Grand Valley State University
ScholarWorks@GVSU

Honors Projects | Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice

9-2018

Finding My Future: Defining the Landscape, Discovering the Path

Samantha Frankhouse
Grand Valley State University, frankhos@mail.gvsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects

Part of the Business Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

ScholarWorks Citation
Frankhouse, Samantha, "Finding My Future: Defining the Landscape, Discovering the Path" (2018). *Honors Projects*. 701.
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects/701

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

FINDING MY FUTURE

DEFINING THE LANDSCAPE
DISCOVERING THE PATH

SAMANTHA FRANKHOUSE
2018

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

2 BACKGROUND

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

5 STUDENT PROFILE

9 PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

12 RECOMMENDATION

14 CONCLUSION

15 REFERENCES

17 APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pivotal moments in a young adult's life is transitioning from high school to post-secondary opportunity; whether this is to university, trade school, or right into the workforce, each student has a unique experience. Finding My Future (FMF), a local startup in Grand Rapids, Michigan, wants to give these students "the tools they need to define a future they'll love."[1] However, as a start-up that is also on a quest to be educated and informed on their decisions, FMF is in need of market research and customer discovery to better understand and appropriately design for their audiences.

Seeing the potential in today's transitioning students, the company has outlined a program designed to promote self-discovery through a framework aimed at unveiling unique strengths in each student. Presently, FMF curriculum is outlined in three steps – awareness, exploration, and design – and is administered through a question-based process. Students may choose to undertake this curriculum independent of FMF and on their own volition or at the guidance of FMF instructors. Additionally, this program engages both students and families – and promotes some intermingling relationship and collaboration between the two groups. FMF attempts to reach beyond exposing students to familiar careers; rather, it extends further into the realm of inspiration and passion for educational and occupational choice and opportunity.

Traditionally, this divide in choice separates work and passion into unconsolidated fields. However, FMF seeks to identify futures for students in which work and passion are strongly dependent on the other: "work doesn't have to feel like 'Work with a capital W.' You should feel passion, purpose, and meaning in whatever you do. And that shift in perspective can open up a world of possibilities."[2] The consolidation of work and passion, can be categorized in three ways: a job, a career, a calling.[3] The difference between these is crucial – especially considering the weight that financial, parental, and return risk play on a newly-emancipated young adult.

Please visit the Finding My Future website (https://www.findingmyfuture.org/) to learn more.

[1] "Finding My Future." Finding My Future.
[2] Kelley, Tom, and David Kelley. Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All. New York: Harpercollins, 2015.
[3] Kelley, Tom, and David Kelley. Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All.

BACKGROUND

By the time students reach their senior year of high school, they have only been exposed to a small sample of different careers – with the majority of these careers being familiar rather than inspirational.[4] An international survey determined that parents, other members of extended family, and influencers, like TV spokespeople or professional athletes, are often the biggest influencers of primary- and secondary-student awareness and career choice.[5] As the workplace diversifies and available jobs outnumber individuals actively looking or prepared for employment, students have unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on these dynamics. However, without alignment of secondary and post-secondary educational systems, many students lack the knowledge and thoughtful guidance on how to leverage the expansive and complicated network of choice.

Federal and state governments have provided widespread funding for initiatives and organizations aimed at educating students about the network of opportunity available to them when considering the path to a fulfilling career. More than $610 million is estimated to be provided to these programs in the United States.[6] This provision of funds is a sound investment; participating students are, in fact, graduating high school at higher rates than peers who do not participate in transitionary programs. The Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP), offered by 10 University of California campuses, has helped 39,000 disadvantaged high school-aged students with this task. In fact, 72 percent of these students graduated from high school, and immediately went on to pursue a post-secondary education. [7] This equates to twenty-eight thousand students of the program graduating at a higher rate than the national average of 69.2 percent (as of 2015).[8] Because this program works with disadvantaged students, the delta for graduation is much larger than a three percent difference from the national state graduation rate without transition programs; 79 percent of the schools the EAOP serves are in the five lowest Academic Performance Index (API) deciles.[9] It becomes clear that this three percent

[4] Selingo, J. J. (2017). Want more jobs? Give high school students more exposure to training for a variety of careers.
[5] Chambers, N., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Percy, C. (2018). Drawing the Future: Exploring the career aspirations of primary school children from around the world. Education and Employers.
[6] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. Phi Kappa Phi Forum, 89(3), 23.
[7] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.
[8] "The NCES Fast Facts Tool Provides Quick Answers to Many Education Questions (National Center for Education Statistics)." Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2001-2002, E.D. Tab.
[9] University of California. (2006). "A Report to the Governor and Legislature on Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships for the 2004-05 Academic Year."

difference is actually much larger and that transition programs can be instrumental in helping students achieve higher educational success.

What becomes precarious however, is the need for these programs to suit all types of students. This generation of students is one in which “the two-year associate and four-year baccalaureate degree have become a thing of the past.” This is due in large part to the fact that college is getting too expensive and “more students are working more hours and cannot take full-time course loads,” and, in turn, “part-time enrollment is increasing owing to an aging student body.”[10] Here, there is a primary issue and a secondary issue. First, students are working more because university is too costly. Second, students are taking longer to graduate, which means they are aging more prior to degree attainment; starting a career later means an overall lower potential earning power over their lifetime to pay back the growing student loans and to get the best return on investment for their college education. While there are large scale programs and some federal funding in place, there is a rising need for programs that construct a sound bridge between secondary and post-secondary institutions to guide students to the “right” occupational and educational solutions that maximize the return on investment while simultaneously minimizing the necessary time for educational exploration.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The composition of this generation is no different than those of the past. Economic, political, technological, and social landscapes, on the other hand, have changed many times over. In fact, social constructs incorrectly label these students with terms such as “coddled, spoiled, never permitted to fail…protected…[and] never permitted to skin their knees.”[11] Technological changes, as well, have greatly impacted today’s rising students and how they interact with and receive information. This result creates fundamentally different educational and occupational needs.

As the United States continues its third full decade of comprehensive K-12 school reform, pressures have mounted for significant policy, organizational, and curriculum reform within

[10] Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. Chapter 2: pages 37-52.
[11] Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. 37-52.

American education to satisfy the diversifying needs of these students.[12] The current educational landscape is ripe with opportunities for reform. However, because of various challenges to the system, such reform is difficult. Most existing transition programs today are created out of an executive order from a politician or the volunteer work of thoughtful community members; both difficult to manage because the political, economic, and social settings are in constant movement and are not always welcoming to innovation and reform in educational systems. However, depending on the type of innovation, the availability of thoughtful community members, or the intensity of political will, there could be a temporary shift in large institutional historical practices as change put forth by these efforts is generally not sustainable – especially when political or social will for positive change is lacking or constantly changing.

In its current state, FMF is a startup company forging a path in this ever-changing and complex society. While small in scale now, the company is mighty in its goals and aspirations. FMF holds a unique foothold in this market in the Grand Rapids area – with a dream to expand nationally in the future. FMF is one of very few programs that seeks to shift the interpretation of choice from just the pursuit of monetary return to the pursuit of passion, inspiration, and lifelong learning through a future career. The program is in the developing phase and, having already run a successful pilot program, is at the opportune moment for thoughtful and intentional market positioning to expand on participant feedback and better tailor the overall experience.

While there are many external opportunities available to FMF like acquiring funding and community support, it is important that the company consider marketing gaps and overlaps so that they can better prepare their services for students. In preliminary discussion with the company, two main questions were asked of two target audiences:

1. How will students respond to this product? How can we encourage students to be more receptive?
2. What will parents think about the product? How can we encourage parents to be more receptive to their child's needs?

FMF's mission is to provide "a unique program that helps teens celebrate their uniqueness and take ownership of their path."[13] As such, the first question, focused on student perspective,

[12] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." *Educational Policy*. Vol 23, Issue 2, pp. 385 – 418.
[13] "Finding My Future." Finding My Future.

became the driving and designing force for this paper as it best aligned with current company goals. Research, however, has shown that "students are unprepared for postsecondary coursework for many reasons."[14] FMF must design a program that not only better prepares and educates students for post-secondary success but also artfully illustrates the intent, purpose, and necessity of their program.

STUDENT PROFILE

As previously discussed, the student profile of today's university-attending generation born around or between the years 1995 and 2001 will prove especially challenging to proper market positioning. A survey given to a diverse group of post-secondary-aged students shows that this generation "works hard at their studies (93 percent), believes that hard work always pays off (83 percent), and nine out of ten (89 percent) describe themselves as intellectuals."[15] This mindset, however, is not unique to the university student. In fact, "from 1980 to 2002, the share of tenth graders who aspired to earn at least a bachelor's degree rose from 41 percent to 80 percent, with the largest increase coming from low-income students."[16] In a more current study, another metric shows that one third of first-time university-attending students, on average, will change their major at least once before graduation – with higher rates of major changes in the STEM fields – and about one in ten students will change their major twice.[17] In a continually diversifying political, economic, and social environment, this generation not only sees ample opportunity, but is also increasingly confused. Today's students have a greater need for guiding forces as they set their sights on educational and occupational success.

Educational choice is defined as the immediate decision a student faces with regard to classes, major, and internship choice. Occupational choice, however, is a more future-thinking concept. Occupational choice is career focused. So, when a student chooses his or her major first, they select one of several aligned occupations at a later date (i.e. when graduating from university). When a student prefers to align with occupational choice, they must find classes and/or majors that provide the core of their training and align with their future-oriented mindset.

---

[14] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children, 23(1), 117-136.
[15] Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. 37-52.
[16] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children. 117-136.
[17] Lederman, D. (2017). Nearly a third of students change major within three years -- math majors the most.

Both educational and occupational choice pose difficult and complex decisions – independent and dependent of the other choice construct. While they are similar in nature, each should be handled separately when working with students. Students are "forward-looking, so their choice of major(s) depends not only on the current state of the world but also on what they expect will happen in the future."[18] Part of this forward-looking attitude, however, requires an upfront financial investment in preparedness – and one that is increasingly sizeable year-by-year. Since 1974, "public tuition in both the public and private sectors of higher education has risen at an annual rate twice that of general inflation."[19] Scholarships have followed somewhat of a disproportionate trend in recent years. Between 1981 and 2003, "state funding for need-based grants for undergraduates increased 7.7% annually," whereas merit-based programs increased at a much higher 14.1%."[20] More recently, only four states within the United States posted net increases in provision of needs-based scholarships with the average national net change in needs-based scholarship experiencing an increase of 11 percent, with large positive outliers to skew the national average.[21] Merit-based scholarships, on the other hand, have been more recently shown to be increasing at or near about 18 percent (as of the 2007-2008 academic year).[22] College tuition is increasing at a higher rate than are needs-based scholarship opportunities – making it more difficult for students to access post-secondary education without the fear of future financial hardship.

The financial risk in funding a college education has prompted an overall shift in time students take to graduate. A study revealed that the average time taken to earn a degree for today's generation is five and a-quarter years, with only one quarter of all students graduating in the standard four years.[23] As time to graduate increases due to a number of factors, like a rise in the need to gain real-world experience, to fund their studies, or due to personal needs, students are faced with difficult decisions on how to make the best financial move while also maximizing a number of different benefits. More specifically, 67 percent of students believe that a chief benefit of a college education is increasing one's future earnings, 73 percent believe that it is necessary to obtain training and acquire skills for an occupation, and 74 percent seek

---

[18] Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? *Economic Inquiry*, 50(2), 287 – 308.
[19] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385-418.
[20] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385-418.
[21] Policy Snapshot: Need-Based State Financial Aid. (2017). Education Commission of the States.
[22] Woo, J. H., & Choy, S. P. (2012). Stats in Brief: Merit Aid for Undergraduates. *National Center for Education Statistics.*
[23] Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. 37-52.

to maintain a detailed grasp of a special field.[24] Getting to university, however, poses a threat against these goals; data shows that each additional month between high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment results in the decrease in the odds of obtaining a degree by 6.5 percent. Furthermore, those who postpone enrolling in college one year after finishing high school are 78 percent less likely to complete a bachelor's degree than those who enroll immediately after high school.[25] It is important to recognize that more students are taking less or different amounts of credits per semester due to a greater responsibility to employment, educational understanding, and skill seeking. This hypothesizes that many students are working while attending university to gain real-world experience, to fund their studies, to validate their educational and occupation choices, or to satisfy some combination of all three.

It is perhaps because of this mix of financial risk, forward-looking aspirations, and educational and occupational validation that students are more likely to pursue careers with higher returns and job security.[26] This is evidenced by the fact that "at least a quarter of college students in the United States graduate with more than one undergraduate major."[27] Promise of returns in more than one field of choice is a forward-thinking, yet precautionary mindset that some students tend to pursue. While students are potentially adding more debt to their future, it is presumed that they do this to mitigate future occupational risk.

This measure, though, is not the only lens that students use when evaluating their path. It extends into familial relationships and perceived parental approval. Students believe that parents are more likely to approve of majors "associated with higher status and returns in the labor market."[28] Further evidence shows that, in a sample size of 12 students that are representative of the diversity of a school and were also undecided in their major, both educational and occupation choices were influenced more by family than by trained advisors, like educationally-trained academic counselors. [29] Additionally, investigations showed that decisions on majors and career were actually influenced much more by family than by academic advising and living learning communities – which are residential programs that allow the creation of diverse student groups based common interests or academic success, and "foster

[24] Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. 37-52.
[25] Bozick, R. & DeLuca, S. (2005). Better Late Than Never? Delayed Enrollment in the High School to College Transition. *Social Forces* 84(1), 531-554. Oxford University Press.
[26] Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? 287 – 308.
[27] Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? 287 – 308.
[28] Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? 287 – 308..
[29] Workman, J. L. (2015). Parental influence on exploratory students' college choice, major, and career decision making. *College Student Journal*, 49(1), 23 – 30.

academic and personal growth."[30] While many might presume this close relationship between parent and child holds a controlling – or potentially even toxic – grasp over a student's decisions, these relationships promote healthier student practices: "Adolescents who report feeling relatively close to their parents score higher than do their peers on measures of self-reliance, responsible independence, behavioral competence in school, and psychosocial well-being."[31] With this in mind, the way in which parents influence their children and the student perception of financial returns remains a key focal point as an area for miscommunication. While parents do wish to see their child succeed, the promise of financial gains may not necessarily be their primary demand from their children. Rather, this perception that children have shown to possess creates a barrier between what they believe they want to achieve to impress parents versus what they wish to achieve to satisfy their own goals and aspirations. Again, it is shown that the consolidation between work and passion is not realized – and that students and parents must collaborate to identify a solid, efficacious, yet enjoyable future path.

With such a sea of influence on a student, what now becomes important is how students choose their future path. As mentioned, students are not solely considering their immediate future; evidence proves this: "60 percent of the men and 55 percent of the women stated they would choose their occupation first."[32] In fact, because students are shown to be forward-looking, occupational choice is, and should be, just as studied as educational choice. In the general scope of educational and occupational choice, "if one plans to select a major first it is a matter of choosing an area of training and at a later date selecting one of several occupations that could employ that core of training. If one chooses an occupation first, then it is a matter of selecting a major to provide the core of training that the occupation requires."[33] Educational and occupational choice are realized in a period of life students characterize as having higher levels of autonomy and self-sufficiency. As a result, students begin to have more freedom of choice, and transitions programs are in place to reveal such a fact.

---

[30] https://collegesofdistinction.com/resource/living-learning-community/

[31] Larose, S., & Boivin, M. (1998). Attachment to Parents, Social Support Expectations, and Socioemotional Adjustment During the High School--College Transition. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* (Lawrence Erlbaum), 8(1), 1-27.

[32] Goodson, D. (1978). Which do college students choose first-their major or their occupation? Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27(2), 150-155.

[33] Goodson, D. (1978). Which do college students choose first-their major or their occupation? 150 – 155.

PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Popular research has provided a general understanding of what a standard transition program looks like. They usually possess similar strategies, ranging from academic preparation to psychosocial and behavioral supports to the development of appropriate habits of mind. Further, each program seeks "to increase the rates at which participants complete high school and enroll in and graduate from college."[34] And, while each individual program tends to focus on one or two of these strategies, there is widespread variation and overlap. In the last 20 years in the United States, three forms of transition policies have been tested: college affordability and student financing, academic preparation, standards, and admissions, and P-16 coordinating and accountability mechanisms.[35]

College affordability and student financing focuses primarily on the financial obligations students face when seeking to attend a post-secondary institution. As mentioned, needs-based scholarships have increased at a much slower pace than merit-based scholarships – creating some type of affirmative actions for students that already possess some form of academic head start. This transition policy may remain effective for some small markets within the United States, the overall and comprehensive "awarding of financial aid on the basis of demonstrated need has eroded" greatly in the last two decades.[36] Academic preparation, standards, and admissions policies have performed similarly – with overall misalignment and misguided intent. These are programs in which educators attempt to adhere to standards-based educational systems and testing. However, education researchers and various national policy organizations have alleged that incongruities between secondary education systems nationwide have "diminished student access, impaired student performance and achievement, and increased costs as a result of duplication, waste, and inefficiency." [37] Finally, P-16 programs are those which attempt to create a seamless educational system from kindergarten through university. These programs give broad mandates to align educational practices with educational expectations at all academic levels.

Modern programs, like FMF, focus more on the latter of the three solutions. P-16 education programs are those that have the goal of constructing a seamless public education system that

[34] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children. 117-136.
[35] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385 – 418.
[36] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385 – 418.
[37] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385 – 418.

spans the years of pre-school through college graduation. They are transitionary programs that attempt to close the gap between what high school educators teach and what college professors expect. Each program still presents a unique perspective on what they believe to be the right fit for this large, continually growing market. For example, the Fall of 2017 showed an enrollment of some 20.4 million students in American colleges and universities, constituting an increase of about 5.1 million – or 33 percent - since Fall of 2000.[38] In the next ten years, this number is expected to increase by over two million students.[39]

This not only provides a ripe environment for transition programs, but also a great opportunity for variation in student profiles purporting the need for specialized programs. However, additional program variation is also due in large part to "the decentralized nature of education in the United States – in which states delegate authority to more than 15,000 local school districts to design and direct programs of instruction."[40] Another estimate shows that there are currently 11 million students of any age in the United States that are actively in need or could benefit from transitionary programs – with federal funding only capable of supporting 7 percent.[41] The remaining 10.2 million students are left in the hands of either state-funded or privately-funded programs. In turn, there is widespread disconnect between what high school educators teach, what postsecondary instructors expect, and, now, what transition program designers can to do fill such gaps – all the while attempting to maintain feasibility, functionality, structure, accessibility, and success for students.

Transition programs that have best practices at aligning these differences not only post the highest rates of college attendance and persistence, but also share many key features, including "clear mission, strong leadership, sound funding, diverse partnerships, wide services, dedicated staff, and long-term commitment."[42] One of these programs, Bottom Line, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, has assisted nearly 3,000 students in its tenure as a program aligned with these very principles. Of all the students this program has seen, 74 percent have graduated college within six years of enrollment – more than twice the rate of Boston public school students that matriculate to college.[43]

[38] Digest of Education Statistics. (2016). National Center for Education Statistics.
[39] Digest of Education Statistics. (2016). National Center for Education Statistics.
[40] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children. 117-136.
[41] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children. 117-136.
[42] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.
[43] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.

Other successful programs – both administered via web-based programs and in-person sessions – make an effort to outline structure and standards-based protocol, provide web availability at no cost, allow for easy administration of material, ensure privacy, and provide accessibility of reports and other materials.[44] In addition to this, certain considerations have been identified that will help evaluate programs and their effectiveness. Some examples include considering educational terrain, identifying expectations of clients, developing informational materials, making connections with existing programs, and a trial-based experience. While each individual transition program has its variations, it is important for each program to consider the market, its intended audience, and, ultimately, the real end user.

Again, this end user has choice – both educational and occupational. While they are very closely related, many programs have deemed it more suitable for students to address these choices separately. This is due largely to the fact that "occupational choice is usually emphasized and educational choice is neglected…the first step in the decision-making process is to divide the problem into parts so that it can be dealt with specifically and creatively."[45] With regard to the implications for counseling, this separation of choice allows an educator to better inform a student of the plethora of educational and occupational options available and to do so in a manner best suitable to that individual student.

There has also been widespread and growing support for programs that begin earlier in a student's educational career. More short-term 'intervention' programs levied later during a student's secondary education have been less effective than transition programs that are implemented earlier in the primary and secondary education system. Student transition from high school to college needs to "begin early in the former setting, not at the outset of the latter, especially for low-income and minority youth." [46] Colleges have taken notice of this, and help students make the leap between high school and college by offering summer transition camps and remedial courses. While these undoubtedly help, "an earlier, long-term investment in transition programs – begun when students are in secondary school--provides a more comprehensive approach" than programs that take action in the last year of high school[47] In fact, transitions programs can hold a negligible effect on students if not implemented correctly

[44] Burhanna, K. J., and Jensen M.L. (2006) "Collaborations for success: high school to college transitions", Reference Services Review, Vol. 34 Issue: 4, pp. 509 – 519.
[45] Goodson, D. (1978). Which do college students choose first-their major or their occupation? 150 – 155.
[46] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.
[47] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.

or in due time. One alarming fact from 2012 is that only 25 percent of students who took the ACT met the College Readiness Benchmarks in all four subjects of English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.[48] While standardized testing is not the ideal measure of student knowledge and capability, the statistic still indicates two things. First, secondary education is not adequately preparing students for taking standardized tests that are a hurdle to jump to start their educational and occupational future. Second, there is ample opportunity for FMF to further develop effective transitional education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has revealed that many students take numerous factors into consideration when deciding their future. This includes perceived parental expectations and familial relationships. In the preliminary weeks of this study, the founder of FMF and the author of this paper discussed two main questions: one about students and one about parents. The two groups were treated differently because FMF wants students to engage with their service of their own volition. However, research shows these two groups are not independent; rather, they co-operationalize, with students influencing parents and vice versa. Hence, FMF must rethink how to position their program. While still maintaining primary interest in marketing directly to students, the company must simultaneously remain open to parental influence, especially considering that healthy relationships between parent and student exhibit higher rates of independence and self-reliance for the student. FMF may consider responding to this discovery by creating a strategy aimed at understanding the relationship between student and parents, and the perceived perception each has for the other. Understanding this relationship – where necessary – can prove fundamental to opening a healthy dialog about goals and expectations for both the immediate and distant future, or educational goals and occupational opportunity. Additionally, understanding this co-dependent relationship will encourage both students and parents to be more receptive to student needs, potential, and opportunity.

Just as student and parent relationships and influences are intertwined, so, too, is educational and occupation choice. In another consideration set, educational choice for a student can be seen as the immediate future while occupational choice is that of the distant future. These two fields of choice must be addressed separately, then holistically. FMF can provide a more

[48] Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children. 117-136.

comprehensive path if they first help students understand each choice individually and, later, as a dynamic whole.

Another factor for consideration is the financial strain today's graduating students face. Remember, the cost of higher education has risen at an annual rate twice that of general inflation in the United States. Assistance for this, however, has not grown at a proportional rate, with merit-based scholarships increasing at faster rate than needs-based scholarships. As financial strain intensifies, and scholarships soften, it is key that FMF avoid imposing students with more financial obligation. Therefore, positioning FMF as a program, within or independent of an educational setting, with varying price points and varying levels of involvement can maximize return on investment for students while simultaneously achieving equitable resource provision for a wide variety of students. This is not to say that FMF cannot charge for their services; rather, the company might consider breaking their services into ala cart options that suit the varying financial capabilities and interest levels of students.

In some situations, a student may lack any financial capability. They may not be able to afford any part of this program. However, it is often these students who will benefit from it most and tend to be most engaged. Studies have shown that "only 54% of low-income traditional college students graduate within six years compared with 77% of their higher-income."[49] This makes for over a twenty percent difference between low-income and higher-income students; these disparaged students will require more support and structure, as access to most information is limited due to constraints that range from insufficient resources to first-generation student barriers. In order to align financially with these students, FMF should consider establishing a form of funding that includes scholarships for their program and for university attendance as well.

FMF utilizes language that strengthens the image of their final product – this is excellent. However, what is perhaps unidentified is a clear and transparent organizational outline. This includes a mission statement, purpose, pillars of operation, greater access to available materials (pamphlets about programs), and an overall identification of a purpose for the participants – a 'you' statement instead of an 'I' statement. As noted previously, successful transition programs share these qualities. By creating these materials, FMF can better define their company's uniqueness and take ownership of their path.

---

[49] Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. 23.

CONCLUSION

FMF wants to enhance student preparation for and transition into post-secondary programs and institutions. This company has planted its roots in a society in which "the absence historically of coordinated policy and planning between the nation's educational sectors has diminished educational opportunity…, hindered the academic preparedness…, produced achievement gaps, and resulted in systemic organizational inefficiencies and financial waste" for all students, but especially those transitioning into university.[50] In fact, the talk of education reform has not moved uniformly across the nation; instead, these communications have progressed separately within cities, counties and states, and rarely at the boundary between the primary and secondary sector and the higher education sector.[51] Aforementioned research shows that such disconnect diminishes student graduation rates and success. What has been shown to have a positive effect during the last twenty years in the United States is transitionary programs which have proven to be exceptional indicators of post-secondary educational achievement. In the next twenty years, they will hold the key to success for the upcoming generations. FMF is attempting to change the mistaken perception of the continuum of education that addresses the needs of today's students. They are seeking to solve for this complex obstacle through a unique, innovative transitionary program that will change the mindset of today's students from seeking familiarity to pursuing inspiration.

---

[50] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385 – 418.
[51] Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). "High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study." 385 – 418.

References

Bozick, R. & DeLuca, S. (2005). Better Late Than Never? Delayed Enrollment in the High School to College Transition. *Social Forces* 84(1), 531-554. Oxford University Press. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from Project MUSE database.

Burhanna, K. J., and Jensen M.L. (2006) "Collaborations for success: high school to college transitions", Reference Services Review, Vol. 34 Issue: 4, pp.509 – 519, https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1108/00907320610716413.

Chambers, N., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Percy, C. (2018). Drawing the Future: Exploring the career aspirations of primary school children from around the world. Education and Employers. Retrieved July 11, 2018.

Digest of Education Statistics. (2016). *National Center for Education Statistics*. Retrieved August 5, 2018.

"Finding My Future." Finding My Future. Accessed June 6, 2018. https://www.findingmyfuture.org/.

Goodson, D. (1978). Which do college students choose first-their major or their occupation? Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27(2), 150-155. doi:10.1002/j.2164-585X.1978.tb01291.x

Kelley, T., and Kelley, D. Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All. New York: Harpercollins, 2015.

Larose, S., & Boivin, M. (1998). Attachment to Parents, Social Support Expectations, and Socioemotional Adjustment During the High School--College Transition. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* (Lawrence Erlbaum), 8(1), 1-27.

Lederman, D. (2017). Nearly a third of students change major within three years -- math majors the most. Retrieved August 5, 2018, from https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/12/08/nearly-third-students-change-major-within-three-years-math-majors-most

Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. Phi Kappa Phi Forum, 89(3), 23.

Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. Chapter 2: pages 37-52. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). “High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study.” *Educational Policy*. Vol 23, Issue 2, pp. 385 – 418. https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1177/0895904808320679

Policy Snapshot: Need-Based State Financial Aid. (2017). Education Commission of the States. Retrieved August 5, 2018.

Selingo, J. J. (2017, February 23). Want more jobs? Give high school students more exposure to training for a variety of careers. Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/02/23/want-more-jobs-give-high-school-students-more-exposure-to-training-for-a-variety-of-careers/?utm_term=.57f884cb29f1

"The NCES Fast Facts Tool Provides Quick Answers to Many Education Questions (National Center for Education Statistics)." Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2001-2002, E.D. Tab. Accessed June 30, 2018. https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372.

University of California. (2006). "A Report to the Governor and Legislature on Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships for the 2004-05 Academic Year.”

Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children, 23(1), 117-136. doi:10.1353/foc.2013.0004

Woo, J. H., & Choy, S. P. (2012). Stats in Brief: Merit Aid for Undergraduates. *National Center for Education Statistics.* Retrieved August 5, 2018.

Workman, J. L. (2015). Parental influence on exploratory students' college choice, major, and career decision making. *College Student Journal*, 49(1), 23 – 30. Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/apps/doc/A409068501/AONE?u=lom_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=f7b63c46

Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? *Economic Inquiry*, 50(2), 287 – 308. doi:10.1111/j.1465-7295.2011.00403.x

APPENDIX

Research Bibliography 1

Citation

Zafar, B. (2012). Double majors: One for me, one for the parents? *Economic Inquiry*, 50(2), 287;308;-308. doi:10.1111/j.1465-7295.2011.00403.x

Reason for including this source in your work

This article provides excellent insight into the process behind a student's decision to double major. Additionally, it contains substantial factual data that outlines how a student chooses the individual majors, why they choose these majors, and shows some of the major determinants pushing this decision.

Main argument

Based on the information and sample provided, author Basit Zafar shows that students that choose to double major will select their majors on a conditional decision to double major, and will consider parents' approval, GPA, time taken to complete their degree, and how much they will actually enjoy studying the material and working in their major fields. However, these factors do not influence one major over another; rather, they influence *both* of the majors. Finally, it is important that these same double-majoring students are intently evaluative of the differences across majors and the respective working fields, incomes, and other dimensions.

Important ideas

- Students choose a major pair such that they will enjoy their coursework, gain the approval of their parents or guardians, and enjoy working at the jobs offered in both majors, whereas these students will choose working environments post-graduation based on job enjoyment, reconciliation of work and family, and hours per week spent at work.
- Students are aware of the relative difficulty of various majors.

  "Less than 40 percent of the eligible respondents believe that there is a greater than 60 percent chance of graduating with a GPA of at 3.5 in Engineering, whereas more than 80 percent of the respondents believe that to be the case in Literature and Fine Arts" (page 297).
- Double major respondents in this study tend to have a higher average GPA, more AP credits, more financial support from parents, and come from higher income families than single major students. However, this does not affect the degree to which

students seek parental approval or coursework enjoyment – the data for both groups in each of these dimensions is relatively the same.

It is important to note that students believe that "parents are more likely to approve of majors associated with higher status and returns in the labor market" (page 295).

Evidence

- "The mean belief of being able to graduate in 4 years varies from .83 (on a 0-1 scale) for Engineering and Math & Computer Studies to .95 for Social Sciences I. Similarly, the mean belief about gaining parents' approval varies from a low of .59 for Literature and Fine Arts to a high of .87 for Natural Sciences" (page 295).
- The author prompted respondents to provide answers to questions aimed at targeting elicited beliefs about various majors offered within Northwestern University's Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences (WCAS) and the School of Engineering. This data is incredibly important because it reflects students' perceptions about different fields of study and that these perceptions and elicited beliefs are frequently correct with real data.

  Students perceived the average GPA for Engineering students to be lower than a 3.5 and that of Literature and Fine Arts to be above a 3.5, and real data collected from the Northwestern 2006 Graduate Survey supports this assumption; the average GPA of Northwestern Engineering graduates of 2006 was 3.43 while that of Literature and Fine Arts was a 3.56.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

Quotes

- "Students are assumed to be forward-looking, so their choice of major(s) depends not only on the current state of the world but also on what they expect will happen in the future" (page 289).
- "At least a quarter of college students in the United States graduate with more than one undergraduate major" (page 287).
- "Students believe that parents are more likely to approve of majors associated with higher status and returns in the labor market" (page 295).

Concepts

- The difference between factors influencing curriculum choice and workplace choice:

  In the classroom: "The outcomes for which the composite major specification is used are graduating in 4 years, graduating with a GPA of at 3.5, hours per week spent on coursework, enjoying the coursework, gaining approval of parents, and finding a job upon graduation" (page 302).

---

*In the workplace: "Outcomes that are statistically significant are finding a job upon graduation, enjoying work at the jobs, being able to reconcile work and family at the jobs, and hours per wee*k spent at work" (pages 302 and 303).

Terms

- Major pair: the combination of two majors as chosen by a student. The author outlines that students elect a major pair based on the conditional decision to pursue this double major, enjoy the coursework, gain approval from parents, and to strategically choose majors that "differ in their chances of completion, in their level of difficultly, and in finding a job upon graduation" (page 288).

Strengths

- This article provides extensive data to support claims made by the author.

Weaknesses:

- The data pool for this set of data is 69 students from two colleges within the entirety of Northwestern University.

Connections

- This resource connects to the Finding My Future research initiative because it highlights how students decide on a double major curriculum.
- Finding My Future has two intertwined – yet separate – audiences: the students and the parents. This article sheds light on some of the connections between students, their parents, and their chosen fields of study. While students do not rely solely on the input of their parents, the author highlights that one-fifth of the relative contribution to major choice was to seek parental approval.
- This article is not tunneling just into the understanding of major choices and immediate impact; rather, it focuses equitably on undergraduate and post-graduate impact. This connects to Finding My Future because this organization aims to not only solve for immediate worry about finding the correct curriculum but also attempts to identify fulfilling options for a lifetime of success.

Questions/Concerns

- If this survey were to be expanded beyond the borders of Northwestern's WCAS and School of Engineering, how would the results change? Would parental approval be as important among students from an urban environment as to students from rural areas of this country? Does this vary in other areas of study completely?
- How do single major students decide on their major? Are these data similar to or different from that found for double major students?

Research Bibliography 2

Citation

Malone, H. J. (2009). Build a bridge from high school to college: Transition programs are essential for many disadvantaged students. Phi Kappa Phi Forum, 89(3), 23.

Reason for including this source in your work

Finding My Future is a start-up company based on the concept of preparation for and transition into college *before* actually attending college. This article is relevant to this project because it plainly states a similar sentiment: "Student transition from high school to college needs to begin early in the former setting, not at the outset of the latter" (page 23). This source is important to this project because it outlines some of ways in which these early transition plans can be helpful, providing solid evidence to back these assertions.

Main argument

In general, most students need at least some form of guidance to the transition into college – and many governmental entities (both federal and state) seem to agree. This preparation is even more important to the low-income and minority youth, who tend to graduate at lower or slower rates. By maintain similar principles of providing a clear mission, showing strong leadership, possessing sound funding, having diverse partnerships, employing a dedicated staff, and encouraging long-term commitment, these programs have proved their effectiveness.

Important ideas

- Different students – of varying race, skill sets, familial support – will require different levels of educational support for this transition into post-secondary education; this is most often the case for low-income high schools where "access to quality and timely information is often limited" due to staffing constraints and insufficient school resources (page 23).
- The federal government and state governments alike have provided widespread funding for these initiatives. More than $610 million is estimated to be provided to these programs. This provision of funds is a sound investment because these students are, in fact, graduating at higher rates than peers who do not participate in these programs.
- While there is a presence of these transitional programs, the author details that "there is still a long way to go" to achieve higher post-secondary graduation rates. Further, given national and international demands, these transitionary programs prove to be successful, measurable ways toward this goal.

Evidence

- Early Academic Outreach Program statistics:
  Began in 1980
  Funding in the 2008 – 2009 school year reached $8.6 million
  Works with more than 39,000 students at 266 high schools and 43 middle schools
  72 percent of its graduates enroll in college immediately after high school, with persistence rates above the state (California) average
- Bottom Line statistics
  Has helped 3,000 students "get to and through college"
  Founded in 1997
  Operates on a budget of $1.5 million
  74 percent of participants have graduated college within six years of enrollment – more than twice the rate of Boston public school students that attend college

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "Programs that post the highest rates of college graduates (or college persistence) share several principles: clear mission, strong leadership, sound funding, diverse partnerships, wide services, dedicated staff, and long-term commitment. While transition services must be designed to address local needs, these guiding principles are a blueprint for college readiness programs everywhere" (page 24).
- "Student transition from high school to college needs to begin early in the former setting, not at the outset of the latter, especially for low-income and minority youth" (page 23).
- Many colleges help students make [the leap between high school and college] by offering summer transition camps and remedial courses. These undoubtedly help. But an earlier, long-term investment in transition programs – begun when students are in secondary school--provides a more comprehensive approach" (page 23).
- "Funded by federal dollars and implemented by multiple local sites, projects like these forge trust and lasting relationships between mentors and students, offer ongoing college preparation courses and related guidance, and create diverse internship and skill- building opportunities--all of which aid student transition to college" (page 23).

Strengths

- This article provides both state and federal initiatives that support transitional or preparatory programs

Weaknesses

- While it provides a lot of data evidence, the article is quite short and does not provide extensive analysis.

Connections

- This resource illustrates great potential for growth of transitional and preparatory programs for all students; this is important to Finding My Future as this company begins to identify its target segments, develops a marketing approach, and educates individuals.
- The article mentions seven key pillars to a successful program. These will prove beneficial to Finding My Future as the company remains in preliminary prototyping and iterative stages.
- There is solid evidence that shows that these programs work. While Finding My Future is based on a smaller scale interpretation of feedback given by a local market, this article provides national data, showing positive results in more than 45,000 students.

Questions/Concerns

- Many of the programs highlighted have massive budgets. How are these programs being completed on a smaller scale and is it as effective? Do the seven main pillars remain the same? What are the regional differences in these more local programs?
- How will the demand for these programs ebb and flow with the change of market behavior (i.e. more emphasis on technology or the trades)? Are these programs flexible to these changes? If so, how? If not, are solutions being actively investigated?

Research Bibliography 3

Citation

Goodson, D. (1978). Which do college students choose first-their major or their occupation? Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27(2), 150-155. doi:10.1002/j.2164-585X.1978.tb01291.x

Reason for including this source in your work

This source provides some clarification and insight into the process by which students choose their future path, and whether this path follows an initial choice of major or of occupation. Because Finding My Future is a program designed around identifying potential in students and determining what path he or she should take to achieve satisfaction in both life and career.

Main argument

This article is written based on evidence collected at Brigham Young University and shows that students choose their majors (first) about fifty percent of the time, whereas other students choose their careers fifty percent of the time; the data is equally divided in the approach to their future choices.

Important ideas

- “In looking at the two approaches to making a career decision, if one plans to select a major first it is a matter of choosing an area of training and at a later date selecting one of several occupations that could employ that core of training. If one chooses an occupation first, then it is a matter of selecting a major to provide the core of training that the occupation requires” (page 151).
- Educational choice and occupational choice are each difficult and complex decisions and, while they are similar in nature, should be handled separately when working with students.
- These decisions must not be made with respect to the whole; rather, the problems and questions must be divided into parts such that each individual piece can be dealt with specifically and creatively.
- The only response that was analyzed in the study was one that identifies the students’ approaches to their career decisions.

Evidence

- “The majority of the students in the Colleges of Biological and Agricultural Sciences, Education, General Studies, Nursing, Physical Education, and Social Sciences stated they chose or planned to choose their occupation first; while a majority of students in the Colleges of Business, Family Living, Fine Arts and Communications, Humanities, Physical and Math Sciences, and Engineering Sciences and Technology chose or planned to choose their major first” (page 151-152).
- “60 percent of the men and 55 percent of the women stated they would choose their occupation first” (page 152).
- “Of the students who intended to choose their major first, a larger portion than expected were women; and of the students who intended to choose their occupation first, a larger portion than expected were men” (page 154).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- “Possibly, those who choose their occupation first are more future-time oriented and value security more than those who choose or plan to choose their major first” (page 152).
- “Occupational choice is usually emphasized and educational choice is neglected…the first step in the decision-making process is to divide the problem into parts so that it can be dealt with specifically and creatively” (page 150).
- “Counselors, to be more effective in aiding students with their career development, need detailed knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of career development” (page 150).
- “Throughout the United States, considerable time and money are being spent by public and private colleges and government agencies to assist students and other adults with career development” (page 150).

Strengths

- This article has a simple argument and provides uncomplicated evidence to support their assertion. It is easy to follow, understand, and evaluate.

Weaknesses

- Written in the 1970s, this article is old and may not be totally current anymore – especially with recent trends supporting more women studying engineering, computer sciences, and other fields than in the 1970s.

Connections

- It provides a few different segments and identifies how these segments choose their path – whether to pursue educational or occupational choice.
- The article was written on the premise that the United States spends considerable time, equity, and effort to support students in career development; Finding My Future is seeking to establish itself in this market.
- By identifying what choices students make, the article unveils how institutions and programs can motivate students to pursue career and life development before enrolling in undergraduate programs.

Questions/Concerns

- How has this data changed since the article was first published in 1978? Is there a trend that follows the economy and the markets or do the trends follow social change?
- What choices do students make today that do or do not influence educational and occupational choice? How does social media and technology of today and the access to public information provided by these two markets influence these choices?

Research Bibliography 4

Citation

Levine, A., & Dean, D. R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: a portrait of today's college student*. Chapter 2: pages 37-52. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Reason for including this source in your work

In my third research bibliography, I posed a question about changes in technology and how these changes may or may not influence educational and occupational choice. This article provides an interesting look into how students of this ‘generation on a tightrope’ are adjusting to changes in technology – provided that ‘the internet and the blackboard’ are now more integrated than ever.

Main argument

This article states that the generation of today is no different than the generations of the past in the choice of majors – with exception to various professional studies. As the composition of this generation has changed to include more women and people of color, business, medical, and communications studies have grown whereas engineering and education studies have stagnated. With respect to actual changes in technology (other than the effects that changes in technology have had), this generation sees it as a helpful change in the learning environment, but that professors, educators, and counselors tend to use it incorrectly or to a limited potential and, therefore, detract from the learning potential of students.

Important ideas

- This generation is no different than those of the past; however, their value of higher education and goals for post-secondary education have become “more utilitarian” than the generations of the past four decades.
- A study revealed that the average time taken to earn a degree for today’s generation is five and one-quarter years, with only one quarter of all students graduating in the standard four years.
- Students are generally as satisfied with college (79 percent) as in 1993; however, a greater proportion say they would rather be going to college than doing anything else.

Evidence

- Two out of three undergraduates (67 percent) say the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one’s earning power” (page 38).

- "Nearly three out of four, a proportion that has risen steadily since the 1969 survey, say obtaining a detailed grasp of a special field (74 percent) and training and skills for an occupation (73 percent) is essential" (page 38).
- "60 percent of all students believe their grades understand the true quality of their work and 46 percent of students say they are not doing as well as they would like academically" (page 46)
  Though this evidence is not a key point of the author's argument, it is important to Finding My Future; this company is built around creating an environment for students to learn about and expand on goals and dreams without total preoccupation spent worrying about an objective grading system. This is not to say that grades are not important; however, it is to say that students should not waiver in their goals or dreams because their grades do not reflect true talent and effort spent learning and practicing their trade.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "This generation works hard at their studies (93 percent), believes that hard work always pays off (83 percent), and nine out of ten (89 percent) describe themselves as intellectuals" (page 47).
- "More students are working more hours and cannot take full-time course loads; part-time enrollment is increasing owing to an aging student body"
  While I agree that more students are taking less credits per semester, it seems as though many students are working at the same time to gain real-world experience or to fund their studies.
  Are these reasons being taken into consideration and are there studies to show the effect of these reasons on educational or occupational choice?

Terms

- "[Staff] used terms such as *coddled, spoiled, never permitted to fail,* and *protected* to describe current students. One captured the feelings of many, saying this is a generation that was never permitted to skin their knees" (page 47).

Strengths

- This article provides a breadth of data and evidence to support various arguments and provide context.
- This article is a recently-published source

Weaknesses

- This is a very strong article; minor weaknesses are present, but do not detract from overall strengths.

- This article focuses heavily on the perspective of students

Connections

- This resource focuses on the mentality of students pursuing an undergraduate degree in a more career and real-world application setting; Finding My Future is a transitionary program aimed at understanding these mentalities and providing a preemptive resource for students to understand their goals before heading into college programs.
- This resource provides helpful data that outlines the current major distribution of students; by understanding this data, Finding My Future can better position their program for this composition of students and can more thoughtfully push the bounds on the restraints that this composition may present to future students.
- This resource shows the features of an education that students really value; Finding My Future can tap into these and apply this to, at the very least, the marketing language of their program to better attract students and position their program.

Questions/Concerns

- How might Finding my Future develop a flexible program that flexes with changes in the needs and desired features of students?
- How might Finding My Future push the bounds of pursuing popular programs (like business and engineering) to encourage students to realize that more non-traditional programs are more tangible?

Research Bibliography 5

Citation

Bozick, R. & DeLuca, S. (2005). Better Late Than Never? Delayed Enrollment in the High School to College Transition. *Social Forces* 84(1), 531-554. Oxford University Press. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from Project MUSE database.

Reason for including this source in your work

This resource provides thoughtful research, questioning, and input into decisions of students to delay their post-secondary pursuit of a higher education. Finding My Future is a resource that is available for students of all types – whether traditional or non-traditional. This resource gives clarity to the causes and effects of this delayed enrollment.

Main argument

This article evaluates the multitude of causes and consequential effects of decisions that are the result of students' decision to pursue a delayed or non-traditional education. Many of these factors (like choices to work, get married, have kids, etc.) have mostly negative effects on their degree pursuit and completion, earning potential, and future success.

Important ideas

- Students that decide to delay their transition into college education are already statistically operating with socioeconomic and academic disadvantages that are traditionally related to lower educational attainment and lower likelihood of degree completion.
- There are many reasons a student may choose to delay the transition into college; this includes the choice to work, get married, have children, or the lack of socioeconomic or sociodemographic capabilities.
- For these students that have chosen to delay their enrollment, more often than not these individuals are "channeled into institutions" that have a poor reputation for retaining enrollees.

Evidence

- "White males experiencing a disorderly pattern of school completion, labor force entry and marriage receive lower earnings returns from their education than do white males who follow a normative sequence," however, "sequencing in the life course matters for some but not all outcomes" (page 533).

- Based on a study conducted in Lenawee County, Michigan, found that “standard socio-demographic measures such as father’s education and occupation, mother’s occupation, urbanicity and cognitive ability were unrelated to delaying postsecondary education and delaying postsecondary enrollment by at least six months was negatively related to total years of overall schooling” (page 535).
- “Students who delay college enrollment by more than a year after high school graduation are often male, come from a low socioeconomic background, and perform poorly on schoolwork and on standardized tests” (page 535).
- “The average number of months between high school completion and college enrollment for our sample is eight months” (Page 538).
- “Those who enroll on time come from families with high socioeconomic backgrounds, have higher standardized test scores, and are unlikely to have dropped out of school” (page 539).
- “For each additional month between high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment, the odds of degree completion are decreased by 6.5 percent. Those who postpone enrolling in college a year after finishing high school are 78 percent less likely to complete a bachelor's degree than those who enroll immediately after high school” (page 547).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- “For many young adults, the conclusion of high school begins a period in the life course characterized by higher levels of autonomy and a series of future oriented decisions” (page 531).
- “One of the most consistent findings in a variety of studies is that a modal sequence of life course events exists, but that the proportions following this order have decreased over the latter part of the past century…The path most commonly followed is to first complete full-time schooling, next obtain a permanent job, and then get married” (page 533).
- “Students who delay enrollment may transition to other roles in the interim between high school graduation and college which, in turn, may hinder their changes of completing a four-year degree” (page 535).

Strengths

- Even though this resource is over a decade old, the data used is drawn from a large pool of participants.
- This resource does an excellent job of pointing out potential weakness

Weaknesses

- This article, though it was published in 2005, uses a lot of information and sources from the late 1980s and early 1990s.

in some of the sources it uses; however, it uses multiple sources to make up for these few shortcomings.

Connections

- This resource evaluates the effects of a postponed college education; as previously mentioned, Finding My Future is a company that, although it focuses on the immediate transition between high school and college, is also ready to aid in non-traditional students or students that mis-determined their previous path.
- This resource shows some of the reasons why students seek to postpone or stray from the traditional modal education path; by understanding some of these reasons, Finding My Future can better position their product among their different target segments.
- This article provides quite a lot of results that do not seem to have resolutions or solutions; while this was not the main focus of the article, it provides great opportunity and flexibility for Finding My Future to determine various resolutions to help these non-traditional students find their correct path.

Questions/Concerns

- How might Finding My Future better position their program to help these non-traditional students to ensure degree completion at a university that is not known for poor retention rates? In other words, how might Finding My Future expand their program to help these students find the proper programs?
- Would the program for traditional students be similar to or different from the program Finding My Future would use for non-traditional or delayed enrollment students?

Research Bibliography 6

Citation

Kenneth J. Burhanna, Mary Lee Jensen, (2006) "Collaborations for success: high school to college transitions", Reference Services Review, Vol. 34 Issue: 4, pp.509-519,https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1108/00907320610716413

Reason for including this source in your work

This resource is included because it gives ideas about various transitionary and collaborative programs formed between high schools and colleges. While the insight is specific to partnership-type programs between high schools and Kent State University and librarian programs, the new innovations can provide helpful understanding that can be beneficial to Finding My Future and their potential future collaboration with area students.

Main argument

This resource argues that in the last decade or so, students transitioning into college programs from high school experience lower retention rates and minimized information literacy. However, through collaborative efforts and program evaluation and proper identification and marketing, transitionary programs can be more effective and beneficial for students.

Important ideas

- An initiative led by KSU librarians is a program focused specifically on information literacy; however, certain objectives were outlined to help guide the current and future development of the TRAILS programs. These include:

  Be standards-based
  Available on the web at no cost
  Easy to administer
  Privacy insured
  Accessibility of reports

- Certain considerations have been identified that will help evaluate programs and their effectiveness as transition programs. Some examples include considering educational terrain, identifying expectations of clients, developing handouts or other information materials, making connections with existing programs, and a trial-based experience.
- High school students may be more receptive to new experiences and preparatory transition programs than college-aged students; priorities shift as students age.

- Exposure to necessary resources in transitionary programs can provide necessary framework to help ease academic and future anxiety.

Evidence

- No firm data-based evidence is offered; however, various testimonials are provided.

  In asking about an engaged group of high school students, a librarian commented, "I wish our [college students] would engage at that level." The resource continues to affirm that these high school students seem more "engaged and enthused" (page 514).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "High school students may be open and receptive to academic library experiences in ways they may not be when they return as first-year students. In the three months that separate high school from college, they have gained their independence and their priorities have shifted" (page 514).
  Here, Finding My Future can work to explore how to better engage high school-aged students and can also work to establish a better line of sight for college-aged students/clients who need better direction but have shifted priorities.

Concepts

- Informed Transitions: a program created by librarians at KSU to ease student transitions to college. The program has specific objectives (page 513):

  Build on, reinforce, and introduce important information literacy skills
  Lower student anxiety related to large libraries and college-level resources
  Help students succeed in the near-term on their high school assignments
  Promote higher education in general

Strengths

- This article provides a lot of ideas on different transitionary programs for high school-aged students

Weaknesses

- Little insight is given into how to help student retention for library attendance after entering into college
- This resource is incredibly specific to library-related programs and can be speculative in conclusions rather than grounded in data.

Connections

- It highlights how to set up effective transition programs; Finding My Future has a great program established, but it will need to be aligned and tailored to specific audiences. Based on this source, high school students will be easier to captivate, whereas college-aged or non-traditional students might need more encouragement.
- Certain objectives have been outlined by this resource; it is necessary for Finding My Future to outline similar objectives and capitalize on them so as to provide better informational and marketing material.
- Some pieces of this resource hint at programs that promote a continued relationship – for example, future engagement with librarians and the library. Finding My Future may want to consider the Basic Buyers Model in that they must evaluate how clients may or may not engage with the brand and the company post-program completion.

Questions/Concerns

- How might Finding My Future promote engagement with clients after the program is completed?
- What are some of the main objectives or pillars behind Finding My Future? What should students immediately know about the program, the brand, and the company? How can clients help to expand on the preliminary platform?
- Could Finding My Future create a trial-based program that will help potential clients see the value of the program? Will they still have some benefits gained from this?

Research Bibliography 7

Citation

Mclendon, Micheal, Donald E. Heller, Stephanie Lee (2008). “High School to College Transition Policy in the American States: Conceptual and Analytic Perspectives on Conducting Across-State Study.” *Educational Policy*. Vol 23, Issue 2, pp. 385 – 418. https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1177/0895904808320679

Reason for including this source in your work

This resource is important to the overall project because it focuses on a broader data set: the entire United States. It offers a comparative look at the demographics and landscape of college transition policies across “50 units of analysis” (page 387). Furthermore, this resource takes a step away from traditional academic-related transition issues like counseling and preparatory classes and instead focuses on the coordination, accountability, and feasibility of transition policies.

Main argument

The main effort of this resource is to describe contemporary problems, identify discrepancies in existing policies, assess the implications of these misalignments, and, ultimately, recommend a healthy policy solution. This resource argues that the current educational system does not fit the need for a seamless, P-16 education in which transition between each level of an individual’s education.

Important ideas

- “The absence historically of coordinated policy and planning between the nation’s educational sectors has diminished educational opportunity…, hindered the academic preparedness…, produced achievement gaps, and resulted in systemic organizational inefficiencies and financial waste” (page 386).
- A P-16 education is necessary to today’s educational system because it provides a platform on which students can be adequately prepared for a college experience; these programs tend to improve structural integration of learning material, enhance collaboration, and prevent student fright and anxiety over the progression in their academic careers.
- The current educational landscape is ripe with opportunities for reform. However, because of various challenges to the system – political, social, or financial – such reform is difficult, as most existing transition programs today are created out of an executive order from a politician or the volunteer work of thoughtful community

---

members. These two occurrences can be difficult to come by because the political and social settings are not always welcoming to innovation and reform.

Evidence

- "Since 1974, public tuition in both the public and private sectors of higher education has risen at an annual rate twice that of general inflation" (page 388).
- 69% of all Americans – in 2002 – were worried about paying for college (page 389).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "As the United States continues its third full decade of comprehensive K-12 school reform, pressures have mounted for significant policy, organizational and curriculum reform within American higher education as well" (page 385).
- "Traditionally, reform – and the talk of reform – has proceeded *within* each of America's two separate educational sectors, but rarely at the boundary connecting them" (page 386).
- "Between 1981 and 2003, state funding for need-based grants for undergraduates increased 7.7% annually," whereas merit-based programs increased at a much higher 14.1% (page 391).

Concepts

- "[The 50 states] are 50 units of analysis with broadly similar structures, populations, and cultures, but with significant variation across social, political, and institutional characteristics" (page 387).
- Three generalized forms of college transition policies used and tested in the last 20 years in the United States:
    1. College affordability and student financing
    2. Academic preparation, standards, and admissions
    3. P-16 coordinating and accountability mechanisms

Terms

- P-16: the term used to describe the goal of constructing a seamless public education system that spans the years of pre-school through college graduation.

Strengths

- By analyzing the practices of many regional interstate studies, this

Weaknesses

- The article states multiple times over that proper data for a 50-unit analysis has not been conducted; while stating

article ties many different sources and data points together	the problem is helpful, the language within the article leads the audience to believe that proper data will be provided.

Connections

- This article provides the framework by which transition programs could become more effective if the proper data sets are collected. This assumption will push the research further to discover if such data has been collected since the publication of this article.
- This article illustrates that P-16 programs do exist and that, in today's educational world, these programs have proven to be incredibly effective at eliminating many student concerns. This can give Finding My Future even more affirmation to build credibility with their own target audience.
- This resource includes many opportunities for further investigation; many of the tables are forms of databases that have been categorized based on various effects of college transition policies, questions asked when interviewing participants of transitions programs, and determinants of these transition policies.

Questions/Concerns

- What is the most comprehensive evaluation of transition programs in the United States? Have studies been conducted to show the difference in regions, cultures, and economies within just the United States?
- How have parents responded to reforms in the education system versus their children of different generations? Is today's generation more or less accepting of educational change? Why?

Research Bibliography 8

Citation

Workman, J. L. (2015). Parental influence on exploratory students' college choice, major, and career decision making. *College Student Journal*, 49(1), 23+. Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/apps/doc/A409068501/AONE?u=lom_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=f7b63c46

Reason for including this source in your work

This article pertains to this project because it explores how parents influence their children's decisions; a main question of this project and of Finding My Future's potential market approach is who the company must pitch to: the students or the parents. Many sources show parents as one of many influential factors in student educational and occupational choice. This article, however, focuses solely on parental involvement.

Main argument

This article attempts to close the "notable gap" in the research surrounding parental influence on exploratory, or undecided, students. By interviewing a number of students at one university, the study determined that while some parents might put a little more pressure on their children, the general sentiment that students had toward their parental figures was positive and appreciative.

Important ideas

- In a sample size of 12 students that are representative of the diversity of the school and were also undecided in their major, a significant theme emerged: both educational and occupation choices were influenced more by family than by trained advisors.
- Students that are undecided may experience more influence from parents due to lower decision-making capabilities; parents, in turn, "sought out to aid them in decision making" (page 24). This parental influence is shown to be welcomed and viewed positively by the interviewed students.
- The resource mentions that understanding this parental influence will help marketers and advertisers to better target their audience.

Evidence

- Many studies reveal that parental influence is stronger and more prominent in student participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields (page 24).

- "…undecided students tend to not only rank low on the career decisiveness continuum, but also place at lower levels of decision making capability overall" (page 24).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "Many students arrive on college campuses without knowing who or what they will be" (page 23).
- "Upon further investigation, it was revealed that for many of the participants, major and career decisions were influenced much more by family than by academic advising and the [living learning community]" (page 23).
- One student described her family as "'the most influential people in your life, and they're the ones that you look up to and respect their advice. It's important that you have those people in your life to weight things off of and that they're going to give you a nonbiased opinion'" (page 25).

Terms

- Exploratory students: students that are undecided in their major.
- Schlossberg's transition theory: comprised of four S's – situation, self, strategies, and support. The data collected in the interviews were categorized into these four categories.

Strengths

- This article talks about multiple different degrees to which students feel their parents are involved, even highlighting situations in which students feel some pressure from parental influence.

Weaknesses

- The sample size for this study is very small and isolated – 12 students at one university known for being a familial legacy school.

Connections

- This resource explores the influence of parents on their children attending college in a more direct way than other resources have done. This is important to Finding My Future as it will inform the company of how they should – or should not – position their product for parents to bring to their students.
- This article evaluates some of the ways a student that is undecided in their major can be influenced and how they characterize their first year of college as an exploratory

student. Understanding this can also be beneficial for targeting the older end of the Finding My Future's target audience.

- By using Schlossberg's theory, the authors of this article have created categories for the data and have provided the means by which they can not only understand the data in an easier manner but also provide a more generalized approach for future marketing and advertisement positioning.

Questions/Concerns

- How might Finding My Future look to categorize its audience so as to create various segments to which they can position their products?
- How much should Finding My Future focus on parental influence? Even if parents are a factor, should Finding My Future go to them before students, who are the actual decision makers in most cases?

Research Bibliography 9

Citation

Venezia, A., & Jaeger, L. (2013). Transitions from high school to college. The Future of Children, 23(1), 117-136. doi:10.1353/foc.2013.0004

Reason for including this source in your work

This article examines current programs in place that aid in the transition of students from high school to college. In the article, the authors also discuss how these problems are or are not adequate for today's generation of students. Because Finding My Future is a program focusing on preparing students for college and life, it is necessary to continue the evaluation of current transition programs to match what works and solve for what does not.

Main argument

More short-term 'intervention' transition programs are less effective than transitions programs that are implemented earlier on in the primary and secondary education system. While there is little widespread evidence to support this argument, it is important to note that, in some situations, transitions programs can hold a negligible effect on student if not implemented correctly.

Important ideas

- The article cites that all transitions programs have the same aim: "to increase the rates at which participants complete high school and enroll in and graduate from college" (page 125).
- Transition programs typically possess the same strategies that range from academic preparation to psychosocial and behavioral supports. and the development of appropriate habits of mind. And, while each individual program tends to focus on one or two of these strategies, there is widespread overlap.
- "The decentralized nature of education in the United States – in which states delegate authority to more than 15,000 local school districts to design and direct programs of instruction – may partly explain the variation in what high schools offer and how well they prepare students for college" (page 119).
- There is widespread disconnect between what high school teachers teach and what postsecondary instructors expect.

Evidence

- "From 1980 to 2002, the share of tenth graders who aspired to earn at least a bachelor's degree rose from 41 percent to 80 percent, with the largest increase coming from low-income students" (page 118).
- "More than 2.9 million students graduated from U.S. high schools in 2008" (page 118).
- "In 2009, only 38 percent of twelfth-grade students performed at or above the proficient level on NAEP's reading assessment; even fewer, 26 percent, were at or above the proficient level in mathematics" (page 119).
- "In 2012, only 25 percent of all ACT-tested high school graduates met the College Readiness Benchmarks in all four subjects" (page 119).
- "Research shows that students whose parents have gone to college are more likely to attend college themselves" (page 120).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- "Students are unprepared for postsecondary coursework for many reasons…including differences between what high schools teach and what colleges expect" (page 17).
- "A key question is, how many of these students are prepared for college-level work?" (page 118).
- "Students determined to be proficient or advanced have demonstrated a competency over challenging subject matter that would be expected of entering college students, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter" (page 118).
- "[The SAT and ACT] tests also have been found to be poor predictors of how students will perform academically" (page 120).
- "As of 2005, 98 percent of community colleges and 77 percent of public four-year colleges were participating in dual-enrollment programs" (page 124).

Concepts

- The decentralized nature of education: "states delegate authority to more than 15,000 local school districts to design and direct programs of instruction" and may partly explain why there is such variation in what high schools offer and the extensive variation in student preparedness for college (page 119).

Terms

- College readiness: "the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed in a college program (certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate) without requiring remediation" (page 118).

- College fit: "includes aspects of a postsecondary institution such as its cost, location, size, student-faculty ratio, counseling and advising services, student body composition, and areas of study offered or special areas of focus" (page 121).

Strengths

- There is extensive data that supports the various smaller claims and arguments made.

Weaknesses

- This article, though it provides a lot of data, is heavily focused on evidence provided by standardized testing agencies – studies have been released showing that these standardized testing mechanisms do not accurately reflect the strengths of today's students.

Connections

- This article briefly touches on how current standardized testing may not be an adequate measure of student success. Finding My Future is attempting to change the mentality of students transitioning into high school; this change will reflect an altered mindset that shows students they are capable of pursuing the life and career *they* want, not what others (including postsecondary institutions) want for them.
- There is widespread need for transition programs for students just in the United States. Each year, there are 3 million students graduating high school and heading off to college; other students have shown that students in addition to graduating seniors are in need of these programs. Currently, there are about 11 million students in the United States are actively in need or could benefit from these programs – with federal funding only capable of supporting 7 percent. Finding My Future can really tap into this need.
- There are many reasons why students are not ready or not fully prepared for college; Finding My Future must be ready to draw parallels between these needs and provide support for all of its potentially diverse clients.

Questions/Concerns

- How might Finding My Future evaluate college readiness in ways other than standardized testing has done up to this point?
- How can Finding My Future be effective for its clients in both a short-term and long-term implementation? Will they offer both of these options?

Research Bibliography 10

Citation

Larose, S., & Boivin, M. (1998). Attachment to Parents, Social Support Expectations, and Socioemotional Adjustment During the High School--College Transition. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* (Lawrence Erlbaum), 8(1), 1-27.

Reason for including this source in your work

One of the main arguments of this resource was to explore the impact of the high school-college transition on one important feature, which is the perceived security to parents – defined as “the degree to which one experiences the attachment figure as reliable and responsive to one’s needs” (page 2). Finding My Future has two potential market entry points: the students and the parents. In understanding this relationship further, Finding My Future can better position their products to the separate, yet always-connected groups.

Main argument

While there are great variations in perceived security to parents, a majority of the time these students who leave home experience a sense of separation that helps adolescents become functionally independent of their parents and strengthens the emotional ties to them. Additionally, this perceived security to parents has been shown to have a positive effect on the transition between high school and college.

Important ideas

- There are many factors that hold influence over the experiences high school students face when transitioning into college
- The relationships formed between student and parent, with respect to this resource, is hypothesized to be one of the strongest determinants of how students will feel about their transition.
- Variations in perceived security to parents generally only occurs in students that have chosen to live at university; this perceived security actually increases, whereas other pillars of social support and socioemotional adjustment factors decreased.

Evidence

- “Adolescents who report feeling relatively close to their parents score higher than do their peers on measures of self-reliance, responsible independence, behavioral competence in school, and psychosocial well-being” (page 2).

- “Other researchers have noted that freshmen score lower than do upperclassmen on social and emotional adjustment measures…Many short-term longitudinal studies have found increases in feelings of loneliness and reports of negative life events and decreases in the quality of social relationships and academic adjustment during this transition” (page 3).
- “Male adolescents who leave home to board at college exhibit increased affection, communication, satisfaction, and independence in relation to their parents, compared to male adolescents who remain at home and commute to college” (page 4).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts

Quotes

- “Attachment to parents has been viewed as an important personal resource through which adolescents derive a sense of security that facilitates independence from the family and exploration of new social environments” (page 2).
- “Anxiety and loneliness may be produced by unresponsive or unpredictable attachment relationships, thereby decreasing exploratory behaviors” (page 2).
- “The perceived security in the attachment relationships to parents predicted positive changes in expectations of support during the high school-college transition…the attachment to parents serves as a base from which the adolescents develop their own expectations of the external social world” (page 21).
- “Loneliness in college was predicted by perceived insecurity in the attachment to mother for adolescents dealing with the leaving-home experience, and by perceived insecurity in the attachment to father for those who stayed home while attending college” (page 22).

Concepts

- Attachment theory: a psychological model that attempts to describe the dynamics of long-term and short-term interpersonal relationships between humans. In this study, this theory applies to the understanding of the nature and function of parent-adolescent relationships.

Strengths

- A lot of data is used to test, support, and prove the hypotheses given in this resource.

Weaknesses

- The data collected in this study, as stated in the article, lacked specificity in criteria “on which variations in attachment perceptions may be compared” (page 4).

- A lot of the data compiled is not received in a 'Layman's Terms,' making if often challenging to understand.

Connections

- This resource evaluates the relationships between a student and his or her parents. What is interesting, however, is that it evaluates how the relationships between child and mother and child and father have different effects on student transition experience. Finding My Future has long captured both parents as 'one.' This offers a potential new experience for program development or marketing.
- Offering another perspective on the connections between parents and students, Finding My Future gains a more comprehensive look on this relationship and can better align marketing and program organization with their clients.
- While relationships with parents are important, this resource also highlights the effects of perceptions about support expectations and socioemotional adjustment. This resource is centralized on student perception – which is one of the main things Finding My Future is helping to change.

Questions/Concerns

- Being that this article evaluated how the connections to parents influences experiences of their children, how might Finding My Future still design their program for students while also appealing to student-parent relationship?