…”
• “…everybody can learn and to value all those learning [styles]…”

It appears that administrators offer responses that indicate deeper understanding and applicability of the learning styles theories. Administrators offered information like:

• “…students make comments to me about their class that they don’t get certain things…”
• “they seem to get more meaning or the seem to have a better connection when they are actually in there doing something... They are hands on or when they can reflect on a situation…”
• “They may go to that lecture for an hour and learn nothing from it. But if they can partner with [someone] …”
• “if they are, you know, really hand on type of person and they learn by getting in the trenches and getting into school and tutoring or working…”
• “[students]…who are going to need to see things laid out…”

These responses indicate that administrators are clearly aware of some learning styles theories and are able to connect these theories to actual student issues in an advising situation.

In addition to the demonstration of perfunctory awareness of learning styles theories, two administrators mentioned specific learning styles inventories that they believe are used and applied to the students in their cases: the “…Kiersey temperament sorter…” and “…Kolb’s learning styles…” were specifically mentioned. This illustrates more knowledge than the practicing advisers who participated in this study.

Development.

There appears to be more of a range of understanding within the cognitive developmental discussion. Fewer are able to name specific theories, though one
administrator specifically mentioned “…Maslow’s hierarchy…” The understanding about developmental theory articulated was outshined by the administrators’ abilities to talk about how they attempt to address developmental level with students.

Understanding is the supporting theme for the development category in this section. The administrators indicate an understanding of cognitive development, however, these answers about cognitive development are more vague than those addressing learning styles. Answers received were those such as:

- “…what is their thinking process and what is the maturation process and how are they dealing with their experiences and how have they been guided in the past?”
- “…cognitive development is like the social side, I would say…”
- “I remember different feelings… how you make decisions in various situations…”

There does appear to be an effort for application to students in certain circumstances. Administrators see the connection between confidence and decision making with cognitive development:

- “…some of them are confident to make decisions…”
- “I guess their cognitive abilities start to take over from their emotional investment, you can see it…”

Administrators mention the priority of the college to promote growth for students, “…grow intellectually… forcing growth is a big thing.”

Teaching and advising students takes the front seat when addressing issues that deal with cognitive development, giving students and understanding that

- “…your point of view is not the only point of view”
• “…you are going to see those who are very black and white… they are very concrete… They are going to say, you know, this is wrong…”

• “for every view there is everyone else brings something else to the table…”

Another administrator recognizes her own connection with students in certain developmental stages, “I tend to be very concrete.” Another administrator recognizes students in levels that want intense guidance, “I really need to know exactly what it is that I need to do…” then there are other students who represent a completely different level, “…I want to try all kinds of things…” and do not want intrusion from advisers or teachers.

Effects on expectations.

With what understanding administrators exhibit, they definitely express the effect that their understanding has on their expectations for the process. In their own practice, administrators mention the need for being guiding but allowing the student to make her own decisions, “I can give them an opinion but they really ultimately have to decide what it is they are going to have to do…”

By far the intention most often expressed by administrators is the promotion of developmental growth and support of the student.

• “…in terms of learning and problem solving…we have to help them use and develop that tool. Not just in research but if you even think about the advising process…”

• “connect them with most meaningful experience based on what they are bringing to the table.”

• “Hopefully they will develop more than one way of understanding in their learning.”

• “…expand their horizon…”

• “…deal with students where they are and we have to help them stretch…”
Another administrator mentions the university commitment to assisting the student with developmental progress, “…help them develop their ethically social thinking… I think that’s part of what our general education program is supposed to be doing…”

An administrator also stated that they hope the adviser is able to assist administration with the identification of students, “adviser is going to have to help us identify where they are.” The need to help students take the steps toward developmental growth is prominent for one administrator, stating the need to “…connect them with a better opportunity on campus that will allow them to reach their potential. There is a desire for the student to take information from the advising and college process, even if it is not something they need to use right away, “…some of these things you need to kind of park in the back of your head.” And “…the skills… The skills that we are hoping you leave this college with…” so that the process of advising and of college changes students for the better.

**Conclusion**

It is evident from these findings that understanding appears to affect expectations. While the expression of understanding for some of the developmental and learning theories was less prolific than what I expected, advisers and administrators both recognize the need for the advising process to address students’ needs, and their learning and development. That these professionals recognize this need is a step in the right direction for addressing the gaps between student and adviser and administrator expectations. The next chapter speaks to the strategies that I suggest for addressing these gaps, connects the findings to the literature, and suggests further study on advising process and expectations thereof.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings in relation to my research and to the literature presented in Chapter Two. The discussion will be guided by the research questions as headings with my observations supported by the findings and links to literature that apply appearing under those headings. The research questions that this study sought to answer were: What do students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process? How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations? And lastly, how do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of the expectations for the advising process? Finally, at the conclusion of the chapter, I will suggest additional studies to add to the knowledge base in this area as well as my recommendations that arise from the information that this study has found.

What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?

After completing the data collection and analysis, it appears that the three groups interviewed share many expectations for the advising process, regardless of discipline or college affiliation. Students, advisers, and administrators all share the expectation that a personal relationship is integral to the process of advising. However, there are differing levels of relationships, as well as responsibilities and roles within these relationships expected by the different participants.

Personal Relationships.

The expectation for personal relationships is one of the findings that exhibits across the board, with administrators, advisers, and students expecting relationships to form from
the process. The notion of relationships within the advising process is slightly different among the three groups; however, there are some themes that overlap. Support is expected by students and advisers both, with advisers intending to provide the support for the student. Advisers’ vision of support is influenced by their own educational and advising experiences. Many advisers report that they want to be able to provide the most up-to-date information in a setting that makes students feel able to communicate concerns and intentions. They want to “meet the students where they are” and “set up an honest relationship” or the student won’t believe the adviser’s advice. Advisers report wanting the student to know that they are listening and they understand what the student is going through.

Students want to feel heard and understood, while being “kept on track” and knowing they are “getting it done”. They also want to know that they are getting the correct information from a person who cares about their success. Support from this relationship is characterized by the concern that students have for someone to watch over their progress and well-being. Students want to be sure that they are understood and heard while being challenged and offered opportunities that will enhance their progress.

Students report the need for trust in their personal relationships with the advisers. They need to see the advisers as people who more than support their academics, but who they can count on to keep their best interest in mind. These students want to be able to count on advisers to “…direct [them] through everything…” to gain an understanding of who they are and to guide and support them through their trials and push them toward their goals.

For administrators, the extent of the relationship between an adviser and a student need not be as broad. They appear to be more interested in a connection for students, a
means to an end. Connection indicates a less personal relationship, but there are still expectations for a helping, supportive role for themselves as advisers.

Given the group of advisers and administrators who participated in this study, I believe that the literature they have reviewed about advising and advising process has influenced their thoughts on personal relationships within advising and expectations for the process. Students’ connection to campus professionals has been established as integral for retention purposes (Tinto, 1987) and supportive, personal relationships are integral to the developmental advising process (Crookston, 1972, 1994; O’Banion, 1994). This expectation for relationship to develop coincides with the premise that advisers in this study expect to perform developmental advising, as it is defined in the literature (Crookston, 1972, 1994; O’Banion, 1972). While administrators, I believe, hope for the developmental relationship, there is less of an emphasis placed on the personal bond than the need for a less expansive connection on campus between adviser and student. This may be influenced by the need for time resources that developmental advising requires (Dickson and Thayer, 1993 as cited in T. Grites, 2000, Frost, 2000; Tuttle, 2000), administrators may not be able to lighten the loads of advisers to give them adequate time to perform such developmental advising tasks. Thus a compromise may have to occur in the process. Advisers may have to amend the definition of their ideal advising session and develop a process that will incorporate their intentions within the timeframe they have with their advisees.

Information.

The next theme that is shared between the participants is information. Students’ and administrators’ interviews yield this theme, while it is inherently woven through most of
advisers’ other themes. Detailed information is one of the requirements that a student holds. Many of the students report that they need to know the things that they feel they do not know, the “tricks of the trade” and they trust the advisory relationship to provide this information. They feel as though they need to know “what [they] need to do” and the “technical nitty gritty”. Detailed information such as how long it takes to get from one class building to another is not something that students would inherently know. These students express a need for this kind of information, or to be forewarned when they should consider are unaware of something they need to know.

An additional need expressed by students under the category of information is the notion of maintaining progress toward their goals. A key goal often mentioned by students is the goal of graduating within a timely fashion. They want to be “kept on track for the entire time…” academically, and they place emphasis in the responsibility of the adviser. This quote and general idea reflect a student’s uncertainty of requirements and their perception of the abundance of regulations and policies of which they are not aware. Students report that they feel it is an adviser’s responsibility to “…make sure I graduate on time…” These students recognize that they will have a role in the maintenance of progress, but their vision of their role and their vision of the role of the adviser do not match the roles that advisers and administrators may hold. This can be typical of the traditional millennial student, as Howe and Strauss (2000) mention, these students have high expectations and are accustomed to being closely guided by authorities. This is an area where, though the theme is a shared theme, the extent and content of the information expectation is markedly incongruent amongst the participant groups. This indicates a need for further education of all parties
about the expectations that each hold for the process and how these differences should be addressed.

Administrators’ interviews indicate that information is a key theme. Moreover, administrators consider the adviser responsibility to provide information as integral to the advising process. It is the administrator’s hope that the student will see the adviser as a connection and source for information, not just for personal relationships. Additionally, the administrators hope that students will feel comfortable approaching the adviser for information. The administrators intend for advisers to have the information and the means to provide students with accurate and pertinent policy and procedure changes for the purpose of “help them problem solve…” That is, advisers should not simply provide the information for students, but take the extra step to help them link the information given to the problems they need solved.

Indeed, several definitions provided by NACADA (2003), identify information dissemination as integral to the process, much the same as it is to the teaching process. Information dissemination is key to advising, clearly both administrators and students agree both on depth and scope of information that should be provided. However, as detailed below, there is incongruence between the understanding of student and adviser role in the responsibilities. Students, as indicated from their interviews, view the adviser as responsible for providing information to keep them on track toward graduation. You will see from the next theme illustrated, advisers expect a different level of engagement and responsibility from the student, expecting their role in the process to be more participatory and investigative than receptive.
Roles that are played in the process.

Advisers’ interview data identified a different overarching category with administrator and student interview data in the information category, instead of being concerned with the information given in the meetings, the adviser identified concern with the roles that everyone plays in the process. Their data did not identify the actual information as a theme, the data suggest that the roles that advisers and students play in the process are fundamentally more important than the actual information given. Advisers expect student participation in the process at many different levels ranging from, “…I’d like for them to have at least made an attempt at their plan of work…” to “…Look, prepare beforehand…” While advisers mention that they want to meet students where they are, they do expect students to come to the advising meeting with something that illustrates their thoughtful participation in the process. To facilitate learning advisers and administrators feel the need to foster student ownership of their educations (Student Learning Imperative, 1996). Students learn more when they are placed in the position of accountability. This accountability for learning may manifest either as being prepared to ask questions or by coming to the meeting with a plan of what he or she wants to take for the next semester. Advisers expect students to be active participants; in much the same way that faculty expects engagement and participation in class. The interviews indicate that advisers expect students to prepare beforehand for their meeting and to be able to articulate what it is that they, as students, want from the educational process, what their goals are, what they enjoy, and how they intend to get there.
The advisers participating in this study expect to be guides who provide support for the students. The understanding that students come with different levels of emotional maturity and knowledge about the process is inherent for the advisers. They express understanding that students harbor ideals for the process that may not be realistic and try to meet the student with an open mind for the history that the student may bring to the table..."take them for who they are and...where they are at...” and “try to recognize what students might be thinking when they’re coming in... and put myself in their shoes...” While advisers expect students to be responsible, engaged, and participative in the process (Keeling, 2004, 2006), they also accept responsibility for presenting options for the student, giving them accurate and timely information, and earning the trust of the student. There is a strong feeling for giving the best information and guidance so that the students are able to trust the adviser’s commitment to their success.

**Discussion.**

It is clear from the interviews that both students and advisers place a heavy value on the relationships with students. The advising relationship appears to be a precursor to the dissemination of the information. It is hard to know what a student needs, and what students will benefit from most without knowing the student first. This holistic approach is congruent with the developmental advising theory as defined by (Crookston, 1972, 1994; O’Banion, 1972). These findings support the findings that Lowe & Toney (2000) produced and concur that a blend of information with personal caring contact is desired by the students.

This desire for information and for giving the best, most accurate information indicates that a prescriptive approach for advising would be effective as an informational
guide for the process. Smith and Allen (2006) established that accurate information is a central advising concern for all students. The academic information that advisers must impart after the relationship is established, appears to provide the best structure for the advising conversation. After all, there is an expectation from each of the constituents that the information that advisers provide is both trustworthy and accurate and keeps students on track and without the accurate academic information dissemination, the meeting is not going to help the student.

Additionally, there are some concrete parts of the process that have to be communicated regardless of personal preference, interest, or developmental level. Even if advisers allow the student’s issues to begin the advising session as they stated, they must be sure to communicate the academic information that is pertinent to the students’ situations. Advisers want students to feel supported and have the end goal of being successful academically. This will not occur if the adviser doles out incorrect information about requirements, policies, and procedures or places inadequate emphasis on the importance of the information. This sets advising apart from counseling. Advising has the intent of both teaching and developing the student in the context of getting her closer to her academic goal: graduation and career attainment.

Many students report the desire to have input into their own progress and schedules. Allowing a blend of the developmental/communicative and the prescriptive/informational styles of advising will allow the benefits of each of the styles to emerge. Developmental advising, as defined by Crookston, (1972, 1994), O’Banion (1972) and Dickson and Thayer (1993), as cited in Grites (2000), tends to take more effort and time on the part of both of the
parties involved, which in turn can be viewed as something to be overcome by both advisers and administrators. The prescriptive informational guide of the advising session affords the students confidence that the adviser knows what she is advising, can act in accordance with policy, and addresses their need for trust in the adviser and the information they receive. It also affords the adviser the confidence that he or she has given the information required without forgetting something. On the other hand, however, it lacks the flexibility for the student to both express herself and be heard. But the two mixed together ensure that the student gets what she needs and desires: a trusting, supportive relationship that provides the academic information needed for her to both grow and graduate. The blend also guides the intent, length, and information provided through the advising session. Strommer (1994) recognizes the nature of advising in practice as random and triage in nature more than developmental. I propose that a blend of prescriptive content and developmental delivery could address the many issues that surround advising. The two ideas of prescriptive and developmental do not have to be dichotomous, as they appear in the definitions established by Crookston (1972) and O’Banion (1972). Burton and Wellington (1998) suggest that the ideal of developmental advising may be difficult to attain. In the interest of bridging the gaps between definitions of prescriptive advising (Crookston, 1972) and developmental advising (Crookston, 1972 and O’Banion, 1972, 1994), I suggest that information can be disseminated in such a way that takes into account student development level and input. In my view, the practicality of developmental advising is lessened by the amount of time that can be required. Prescriptive advising is not practical for the purpose of teaching students; therefore a blend of
the two will mitigate the weaknesses of each, not unlike what Brown and Rivas (1994) suggest for appropriate intervention with underrepresented populations.

In accordance with Crookston’s assertion that students demand more choice and control in their educations and coursework choices, (Crookston, 1972) the student participants suggested that they want to be able to have some flexibility and choice in scheduling. If the students desire flexibility in scheduling and hours, they may be sorely disappointed. Because incoming students schedule later, the courses that are available are not always at the most desirable times of the day. Unfortunately, the bearer of this news is generally the adviser. Eventually, these students will be able to have more choice and flexibility, but this will most likely not be the case upon entry. Fortunately, this process reflects the appropriate changes in flexibility and responsibility that Brown & Rivas (1994) identify that a student should undertake, beginning with lower control in the first years with increasing independence and choice with development and growth.

Advisers want each party to be clear about his or her expected role in the advising process. A deliberate and intentional definition for what is expected of the students and what is expected of advisers is something that few students appear to understand. Indeed, there is nothing provided to the student that informs him or her of what the student responsibility is in the process, or how to prepare for initial advising. The information that some of the cases provides will help to inform the student about what advisers expect their role to be. The problem is that this information generally comes after the student has started to set his expectations of the process. Clear communication about role expectations, as well as what both advisers and students expect will enlighten everyone; will add to the trust factor; and
will begin the dialogue appropriately before misconceptions can occur. These role expectations can also be linked to learning and developmental outcomes, thus informing and improving the assessment process.

Administrators expect that advisers will have relationships with the students who they advise, “…they have to have a connection…” and “…we hope that students develop relationships with advisers…” The importance of connection and understanding between student and adviser is expressed by these administrators. However, included in this desire for connection is the intention for advisers to understand the students’ development and promote the continuing growth and learning. Advisers exhibit a possible gap between what they know about this subject and what they articulate. In fact, most of the administrators appear to exhibit more applicable knowledge than the practitioners of advising. Or, perhaps, they are more able to articulate their knowledge about the subject.

Administrators in this study appear to do a good job of promoting communication and training for advisers to deal with the policy, procedure and curriculum side of the advising relationship. This training confirms they share a goal with the students and the advisers that they will give and receive accurate and timely information as emphasized by this administrator, “…it’s important to have that relationship but it is important that you have good information…” This finding suggests agreement with Allen & Smith (2008) that administrators value academic advising and the role that advisers play in the process. Allocating time and resources for training and communication illustrates this value.

Each of the participants brings with him or her a connection to the past that influences her thoughts and expectations about the advising process and the desire for good information
and a trusting, supportive relationship. The next section examines the affect that the understanding of the process has on their expectations for advising.

**How does their understanding of the process affect their expectations?**

Each of the participating groups exhibits a preconceived notion about what advising should encompass. All three groups, students, advisers, and administrators bring these previous influences to the table, each of which appears to affect the expectations directly.

**Family.**

Students express that family members have a great influence over what they expect from the advising process. The family background may also have a great effect on what the student knows and does not know about college in general. Several of the participating students were first generation college students and, in turn, had a different level of understanding about college processes than those who had parents who attended college, or even those who worked at the university the student would attend. Clearly, the students would bring with them a variance in understanding about university process and, in turn, the advising process. First generation students have different resources from which to draw and as a result do not have the same knowledge about processes as students who are not the first in their families to attend college (Rhiels, 1994; Pascarella et al, 2004). All ranges of experiences were reported by the students’ family members: some had miserable experiences with advising: “… my older sister had horrible advisers…”; another student’s mother had to take an extra semester because of an adviser error; and another had a boyfriend who had to register late because of inability to get in contact with his adviser, “…um. My boyfriend for
two semesters has been one of the last 15 people in the entire… campus to sign up for classes because of his adviser…”

On the other hand, there are those who already have good relationships with resources on campus, “…um… then my other sister hasn’t had any problems with her adviser. In fact she seems to get along with her adviser very well and with everything, she added a major on to it so now she’s a double major…”, those who have parents who attended at the study’s setting or those who have parents who work there and have a better idea of how to navigate the system and methods of successfully undertaking many of the processes that college ensues (Rhie1, 1994; Kohler, Giancola, Munz, & Trares, 2008). They will be more comfortable with knowing their options, the resources available and they will be guided throughout the process. Their understanding of the process is far different than those who have limited experience and resources to call upon for suggestions. Even a familiarity with campus and the surrounding area can affect the questions a student could bring to the advising process, as well as the expectation of information provided by the adviser.

**Previous Relationships.**

Across the board, all of the interviewees identified either previous advising relationships or personal experiences with advising as an influence on their understanding of the advising process. As a constructivist, I maintain there is no greater influence on current knowledge and understanding than past experience (Merriam, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) so this reinforces my constructivist view. Students report a range of experiences with advising professionals in high school. These range from a close personal guiding relationship “…I honestly feel bad for my college adviser, they’ll never live up…” to one
where the student did not even have contact with the person: “…he didn’t do anything…”

Different levels of experience with choosing schedules and ranges of intervention for college exploration are also reported. These students also had a wide range of opportunities available, depending on the size and resources of the high school they attended. Additionally, some mention that they believe the process should be approximately the same regarding picking classes and other procedures, “…probably the same thing as far as scheduling and all…”, whereas others recognize “… [I] have no idea…” what to expect.

As advisers and administrators spoke about what influenced their understanding of the process, again, there was a range of experiences. The range of activity and level of relationship with were widely different. Some, of course, do not remember their undergraduate advising experience as well as others do “…I barely remember being advised…”, however, there are some advisers who articulate a strong relationship with an adviser that clearly influenced their career path. Levels of intrusion and guidance will differ for the ages of the advisers, the sizes and types of institutions they attended and the priorities of the adviser who was the student at the time (Frost, 2000). However, each of the experiences appears to have shaped their understanding of what advising should be and how it should be done. Some report that they want to right the wrongs that they experienced in their own undergraduate advising relationships, “…I didn’t have such a great adviser, and I think my roommate advised me…” Some report the opposite; their advisers helped to shape their growth into academic professionals and they intend to emulate this behavior and helpfulness, “…you could definitely tell he cared…” and “…He was so encouraging and helpful…” It is clear that expectations about advising arose from the previous relationships
these participants encountered with their own advisers and counselors, whether they were supportive or hard to recall.

**Understanding of the Process: Meeting.**

What influences these participants’ understanding of advising is vastly different. Additionally, the actual understanding that they bring to table about what advising is reflects vastly different perspectives. Students have very little information to pull from, no personal experience with college advising, and a range of stories, many very intimidating, to pull from family and friends. They report believing that students will meet with advisers, ensuring that there will be some sort of communication. The hope is that there will be a one on one meeting, however, there is a recognition that group advising could occur, “…if it’s more than four or five, I’ll feel like a number…” While there is an understanding that there will be limits to the adviser’s time, there is still an expectation for the aforementioned relationship and the desire for a trusting and quality interaction in which the student does not feel rushed or “…like a number...” The purpose for the advising meeting will be outlined in the next thematic discussion, but there is only one type of advising meeting assumed by students, meetings in which they pick coursework.

Adviser interviews yielded the same theme of meetings, though the information in the theme illustrates a different depth of understanding. The advisers at this institution identify different types of meetings that they undertake with students, indicating a different level understanding about advising and advisers’ roles than that which students exhibit. The three types of meetings identified by these participants are: registration advising, that is picking a schedule; academic warning, that is a meeting to help the student get back on track; and
interest or informational meetings, in which the adviser performs different informational functions for the student. Additionally, the motivation for each of these types of meetings is different. The university requires some and some are purely student driven. Each of these factors will, in turn, affect the information provided and the roles of each of the parties involved. Clearly, advisers and administrators have a different understanding of the requirements that the university imposes. That is the purpose of the roles that they play. Being mindful of the information that advising administrators and practitioners take for granted, which are not always inherent in student knowledge is key.

**Understanding of the Process: Content.**

The next theme that emerged from the data is content for meetings. Advisers and students share this theme. Students again have a range of thoughts on what should be present in an advising meeting and how it should go. While most believe that coursework and picking of schedules will be addressed in the meeting, many also plan on taking questions to their advisers about co-curricular information. The range of examples offered spans from clubs and activity information to roommate disputes. Evident is the hope that advisers will be a catchall that can lead the student to the right resource. Additionally, students report that they will look to the adviser for actual advice on how to handle time management and personal choices. This personal guidance is expected in addition to keeping the student aware of graduation requirements and making sure they are taking care of “…what needs to be taken care of…” and “…keeping [them] on track…” Lowe and Toney (2000) found that the expectations of undergraduate students establish advisers as most importantly being available and giving good information about academics and other opportunities. This
supports the data that these participants put forth, they want advice on more than just scheduling, but want to be made aware of opportunities and enhancement activities while maintaining balance in their lives.

The first priority that the data suggests is important for advisers is the establishment of rapport and a relationship. The students’ data suggests a strong desire for information, almost in an egocentric sense and the advisers’ data supports that they want to establish a trusting relationship. The relationship supersedes the information dissemination for advisers. These advisers report that the student’s comfort level and ease with the adviser enhances the informational side of the meeting. It establishes the trust that students must have when interacting with advisers, as stated in the previous question’s findings, and compliments the students’ aforementioned lack of articulation about relationship content in meetings. Advisers appear willing and able to take care of this, and understand that it is their responsibility to establish this rapport and relationship. These findings are supported by the fact that almost across the board, advisers report making small talk, “…what’s happening exciting this semester?” and making chit chat to establish rapport and a connection, “…I’ll sit down and, you know, ask them how their term is going and how their courses are…” Regardless of type of meeting, the data suggest that advisers want to establish an environment where students are willing and feel able to speak openly.

Once the connection and rapport are established, the purpose of the meeting needs to be established. As stated before, the advisers’ data report that there are different types of meetings and when not understood beforehand, it has to be established before the communication goes further, “What are we talking about today? What are your objectives
for the meeting?” Once clarified, the information gathering and disseminating begins for the adviser. The advisers’ data suggests that many have a guide that they employ to ensure all of the information that needs to be addressed is, in fact, addressed, “I have a little sticky note with a checklist of reminders…” Additionally, many try to anticipate what questions the students are not asking and answer them too. The data suggest that the intention of advisers is to teach students how to do it themselves, to make them independent, “…you are teaching somebody how to navigate the educational process…” and “…they are learning in large part…” The data identifies that advisers equate advising as a teaching process: teaching the student how to navigate the systems, how to motivate themselves and teaching them skills through answering their questions. Indeed, Crookston (1972), established this in his definition of developmental advising.

If the advisers are aware of the differences and gaps in their expectations about advising, the gaps can be addressed. If they go unaddressed, there can be difficulty in the relationship between the advisee and adviser. Some of the differences are inherent in the level of knowledge held. Advisers desire interaction to facilitate development and learning of the students (Gordon, 1998, Habley, 2000, Grites, 1977). Students expect to be supported and guided which may be an indication of their developmental level (Creamer, 2000). How does higher education teach students how to be successful students? It is necessary to impart the skills students will require for success within the university and beyond graduation.

Roles of administrators and the administration of programs.

Going hand in hand with the ideas established in adviser and student data, the administrators’ data suggest their understanding of the advising process is affected by their
role of administrator. The themes established in these interviews illustrate their concern with roles played in the process and the administration of the process. Their concern lays less with what the content of the meetings are, and more with the proper use of resources, distribution of information and efficient and effective practices. The administrators’ interviews establish that they expect the advisers to take a large part of the responsibility for the advising process, but that students are not free of responsibility. They see advising sessions as an interactive exchange and a teaching process to help the student problem solve, “…That mutual agreement that we are going to work together…” Their concern with the business side of advising is further illustrated in the data suggested that availability of advisers is suggested as important and that, in many cases, the loads of advisers are areas of concern, “…the queue can’t be so long that the student doesn’t ever seek advice…” Not surprisingly, administrators of advising programs do have responsibility for discussion about how the program performs. In the administrators’ data, assessment of advising is reported in varying levels, and none of which encompass student learning and development, but instead are concerned with student satisfaction and adviser preparedness. This supports the data that suggest that administrators appear less concerned with the content of meetings and more with the business end and management of the process. It is important to bear in mind these differences in priorities for each player when considering expectations. The business of managing a process is going to directly affect the expectation of practice.

Discussion.

Students express that the experiences of family and friends have shaped their understanding of the process. Some have parents and siblings that attended the same
university that they are entering as first year students. Student conversations with family and friends about previous experiences help to set the tone for what students expect. If a parent had a bad experience, the student is more guarded and expects different interactions and information than one whose family members or friends had a great experience. Additionally, if the student knows someone who did not graduate on time or had to take an extra class: anything that could be blamed on the adviser, he or she will be more intently focused about maintaining progress toward the degree. The evidence suggests that an effect on expectations or priorities for advising sessions would ensue from these interactions. Even a familiarity with campus affects the questions a student could bring to the advising process, as well as the expectation of information provided by the adviser.

The effects that other’s experiences have on student expectations are directly represented with the categories established in Chapter Four. If family members or friends have had bad experiences with advising or have had advisers who are misinformed or give incorrect information, then students are going to have different expectations. If there was a lack of personal relationship with a high school counselor, expectations will be affected. Students articulate that significant people in their lives share issues with relationships with advisers and information that these advisers gave. These prominent effects of these past experiences on student expectations are reflected in and demonstrated by the two categories of advising expectations that students presented Relationships and Information. Differing levels of support, trust and respect expected can be indicative of the relationships with advisers that family members have reported to the student. The expectation for detailed information and fear of inadequate information having deleterious effects on maintenance of
progress can also be an illustration of reports from family members. Interestingly students
reported a desire for the relationships and trust establishment but say nothing about this in the
content for the meetings, are they expecting outside interaction with the advisers to promote
this trusting relationship or are they simply not articulating this thought in the content theme?
Or do they feel that trust and support are inherent in the assumption that they will get the best
information and that the adviser has their best interest at heart? The absence of articulation
about the maintenance of the relationship that students expect with advisers indicates to me
that they are hoping for it to be provided for them, and suggests that they are not exactly
aware how this relationship will manifest.

Advisers and administrators know that they are accountable to the student. There are
expectations for the process that are predetermined because of this accountability. The
responsibilities that the colleges and departments owe to the students are more far ranging
than those recognized by the adviser. The advisers’ and administrators’ experiences guide
the way they intend to perform their duties, but there are baseline expectations for the
advising process. Many times, though, these expectations are unspoken but understood.
Availability for students, accurate and timely information and the appearance of caring
relationships are not spelled out, but certainly are expected on different levels for each of the
cases. There is no standard that is set for adviser availability, what information should be
disseminated, and what the relationships should look like. Indeed, with the ranges of
advising loads represented, how can there be a set standard for availability or relationship?
While the university widely publishes mandatory policy and procedure information, the
individual case colleges’ information can be less visible or easily accessed.
The responsibility for advising, though not always recognized for tenure and promotion in reviews, (Habley, 2003) still exists. There may be a lack of evidence that their advising obligation is being met. No better way to address the accountability to student learning and development exists than to assess learning outcomes (Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004). The difficulty lies in that many of the expectations that are understood for advising from an administrative point of view are not officially articulated and many times nonspecific. Accordingly, assessment of learning and development stemming from the advising process, in this study, was not found to be a focus. Evaluation of advising, throughout the cases, is relatively prolific, though largely decentralized, unmonitored, and unguided. Each case reports conducting evaluation, but there is no central guiding process. The College of Mining mentions data collection and its modernization with technology. Consumer and Family Sciences suggests that there is discussion about evaluating advising but does not provide specifics. The College of Earth and Mineral Sciences and the College of Communications appear to have more intention processes, possibly because they are so much smaller in enrollment. Student satisfaction and not learning and development tends to be the focus. While it is appropriate to ensure that students are happy with their advising, happiness does not ensure developmental growth or learning. While there appears to be a certain understanding that advising equates with teaching, it appears to be encompassed by the informational exchange. Appleby (2001) establishes the various areas in which advising and teaching are similar, if not the same. Ramos (1994) suggests that advisers should give the same weight to advising as one would a course. Further explanation and deliberation about shrinking the gaps of understanding between advising and teaching will allow for more
student learning and developmental assessment from the process, as well as will lend a guiding focus for expectations of the advising process. This could be done by providing a syllabus for the student and having deliberate and intentional goals for each advising session. Providing guidance about how to complete tasks associated with registration, schedule planning or other particular university foci and then providing assignments for the student to complete and evaluate is another key method. By modeling the advising session after a class, with clear objectives, articulated expectations and plans, advising can begin to bridge this gap.

Past experiences and current beliefs about advising’s purpose definitely affect students’, advisers’ and administrators’ expectations. Learning styles and developmental theories appear to inform the process of academic advising at the university where this study is set, even despite the apparent inability of advisers to articulate said theories. The following illustrates my thoughts on and evidence of how they inform this process.

**How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of the expectations for the advising process?**

Not surprisingly, there was a large variance in ability to articulate knowledge of developmental and learning style theory for each of the participant groups, but most notably in adviser and student interviews. Data from the student interviews yielded the themes of “how I learn best” and through which they were quite able to talk about their methods of learning and what preferences they exhibit in the learning process and knowledge and verifying quality of knowledge. It is clear that the lingo of visual and auditory learning is prolific, even in lower education. Many students report having a visual or “audio”
preference, however, there were students who actually mention hands-on learning and “doing rather than reading it out of books”. Much of the students’ data is punctuated with clarification such as though they are able to learn any way they prefer certain methods. And sometimes, the data suggest that though they may not be familiar with the terms, they are familiar with methods to accommodate unspoken preferences like taking notes in different colored ink or “…if I draw a diagram, I can locate the pieces…” Also of interest in the data is the fact that students recognize the influence of past experience on what they learn and know, “knowledge is formed through experiences…” The following section illustrates the students’ abilities to discuss their learning preferences and what that means in the formation of their expectations.

**How I Learn Best.**

Students were surprisingly able to articulate how they learn best. This knowledge, I suspect, influences their expectations about how an adviser will listen to their thoughts and accommodate their requests. The ability to articulate learning preferences will help to put them into the conversation with more weight and allow them to exert more influence on their own educational choices. It is the understanding of what these learning styles mean and what they require from the student that the adviser will have to help the students understand. Students are able to point out, “I guess audio and visual” or “lecturing and application” and “hands on” but do they understand what that means? Additionally, they will need guidance to understand how to accommodate for classes that do not support their preferred learning method, though some articulated the accommodation they perform for themselves: “…I do a lot of note taking in different colors…” and” …if I draw a diagram, I can locate the
“pieces…” General education requirements expose students to different types of courses and methods of instruction. Students need assistance making the bridge between their preference and the delivery of different courses. In addition to the auditory and visual preferences, student participants recognize that learning “…is based on one experience or another…” and “…knowledge is formed through your experiences…”

Their learning style preferences may have already influenced their choice of major, whether they are aware of this or not “…hands on…instead of reading a book, you’ve got to get out there and do it…” Kolb (1984) suggests that they processing style preference that students hold affects their choice of career path. This is in addition to the style influence that Gardner (1993, 2004) identifies. Gardner’s kinesthetic learning (1993) can be equated on a level with Kolb’s concrete experience (1984) in that they can influence performance in class types such as: lab classes (hands on) or, conversely, writing classes “…there is just something about, like, crafting a well worded paper or answer…” Perhaps their awareness of these will influence how they interact with their adviser; perhaps it will influence what they take away from the meeting and how they take it. Many discussed how to deal with their visual preference and specifically mentioned taking notes and using technology. Students also expect their learning styles to be accommodated. For example, they expect to be met where they are “…I have to read stuff… I don’t remember anything I hear at all…” If they are visual, they are hoping for a handout or paper representation of what they need.

Nowhere is there a reference to reflection or how the thinking occurs, there is simply the recognition of delivery models and accommodation for those. Neither Kolb’s Theory (1984), nor Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences (1993) are recognized fully. It seems as though
students are aware of limited types of preferences, and how they prefer to learn is applicable to only the hands-on, audio or visual preferences. No one mentioned the processing of information, levels of understanding and learning, (Bloom, 1956) nor inherent styles other than auditory or visual (Gardner, 1993). Reflection, observation and linking experiences (Kolb, 1984) were not articulated in such a depth that I felt the students understood them fully enough to recognize their place in each students’ learning. Some of the students participating in this study clearly have been educated about learning styles and preferences. This understanding of preferences will affect student participation in the process of course selection and possibly career and major selection. Proper guidance and expansion of their knowledge on this subject can be achieved within an advising meeting.

**Knowledge and Verifying Quality.**

Students responded to questions about judging the quality of information range from the dualistic (Perry, 1970), received knowledge (Belenky, et al., 1997), absolute knowing and beginning receiving knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 1992), and stages one and two of pre-reflective thinking, where knowledge is gained from authorities and one’s own senses (King & Kitchener, 1994). such as, “…if they’re a teacher they must know what they’re talking about…” and “…if I watch someone do it…this equals this… Ok, I believe you completely…” to a more multiplistic (Perry, 1970) view by comparing the information with the knowledge that they already hold and seeking out verification or contradiction from trusted sources: “…talk to my parents…talk to some of the people I know around me and come up with an informed opinion…” and trusted sources are “…parents and friends…” Interestingly, students do mention using the “…internet. You know, it’s 2009…” and
“…Google…I’d probably go look at it…” however, there is a definite understanding about the inequality of data from the internet: “…it’s WIKI, its wrong…” Unfortunately, some students view professional appearance as indicators of veracity and good information, “…if it’s all put together professionally, odds are it has professional information inside of it…” Perry (1970) identifies dualism as the beginning position in which students receive information from authorities. Inherent in the dualists view is that authorities hold knowledge and disseminate it as appropriate. These authorities are not to be challenged. It seems fitting that students of this age represent the beginning developmental level in knowledge formation. Clearly, authoritative or professional appearance or position influences the credibility of the information for these students.

None of the participants mentioned that there may be gray areas, indicating levels of dualism (Perry, 1970), received knowledge (Belenky, et al., 1997), absolute knowing and beginning receiving knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 1992), and stages one and two of pre-reflective thinking, where knowledge is gained from authorities and one’s own senses (King & Kitchener, 1994). This level of information has ramifications for the advising session and for the approaches that advisers take when eliciting information from students and when communicating advising content throughout the meeting.

**Other Developmental Insights.**

Not only are students concerned with the learning and knowledge that they gain from college, but they also want to become independent and their own person, “…I see college as a time for independence and kind of figuring out who I am…” and “I hope it will make me a more independent person.” They want to grow up, become independent adults: “…growing
up, getting out of the house and living on my own…” and “…transition me into adulthood maybe…” There is a desire to learn and grow, to become a “…more rounded person, well-rounded person, who can communicate with, like, other people and know where they are coming from…” On the other hand, one participant illustrates another perspective about college and his or her expectations from it, “college is just something you’ve got to do…” Most of these students illustrate the findings that Byrne and Flood (2005) mention: most students expect that the university experience will help them develop new skills, broaden their horizons and grow intellectually.

As expected, students do not exhibit enough knowledge about developmental theories to connect them to their expectations for advising. Students do mention that they view college as a vehicle for progression into adulthood and independence, but do not necessarily envision advising as the main catalyst for this growth, perhaps because they do not equate this process with a learning process. The inability to connect advising and development does not seem to remove all of their expectations for advising; they do expect to meet with a person and develop a trusting and supportive relationship with the adviser. They also expect to rely on this adviser for guidance and detailed information that will help them maintain progress toward educational and career goals. It seems the combination of time, coursework and challenges they will encounter are what they anticipate will facilitate the development they desire.

Knowledge of Learning Styles.

Advisers’ interview data indicates that, while they are aware of learning styles, they do not articulate the actual theories that were outlined in this study’s literature review. The
advisers report some specific inventories, like the “Gregoric” and “Kolb” but they do not expand and illustrate their knowledge about the theories. Definitions of what learning styles or learning theories are range from “…you know the way that maybe I learn…”, “…People have a preferred way of receiving information that helps them to facilitate their learning best…”, and “…how they are going to process the information…”, to actual style information “…visual learner or …hands on…”, “…active learning, reflective learning, global…”, “auditory learning where when they hear stuff, they get it…” and “…visual learner so when they see stuff that helps them understand…” There is recognition that “different people learn different ways…” that I think is an undercurrent throughout the whole of advisers’ knowledge of student learning styles, but the recognition that “…Everyone will use different areas at some point in time and can adapt to those areas…” and “…everyone has a preference but that doesn’t mean that’s the only way you learn…” They, without always saying so, appear to understand that each student is different with respect to learning and development and try to approach each student uniquely, while maintaining some student responsibility for the learning method accommodation. They report understanding that recognition of personal preference can help maintain awareness and accommodation of student preferences in how they receive information. Incorporating information about their own learning preferences into an advising session can assist students with understanding of learning preferences and also help establish rapport and connection between the adviser and student.
Awareness of Development.

Advisers’ and administrators’ information suggested a difference in abilities to articulate theory. Advisers’ data yields a theme of awareness for different developmental theories and propose to embrace developmental versus prescriptive advising, but the data contains few references to specific theories. The understanding that students come in at different levels and that advisers need to “meet students where they are” suggests a greater adherence to developmental advising than to actual developmental theory knowledge. Clearly the statement, “…a student may come in and have a full black and white view…” indicates knowledge of dualistic (Perry, 1970) level, and the remainder of the statement, “…and as they grow, as a person, they are going to realize some of the complexities…” shows that growth is expected by the adviser. However, when asked specifically about theories, only one adviser mentioned a specific name for a theorist, “…I’m thinking Chickering…” and many exhibit behaviors that indicate they should know more specifics about theory, “…you know…levels and stuff…” and “…I am really having a brain fart. I apologize…”

While I do not believe that these advisers do not have knowledge of theory about cognitive development, they are not fully able to discuss theory and the application of theory to the advising session. At times, however, the discussion they provide indicates their promotion of developmental type advising, “…connecting at some level thinking that’s going to mean something to them…”, and “…hold their hands for a little while and then I try to get them to be a little more independent…” There are further quotes expecting developmental growth and increasing ability to act independently for the student, “…expect
responsibility…”, “…I expect my sophomore students to not ask me questions that a freshman would ask me…” and “…trying to help them quickly become independent because they are not going to be able to be where they need to be…” Advisers report the desire to “meet students where they are” and actually label themselves developmental advisers so they, by definition, promote the understanding of students. When an adviser mentions the “black or white view” that a student may hold, they are articulating a piece of Perry’s (1970) theory. This indicates that they are aware of theory, though they may have difficulty articulating particular theories by name.

**Definitions of Learning Styles.**

Administrators’ data suggests that they understand learning theory as, “…different ways of knowing…” “…everybody can learn and value all those learning styles…” and “…the ways people learn…” There appears to be a greater depth of understanding or application with the administrator answers than those of the advisers, data include, “students make comments to me about their class that they don’t get certain things…” and “…they seem to get more meaning… when they are actually in there doing something…they are hands on.” These statements indicate that, while students may not actually articulate the course does not match well with their learning preference; the administrator hears what the student is not saying. I did not get this level of information from the adviser data; however, I do believe that the advisers can glean this information in practice. Administrators’ interview data shows that they are able to connect theory to practice and are able to pick out particular learning preferences from inference as in the aforementioned quote. Additionally, they mention the accommodation that students with different preferences may require, such as,
“they learn by getting in the trenches and… tutoring or working…” and “they may go to that lecture for an hour and learn nothing… but if they can partner…” Application of the theories and accommodation for different learning preferences enhances student education and clearly affects the way administrators look at the advising process.

Additionally, two administrators were able to mention specific learning style inventories that are used, “…Kiersey temperament sorter…” and “…Kolb’s learning styles…” I note the ability of administrators, who I thought would be more removed from practice and less knowledgeable about the theories, to articulate these at this level. Given the levels of the positions that the administrators hold and the other significant responsibilities they undertake I was assuming they were less involved with the actual practice of advising than they are.

**Administrator Understanding of Developmental Theory.**

Administrators also demonstrate knowledge of developmental theory, on the same level as the advisers demonstrate. Administrators’ interview data, again, suggest that they are interested in application and how the theory is applied in the process of advising. Answers like, ‘…what is their thinking process and what is the maturation process and how are they dealing with their experiences and how have they been guided in the past?”

They appear to link confidence and decision making skills to cognitive development, and understand that advising plays a role in the facilitation of developmental growth, “…some of them are confident to make decisions…” and “…I guess their cognitive abilities start to take over from their emotional investment…” There is a definite interest in moving students along developmentally. Statements like, ‘forcing growth is a big thing…” and “for
understanding that students need to be lead from “…very concrete…” to understanding that “…your view is not the only point of view”.

Additionally, the data suggests that administrators echo advisers’ intention of recognizing where students are and meeting them there, such as the student who “…really needs to know exactly what I need to do…” versus those who, “want to try all kinds of things…” There is a definite realism about the extent of their influence through advising, that students are going to do what they will do, “…I can give them an opinion, but they really ultimately have to decide what it is they are going to have to do…” which firmly places the responsibility for decisions on the student. However, as mentioned before, responsibility for the development of students is recognized as a university wide priority, “in terms of learning and problem solving, we have to help them use and develop that tool. Not just in research but … even in the advising process…” and “… help them develop their ethically social thinking… I think that’s part of what our general education program is supposed to be doing…”

**Discussion.**

As discussed earlier, there is a divide between what advisers aspire to and what they actually articulate in relation to developmental and learning theory. They intend to help the student grow and practice “developmental advising” and many are able to talk about what developmental advising and prescriptive advising are. But they are unable to speak to what theories inform their practice or how they may use theory in class choice, discussing major interests, or planning out career or educational goals. This understanding of developmental
versus prescriptive advising influences their expectations, whether or not they express particular theories appropriately or not. The mere fact that they refer to developmental advising as an aspiration illustrates their style preference. Though many recognize time constraints and time limitations for appointments, all of those who mention developmental advising mention also a connection with the student and the importance of helping them maneuver through the educational system successfully. Additionally, their practices indicate that they care holistically about the student and want to incorporate their growth into the process. As a result, these advisers hold a responsibility to bridge a gap between the need for developmental guidance and understanding and the need for information about policies and requirements to be disseminated to the students.

Administrators’ understanding of learning and developmental theory surprised me. Given their relative distance from the practical side of advising, the differences in educational background, and the various pressures surrounding their administrative positions, I suspected their familiarity with developmental and learning styles theory to be diminished. Their abilities to articulate theory application certainly influence the expectations that they hold for the advising relationship. The administrators’ apparent understanding that better services to student affects student retention (Artman & Gore, 1992) coincides with their intention for advisers and students to make a connection and the universal interest in retention and student success. It should be noted, there are several administrators who actually still advise on top of their administrative duties and appear to have a clearer connection to the students through this responsibility.
The connection aspired in the advising process is facilitated by the developmental advising approach. Without the adviser interest about the student within the relationship, the connection would not occur. Within the developmental advising practice, the intention is for students to grow and make choices, to express themselves, and feel supported. This support and intended growth is the effect that administrators’ understanding of learning and developmental theories has on their expectation. Without this understanding, it is conceivable that administrators may express priorities solely for the retention, matriculation and graduation of the student and not the students’ personal benefit. This is not the case.

The student participants do not report recognizing the role of academic advising in developmental growth. However, they do expect to grow developmentally, become more independent, and transition into adulthood through the college experience. O’Banion (1972) identifies this intended growth as a goal of developmental advising, and a good reason to implement the use of developmental theory in advising. In addition to learning through the curriculum, advising can be a vehicle to promote this growth that these students’ desire. Given the advisers’ intention of helping students where they are and helping them become independent, incorporating developmental style into the advising session is imperative.

Creamer (2000) states that advisers need to be aware of student development theories because the students’ needs change as they develop. This is important for two reasons: if the adviser is unable to recognize where a student is developmentally, the needs of the student may not be appropriately met; and as the student grows, the changes in needs may not be recognized if the growth is not noted. Miller & Alberts (1994) mention the deleterious effects of an adviser’s inability to distinguish developmental growth. Advisers expect that
students will, in essence, participate in the process. Whether the adviser wants a student to plan ahead, express his abilities and his goals accurately and truthfully, or just to engage in conversation, there is an expectation that the students make the advising meeting a priority and participate appropriately.

Advisers may mistake a student’s reticence or desire for strict guidance as obstinacy and disinterest. A dualistic (Perry, 1970) student may need the adviser to tell him exactly what to do, even if he expresses the desire to have input. Moreover, developmentally some levels and stages that students can exhibit may require more understanding on the part of the adviser. Sometimes student questioning within discussions can be viewed as challenging the authority or not trusting the advisers. Indeed, one adviser specifically mentions building trust to eliminate the need for the student to check with someone else. It may simply be the student acting in accordance with her developmental stage. This misunderstanding can be counterproductive for both the student and the adviser’s relationship and progress that the student may make. As is illustrated in the theories outlined in Chapter Two, we would expect that traditionally aged students enter college with the expectation that information is something they seek and will be given. They anticipate truths and facts that have proven veracity. These facts will be received and can be verified by seeking verification from the authorities (Perry, 1970; Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1997; Kitchener & King, 1981). The findings of this study illustrate these positions and theories well. Students expect to receive information and hold advisers as authorities on more than simply academic information. It is essential to the advising relationship that advisers are aware of the levels of understanding that these students exhibit.
The inability of adviser participants in the study to discuss particular developmental theory and its application is disconcerting. However, so many of the advisers mention their intentions of “meeting the student where she is” and trying to deal with students holistically, the inability to recall specific theory or the application specifically makes me wonder how fastidiously advisers pursue these aforementioned intentions. Of particular importance to the advising relationship are applications of the different learning styles theories. Preferences in different styles can indicate strengths in different types of classes and possibly discipline and career goals (Kolb, 1984; Gardner, 1993, 2004). Ender, Winston & Miller (1982) point out the importance of use in theory when guiding students toward these goals. Without being able to identify and apply learning styles theories, advisers may miss an important opportunity to guide the student in a direction through which he would be successful and fulfilled.

Advisers may actually hold more knowledge about theory and application than they were able to emit at the time of the interview. Many of the advisers seemed caught off guard when I asked them to recall specific theory, as though they had not thought of these theories since graduate school. Their stated intentions give some evidence that they intend to apply theory to different situations but the ability to recall specifics is lacking.

The disconnect that lies in this is that advisers do not articulate the theories and ability to apply developmental and learning theory that the administrators appear to expect. Is there a disconnect between the way the developmental theories are presented and how they are used in conjunction with other additional learning outcomes? Laff (1994) points out, development happens over time but developmental theories occur as a snap shot. This
indicates that development does not take place in a vacuum. Miller and Alberts (1994) assert that there is an abundance of theory that “seldom makes its way into usable form” (p. 43). So many factors affect learning and development that we may need to rethink the unilateral one dimensional version of theories and articulate them in a more applicable method so that advisers can articulate the way they are actually used.

In conclusion, though few of the participants speak directly to developmental theories that I outlined in chapter 4, there is clearly a relationship between knowledge about developmental and learning styles theory and the expectations for the advising process. Remove the understanding of developmental advising theory and prescriptive advising ensues. No one who participated in this study declared a preference for prescriptive advising; their intentions were to developmentally advising students. The knowledge, to whatever degree they can express it, that they do hold appears to have an effect on their expectations.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the recommendations that arise from the results of this study. This section will point out some immediate actions that I feel should be taken and also those that would help but may be more difficult to implement because of budgetary or time constraints. After the recommendations are outlined, I will discuss the heuristic value of this study and some suggestions for further study that ensue. Finally, I will summarize and provide conclusion for the dissertation.

Implications for Practice and Policy.

Because the data suggest that advisers and administrators cannot articulate specific developmental theories, advisers and administrators who work in an advisory capacity need
to make education about learning and developmental theory a priority. The definite inability to report what learning styles and developmental theories affect the students and how the application of these theories guides the advising process is both notable and disconcerting. Creamer (2000) and Miller & Alberts (1994) identify that the use of theory ameliorates the advising relationship. Evans et al. (1998) identify that theory, in general, is useful in providing explanations for behavior and experiences. Particularly surprising is that fact that many of the advisers interviewed hold graduate degrees in higher education or college student personnel. At the very least, familiarity with different learning style theories and the link between holding particular preferences and academic success in different types of coursework should be reviewed (Kolb, 1984; Gardner, 1993, 2004). A lack of knowledge is easy to overcome with the proper attention. Student success is a main concern that the advisers mentioned. Students will be most capable of success if they are understood, their needs are met, and they are guided into coursework and extracurricular situations that build both confidence and skill. Application of learning styles inventories and diagnostic information can make these placements possible (Grites, 2000). For example, if a student is truly a hands on learner, needing concrete experience (Kolb, 1984), then a lab experience and physical education experiences can help boost the student’s confidence in a classroom setting and, in turn possibly, boost the student’s grade point average.

Further discussion on the application of theory and which theories are most applicable to the populations with whom advisers are dealing will assist advisers not only in procedural knowledge of the particular theories, but also in the multidimensional way that theories can be applied and articulated. Understanding students on different levels and using theories, as
a guide will allow for the best use of theory to guide student growth and development. This practice of using theories to guide the advising process will assist with the establishment of advising developmental outcomes that can be assessed. For instance, if a student enters the advising relationship with a dualistic view (Perry, 1970), an intended development outcome could be to see progression along Perry’s scale. I propose that perhaps the most fruitful discussions for advisers and administrators would be about how to bridge the gap between practice and theory and how to make these theories more applicable to student interaction. Knefelkamp (1978) suggests that theory cannot be used in isolation, meaning that theory is descriptive of one part of a student’s life and cannot be applied without the awareness of both its affect on the student and its affect on the environment of the student. Making theory applicable to practice encompasses a recognition that the students’ development does not occur in isolation, but in conjunction with all of the factors surrounding him or her. This recognition has to be a part of the discussion that advisers need to undertake. In Evans, et al. (1998, p.20), Knefelkamp identifies the practice to theory to practice model for making practical use of theory. The aforementioned discussion about theory between advisers could be well informed by this model, which proposes taking the practical situation, examining appropriate theories to address it, discussing and identifying potential application to reach the goals intended.

In house training is already reportedly undertaken within one case college. Incorporating sections on these cognitive development and learning preference theories can add beneficial information and variety to the discussions about policies and procedures. If fully dedicated training sessions are not practical, assign different theories to different
advisers and have them outlined at the staff meetings or by virtual communication. An executive summary or a thorough synopsis is many times adequate to provide the knowledge needed. This is applicable if the advisers are professional or are faculty advisers. The assignment to examine one theory is far less intimidating and daunting than having to prepare an array of information about several different theories. Additionally, it may provoke conversation, which can lead to better communication between peers. Increased communication will allow strategy sharing and camaraderie, which may, in turn, enhance other aspects of the job.

It is important for students to understand what they are encountering and adjust their expectations accordingly. As previously mentioned, students expect many of the same things that advisers expect from the process. The divergence in expectations may occur in the roles that advisers expect students to play in the process—and the role that students expect advisers to play. Students may expect more follow up and intrusion on the part of advisers, or the adviser may expect more from the student than she understands or is able to produce. To alleviate this gap, clear information to the student should be delivered early and expectations delivered unambiguously to alleviate confusion or misconception. It is imperative that this information gets to the student before she has fully formed her expectations and well before she attends any type of New Student Orientation on campus. I would encourage communication between the institution and the student from the point of tuition deposit. This early communication would solidify her commitment to the school and help front load information. An early flow of communication would also allow students a venue to address concerns about advising before the advising actually occurs. Early
information dissemination promotes familiarity with the information before it needs to be applied. This will allow students to become familiar with different concepts, processes, and information before having to act. Students with additional needs such as first generation students would particularly benefit from this type of suggested practice.

Information that requires attention can begin with sending students information about the scheduling system, terms, and acronyms that are used within scheduling, online technology they will use and what courses are required for their intended degrees, or for the general education requirements of the college or university. Many times, information about procedures for registering and scheduling is already available online. The earlier students are aware of resources like online demonstrations and instructions, the earlier they will begin to utilize them. Specifics about where to find information and perhaps how to access this information virtually are the types of illustrations recommended. Providing practical information about “how tos” in advance of orientation will allow students to prepare ahead for the session and leave more time for meaningful conversation during initial advising. At the very least, it will alleviate some the students’ anxieties about the process by allowing clear expectations about what will happen during the process.

In addition, outlining what the process will look like for students once they come to campus is important. Questions that may need answering can include what will occur during their first visit, information about access to advisers, what the meeting will look like, whether it will be a group advising session or an individual meeting? Additionally, what the adviser and administrators want the student to bring to the meeting and take from the meeting will allow the student to prepare ahead mentally and practically. Again, this will serve to
diminish stress and anxiety for the student, allowing for a better experience. Clarity about what the adviser will do for them and what role they should anticipate playing is essential.

Once initial advising takes place, discussions with the students should include defining the different types of advising meetings that advisers undertake. As stated previously, advisers in this study identified registration advising meetings, academic warning meetings and general informational meetings as the three types of advising interactions. Each type has a different focus, purpose, and drive behind it. For example, a registration advising meeting at the participating university is required by administration and affords the student an opportunity to discuss academic coursework and fulfillment of degree requirements. Academic warning meetings are again required by administration and are intended to assist the student with improving performance. Informational meetings are student driven and are for the purpose of gathering information about majors, policies and procedures. Understanding these different types of meetings will facilitate proper scheduling of appointments and afford students the knowledge of what is available to them through the adviser. An initial in depth conversation should include information about what the student brings to the table and what their family’s and friends’ experiences with advising and about their experiences with their high school counselor are. As established above, previous experience of the student and the family or peer network influences expectations. By addressing this history immediately, misconceptions can be thwarted and the relationship will be able to grow and thrive.

Finally, an agreement about expectations of the process and roles for the parties involved should be established. This can be done through a syllabus-type document, as most
students are accustomed to syllabi as a regular part of the academic experience. This
document should allow student input, but still illustrate the information that students need to
perform their role adequately. It can serve as a conversation piece but it needs to be
deliberate and explicit with expectations, minimizing the possibility for misunderstanding.
Particular dates, responsibilities, learning outcomes and assignments need to be outlined and
accountability assigned.

When devising roles and responsibilities for a syllabus document, it is important that
the adviser and administrator take into account the intended outcomes for the advising
process so that these outcomes can be clearly aligned with the goals stated in the syllabus.
Assignments and roles should reflect the learning and development that the program intends
the student to experience. Additionally, attention to Bloom’s (1956) theory and information
about levels of learning need to be attended. If we are going to present information in a
manner through which we expect students to recall, analyze processes, synthesize, and
problem solve (Bloom, 1956), an awareness of the use of his theory and its implications for
teaching will help with the process, as this is precisely an illustration of Bloom’s theoretical
process.

These goals should also take into account the mission and goals of the department and
university. For example, an assignment could be that the student has to take a learning styles
inventory online and bring the results to the advising meeting. This would clearly link to an
outcome about accommodating for particular learning style. As the process unfolds, the
adviser should allow the student to give feedback on the process and the outcome so that it
can guide both the program’s intention and outcomes. It is also important to revisit the
desired outcomes as the needs of the student population change. This is not necessarily one
uniform approach that may be more work but allows for more deliberate learning and
development intentions.

Many of the advisers and administrators expressed the same interests in student
welfare and expectations of the process. Building a network for sharing resources and ideas
is an excellent way to ensure the most accurate and timely information is delivered in the
most appropriate way. Resource sharing and ideas for what works is without cost and can
 promote understanding and camaraderie, as well as ensuring the timeliest information is
disseminated.

Because assessment of advising appears to be a weakness identified of the cases in
this study, the purpose and need for assessment should be revisited at the university level.
Each of the case colleges reports a desire to improve the assessment process. If a policy in
support of assessment would be mandated from the institutional level then the importance of
improving assessment in each case would increase. Understanding that assessment is the best
way to illustrate learning and developmental outcomes are being met (Maki, 2004; Bresciani,
Zelna and Anderson, 2004) is the first step but may not occur if priority for this is not
assigned at the university level. Assessment of the advising process and student experience
needs to take place at every step in the process, and for that to happen, specific outcomes
need to be identified for each step of the process. Specific examples of learning outcomes
could be easily measured and reported. For example, I would suggest that the ability to read
a degree audit, to navigate the registration calendar and system, to know where to access and
how to interpret policy information are measurable student learning outcomes that an
advising program may want to establish. If clear expectations for advising outcomes are mandated through university policy, outcomes will flow from these expectations.

A student’s advising experience with information he receives before orientation, the advising sessions he encounters during orientation and during the academic year, and the advising process as a whole are levels at which assessment needs to be conducted. Evaluation of the adviser/student relationship and student satisfaction also needs to be attended, while they tend to be a focus currently, they need to also occur at each level of the process: before orientation, during orientation, during the academic year, and at the conclusion of the students’ attending the university. Establishing outcomes that are intentional, deliberate and address expectations for each of the parties involved should be established to guide both the process and the assessment of the process.

The strategies suggested are for the purpose of addressing the needs of the students, advisers, and administrators. These suggestions for alleviating miscommunication and diminishing the gaps in understanding are by no means an exhaustive list of recommendations. Each group of students is different and brings with her different concerns, expectations, and unique needs that should be addressed individually. This will affect the appropriate ways to address the students’ concerns.

**Implications for Theory.**

Perhaps looking at theory in a one-dimensional fashion is not adequate. As Laff (1994) suggests development rarely happens unilaterally or all at one time. It is a process that does not occur in isolation. Discussion about theory and relevance of theory to the advising setting may yield amendments to theory and further exploration of application. Too
often, theories are established that are difficult to put into use. Reframing the discussion and allowing theory to guide rather than dictate what may produce further opportunities to expand the developmental adviser’s repertoire. As stated in the implications for practice, neither theory nor practice can operate in isolation of the other. Discussion and practice have to be informed by theory, however, as Knefelcamp (as cited in Evans, etal. 1998) suggests, a process should be established for bridging the gap between theoretical relevance and practice.

Hofer and Pintrich (1997) illustrate particular areas to address in the application of theories outlined in Chapter Two of this study. They propose that clear or more standardized definitions of learning and knowledge are essential to understanding and defining the process of cognitive development theories. In other words, while considering theoretical contributions of research, particularly those studies focused on cognitive development, a standard definition or baseline definition needs to be established. Because learning and development can evoke different meanings for researchers and subjects alike, a study’s design, relevance, and contribution can differ depending on these meanings.

Additionally, Laff (1994) indicates the multidimensional issues of developmental theory, such as the nature and certainty of knowledge are also worthy of discussion. Each of these considerations about theory itself can affect the interpretation of theory, which, in turn should affect practice. Without clear definitions of what learning and knowledge are to students, or perhaps, what development is, it is unlikely common goals and expectations can be expected or sought. Those professionals studying student development theory may be
challenged by the multiple definitions of theory related concepts and thus not able to easily apply them to their work environment.

Implications for practice are included in this theoretical implication. For example, when teaching graduate students developmental theory, use of case studies exemplifying the translation of theory to practice will be most useful. When graduate students learn theory in isolation of practice, the interpretation piece can sometimes become insurmountable. By providing case studies for the purpose of learning an interpretive application of the theory to practice, the invaluable ability to translate theory into practice is solidified. Thus, an examination of what makes contribution from a theory and how to bridge the theoretical to the practical are essential to graduate education about development.

Implications for Future Research

Further study should begin with the examination of the expectations of students at different times in the process. Using virtually the same research questions, a longitudinal study would inform the literature about how students progress and develop once the advising process is undertaken. Additionally, looking at these same students in a year, two years, and three years to find their progression developmentally and how their expectations and perspectives have changed due to their experiences would provide useful insight into the developmentally focused advising process. Additionally, it would inform practice to know if, once some of the recommendations are implemented, they make a difference. Questions to research at an institution that provides early information would include those such as: Is there a difference in learning, development, academic success and satisfaction for those students who receive extensive information before they enter the advising relationship? And:
does educating advisers about developmental and learning styles theory have an effect on student learning, development and satisfaction?

Additional research questions would include information about the practice of advising itself, taking an organizational and administrative frame to shape such a study would yield questions such as: Is there a difference in learning and developmental progression for students served by professional advisers versus faculty advisers and possibly different models? Do orientation courses have an effect on the connection to the campus and to development and learning? And finally, can outcomes be determined from the expectations established in this study? For instance, one outcome from the expectations of administrators could be that the student feels a connection with the adviser. Because these administrators report the expectation that students have a connection with their assigned adviser, one outcome could be that students report using their adviser as a source for information. The connection in this example is one for information rather than personal support, but the connection is illustrated by using the adviser as a trusted source for information, whether that is policy interpretation or guidance on procedures. Is there a possibility for uniform learning and developmental outcomes across the cases, disciplines and models? Because, in this study, the disciplinary focus of the cases does not appear to affect expectations, it should be the case that they intend the same learning and developmental outcomes for the students. For instance, each of them should consider the student’s ability to read a degree audit as a learning outcome, regardless of the subject matter.
An examination of the learning outcomes for graduate level study about student development needs further examination. Given that the majority of advisers in this study hold graduate degrees with student development foci and are unable to recall such information after their graduation. Why are these advisers not actually thinking of specific theories when talking about developmental processes? Why are they unable to articulate particular theories in the context of practice? These questions would benefit from further examination.

**Conclusions**

There do not appear to be huge gaps between what the students want: supportive relationships, good information and someone to check on them and what the advisers want to provide: supportive and interactive relationship, with clear roles delineated and to provide and be provided good information. The differences in expectations that arise can be alleviated by intentional and deliberate information provided to the student at a time before they have conceived a firm expectation about advising.

While the end goal of each participant group is the education and developmental growth of the student, the process can be undertaken very differently for each of the cases involved. Different models, advising loads and disciplines can affect delivery of services but do not have to affect deleteriously the outcomes for the students. Each advising constituent group in this study considers college as a vehicle for growth. It is important for advising professionals and administrators to be as deliberate and intentional about this expected growth as faculty members are about the outcomes for a class they teach. Without such
deliberation, students may progress through the ranks of universities without benefitting fully from the opportunities for developmental growth that are available.

Promoting the discussion of student learning and development through further research and wider spread publication will inform the higher education arena about the importance of the advising process and the important role that advisers play in the lives of their students. Assigning integral outcomes to the advising process will allow advisers and administrators to illustrate this role and confirm for everyone involved the important tasks this process undertakes. Standardizing outcomes and establishing rigorous assessment practices will promote a better, more measurable understanding of the growth opportunities provided for a student and the benefits of having a strong advising program.

The advisers’ inability to discuss learning and developmental theory was surprising. With the recognized importance of developmental advising, developmental theory needs to be a core-training piece for advisers and quite possibly more practitioners of student development theory. The link between advising and development is established (Crookston, 1972; O’Banion, 1972; Creamer, 2000) making the practical knowledge of developmental theory necessary for advisers to perform duties completely. The theories described in Chapter Two are the best place to start with the educational process. Higher education as a whole should begin the conversation by talking about the theory. Afterwards, elaboration can take place, emphasizing the utility of theory and continuing the conversation to include assessment. Clearly addressing what we, as advising professionals, want students to learn and gain from the advising process is the first step in validating the profession of advising as educating.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Administrator Interview # ___ Date ______________  Time ______
Location _______________

Research questions:
What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

Please describe the advising you encountered as an undergraduate student.
   What kind of expectations did you have for the process?

   What did you learn from your advising experiences?

   How do these experiences influence your expectations of the process now?

Please describe your college’s advising process.

What do you view as most important in an advising meeting?
Why is it most important?

What do you think an advising meeting means to a student?

What do you think an advising meeting should mean to a student?

How do you expect students to prepare for an advising appointment?

How do you expect yourself or other advisers to prepare for an advising appointment?

What is the average advising load of an adviser in your college?

What process does your college have for assessing advising?

How does your college weigh advising in tenure and promotion decisions?

Describe your understanding of learning theories (those about how people learn learning styles, Bloom’s taxonomy –levels of learning).

   How do you (or would you) use these in the advising or teaching process?
Describe your understanding of cognitive development theory (how students make sense of who they are and how that affects them as students).

How do you believe this development affects the advising or teaching process?

Is there anything else that you would like to share that you believe will be helpful?
Adviser Interview #_______ Date ____________  Time __________
Location____________

Research questions:
What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

Describe your experiences with academic advising as an undergraduate student.
What kind of expectations did you have for the process?
What did you learn from your advising experiences?
How do these experiences influence your expectations of the process now?

Describe your typical advising meeting.
How much time in your semester do you spend advising?

What is your advising load?

Describe your understanding of developmental advising.

Describe your understanding of prescriptive advising.
How do you aspire to either?
How do you respond to questions that aren’t related to curriculum?

What do you view as most important in an advising meeting?
Why is it most important?

What do you think an advising meeting means to a student?
What do you think an advising meeting should mean to a student?

Describe what you expect students to bring to the advising process.

How do you expect students to prepare for an advising appointment?

How do you prepare for an advising appointment?

Describe your understanding of learning styles theories.
How do you use learning styles theory in your advising?
How do you use learning styles theory in your teaching?
How do you believe a student’s learning style affects the advising process for him/her?
Describe your understanding of cognitive development theories.  
   How do you use cognitive development theory in your advising?  
   How do you use it in your teaching?  
   How do you believe these theories affect the advising process for the student?

How do you equate the advising process with the teaching process?

Is there anything else that you would like to share that you believe will be helpful?
Research questions:
What do undergraduate students, advisers, and administrators expect from the academic advising process?
How does their understanding of the process influence their expectations?
How do the developmental and learning theories outlined appear to be a part of expectations for the advising process?

What do you expect from the advising process?
  - How do you anticipate interacting with your adviser?
  - How often do you anticipate meeting?
  - Where do you think you will meet?

How do you intend to prepare for your first advising meeting?

What do you view as adviser responsibilities?

What do you view as your responsibilities in the process?

What do you want to learn from the process?

What influences your expectations of the advising process?
  - Do you have friends who have talked about it?
  - Do your parents influence?

How sure are you that you will graduate from your current major?

What career do you want to pursue?

Describe how you believe knowledge is formed.

How do you know when an answer is “right”? How do you evaluate the quality of an answer?

Describe how you learn best.
  - How do you think this will affect the advising process for you?

How do you expect college to change you?
  - Cognitively?
  - Emotionally?

How do you expect the advising process to affect you?

What role do you think your adviser will play in the changes that happen to you in college?

What was your experience with advising in high school?
How do you think advising in college will be different or the same?
Is there anything else that you would like to share that you believe will be helpful?
Appendix B

From: Joseph Rabiega, IRB Coordinator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: December 11, 2008

Project Title: Expectations of the Advising Process
IRB#: 617-08-12

Dear Keri:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101(b.2)). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA000003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rabiega
NCSU IRB