IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM IN FACILITATING GROWTH

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Emerging adulthood was born as a concept in the last decade and identifies the span of time between 18 and 24 as a unique period of human development. The recognition of this stage of growth as distinct and meaningful contextualized this transition and allowed a new wave of developmental psychologists and student service providers a framework to better understand this under researched group. Yet still more research needs to be conducted in order to address the factors and resources that are conducive to transition from this period into becoming healthy and capable adults.

This research further explores the differences between course enrolled, academic year at college, gender, and ethnicity as factors that affect adult development through identity exploration and identity commitment. In addition, qualitative interviews allowed for further exportation on how participants perceive that college has affected their transition towards adulthood.

A sample of 464 college students between 18 and 24 was gathered from three social science courses, two hard science courses, and two performing arts walk-in sessions. In order to assess differences in identity exploration and commitment, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) was utilized. Of these 464 participants, 6 participants took part in qualitative interview sessions. Interview questions provided participants an opportunity to state their past experiences and expectations before coming to college, how those expectations had changed, what experiences and events were viewed as beneficial or detrimental toward becoming an adult, and their future plans and aspirations.
No statistically significant differences were found in commitment and exploration scores between course enrolled, academic year, gender, and ethnicity. This result suggests that identity status should be regarded as a separate construct. The analysis of qualitative interviews 1) supported the validity of the EIPQ to assess identity statuses, 2) recognized developing competence and establishing autonomy as common goals among college students, 3) identified social support and the unique opportunities available at college as crucial resources and experiences conducive to adult growth, 4) identified academic difficulties and managing emotions as valuable challenges to student’s development while financial difficulties and personal crises posed detrimental obstacles, and 5) recognized that achieving individual and cultural criteria was more important in establishing adult status than biological age.

Thus, college can be recognized as a source of both difficulties and opportunities toward interpersonal and professional development. More exploration should be conducted in order to address how colleges can bolster its benefits while reducing negative outcomes. Furthermore, exploring the differences within identity status may provide us with better understanding of the services, resources, and experiences that may support emerging adults toward adult development.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the past decade researchers and the public media have noticed a trend in which individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 have been delaying major life milestones as they transition into adulthood. Researchers have shown that, over the past 10 years, people within this age range have been increasingly less likely to be married, more likely to live at home with their parents, and be in a job that does not match their educational aspirations (Danziger & Rouse, 2007; Skaletz & Seiffger-Krenke, 2010). Further, this trend seems to be occurring throughout the world, with research conducted in Japan (Cordilia, 1989), India (Seiter & Nelson, 2011), Germany (Skaletz & Seiffger-Krenke, 2010), and Belgium (Luyckx et al., 2008) all reporting similar delays. These trends have raised some concern about the state of individuals within this age range as indicative of problems within people in this age range. Robbins and Wilner (2001) conceptualized this period of life as a “quarterlife crisis” marked by intense anxiety, unhappiness and fear at the prospect of entering the adult world. However, Arnett (2007b) challenged these claims, stating that they are hyperbolic exaggerations of what is naturally occurring: a developmental transition between adolescence and adulthood.

Instead, Arnett (2000) observed a trend where individuals in this age range reported less likeliness to identify with adulthood, as well as feeling their transition to adulthood had been delayed. Due to the vast changes in the demographics of this group over the past few decades, Arnett proposed a developmental transition called “emerging adulthood.” This developmental stage is distinct from adolescence, which has its own unique identifiers (such as being in a school-based peer culture, physical changes at
puberty and the enrollment in secondary education), and adulthood (such as establishing a long-term occupation, greater percentage of being married and having a child). Instead, emerging adulthood can be viewed as a “roleless role” where a range of possibilities exist and the individual is in the process of exploring and preparing themselves within the world.

More specifically, the developmental challenge that occurs within this age lies in identity development and formation (Arnett, 2000; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Unlike previously believed conceptualizations, emerging adults in this period of exploration are often fully engaged in taking an active role in their growth (Schwartz et al., 2005). In the midst of this process, an individual is faced with difficult challenges as they move from autonomy toward independence. Research in Germany focused on the identity exploration of emerging adults, and found that regardless of whether they were in college or working, emerging adults still face the same crisis of identity (Skaletz & Seiffger-Krenke, 2010). Other problems associated with emerging adulthood include impulsive behavior such as binge drinking and reckless driving (Arnett, 2000). In contrast, a successful transition and healthy identity formation has been associated with increased sense of self-esteem, less incidences of depression and anxiety, and lower chance of work-related burnout (Luyckx, De Witte, & Goossens, 2011). Thus, by establishing a secure sense of self and developing a student’s competence and autonomy, we may be able to see benefits to the student’s psychological well-being in both the short and long-term.
As can be imagined the developmental transition between adolescence into young adulthood consists of immense developmental challenges in identity formation, developing autonomy, and establishing independence (Arnett, 2000). However, some researchers observed that college can be regarded as a prolonged moratorium (Cordilia, 1989; Erikson, 1963), which raises questions as to whether college is a benefit for emerging adults or a hindrance. Furthermore, research suggests that this moratorium may be associated with identity indecision and procrastination, which could potentially generate distress and anxiety (Adams, Berzonsky, & Keating, 2006). College students generally have a considerable amount of unstructured free time as well as free access to the Internet on campus, which may increase internet use (Shier, 2005). Other researchers have suggested that specific exploration towards a resolution to determine one’s identity is related to improved psychological outcomes (Profeli & Skorikov, 2010). Thus, by addressing the factors that affect student development while at college, we may begin to broaden our understanding of how individual students perceive their experiences while attending college as beneficial in their transition to adulthood and explore ways of providing better support to facilitate interpersonal and professional growth during college.

In addition, exploring how colleges could benefit students’ professional growth (pertaining to academic, intellectual and occupational growth) and personal growth (pertaining to social, psychological, and self-efficacy growth) will be tantamount to address how effective colleges are in fostering student development. A recent article in the Chronicles of Higher Education accounted how over 20 schools of law were
threatened with legal action over misrepresenting employability figures to their students (Mangan, 2012). As a result, some colleges are beginning to consider programs which provide additional training such as a “post-baccalaureate” program which provides placements and on-site work experiences so that students may have an easier time finding employment (Selingo, 2012). Other news articles have raised an alarm over the price of tuition. The Project on Student Debt (2012) reported that in 2010 two-thirds of college graduates had an average debt of $25,250, and the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid (2011) has reported that the average cost of attendance nearly doubled from 2001 to 2010 for four-year public institutions (from $8,600 in 2001 to $15,100). There is little doubt that the effectiveness of college in developing well-rounded students will continued to be scrutinized to address whether the programs and instruction is going to benefit college students in the long run, or will be a financial burden that beleaguer students with debt.

Another important reason this research may be beneficial is through improving student services by providing us with a landscape of how individuals transition through college. Successful identify formation during this age has been linked to benefits in self-esteem and reduction of depressive symptoms (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006; Luyckx, De Witte, & Goossens, 2010; Seiter, & Nelson, 2011) as well as decreases in risky sexual activity, drug use and drunk driving (Schwartz et al., 2011). Through a detailed analysis of the developmental stages found in college students, we should be able provide suggestions for support services to better address these needs.
However, one major limitation of the scope of research within emerging adults is the tendency to assess emerging adults as a cohesive whole with little emphasis on differences between different groups outside of the few studies that examined ethnic identity formation (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; St. Louis & Liem, 2005). In addition, little research has addressed how identity status has changed over an emerging adult’s time at college – with the one exception of a Belgium study which addressed how the sense of adulthood and identity differed between those who were employed after high school compared to those who enrolled in college (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens & Pollock, 2008). Further research that addresses college students needs to be conducted in order to assess how the needs of college students are being provided for and whether or not higher education is sufficiently addressing these needs.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the extent to which college effects students’ psychosocial growth while at college, as well as how college students perceive the effects of college on their transition to adulthood. In Chapter II, a discussion of the present state of the literature will be presented, along with further context to the issues emerging adults face, highlighting key theories pertaining to psychological growth during the college years, identifying important factors that have been identified as significant issues and challenges during emerging adulthood, and an assessment of past and present instruments that are used to assess and measure psychosocial growth. In Chapter III, a discussion of the methods and results of a two-part mixed-methods research study will be presented. The first part details a quantitative survey that accesses how class type enrolled, academic year, gender, and ethnicity affects identity status through identity
commitment and identity exploration. The second part details qualitative interviews that address how individuals with different identity statuses view how college has affected their transition toward adulthood. Chapter IV, a description of the results of the study will be presented. Finally, Chapter V, the conclusion and discussion of the significance and implications of the research, how the two-part study contributes to the, a discussion of the address limitations within both studies, and how the research can be used as a springboard for future research will be presented.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Current Environment for Students Aged 18-24

“Life in general, I feel almost like I’m in the same place that I was when I graduated, like I haven’t really gone anywhere. I’ve been kind of plugging away at a job, and I guess gaining some experience, but at the same time it’s not really applicable to a lot of other industries. I feel that I don’t know where I’m supposed to be; I ask myself, ‘Is this how everyone feels? Does everyone kind of go through a lull?’ I’ve done a lot of stuff, but I don’t feel like I’ve gone anywhere.”

(Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt, 2010, pg. 178)

Like the above male participant who Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig and Platt interviewed, college students today have felt increasingly wedged in transition. Though some have started to move away from home to live independently, many still have not felt as though they have reached the point where they would regard themselves as adults (Arnett, 1997). Often they feel as though they have been “caught between” adolescence and adulthood, with no clear indication of whether they are making developmental progress. The normative points that determine these transitions have changed over the past decade, with many cultural indicators, such as purchasing a home, starting a career, and beginning a family occurring later in life with each passing generation.

Some indicators point to the expectations and costs of acquiring a college education as being a major source of this delay. Many college students often enroll in college with the intent to acquire the knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to apply for future careers. A recent poll conducted by Rutgers University found that, of a population
of 444 students, 50% of students selected their chosen major for job-related reasons (39% of students for job opportunities in the field, 8% for the average salary in their field, and 3% for the starting salary in the field) (Stone, Van Horn, & Zukin, 2012). Some research suggests, however, that this influx of college students has delayed normative developmental transitions. Researchers at Sallie Mae (2012) reported that in 2011-2012, 51% of college students lived at home. This trend appears to continue after graduation, as a Pew Social and Demographic Trends study revealed that 39% of young adults (aged 18 to 34) live with their parents, with younger age ranges reporting even greater frequency (54% for 18-24 year olds, and 41% for 25-29 year olds) (Parker, 2012). Further supporting this finding, Stone, Van Horn and Zukin (2012) found that 12 months after graduation, 51% of their participants were employed full-time, approximately 25% were working part-time, and 5% were attending graduate school, with 11% of their sample unemployed and not in school (with 5% seeking employment and 6% not seeking).

For many, this delay is related to the increases in the cost of college student enrollment. The U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid (2011) has reported that the average cost of attendance nearly doubled in cost from 2001 to 2010 for four-year public institutions (from $8,600 in 2001 to $15,100) with similar trends in two-year public institutions ($1,700 to $2,900) and private four-year institutions ($20,700 to $32,900). Unsurprisingly, the rate of student loans has also increased to keep up with this increased cost. The Project on Student Debt (2012) reported that in 2010, two-thirds of college graduates had an average debt of $25,250. Stone, Van Horn and Zukin (2012) found that due to this debt, 40% of college students delayed a major purchase such as a
home or car, 28% put off continuing education, and 14% delayed marriage or other committed relationships. In addition, Brown, Haughwout, Lee, Mabutas, and van der Klaauw (2012) report that the median student loan balance for college students is around $12,800, with approximately 25% of borrowers owing more than $25,000, 10% owing more than $54,000, and 3.1% owing more than $100,000. This increase in debt has not gone unnoticed and has sparked debates in the public media, within the government, and between researchers in order to address what should be done over college student debt. (Caldwell, 2012; Carrns, 2012; Fairbanks, 2012; Jayson, 2012; Martin, 2012).

Other researchers have raised concerns over college students’ ability to cope and handle the pressures associated with being an adult. In 2010, The New York Times started an opinion debate entitled “Have College Students Changed?” Several professors responded to this question, including Marano (2011), who argued that the over-saturation of technology has created new dynamics of social structures which ultimately cause students to be dependent on their parents while at college. He challenged institutions to educate parents on proper parental behavior to foster independence and establish meaningful relationships outside of college. Marano’s claim is corroborated by Hofer (2011), who found in her research that parents are in contact with their college students an average of 13.4 times per week (including text-messages, e-mails, Skype, phone calls and Facebook). Montgomery (2010) takes a more pragmatic view, stating that in his experience parents are “protecting their investments,” by monitoring the academic performance of their college students as a way of ensuring that their money is being well spent. This, he argues, has elevated levels of dependency, self-consciousness, anger, and
vulnerability within college students. Ultimately, the net result of all this parental interference is a population of college students who have difficulty handling adversity on their own (Bips, 2010), and have stagnated psychological maturity (Trachtenberg, 2010). While these responses are based on personal opinions, they still represent years of experience addressing the challenges of this demographic, and provide common perspectives that older generations may possess towards current college-aged students.

In response to the growing trend for individuals between the ages of 19 and 28 to delay their transition towards a career, Robbins and Wilner (2001) identified a new crisis that appeared to affect this age group. Termed “quarterlife crisis,” this conceptualization encompasses a host of emotions and beliefs, concerns, and self-doubts within this population. Much like the “midlife crisis” in its response to major life change, the quarterlife crisis highlights challenges and pathologies that may affect an individual who is moving from adolescence into adulthood. Uncertainty about the demands and missed opportunities that result from pursuing a career, an educational path, or a particular life trajectory may cause an individual anxiety over their current trajectory and negatively affect their future success and happiness. Other individuals may be terrified by the idea of moving away from their family to develop their autonomy or to begin building emotional relationships with another person. Others still may avoid the transition altogether, preferring the safety of trusting their parents to make their decisions or stay at home where they would be less likely to make a detrimental mistake that would affect them for the rest of their lives.
Arnett (2007a), challenges the notion of a quarterlife crisis, claiming that while individuals in this age range may feel a sense of anxiety over the prospect of making a decision about their life careers, many more are optimistic about their future prospects. Indeed, as reported by USA Today, the Clark University Poll for Emerging Adults, a nationally representative survey of 1,029 people between the ages of 18 to 29, found that 56% of the survey sample stated they often feel depressed, 65% agreed with the statement “this time of my life is full of uncertainty.” However, in spite of these anxieties, 82% of their sample still believed “it still seems like anything is possible” (Jayson, 2012). Arnett argued that this period may represent a new stage in human development between adolescence and young adulthood. Called “emerging adulthood,” this stage represents an individual’s challenges in the transitioning from adolescence, taking on an adult identity, becoming financially independent, developing personal autonomy, and taking responsibility for one’s own actions.

As we can see, the time an individual spends in college can be filled with uncertainty and change. Individuals aged 18 to 25 are addressing the challenges and concerns that many previous generations have had to face (developing autonomy, financial independence) while juggling other challenges that previous generations have not had to face (decreased face-to-face communication, increased demands in the job market, and increased tuition rates and college debt).

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the developmental stage of emerging adulthood and the various factors that affect an emerging adult’s growth. An initial examination of the various developmental constructs encapsulated in this age range, and
assess whether the concept of emerging adulthood is a concept that adequately defines individuals within this demographic will be addressed. The concept of adulthood, addressing how adulthood is both a physiological and social construct that has changed across different locations and generations is discussed. Next, the psychological, developmental, and professional challenges that individuals within this age group face will be explored. In addition the behavioral, psychological, and social challenges with this group will be addressed. By identifying some of the destructive behaviors observed in this age group and how emerging adults are negatively affected by the developmental challenges they face will also be addressed. This research continues with a look at suggested methods of providing support for emerging adults, identifying potential resources and treatments to foster healthy development and growth. Continuing on, observations of how the construct of emerging adulthood is assessed from a historical perspective and how determination of how to holistically observe an individual’s current identity status as well as how to provide someone with a voice to express their goals, beliefs, and experiences. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an overview of the present research, addressing challenges and criticisms to the concept of emerging adulthood, and conclude by addressing how the present addresses some of the holes in the literature.

B. Theoretical Frameworks of Development and Growth

Psychological theories on development have had a long history in attempting to determine what causes an individual to grow and change over time. Indeed, there is a wealth of psychological theories that I could choose to explore what occurs during the
period between 18 to 24 years of age. To explore all of them would be beyond the scope of this text, but would certainly provide greater insight and would be a worthwhile pursuit for future exploration. Within the realm of development between college-aged individuals, four theories stand out the most: Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Development (Erikson, 1963), Marcia's Identity Status Theory (Marcia, 1966), Chickering’s Vectors of College Student Development (Chickering, 1969; Chickering and Reisser, 1993) Berzonsky’s theory of Identity Processing Styles (Berzonsky, 1989), and Arnett’s Theory of Emerging Adulthood (Arnett, 2000; 2004)

The first psychologist to begin a stage analysis of individual’s development was Freud with his (1949) theory of psychosexual development. This purpose of this theory was to explain the manifestation of sexual deviancy in adulthood and address normative, healthy sexual behavior. Within it, Freud identified primitive and basic sources as the propelling force of motivation. Freud stated that an individual receives this motivation for naturalistic, survival-oriented foundations which are intended to facilitate individual survival and the passing on of one’s genes to the next generation. Thus, sexual energy – which Freud called “libido” – emphasized physiological regions of the body that required stimulation in order foster psychosexual growth: the mouth for the intake of food, the regulation of the bowels, and the recognition of one’s sexual organs as identifiers of one’s physiological and psychological sex. Freud proposed, in his theory of development, five psychosexual stages based on the physiological area being emphasized. He identified these stages as “critical periods” or moments in physiological development when an individual’s growth could achieve a healthy transition, or abnormal fixation – a quality of
being stuck. Freud’s five stages are the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages from the earliest point of human development (birth) to adult maturity. Specifically, Freud believed that overstimulation, under-stimulation, or repression of the libido drive during the earlier stages of child development would manifest itself during genital stage, which occurs after puberty and continues on into emerging adulthood. According to Freud, most people would develop through these early stages of psychosexual development without these problems occurring and develop into a psychologically healthy and mature adult. By contrast, an unhealthy resolution of early psychosexual stages would manifest itself during this stage as a variety of psychological disorders that stem from fixation, such as asexuality, excessive promiscuity, a lack of development of shame, and homosexuality.

Erik Erikson (1963), however, disagreed with Freud’s claim that all developmental growth is due to sexual development and psychosexual stages. Rather, Erikson felt that an individual grew and developed psychosocially in their interactions with others (Erikson, 1968). As with Freud, his theory recognized "critical periods" in a person's life, except his theory recognized the importance of both biological markers and social challenges which embody a period of rapid developmental growth. Erikson described eight of these stages, which he identified as “crises,” that a person transitioned through during their entire life span. These eight stages are Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guild, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Role Diffusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Integrity vs. Despair. Of these eight stages, the fifth one, Identity vs. Role Diffusion, pertains to an individual's
exploration in their role within their social group and within the context of society. It is during this stage that a person establishes both their personal identity and their desired career path. A healthy transition was marked by an understanding of oneself and a direction of how they would contribute toward their own goals and/or that of their communities. An unhealthy transition would cause “role confusion,” which was a state where an individual’s identity was not established and was a source of marked anxiety and feelings of aimlessness. Originally, Erikson described this stage occurring between the ages of 13 to 18, but further recognized that an individual may extend this stage through moratorium—a prolonging of exploration by embarking on activities that allow an individual to explore identities and develop expertise, such as attending college. The process of being in moratorium, however, could potentially delay the transition toward later developmental stages. Whether or not this delay is beneficial or detrimental will be explored later in this literature review.

While Erikson provided the overall theory of human development and identity formation, Marcia (1966) elaborated on the identity formation stage by describing four states of identity statuses that can occur during Identity and Role Confusion. According to Marcia, the identity state an individual was in was determined through 1) the extent to which a person had explored alternatives towards determining their identity, and 2) the extent to which a person had committed toward any one specific identity. Marcia’s four states are 1) identity diffusion, 2) moratorium, 3) foreclosure, and 4) identity achievement. The first state, identity diffusion, represents an individual who had neither explored nor committed to any identity. This may be due to a lack of concern of forming
an identity or due to taking a "smorgasbord" approach where one identity seems as good as another. The second state, moratorium, occurs when a person is in the process of determining their identity but have yet to establish a commitment. Unlike diffusion, however, an individual in moratorium tends to actively seek direction and works towards determining who they are to become. The third state, foreclosure, represents a commitment to a specific identity before an individual has thoroughly explored potential options—oftentimes they either have made up their mind early or they are following their parent's goals for them. Marcia recognizes that a certain degree of rigidity is common in a foreclosed identity status, where, if outside forces challenged that person's ability to achieve, that status would be perceived as an extreme threat to their psychological well-being. The final status, identity achieved, represents an identity status that has explored potential possibilities and has reached a commitment. Unsurprisingly, Marcia noted that individuals who are identity achieved tended to persevere in their commitments longer and had realistic aspirational goals. Marcia's theory of identity status is used frequently to address the psychological well-being of individuals as they are attempting to transition from college into a professional career (Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010), as well as how various identity statuses are integrated, such as racial, gender and ego identities as explored by Miville, Darlington, Whitlock, and Mulligan (2005).

Another theory began in 1959 and emphasized how colleges affected student development. At Goddard College, Chickering was responsible for evaluating the impact of curricular practices on college student development (Evans, Forney, & Guido- DiBrito, 1998; Thomas & Chickering, 1984). In order to do this, he administered a series of
achievement tests, and personality inventories to Goddard students in sophomore and senior classes. In addition, several additional students were selected to keep diaries of their thoughts or had been interviewed on their thoughts and experiences while at college. Between 1964 and 1969, Chickering brought more data which he gathered from his work with The Project on Student Development in small colleges, which drew data from different colleges and universities in order to determine the effect of college environment on student development. Chickering (1969) identified what he called vectors of student development, which marked actions, goals, or needs that had specific direction and magnitude. His initial theory included seven vectors: 1) achieving competence, which included intellectual competence (the ability to be proficient in understanding and using knowledge), physical competence (the ability to be proficient in physical skills and abilities), social/interpersonal competence, and finally general competence (the ability to be confident in one’s own competencies); 2) managing emotions, which included controlling one’s own impulses while also finding a way to express those emotions in meaningful and productive ways; 3) becoming autonomous, which included being free of the “pressing need for reassurance, affection and approval” (pg. 12), and the ability to cope with problems and making progress toward one’s needs and desires; 4) establishing identity, which included determining what kind of experiences are safe and satisfying, as well as establishing personal satisfaction towards one’s own physical appearance, physical needs, and sexual roles and behavior; 5) freeing interpersonal relationships, which included fostering proficiency in cooperation, establishing tolerance toward a wide range of different groups and beliefs, and creating secure intimate relationships; 6)
clarifying purposes, which included recreational interests (activities that can be started and stopped quickly through which the only purpose is the satisfaction derived from activity), vocational plans and aspirations (which continues the exploration that started in high school, but also affirms and establishes a set of future choices and meaningful next steps), and general life-style considerations (activities towards how one establishes themselves in the community and lives their lives); and 7) developing integrity, which included the humanizing of values (where an individual recognizes the meaning of the law and applies a less rigid adherence to them as necessary), the personalizing of values (where an individual identifies and takes on the values that they believe is important and relevant to their own beliefs and understanding of the world), and the development of congruence (where an individual feels a sense of parallel to their own actions to the values that they have chosen to ascribe to).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) revised Chickering’s theory, adding contributions and insight gained from the years of research that followed (Pascerella & Terenzini, 2005) and in response to research that found that African American college students experienced different trajectories from whites in predominately white colleges (Fleming, 1985; Hughes, 1987). Thus, the seven vectors became 1) achieving competence, which now included knowledge acquisition, increased intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural sophistication, and development of higher-order cognitive skills; 2) managing emotions, which now included experiencing feelings of wonder, sympathy, caring, and optimism; 3) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, which now recognized the importance of balancing the need to be independent and the need to belong; 4)
developing mature interpersonal relationships, which moved its placement above identity and represents and increasing awareness and appreciation for different ideas, backgrounds, and values, 5) establishing identity, which now included a stronger emphasis on sexuality, gender identity, and the historical context of ethnic heritage; 6) developing purpose, which retained its original conceptualization; and 7) developing integrity, which also retained its original conceptualizations.

Berzonsky (1989) provides a final piece to the construction of identity formation. However, instead of focusing on the identity status, Berzonsky’s conceptualized the process that an individual may use to approach their identity development. His theory conceptualized three orientations. The first orientation is 1) information oriented, actively seeks out, elaborates, and utilizes self-relevant information when making identity-relevant decisions and solving personal problems. His research suggested that individuals with this orientation tended to desire to establish one’s identity formation and sought experiences that allowed this to be a possibility. An individual who was said to be information oriented was associated with being in a state of constructive moratorium moving towards identity achievement. The second orientation is 2) normative orientation, which occurred when an individual relied more automatically to the prescriptions and expectations of significant others and reference groups. In this orientation an individual chooses to forgo their own identity development for an already established identity. These individuals were associated with foreclosure identity formations. Finally, the third orientation is 3) diffuse-avoidant style which attempted to procrastinate and delay identity development as much as possible. This identity
orientation was often related to hedonistic desires and emphasized situational consequences more than emphasizing long-term goals. This identity orientation was also closely associated with diffusion and nonproductive moratorium. In addition to future identity status, these identity orientations have also been associated with coping strategies and test anxiety (Berzonsky, 1992), as well as one’s ability to self-reflect and foster personal insight (Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008).

Prior to the last century, not many researchers had explored the process of development within younger adults. Historically, the concept of “young adulthood” consisted of an age range between the ages of 18 to 35. Yet the process that determines the transition from adolescence to adulthood was not extensively explored. Thus, Arnett (1997) sought to determine which "criteria for the transition of adulthood" college students would endorse as significant indicators of being an adult. When asked whether or not this group of college students felt they had reached adulthood (between the ages of 18 to 25), Arnett discovered that 27% responded "yes," 10% responded "no," and 63% responded "in some ways yes, and in some ways no." By contrast, among people ages 25-30s, 63% responded "yes," 2% responded "no," and 35% responded "in some ways yes, and in some ways no." The drastic change of identification of individuals between a span of roughly six to eight years caused Arnett to further research the process within this group to determine the cause for this change in perception. His exploration prompted Arnett to identify a new developmental stage that occurs during age range: emerging adulthood.

Arnett (2004) stated that emerging adulthood possesses five main features: 1) a
time when a person focuses on identity formation, 2) a time when a person feels instability in their social and interpersonal status, 3) an time when a person has the opportunity to emphasize attention on themself, 4) the time of feeling in-transition, and 5) a time when a vast number of possibilities are available. The first feature, a time when a person focuses on identity formation, described how many individuals understand this time as a period of freedom and exploration. Up until this age range, an individual had mostly been supervised by their parents. However, it is during this time of their life that emerging adults move out and attempt to establish their own independence. As the person progresses during emerging adulthood, other transitions towards stable and life-long commitments occur, such as shifting the emphasis of dating from an opportunity to socialize and fraternize into seeking a romantic partner and marriage companion, and also moving from short-term employments towards in a long-term career of adult occupation.

The second feature, a time when a person feels instability in their social and interpersonal state, is recognized as the time period that is the most transitory stage in a person's life (Arnett, 2004). As an individual attempts to determine their identity and what they are going to do, they usually establish their goals and objectives, as well as form plans and make determinations of what needs to occur in order to be successful in their desired area of exploration. These goals, however, may be subject to change due to new interests, changes in the environment, or when an option is no longer desired or realistically obtainable. An individual during this stage may have to modify the plan in order to adapt to new situations and challenges, which can cause an emerging adult to be in a state of flux and cause anxiety and uncertainty of what the future may bring.
The third feature of emerging adulthood is as a time when a person has the opportunity to emphasize attention on oneself (Arnett, 2004). During this time period one recognizes that this is one of the few points in an individual’s life where they have fewer commitments to anybody than themselves. Indeed, a person can focus their attention inwards for their own fulfillment and sufficiency. They can learn to establish and create their own style and personality independent of the needs and desires of others. This is perhaps where one of the myths of emerging adulthood comes from: the idea that prolonging this period of self-directed growth is maladaptive and opportunistic. This is a notion that has been refuted by Arnett (2007b) when he observed that current emerging adults are volunteering more regularly than previous generations, such as an increased proportion of college freshman reporting from 66% in 1989 to 82% in 2001, as well as a vast majority comprising of the 8,000 individuals in the Peace Corps and 70,000 in AmericCorps. In addition, Arnett believed that this transition is often temporary, with many emerging adults expressing a desire to be recognized as full adults. In addition, Côté (2002) stated that colleges represent an excellent opportunity for “identity investments” which an emerging adult may draw on interpersonal, social, educational, and occupational resources, social networks, and acquired professional and life strategies during this time toward future careers, demands and goals. In this way Côté argued that college can be viewed as potentially possessing both “moratorium effects,” or a delay in development and growth, and “acceleration effects,” or an enhancement in development and growth.

The fourth feature, the time of feeling in-transition, recognizes that individuals
within emerging adulthood are neither an adolescent nor are they a young adult (Arnett, 2004). Arnett (2000) argued that this stage needs to be identified as distinct from adolescence and adulthood. Emerging adulthood is not adolescence because adolescents encompasses a specific set of developmental transitions that emerging adults have already experienced (i.e., physical maturation during puberty, still enrolled in high school, and so on). Furthermore, emerging adulthood is not young adulthood, because young adulthood encompasses a range of developmental transitions which include parenthood, settling in with a long-term career, and beginning to establish oneself as a recognizable adult within the community that emerging adults have yet to experience. Thus, emerging adults are recognized as being in a state between two: neither adolescents nor young adults, but in the process of moving from one state to the next and yet may have characteristics from each.

The last feature, a time when a vast number of possibilities are available, recognizes the openness for the conduciveness of future events and endeavors (Arnett, 2004). When asked, most emerging adults look forward and anticipate the possibility of having a happy family, a career that is representative of their educational experience and personal interests, and being financially well established. While in many ways these beliefs are adaptive and beneficial, sometimes they can also cause problems. For example, some individuals become stuck between choosing a career path in which they attempt to seek out an idealistic "perfect job" that satisfies all their personal and financial desires, and in their desire in finding a "soul mate" that possesses unrealistically impossible qualities. This pursuit of perfection and the most desired outcome could be a
potential source of unhappiness if their expectations are not met, and could also undermine their ability to take advantage of opportunities that are available that could lead them closer to their desired outcomes (Arnett, 2007; Luyckx, De Witte & Goossens, 2011).

Thus, we can see how developmental theories provide a lens of college student development and identity formation. These developmental theories, beginning with Freud and Erikson and continuing on through the work of Arnett and Berzonsky, provides us with many ways to view and understand the developmental growth and development of the emerging adult. As we can see, there are many potential factors that could potentially influence an individual's trajectory through this period. The next section will look at how the process of development manifests itself in the context of the specific challenges that an emerging adult typical for this generation may face, as well their unique goals and needs.

C. Individual Development in Context

While addressing the developmental growth of an individual, two challenges need to be addressed: the fact that the construct that is being observed is socially, culturally, and historically embedded, and that this construct also consists of an individual, interpersonal aspect. Eccles (2009) provided evidence of these challenges, stating that both culture and individual growth are related to identity development. She began by differentiating between two types of identities: personal identities and collective/social identities. The personal identity represents the self that is known through observation of one's own behaviors and characteristics—an established self, while the collective identity
represented the personally valued parts of the self that serve to strengthen one’s ties to valued social groups and relationships. Thus, in order to get a better understanding of how each of these factors interact and create a developmental life path that is unique to the individual, we should first begin with an examination of each of these factors separately.

1. The effects of societal norms and culture on emerging adulthood. The norms and beliefs that make up an individual’s understanding of the world are devised by more than just their own cognitive processes. Both the temporal and cultural contexts that an individual lives within have major effects on the schema of what constitutes adulthood. The criteria and expectations of what makes an individual an adult is something that is internalized from societal norms and the cultural environment that a person is born into. For example, emerging adults in the United States have very different personal, parental, and peer expectations of what constitutes adulthood than an emerging adults in India (Seiter & Nelson, 2011). Eccles (2009) further posited that 1) every cultural group has notions about the ordering of developmental tasks and experiences and then structures the transitions to adulthood accordingly; in addition 2) with increasing maturity, each individual will become better able to pick social contexts and experiences that allow them to shape their own beliefs, creating new contexts and conceptualizations while also modifying existing understandings.

In addition to being culturally embedded, the historical context also plays a significant role in the conceptualization of adulthood. For example, a Swiss cross-sectional study conducted by Bangerter, Grob & Krings (2001) assessed three groups of
cohorts: 1) one group who became emerging adults between the years 1920 to 1925, 2) a second group who became emerging adults between the years 1945 and 1950, and 3) a third group who became emerging adults between the years 1970 and 1975. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews which focused on significant life events, life satisfaction, and personal goals at different points over their life span. They found that the youngest group (those born between 1970 and 1975) reported significantly fewer family-oriented goals than the previous two groups, while goals of education and time/leisure were endorsed significantly more often. Interestingly, work-related goals were not significantly different among the groups despite criticisms that each successive generation is lazier than the last. To explain the observed differences, the researchers stated that increased access to education as well as changes in the economic growth between the two World Wars was related to variations in the subjective group goals. In addition, the findings that the youngest group reported a larger overall number of goals encompassing a broader range of aspirations (such as greater emphasis on education, time/leisure, and material goals) as well as greater incidence of self-related goals, which pertain to personal characteristics and self-fulfillment. The researchers believe that this result could due to an increased availability of opportunities compared to earlier generations. Another explanation could also be due to selective recall in the older groups, who may be under-reporting their choices at an early time in favor of the supporting the decisions that were actually made.

The processes of becoming an adult can also be viewed as socially constructed as it is a societal understanding of normative turning points and transitions that are expected
to occur within a person’s life. Hareven and Masaoka (1988) assessed these transitions as the movement of individuals and families as they progress through the life cycle. Their research conceptualized such transitions as normative if a majority of the population experiences them. One such example of this would be the normative process of acquiring autonomy through moving out of a parent or guardian’s home. This is often viewed as a normative process for many emerging adults in the United States and elsewhere, and the process of moving out into a new residence is an important normative transition. The researchers differentiated some major transitions as “turning points” which represents significant perceptual road marks along the life course. These major turning points typically contained five characteristics: 1) when a transition coincides with a crisis or follows a crisis, 2) when a normative transition is accompanied by a family conflict due to clashes between individual and community transitions, 3) when a transition occurs earlier or later than what is perceived as normative, 4) when an unexpected or unseen negative consequence occurs as a result of a transition, and 5) when the transition causes changes that requires alterations to a person’s social adjustment.

As an example, Hareven and Masaoka (1988) provided evidence of the effects of these transitions through an assessment of three Japanese cohort groups born between 1920-1922, 1928-1929, and 1934-1939, and compared them with the two additional cohort groups from Manchester, Indiana. Within the Manchester, Indiana group, 42 participants aged 60-69 came of age during the Great Depression and 43 participants between the ages of 50-59 who came of age during World War II. Interestingly, these two decades created sharp distinctions in the group’s understanding and
conceptualizations of normal transitions. An example lies in the importance of employment. Due to the uncertainty of employment opportunities during the Great Depression, sporadic periods of unemployment were not viewed as major difficulties within the life transition of the group that came of age during the Great Depression. The researchers recognized that this lack of work urgency within the group was due to insufficient employment opportunities at the time. Those in the Indiana cohort who came of age during World War II, however, had substantially more occupational and military opportunities, which may have ultimately delayed developmental transitions towards family life but also led to more structured life transitions. The researchers observed that these transitions were similar to those seen in the same aged Japanese emerging adults, whose three transitions milestones included independence, marriage, and household leadership and who also experienced similar delays transitional delays during World War II. By contrast, those who came of age during World War II when more jobs became available placed greater importance on employment and considered it a normative transition. To these emerging adults, unemployment was a major crisis that could potentially impede the development of autonomy and independence. Amazingly, Hareven and Masaoka’s research that suggests the expectation of orderly transitions—that is, the expectation that an individual first achieves stable employment before proceeding to financial independence and then moving on to family growth—only became common in the years following World War II. Before World War II, normative transitions followed a less sequential, nonlinear fashion (such as pursuing a family before achieving a stable sense of employment, etc.).
Another study conducted by Whitbourne, Sneed, and Sayer (2009) addressed the effects of both cohort membership and historical context had on a group's development. As part of a long-term longitudinal study which assessed psychosocial development, 349 individuals born in 1946 were first assessed in 1966-68 (when they became 20 to 24 years of age), while another group born in 1957 was first assessed in 1977 (when they became 20 years of age). Both groups were then assessed in 1989 and 2000, to track changes over time. Their analysis attempted to determine differences in educational attainment, occupational prestige, long-term readership, and parental status. Their results support Erikson's model of psychosocial development, which represents psychosocial growth as an ongoing progression where various stages are met and revisited as an individual develops later. This progression further posits that psychosocial growth is a continuing process that occurs throughout an individual's lifespan. Their results suggested that an individual’s resolution of industry, identity, and intimacy achievement tended to reach the same level of success but were also subject to the influence of historical factors which may hasten or hinder growth. For example, the 1946 cohort initially began with lower scores on industry compared with their younger counterparts. Over time, however, the researchers were able to determine that these individuals began with jobs of lower prestige and that they were eventually able to achieve higher positions of employment and exceed their peers in industry scores. These results also suggest that individuals may overcome deficits in initiative, intimacy, and generativity and catch up with their more advantaged peers (and in fact, in regards to intimacy, participants that were not in a committed relationship early in adulthood showed continued gains over the
course of the study and eventually exceeded their peers who were in a committed relationship earlier in their lives). Whitbourne et al. (2009) concluded that psychosocial challenges in adulthood continue to be returned, revisited and developed throughout one’s life, continuing up to at least a person’s 50s (and possibly beyond).

So knowing this, what are the expected cultural challenges that emerging adults are expected to face? Shanahan (2000) observed that over the past 100 years, people have become increasingly freer of traditional constraints of family and societal expectations, which has provided for a greater breadth of individualistic exploration. This observation is further supported by Arnett (2007a), who stated that one of the biggest challenges of emerging adults is determining their future direction and where they wish to develop skills and expertise. Indeed, if we were to look at the results of Hareven and Masaoka’s 1988 study, we could see that as the U.S. emerged from the Great Depression and into World War II, there were more employment opportunities available. Bangerter et al. (2001) also observed that many individuals (especially women) born between the years 1920 to 1925 stated that it was impossible for them to pursue a college education after finishing high school. In comparison, recent generations of emerging adults have fewer restrictions that prohibit them from enrolling in higher education. Danziger and Rouse (2007) provided further context by addressing the economic shifts that have occurred within the past 30 years. They suggest that part of the reason why individuals delay their transition into "adulthood status" lies in the economics of making this decision. Specifically, they observed that trends in marriage and living arrangements among young adults (people are marrying older and are moving out later), are due to having difficulty
securing employment that does not require higher degrees of education that is far less likely to be secure than previous generations. In addition, the costs to finance education has gone up while federal financing programs (such as Pell grants and Stafford loans) have remained relatively consistent, causing many to have to find work to pay off college costs and loans during and after college. Due to all this, Danziger and Rouse predicted that the ease and availability of credit may become another source of financial burden in the future. All of these changes in the economic changes and social environment alter the trajectory of development and growth of emerging adults.

In addition to historical embeddedness, cultural norms and expectations can also change what norms and expectations a person and a society may impose on individual development. For example, Low, Akande and Hill (2005) performed a cross-cultural comparison of identity development between 149 students from South Africa and 123 students from the U.S. who ranged from the ages of 19 to 25. Their results were striking. In the South African sample, 50% were classified as being identity achieved (with 26% in moratorium, 13% foreclosed, 11% diffused). By contrast, remarkably only 8% of the U.S. sample were classified as being identity achieved (with 41% in moratorium, 22% foreclosed, and 29% diffused). The researchers explain that one potential reason for this difference is due to the fact that South African students need to declare a major before being admitted to a university and there is an expectation of not changing that major after matriculation. Compare this to the U.S., where emerging adults are increasingly left on their own to make their own life decisions and in the U.S. students appear to have less direction in determining their life paths. The researchers further found significant
differences in political identity (with South Africans being more achieved than the U.S.), in friendship (with South Africans being more foreclosed than the U.S.), in dating (with South Africans being more foreclosed and in moratorium than the U.S.), in philosophical lifestyle, which pertains to the extent to which an individual has established their own philosophical beliefs and values (with South Africans being more achieved than the U.S.), and in occupation (with South Africans being more diffused than the U.S.). The researchers conclude that in general, students from South Africa tend to explore ideological domains while relying on parental and societal norms for interpersonal domains.

Another example of how cultural norms and expectations can effect individual development can be seen in Cordilia’s (1989) description of college students in Japanese colleges. In general, the educational processes within Japan places higher emphasis on the process of getting enrolled in a university and on the high-stakes placement tests necessary to apply. Upon acceptance, college culture is often an extremely lax period in the Japanese student’s life. Cordilia reported two broad themes that describe this period in Japanese university students: 1) college as a time of unparalleled freedom, and 2) college as a unique period during which students have the opportunity to learn about themselves and society. Indeed, many students struggled with the unparalleled freedom offered within college, and some have difficulty finding structure after many years of highly organized pre-college educational curricula. This is a unique period nestled within the academic rigors necessary to enroll, and the occupational expectations of entering into a career. As such, many Japanese college students seized this period of time to
explore their own interests, travel, communicate with individuals they would not otherwise, or work. Cordilia believed this transition period is a positive one, providing a momentary impasse of personal growth and exploration that is unique to this particular group.

Another study conducted by Seiter and Nelson (2011) examined how emerging adulthood manifests in India. They explained that people of India possess distinct differences in ideological beliefs and social structures that set them apart from the U.S. For example, Hinduism delineates four stages of life: 1) brahmcarya (a time for studentship, discipline and preparation for future relationships), 2) grhasthasrama (a time when a person marries, has children and fulfills their role as householder), vanaprastha (the “retiring forest-dweller stage” where one loosens the bond created during life), and 4) sanyasa (a time one renounces past and present relationships in order to seek spiritual emancipation). The ultimate reward, moksha, is acquired when one achieves dharma, or their moral duty. In addition to their spiritual beliefs, traditional India’s society is organized by a caste system which constitutes two parts: varna and jati. Varna is related to the duties assigned to an individual by their Lord and is related to specific parts of their body. Those born of the mouth, for example, become priests, while those born of the arms become merchants, and those born of the feet were appointed positions of servants. The other caste, jati, once used to determine one’s occupation at birth, but is now used to determine the caste group that a person is expected to marry into. Finally, Seiter and Nelson note that a majority of Indians still have marriage arranged by their parents or
members of their kinship through the belief that such important matters should not be determined by individuals who are more inexperienced.

Seiter and Nelson’s (2011) study examined the constructs of emerging adulthood (adult status, criteria of adulthood, and perceived optimism) in a population of Indian emerging adults. They assessed 576 emerging adults between the ages of 18 to 26. Respondents were predominately unmarried (89%), Hindu (87%) and came from families that had little higher education (90% of mothers and 83% of fathers receiving high school education or less). Of these participants, 476 were graduate and undergraduate students, while 100 participants were from rural villages surrounding the city of Coimbatore. They found that a majority of the respondents (61%) felt that they had reached adulthood. This was much higher than Arnett’s (1997) study of 346 U.S. college students, of which only 27% felt they reached adulthood. In regards to criteria for adulthood, Seiter and Nelson (2011) found that top criteria included for all participants was “becoming capable of keeping their family physically safe,” and for men, “becoming capable of supporting their family financially,” which were similar to results found in America and China. One difference that may have reflected Indian culture where the emphasis is taking care of the family, for example, 84% of male respondents indicated that “being capable of supporting parents financially” was a necessary attribute for being considered an adult.

Finally, in regards to optimism, 60% of the participants responded that they think they will do better financially than the previous generation. The researchers believed that this may be due to 1) India’s rapidly increasing economy, 2) a lessening of discrimination based on caste and gender, and 3) affirmative action policies making education more
widely available. This sense of optimism, however, is not distributed evenly: while 74% of students reported being optimistic, only 35% of the nonstudents surveyed from rural areas reported being optimistic. The researchers noted that this may be due to literacy rate (59% in rural, compared to 80% literacy in urban areas), and caste distinctions. Taken collectively, research conducted by Cordilia (1989) and Seiter and Nelson (2011) provides strong evidence that cultural norms, beliefs, and climate can have a profound effect on how emerging adulthood is conceptualized and constructed for college students.

However, we do not need to look to other countries to witness how cultural norms and expectations can affect identity. Discrepancies in beliefs and cultural identification can be observed within our own borders through differences in ethnicity, religious practices, regional norms, and group beliefs. For example, one study conducted by Barry and Nelson (2005) assessed the affects religion has on 1) the criteria emerging adults deem necessary for adulthood, 2) the extent to which emerging adults felt they had achieved these criteria, 3) various spiritual beliefs and practices, and 4) risk behaviors they engaged in characteristics of the time period. Their study assessed 445 students between 18 to 20 years old attending Mormon, Catholic, and public universities (control group). They found that students who attended Mormon universities placed greater importance on interdependence, norm compliance, and family capacities (defined as being able to establish and support a family) and religion as a culture compared to students that attended public and Roman Catholic universities, which suggested a strong investment for Mormon students towards these norms and beliefs. The Roman Catholic group, by contrast, only differed from the control group on family capacities, which
suggested a commonality in norms between Roman Catholic and non-Catholic groups. In regards to achieved criteria, the Mormon group rated themselves higher on achieved independence, norm compliance and family capacities than the Catholic and control group, and the control group rated their own interdependence and family capacities scores higher than the Catholic group. For spirituality variables, Mormons rated themselves higher on religious culture, religious practices, religious importance, religious certainty, and belief in God. Once again, the control group rated themselves higher on religious culture than the Catholic group, while Catholics rated themselves higher than the control on religious practices and belief in God than the control group. Finally, in regards to risk behaviors, Mormons reported avoiding getting drunk, avoiding drunk driving, and avoiding using illegal drugs at a higher rate compared to both Catholics and the control groups. These results suggested that religious practices and beliefs may have an effect on how particular groups emphasize certain behaviors as being important to adulthood as well as steps necessary to be regarded as an adult. These results also suggested that within Mormon communities, religious beliefs and practices are much more salient in their cultural and lived experiences, while Catholic and non-Catholic groups may possess different religious practices but maintain similar cultural norms and societal beliefs. The authors, however, cautioned against viewing these results as better or worse, and that the results simply provides more clarification on the multiple dynamics of culture and social groups in this age group. As we will see later, differences between and within groups have also been noted to be a significant influence on norms and beliefs as well (St. Louis & Liem, 2005; Tsai & Fuligni, 2012).
One might suspect that, with all of these differences, discovering commonalities between cultural, religious, and peer groups may be impossible. However, despite the differences across culture and times there are similarities. A study conducted by Sheldon, Kasser, Houser-Marko, Jones, and Turban (2004) assessed how the changes in external motivation (behavior that is performed out of situational circumstances towards obtaining rewards or avoiding punishments) and interjected motivation (behavior that is performed to relieve feelings of guilt or anxiety) differed over time between the U.S., an individualistic country (one that emphasizes individualistic goals and objectives) and Singapore, a predominately collectivistic culture (one that emphasizes community and group goals and objectives). Their results suggested that, as an individual becomes older and more mature, they tend to increase their feelings of autonomy and increased choice between the three selected behaviors chosen (tipping service workers, paying taxes, and voting). These findings were replicated in both individualistic and collectivistic societies (while modifying the behaviors to common behaviors found in collectivistic culture such as ‘helping distant relatives,’ ‘obeying authorities,’ and ‘staying informed about political issues.’). Once again, they observed that as an individual matured, they tended to report more experienced autonomy compared to younger groups, which suggested that perceived increases in autonomy increases with age similarly between the two cultures, while differently in the type of behaviors performed.

Thus, in order for us to fully understand the developmental goals, norms, and expectations of an individual, we need to first begin by observing the contextual factors in which these goals, norms, and expectations are taking place. As environmental factors
change and expectations shift, an individual must modify their plans and expectations of what it is they seek to accomplish and how they will achieve normative transitions towards becoming adult. Sometimes this may be a conscious effort in response to environmental or personal crises, while other times the changes in norms and expectations shift in step with changing occupational and social beliefs. With all this fluctuation, one may become cynical that research and analysis may be completely context-specific and over time may no longer be relevant enough to explain changes in norms. Yet, as the research conducted by Sheldon et al. (2004) suggested, while the means through which these differences are expressed may differ, the underlying beliefs remain remarkably consistent. Thus, through developing an understanding of the core tenants of what constitute adulthood we can observe the stable traits that constitutes normative behaviors and achievements towards adulthood.

2. Motivation and goal development during emerging adulthood. As emerging adulthood represents a period in which people between the ages of 18 to 24 moves rapidly from uncertainty towards certainty, one important aspect that should be carefully assessed is identifying individual growth goals that lead a person towards becoming an adult. By doing so, we develop a better understanding of what establishes an emerging adult’s motivation. In an analysis of the developmental stages of young, middle, and late adulthood, Ebner, Freund and Baltes (2006) stated that relative to a sample of middle and older adults, emerging adults tended to emphasize growth goals which strive for gains towards positive, desired change. This makes inherent sense, as emerging adults are attempting to establish themselves within the community as adult members of society.
Yet, what does motivate an individual towards growth? Eccles (2009) provided one explanation, stating that an individual’s goals are defined by their expectations of success and value of obtaining a specific skill or identity. Within this value, Eccles defined constructs within subjective task value, interest value, attainment value, utility value, and perceived cost. This identification of value is further moderated by cultural norms and expectations, which form and create expectations of success. Eccles provided evidence of this theory of identity growth, citing research conducted by Dunteman, Wisenbaker, and Taylor (1978), who found that college students’ choice of a major could be classified as either “thing-oriented” (pertaining to manipulating objects or understanding the physical world) or “person-oriented” (pertaining to an interest in understanding social interaction and helping people). Dunteman, Wisenbaker, and Tayler also found that women tended to prefer person-oriented majors, shying away from majoring in math and science and preferring to major in education, language, and library science, while men tended to prefer thing-oriented majors such as math and science. Eccles, Barber, and Jozefowicz (1999) further elaborated on these findings, by providing evidence when they conducted a longitudinal study of 1,000 students from southeastern Michigan. They found that, in regards to future professional success, beliefs in high school of personal efficacy, high occupational aspirations, and the value and importance students placed on occupations and occupational characteristics was highly predictive of future success in those areas.

Another important factor may be time. Baltes (1997) described an evolutionary perspective of lifespan development, which emphasized growth goals, maintenance goals, and goals that prioritized prevention and compensation of losses. His theory proposed
three principles that address the progress and growth across the lifespan. The first principle stated that as people age, the prevalence of genetic flaws becomes more pronounced (as natural selection would only remove negative traits in earlier ages which may impede reproductive potential). Thus, there are more negative effects of biological aging as an individual matures over time. His second principle stated that as an individual ages, their demands for social, material, psychological, or symbolic resources increases as a result of impairments that occur due to aging. For example, as a person ages, their need for social support, corrective devices (such as glasses or walkers), and/or the use of medication, increases in order to maintain their physical and mental performance that they once possessed. Finally, Baltes’ third principle stated, that as an individual further ages, the effectiveness of such compensatory or corrective resources would become increasingly insufficient to replace the functioning or ability that was lost. This theory was validated by research conducted by Ebner, Freund, and Baltes (2006) who assessed the progress of growth, maintenance, and prevention of loss of goals across the lifespan. They found that within a group of participants between the ages of 18 and 26 their primary emphasis was on growth goals compared to maintenance and prevention of losses. The emphasis of growth goals, however, was not significant between the younger (18-26), middle-aged (40-59) and older adults (65-84). The prevalence of maintenance and preventing loss was significantly lower in the younger group (18-26), however, suggesting that although the motivation towards growth does not change much across time. The difference is that emerging adulthood is a time in which an individual puts emphasis on growth goals in order to acquire new abilities and expand their capabilities,
whereas middle-aged and older adults, while still emphasizing growth, also wants to acquire resources so they can maintain and protect their goals and capabilities.

Thus, in regards to emerging adults, Baltes’ theory asserted that, while there may be some emphasis on the maintenance and prevention of losses, a majority of emerging adults are emphasizing growth goals. This conceptualization is validated by research such as the study conducted by Galambos, Turner, and Tilton-Weaver (2005). Recognizing that adolescents perceived themselves as older than their chronological age, while adults tended to perceive themselves as younger than their chronological age, these researchers set out in order to determine at what age does this “crossover” of perceived age occurs. By analyzing 190 university students aged between 17 to 29, they found that the point in which an individual “crosses over” from perceiving themselves as being older than their actual age to younger than their actual age occurs at 25.5 years of age – towards the tail end of Arnett’s proposed theory of emerging adulthood, which could potentially suggest that this crossover effect recognizes a change in the self-identity that occurs as an individual moves from perceiving themselves as an adolescent towards being an adult. Thus, as an individual departs high school and enters college, they are still at an age where they wish to identify themselves as being an adult and create aspirations and goals in order to achieve their adult identity. Yet there is also a recognition that one can become “too old,” which narrows options and restricts freedom. It is this dichotomy of choice – the opportunity to express freedom over the stability of establishing a goal – that may become a major source of anxiety for emerging adults. This will be discussed in more depth later in this literature review.
Côté (2002) identified a wealth of resources available for effective functioning during this transition, which include what he identifies as “tangible” (parent’s social class and investments, gender, and group associations) and “intangible” (an agentic personality, previously earned resources and psychosocial and intellectual development). Ultimately, an individual determines the extent to which they endeavor to form their identity, in what Côté identified as either “default individualization,” which is identified as passive acceptance of mass-marketed, communal identifies; or “developmental individualization,” which is identified as an active process of personal growth and goals within an adult community. Côté explored whether or not agency or initial investment was more conducive to developmental growth by assessing 255 Canadian college students over 10 years. He discovered that neither initial resources alone nor agency alone was sufficient to support adequate developmental functioning. Instead agency plays a role in long-term outcomes regardless of structural factors (such as salary and job satisfaction).

Côté (2002) further conducted a longitudinal study to address this theory, where he compared identity approaches with “structural growth” such as gender differences and parental financial support. Côté compared the growth trajectories of 255 students over an 8-9 year period. He assessed the transfer of parental financial support, agentic personality, and accumulated identity capital with salary and salary satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Côté found that in regards to structure, females benefited the most from high levels of parental financial support, while males benefited the most from low levels of support. In addition, agency appeared to benefit long-term
outcomes. Côté concluded that agency type can play a significant role in individual growth. This is also an important result as it suggested that neither environmental factors nor motivational factors are sufficient in order to determine success in emerging adulthood. It is a combination of sufficient available resources, agentic motivation, and the effects of gender which ultimately determines success during this period of growth.

Having determined some of the major theoretical conceptualizations of an individual’s development and motivation, as well as the major effects from the sociological and environmental systems that could potentially influence growth, let us now turn our attention to how each of these constructs manifest themselves at the group and interpersonal level.

D. Determining a Successful Transition into Adulthood

Since emerging adulthood is a period of growth where an individual moves from adolescence towards young adulthood, the next question to ask, then, is what are the criteria that identify an individual as successful transiting to adulthood? We have seen in a previous section that these criteria are socially and historically embedded, but in order for these qualities to have any meaning, important transition points need to be internalized and valued by the emerging adult themselves in order for them to determine “How do you know when you have become an adult?” This was the very question Arnett (1997) asked a sample of college students. In this study, Arnett took a sample of 346 university students and compared their responses with another sample of 140 participants between the ages of 21 and 28 who were separated into two groups of 70. The first group consisted of participants who were aged between 21 and 24 and the second group
consisted of participants who were aged between 25 and 28. Arnett provided both groups with a list of behaviors and qualities typically ascribed to adulthood based on common indicators drawn from sociology, psychology, and anthropology. This list included 1) role transitions (i.e., finished with education, married, employed full-time), 2) cognitive traits (i.e., capable of deciding personal beliefs and values independently of others), 3) emotional traits (i.e., establishing a relationship with parents as equal, not deeply tied to parents emotionally), 4) behavioral traits (i.e., avoiding becoming drunk, avoiding illegal drugs, not having more than one sexual partner), 5) biological markers (i.e., capable of bearing children, grown to full height, have had sexual intercourse), 6) legal/chronological markers (i.e., received a driver’s license, reached age 18, reached age 21), and responsibilities (i.e., accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions, making lifelong commitments to others, and capable of keeping the family physically safe). Arnett found that between the two samples, the qualities that were endorsed most frequently of what they believed was true for adults remained consistent, with no significant differences endorsed between ages and one’s perceived status of being adult. Specifically the most endorsed qualities were “achieve financial independent from parents,” “no longer living in parent’s household,” “has decided one’s personal beliefs and values independently of parents and other influences,” “established a relationship with parents as an equal adult,” and “acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of your actions.” These same traits are further endorsed by adolescents found in residential care (Raymond & Heseltine, 2008) and adolescent inmates living in a juvenile correctional facility (Inderbitzin, 2009).
Continuing from Arnett’s work, Nelson and Barry (2005) attempted to determine the extent to which individuals who identified themselves as emerging adults possessed behaviors and traits they deemed important for being an adult and compared to the extent in which those behaviors and traits occurred in adult individuals who identified themselves as already having those same identified behaviors and traits. Their sample consisted of 232 college students ages 19-25 years. Within this group, 57 (approx. 25%) identified themselves as an adult, while 175 (approximately 75%) identified themselves as emerging adult. As with Arnett, there was no difference in the behaviors and traits identified as important to be considered an adult (i.e., independence, preparation to have a family). Likewise, those who identified themselves as an adult stated that they had achieved these behaviors and traits. They further found that those that identified themselves as adults tended to report a greater sense of overall identity, and showed fewer signs of depression and risk-taking behavior.

Molgat (2007) further addressed how self-conceptions of adulthood are constructed and the importance of individual qualities as well as transition partners. He conducted semi-structured interviews of individuals aged 25-29, which is when an individual begins to report a greater sense of being an adult. He found that individuals in this age range tended to endorse three dimensions towards becoming an adult: 1) developing autonomy from one’s parents, which included a sense of control over one’s life, however, more internal to individual’s decisive moments regarding leaving home, the choice of study programs and career orientations, and employment which fosters a sense of self-efficacy and establishing commitments; 2) establishing financial
independence, which included obtaining a ‘real job’ – or work that allows one to live independently and with financial stability required to plan for the future; and 3) defining responsibilities, which are related the ability to accept and carry the responsibilities out and can included responsibilities associated with living independently, finishing college, moving in with a partner and having children. Molgat further separated responsibilities into responsibilities for oneself, which were linked to being able to shoulder financial obligations and responsibilities towards others, such as their partner or having children.

In order to understand the goals that represent the most common goals that emerging adults identify as being important as an adult, I will further explore the dimensions of adulthood in further depth by dividing the dimensions of adulthood into three sub sections. The first sub section analyzes how developing autonomy is established and how the extent to which an emerging adult decides to live with their parents can affect their sense of adulthood. The second sub section analyzes the processes toward creating and maintaining adult goals which identifies directions, responsibilities and principles that one recognizes as being significant in their life. The third sub-section addresses career development and exploration. I conclude with an analysis of ethnic identity in this developmental stage.

1. Towards developing autonomy. One of the most pertinent tasks during this period of emerging adulthood is the development of autonomy. For many emerging adults, this provides them with the first opportunity to experience independent living free of their parents’ supervision and challenges them to take on more responsibilities. Indeed, the challenges and difficulties associated with moving out and living on one’s
own often causes parents to become worried about the progress of their children before and after they depart. This transition is made even more risky by the changing environment of the cost of living and employment opportunities, which often force emerging adults to return to their parents when they are no longer able to pay rent or other expenditures which may potentially undermine autonomy.

Yet what constitutes a normative transition from a parent’s home? And is an emerging adult who chooses to stay with their parents causing harm to their sense of autonomy and independence? This discrepancy between the different patterns of leaving home was the topic of inquiry in a Belgium study conducted by Kins, Beyers, Soenens, and Vansteenkiste (2009). These researchers recognized that leaving home was more nuanced than packing up one’s bags and departing a parent’s home. They sought to determine how students left their parents’ home as well as assessed how parenting styles effects motivation for living situations. In an analysis of 224 emerging adults aged around 22, they found that young adults typically lived in three different living situations: 1) permanent residency with their parents, 2) semiautonomous living arrangements where an individual moves between living on their own or with others and living with their parents (i.e., staying at their parent’s home during weekends), and 3) permanent residency away from their parents either alone or with a partner. Kins and her colleagues further addressed the psychological outcome of these three statuses, and found that, compared to individuals staying permanently at home, individuals in a semiautonomous transition or having moved completely away from their parents experienced more satisfaction with their living situation and having a higher state of psychological well-
being. In regards to parental styles, parents who possessed more autonomy-supportive parenting styles tended to have emerging adults that were more able to choose their residency away from home. Interestingly, autonomy support was unrelated to whether or not an emerging adult choose to leave or stay, suggesting that there may be more in the determination of departing than simply coming of age. Indeed, some emerging adults had chosen to stay with their families to support them financially, while others still may return to provide medical or emotional support to family members, and other still may choose to stay to mitigate the cost of living on one’s own. Kins and her colleagues concluded that regardless of where an emerging adult chooses to stay, so long as delayed home leaving reflects a personal choice rather than external pressures, staying with one’s parents should not be problematic for an emerging adult’s psychological and developmental well-being.

In a follow-up study to the research conducted by Kins et al. (2009), Kins and Beyers (2010) sought to determine 1) the extent to which emerging adults make progress towards establishing themselves as adults within one year, 2) whether the effects of delaying the process of leaving home effects one’s sense of adult status, 3) whether progress toward establishing oneself as an adult was moderated by changes in living arrangements, and finally 4) whether or not the transition towards an adult status was related to subjective well-being. Their research compared the same group of Belgian emerging adults addressed in Kins et al. (2009) one year later. They were able to determine that, during that one year, progress towards achieving adulthood was multidimensional: some subjects reported progress in some areas (such as work-related
role transitions) and not in others (such as marriage and childbearing). While this may predominantly be considered constructive toward healthy behaviors, not all progress was beneficial. One interesting finding was that within this year, participants were determined to be more likely to perform drunk driving. Kins and Beyers posed that this is perhaps because as individuals become older they become more confident in their ability to drive. In regards to the effects of their living situations, they found that participants who lived apart from their parents tended to have the most progress towards adult status and expressed more healthy behaviors. Participants who continued to live with their parents, by contrast, possessed the slowest progress toward adult development with the exception of one area: finishing education and achieving full-time employment. Finally, in regards to semi-autonomous living situations (living alone part time while also living with their parents part time), emerging adults who lived semi-autonomously appeared to make the least progress to adulthood. However, Kins and Beyers observed that this may be due to the fact that they comprised the highest number of continuing college students.

Thus, Kins and Beyers (2010) found that in regards to changing living situations, emerging adults that moved towards more independent living situations made the most progress toward financial status, relationship status and perceived skills to run a household. Meanwhile, those who remained with their parents or semi-independently also appeared to have made progress, but still scored lowest in identity achievement. In regards to returning home, emerging adults who returned back home after living independently stated that they believed they still have retained their growth – or in other words that they felt as though they retained their perceived progress towards adulthood.
Finally in regards to psychological health, Kins and Beyers found that progress towards achieving adulthood increased all levels of subjective well-being. However, there was one criterion of adult development which appeared to predict declining sense of well-being: having no more than one sexual partner. In other words, restricting oneself to one sexual partner—or who were in a committed sexual relationship—may cause decreases in one’s psychological health. Kins and Beyers concluded that perhaps this process of self-restriction may be a heavy burden for some emerging adults.

However, only describing the process and transition of moving out from their parents is insufficient to determine the process of developing autonomy from parents. The family relationship and family structure can have mediating effects on the transition to adulthood. For example, Johnson, Gans, Kerr, and LaValle (2010) found that first-year undergraduates who viewed their families to be cohesive reported fewer difficulties with academic adjustment, social adjustment, and personal/emotional adjustment. Furthermore, when college students reported more expressiveness in their family, they also reported higher levels of social and personal adjustment in college. Another study conducted by Quintana and Lapsley (1987) assessed 101 undergraduates to determine how ego identity was affected by attachment to one’s parents. They found that 1) individuals who perceived that their parents were highly controlling reported weaker attachment compared than those whose parents were less controlling, 2) individuals who perceived their fathers as controlling scored lower on measures of identity achievement, and 3) there appeared to be a weak correlation between adolescent attachment and ego identity. Quintana and Laspley concluded that while parental attachment does not seem to
be correlated with ego development, parental control was found to be negatively associated with ego development and that a non-controlling family with open lines of communication allows emerging adults more opportunity to freely explore identity options.

Beyers, Goossens, Vansant, and Moors (2003) used confirmatory factor analysis of the various traits towards establishing autonomy in college students to create a model of four factors. These four factors are: 1) connectedness, which reflected close parent-adolescent relationships characterized by mutual reciprocity, trust, and dependency; 2) separation, which reflected the dimension of physical distance, deidealization, and decreasing of dependence; 3) detachment, which reflected feeling of disengagement due to feelings of mistrust and alienation; and 4) agency, which reflected the possibility of self-reflective behavior. Thus as a person departs from their family home, they experience different levels of these four factors, which are related to psychological well-being. For instance, Lamborn and Groh (2009) followed up on the work of Beyers and his colleagues (2003) when they assessed the correlation of each of these factors with each other, as well as with self-reliance, self-esteem, psychological and somatic symptoms (such as anxiety, depression, headaches, etc.), college grades and school attitudes. Lamborn and Groh found that connectedness, separation, and dependence were all significantly negatively correlated with each other, while agency was unrelated to the other three autonomy components. This finding suggested that while each of these factors appears at surface value to be the same construct, that they are in fact measuring something similar but different. In regards to positive outcomes, connectedness was
related to positive self-esteem and fewer psychological and somatic symptoms. Separation and detachment, by contrast, were related modestly to feelings of lower self-esteem and were moderated by self-reliance. Finally, there was an observed interaction effect in which individuals possessing low self-reliance and low separation received much higher grades than individuals who possessed high self-reliance in both low and high separation scenarios. This suggested that when self-reliance was high, differences in separation do not have much effect on student grades.

Thus, the research has suggested that, while developing autonomy plays a significant factor towards establishing oneself as an adult, complete separation may remove valuable sources of social support which ultimately causes difficulties in adjustment. This finding is heartening, and true to many individual’s experiences who tend to keep in contact with either their parents or somebody they feel closely related to for support. An example of this can be seen in a research study by Tognoli (2003), who examined the extent of homesickness in first-year college students who lived either 50 or 100 miles away from their parents’ home. He found that distance plays a significant role in the frequency of homesickness. Further, homesick students possessed lower scores of self-esteem, ego identity, and internal locus of control. These effects were mediated by maintaining contact with family, immersing oneself in activities at the school, and developing friendships – all areas of continuing and fostering psychological and physical support. On the opposite side of departing college, an analysis of the college to career transition found that social support mediated the transition from college to career – most especially participants’ mothers, who were important in providing unconditional support.
and serving as role models in the development of an adaptive work ethic and flexible career plans (Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt, 2010).

2. **Establishing and mitigating goals.** As with most things when dealing with emerging adults, one of the biggest challenges of addressing interpersonal goals during this period lies in the vast heterogeneity in goals, resources, and beliefs within this population. As an individual is in the midst of embracing adult roles and forging their future identity, how those roles are defined and what steps are necessary to successfully achieve them is tenebrous and multidirectional (Arnett, 2000). For example, an emerging adult may choose to leave home and seek occupational employment immediately, foregoing higher education or other such areas of exploration. For many, this “foreclosure” may be due to a lack of resources and opportunities; they simply do not have the time, resources, or patience to invest into higher education. Others may begin the process of achieving their baccalaureate only to decide later that this goal is not for them, or outside obligations such as family obligations or a crisis may require their cessation in pursuit of this goal, or taking advantage of a lucrative opportunity that presents itself. Thus, while the net result of all these circumstances leads to the same conclusion—dropping out of school—identifying individual goals and objectives and generalizing them toward the broader population is much more difficult to discern.

Another study was conducted by Bauer and McAdams (2004), who sought to observe whether the type of goals plays an important role in determining maturity and psychology well-being. The investigators addressed this question by differentiating between two types of growth goals. The first set of goals are related to the time involved
in order to achieve the goals and are divided into: 1) long term, which are goals that are achieved over a sizable period of time (generally a week or more), and 2) short term, which are related to more transient goals and aspirations (usually no more than a few days). The second set of objectives assessed the direction of different types of life span goals: 1) exploratory, which pertained to the process of conceptually exploring, integrating, deepening, or otherwise learning about the new perspectives on the individual’s life, and 2) intrinsic, which pertained to internalized desires to do things that are personally motivated, related to individual growth, establishing meaningful relationships, and contributing to society. Baure and McAdams found that in general all types of growth goals (intrinsic or exploratory) were related to personality development such as ego development, multidimensional well-being and satisfaction with life. However, in regards to personality development, exploratory life span growth goals were related to the greatest increases to ego development, while intrinsic life goals were related to the greatest increases to psychological well-being. In regards to their long-term and daily goals, Bauer and McAdams found that consistency between long-term and everyday goals were related to higher levels of personality development. This link was believed to be similar to a two-way street of meaningfulness: everyday goals should be connected with the long term ones. By doing so, a person’s goals facilitate and foster interpersonal growth and increase psychological well-being. Finally, in regards to age, Bauer and McAdams found that while there was no difference in long-term exploratory goals between older and younger adults, older adults tended to have marginally more everyday exploratory goals than young adults, which was associated with greater goal consistency.
This makes inherent sense, as an individual who has discovered their path would seek to develop a better understanding of their decisions and learn more of how to improve their roles in the context of their work, family, and community.

In regards to the goals found in emerging adulthood, Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, and Duriez (2009) assessed the effects of satisfying identity formation and basic needs. For identity development, they utilized the extended factors proposed by Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, and Beyers (2006) of 1) commitment (the degree to which an individual has made invested choices about important identity issues), 2) identification with commitment (the degree to which an individual identify with and feel certain about their choices and commitments), 3) exploration of breadth, 4) exploration of depth, and 5) ruminative exploration (which is related to anxiety and fear associated with the process of making a decision). In regards to the factors related to goal achievement, they utilized self-determination criteria of autonomy satisfaction, competence satisfaction and relational support, and relational satisfaction. Their research study attempted to determine the extent to which need satisfaction affected identity formation, and vice versa.

In order to assess this, Luyckx and his colleagues (2009) assessed 343 senior high school students and 371 freshman students residing in Flanders, Belgium twice over a four-month interval. They found that over time all of their participants’ individual’s needs satisfaction improved. College students also reported an increase in autonomy and competence satisfaction over time, which suggested that their growth and acclimation to their new environment improved. Their results also suggested that needs satisfaction was positively related to all factors associated to personality growth and negatively related to
ruminative exploration. Further, individuals who achieved a sense of personal identity that was due to proactive exploration strategies scored the highest on all three needs, while those that possessed a diffused identity state while possessing ruminative exploration also scored the lowest in need satisfaction. They further found that commitment making, and identification with commitment were influenced by need satisfaction and the three needs assessed. Finally, in regards to exploration type, exploration in breadth positively predicted need satisfaction while the exploration of depth was less clear, as it was not associated with any of the need satisfactions. Luyckx and his colleagues attributed this finding to the amount of energy exploration of breadth requires, which perhaps indicated a greater investment and positive resolution in identity exploration. These findings supported the energizing effect of being successful in need satisfaction towards forming one’s own identity, as well as support a reciprocal effect of identity commitments on acquiring those needs.

In their analysis of the literature, Luyckx, De Witte, and Goossens (2011) determined that emerging adulthood appeared to be an unstable time period of human development. They attributed this uncertainty to the modernization and post-industrialized work force, which they perceived disrupted occupational conventions such as life-long careers and staying close to one’s social network. In comparison to previous generations, emerging adults of the first generation of the new millennium were faced with less structural support and traditional certainty. In order to address this, Luyckx et al. (2011) sought to determine how this experienced instability of emerging adulthood was related to general and work related outcomes. In addition, they further sought to
determine how Côté’s (2002) identity capital acquired by individuals moderated this uncertainty. In order to assess this, Luyckx and his colleagues distributed 500 questionnaires in different work settings such as hospitals, schools and factories in Flanders, Belgium. Some questionnaires were given directly to workers and some were given to employees with the request that the handouts be distributed to employees that were between 18 to 30 years of age. The questionnaires were completed at home and returned in a pre-stamped envelope. Of these 500 questionnaires, a sample of 202 emerging adults were received and of these 202, two-thirds (66.4%) had received higher education degrees. In regards to psychological well-being, Luyckx et al. (2011) found that all emerging adults, regardless if they entered the work force immediately after high school or after completing college, experienced moderately high levels of instability (2.48 on a scale of 1, which would represent highly stable, to 4, which would represent highly instable). They theorized that although individuals were able to move directly into a job after graduating high school, these positions were more often than not entry-level and were not able to satisfy the worker’s long term career aspirations. Thus, they would need to seek out new and different occupations in the pursuit of establishing stability. In regards to outcomes, Luyckx and his colleagues found that instability was negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to depressive symptoms, but not work-related outcomes. Further, instability was related to lower work engagement and heightened job burnout when combined with low scores of sense of adulthood. Identity capital acquisition, which Côté (2002) defined as a purposeful act of utilizing, acquiring, or investing in skills, resources, and personal interest for the purpose of applying these
acquired “capital” in future endeavors, was shown to have a positive effect on psychological and job-related outcomes, suggesting that an individual that initially possessed good resources (such as achieving higher education or establishing solid networks) or acquired new resources during emerging adulthood would also be more likely to acquire healthy psychological functioning and greater work-related outcomes in the future.

Another study conducted by Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, and Tsellgen (2004) assessed the predictive links of salient (friendship, academic, and conduct) and emerging (work and romantic) developmental tasks. Drawing from a normative sample of 205 children living in Minneapolis who were from a wide range of ethnicities (29% minority) and socioeconomic groups, Roisman and his colleagues conducted a longitudinal study by tracking 177 of the participants from 7 years of age to 20 and 30. They discovered that, while many of the developmental tasks engaged at age 20 were predictive of future success in that task (competency in friendship was related to future competency in friendship), work and romantic developmental tasks at age 20 were not related to any future tasks of work, development, friendship, academic, and conduct tasks 10 years later. They further found that social and academic competency at age 20 was also related to predictors of success in work and romantic competence 10 years later. These results potentially suggested that certain tasks in emerging adulthood may be unrelated to growth, such as engaging in entry-level employment, while others activities may be related to future development, such as developing social networks and establishing a romantic union.
Finally, Salmela-Aro, Aunola and Nurmi (2007) assessed how reported tasks changed over the course of emerging adulthood. They analyzed 297 undergraduates from the University of Finland over a 10-year period and discovered that during that time, the number of goals that addressed education, friendship, and travel were reported less often after the study began, while goals that addressed work, family, and health increased. These goals were directly related to an emerging adult’s relative position toward becoming an adult. For example, in regards to life transitions, early graduation was related to earlier decrease in education goals and increase in work-related goals, while establishing a romantic relationship earlier (either though cohabitation or marriage) was related to an increase in reporting family and child related goals compared to individuals who engaged in them later.

Thus we have seen that there are many factors involved in the process of forming and developing goals. The type of goals that an emerging adult endeavors to achieve (such as intrinsic/extrinsic or short term/long term in the Kins et al. 2009 study) and the major life events that are occurring in a person’s life (Salmela-Aro, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2007) all play a significant role in the transformative process of emerging adulthood and are related to their psychological well-being. Establishing goals that are realistic to a person’s skill level and addresses their internal interests is a vital part of developing one’s identity towards adulthood. Ultimately, these long-term goals—manifested and supported by short term daily goals—establish the direction and importance of the tasks that an emerging adult works towards as they progress towards maturity.
3. Career development. Career development has been a topic of interest for several years, especially when it comes to the vocational development of mid to late adolescents (see Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006, for social and historical context). This interest, however, does not usually extend into the age of emerging adulthood. Indeed, during January 2013, I conducted a quick search of ERIC, PsychINFO and PsychArticles for “career development” and “adolescence/adolescents” which offered 274 and 1,455 results, respectively, while a search for “career development” and “late adolescence (23)/late adolescents (27),” “young adulthood (61)/young adults (526),” and “emerging adults (23)/emerging adulthood (10),” only offered a grand total of 670 articles, not accounting for repeats in the search. However, career development in higher education has become an increasing topic of interest in recent years. A recent article within The Chronicles of Higher Education (Mangan, 2012) described how 15 law schools, including the New York Law School are under legal scrutiny for misrepresenting job availability and salary data. While ultimately dismissed, other schools have started to take steps to increase placements and work experience for their students (Selingo, 2012).

Having recognized career development as a source of public concern, the next question that requires exploration attempts to identify the source of career development. Vondracek (1995) attested that vocational identity can propel an individual towards self-realization. However, Vondracek further acknowledged that not every individual who enters into a long-term vocation would achieve this level of fulfillment – individuals may find that careers unrewarding, their results underwhelming and their efforts unappreciated. So how does a person achieve fulfillment in their work? Vondracek
identified two qualities which would necessitate self-realization: 1) a state of self-efficacy and personal achievement within one’s vocation (i.e. possessing the skills, motivation, knowledge and traits that allow for success), and 2) identifying oneself with that career. To quote Vondracek: “Whether self-realization through a vocational career is possible, however, depends ultimately upon the person’s ability to also experience achievement and competence in relation to the personal values and goals that are experienced by his or her vocational identity.” (pp. 86)

This assertion was supported by Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, and Pollock (2008), who attempted to identify the extent to which being in college or being employed, as well as psychological processes (sense of coherence – the extent to which one views the world, the individual environment, and life events as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful) effected identity formation (sense of adulthood, commitment making, identification with commitment, exploration of breadth, exploration of depth, and ruminative exploration). Questionnaires were collected from 147 Belgian college students and 174 nonstudents that came from a pool of 500 surveys distributed to several work settings such as local hospitals, schools, and factories and a few personal acquaintances of the researchers. Their results found that as an individual becomes older, their scores for exploration of breadth, exploration of depth and ruminative exploration decrease. Exploration in depth, however, was more modest between younger emerging adults and young adults (25+ years of age), which possibly suggested that, even as an individual moved from emerging adulthood into young adulthood, their exploration for new opportunities persists. In addition, sense of adulthood was positively related to
commitment making and identification with commitment, while also being negatively related to ruminative exploration.

Another finding in Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, and Pollock’s (2008) study suggested that sense of adulthood was positively related to sense of coherence and being employed, while a strong sense of coherence was positively related to commitment making, identifying with commitments, and negatively related with ruminative exploration. In regards to differences that occur as a result of one’s environment, emerging adults attending the university appeared more able to stimulate exploration in breadth by being provided with a variety of opportunities, career goals, and peer beliefs. However, these same university students also scored higher than nonstudents on ruminative exploration, which suggested that one potential drawback to being afforded with this so much open freedom is increased anxiety of the upcoming transition and narrowing down one’s choices. In regards to emerging adults working at entry-level employment, Luyckx and his colleagues found that these emerging adults were somewhat higher on commitment making than emerging adults at the university, but had no such increases in identification with commitment. This finding suggested that while the working adults may have made a decision, their investment in their career may not be as high had they allowed themselves more time for exploration. These results provided support for Vondracek’s (1995) argument that identity commitment and personal self-efficacy/sense of achievement (which Luyckx and colleagues identified as “sense of coherence”) are important qualities toward personal fulfillment and satisfaction with one’s career.
In response to the Vondracek’s (1995) theory and Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, and Pollock’s (2008) research, Stringer and Kerpelman (2010) conducted a study to determine the extent to which career decision self-efficacy (which was defined as having confidence in oneself to make decisions about a career on the basis of information about self, goals, and career options), parental support, and past work experience affected career identity development. In order to assess this, Stringer and Kerpelman provided surveys with measures for career identity evaluation, career decision self-efficacy, parental support for career and work experience to 345 participants drawn from a 4-year university in the Southeastern United States. Their factor correlations found significant moderate correlations between parental support and career decision self-efficacy ($r = 0.37$), parental support and career identity evaluation ($r = 0.46$), and career decision self-efficacy and career identity evaluation ($r = 0.68$). Furthermore, their findings suggested that individuals with greater levels of career decision self-efficacy had greater levels of career identity exploration depth and identification with career identity commitment. In addition, career decision self-efficacy had a moderately significant inverse correlation with career indecision ($r = -0.33$, $p < .001$). These increases in career decision self-efficacy, career identity evaluation, and career identity commitment can be interpreted as career decision self-efficacy having a positive association with career achieved identity status, validating Vondracek’s (1995) assertion that higher sense of self-efficacy was related to self-actualization in the work place. In regards to work experience, perceived relevant work experience was not associated with career identity evaluation or career decision self-efficacy. Stringer and Kerpelman interpreted this finding by suggesting that
most work experiences available without a college degree only requires tasks that provide little applicability in other professions and requires low skill, which makes them less relevant to future careers. However, the number of jobs that an individual has worked in was significantly and positively associated with career identity evaluation and career decision self-efficacy. The researchers interpreted this finding to suggest that previous career exploration in breadth would increase confidence in career decisions and the deepening of career commitments. Finally, parental support was found to have direct and indirect effects on career self-efficacy and career commitment.

Another challenge within career development is the extent to which an individual chooses what they wish to pursue. Continuing from the work started Côté (2002), Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett (2005) re-examined the effects of agency on the identity-formation process as well as whether agentic personality would be consistent across Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. Through an assessment of 332 emerging adults (121 White, 77 Black, and 134 Hispanics), Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett found that, in general, agency was related to exploration, flexible commitment, and deliberate decision across all three ethnic groups. In addition, agency was also negatively related to avoidance and aimlessness in identity formation. Furthermore, those who possessed an agentic personality had a tendency to possess more developmental individualization and, as such, possessed better self-esteem, ego strength, intermediately in purpose in life, and internal locus of control. One other interesting finding was that commitment, but not exploration, differed between the default and developmental individualization clusters. This suggested that making a commitment to a set of goals, values, and beliefs occurred within
developmental individualism (where those in the default individualization do not make a choice of their beliefs). This research supported the validity of agency across a variety of ethnicities, and further supported the need of identity commitment within emerging adults.

Gender may also play a role in the formation of goals. Research conducted by Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) further explored the extent to which emerging adults endorse work or family-oriented commitments and the extent to which gender affects those decisions. They provided 95 college students with the Life Role Salience Scales, which assesses the extent to which an individual endorses high or low work commitment and high or low family commitment. In regards to decision making status, Friedman and Weissbrod found that work commitment was positively associated with work decision status and that individuals who had not yet thought a lot about a career/work path had significantly lower scores on work commitment compared to those who thought a lot about career/work without making a decision and to those who had made a decision about a career/work path. Friedman and Weissbrod stated that the amount of thought gone into work plans appears related to work commitment. In regards to family commitment however, those who stated they had reached a decision regarding whether or not to marry had significantly higher scores on family commitment. In addition, family commitment was significantly related to decision-making status regarding parenthood. For example, those who had decided whether or not to have children had significantly higher scores on family commitment. However, individuals who thought a lot about parenthood without reaching a decision had no significant difference in commitment than those who have not
thought about parenthood. Thus, the process of thought towards deciding a career direction appeared to be central towards career commitment, which is different from family commitment, which was not affected by the decision making process.

In addition to these findings, Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) also found some gender differences in regards to work and family. For example, their research determined that the correlation of the relationship between work and family was significantly different between women and men: women possessed a significantly negative correlation between work and family commitment, while men did not. In response to this, the researchers created a two by two matrix between low and high work commitment and low and high family commitment which were separated to high and low by the median. Through this method, Friedman and Weissbrod discovered a significant difference between men and women in endorsing high family commitment with low work commitment, with men endorsing this configuration 6.5% of the time and women endorsing this configuration 38.8% of the time. The other configurations were not significant (high work/high family: men = 34.8%, women = 20.4%; high work/low family: men = 28.3%, women = 12.2%; low work/low family: men = 30.4%, women = 28.6%). This was a relevant finding, which indicated that the commitment of men and women towards working or raising a family had increased, or in other words that commonly associated differences between work and family commitments have become non-significant. However, there was a significantly negative relationship in the extent to which women regards their commitment to either family or work, with the women that chosen high family commitment possessing low work commitment while the women that
chosen high work commitment possessed low family commitment. This result suggested that women may feel a need to “trade off” between these two directions.

The ways to which an individual approaches career exploration may also have an effect on career development. One study conducted by Profeli and Skorikov (2010) examined the extent to which two different types of exploration methods—specific and diverse—would be validated as the structure of career exploration over time using structural equation modeling. Specific exploration was related to learning about the world of work and the self in a mutually dependent fashion to achieve a refined understanding of careers that are realistically aligned to one’s sense of self (values, aptitudes, interests and talents). Diverse exploration involved learning broadly about the world of work and self relatively independent of one another and with focus on novel or stimulating careers. In order to assess the extent to which exploration methods have an effect on emerging adults, they conducted a longitudinal study of 308 participants from a period that began in the last two years of high school and extending every year after thereafter. The data for this study were collected 1.5 years after high school graduation when the participants were around 19 years old, and continued annually over three years. Measures were provided which assessed specific and diverse career exploration, career indecision, career planning and career confidence.

Profeli and Skorikov (2010) found that the results of the exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling demonstrated distinctiveness of these two forms of exploration during the three years. In addition, an analysis of the effects of the diversive and exploratory methods found that diversive exploration was associated with
career indecision and negative association with career confidence. Specific exploration, by contrast, had a negative association with career indecision, a positive association with career confidence, and a positive association with career planning. These findings suggested that specific exploration exhibited greater stability over a long period of time than diversive exploration. While these results may have indicated that narrowing one’s focus may be more beneficial than exploring options, Profeli and Skorikov noted that as emerging adults matured, their exploration styles moved away from diversive exploration towards specific exploration as a means of continuing the transition of adulthood. This claim is also supported by evidence which suggests that diversive exploration appeared to facilitate specific exploration during the transition to adulthood – providing a context through which an emerging adult may narrow down their options. However, the fact remains that specific exploration appeared to increase stability as it would be related to occupational commitment as well as a clearly defined direction.

As a result, Profeli and Skorikov’s (2010) research has suggested that career exploration can generate and reduce work alternatives, which allows an individual to be able to specify their career commitments based on that exploration. Alternatively, an excessive amount of options may also generate indecision. This may culminate into a nonproductive cycle where career indecision may lead emerging adults to further spread out their exploration of potential careers toward more alternatives, which generates more choice, which in turn leads to even greater indecision. Thus, three patterns of behavior develop: one in which an individual is already in specific exploration (which indicates foreclosure), one in which an individual is in diversive exploration and moving towards
specific exploration (which indicates moratorium moving towards achievement), and diverse exploration that generates and supports continual career indecision (moratorium that leads to either diffusion). This result also appears to validate Luyckx and his colleagues’ (2008) concept of ruminative exploration.

So, where do colleges fit in? Extracting from the results of Luyckx et al. (2008) and Profeli and Skorikov’s (2010) research, college appears to provide opportunities for both achievement orientation/specific exploration and ruminative exploration/career indecision. Through developing expertise, colleges provide students with many opportunities to refine and hone skills towards specific career paths, which could potentially lead to greater career identification and commitment. However, the breadth and number of experiences offered at college could be potentially disorienting to some. In the absence of actively specifying oneself towards directed growth, an individual may diffuse their interests over an ever-increasing array of possibilities, further fostering indecision and anxiety over choice. Seeing the effects of this is not difficult in research. For example, Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, and Platt (2010), utilized qualitative analysis on 10 college graduates over three years to explore the experience of moving on from college into a career. In regards to their expectations, four of the 10 expected a difficult transition (with one student reporting anxiety over working 9 to 5), increased expectations to work over the weekends, and a restrictive corporate culture. In regards to actual transition experiences, six of the 10 reported a difficult transition, with one student reported disappointment in their adjustment since graduating and that they were unsatisfied with the quality and content of their work experiences. Other themes included
the evolution of career identity and work values, adjusting to work experience, and managing demands and expectations in the new job. Overall, these results suggested that one way to help support emerging adults manage the transition of careers is by providing them with realistic expectations by utilizing family and social supports as a means of easing the transition and coping with the developmental challenges inherent to this age group. This may be particularly important as college appears to potentially create a situation where students get enveloped in a myriad of options without having the opportunity to establish any clear direction.

E. Ethnic Identity Development

One criticism levied on identity development is that the research has primarily focused on White populations. In an analysis of the literature, Sneed, Schwartz and Cross (2006) explored four major publications of identity status between 1995 and 2003 and came up with only 57 articles. They found that these articles contained 62 distinct samples and of those only 22 of the 62 samples was ethnicity reported. This lack of consideration has been problematic through an underrepresentation of minority populations and indicates a continuing flaw of research that addresses identity development. While this area of exploration is not the focus of this literature review, providing an opportunity to explore ethnic identity development in emerging adulthood would be beneficial to determine how ethnic growth could potentially benefit or hinder identity development.

Research conducted by Phinney (1989) provided a good overview of the different type of identity statuses within minority groups and how such identity progresses and
develops. Using Marcia’s (1966) theory of identity development, she conceptualized three stages of minority identity development: 1) unexamined ethnic identity, characterized by either passive acceptance of one’s ethnic identity status (similar to Marcia’s foreclosure status) or through not thinking about their identity status (diffusion); 2) ethnic identity development, which is a period where an individual is in the process of forming their own ethnic identity (moratorium); and 3) ethnic identity formation/achievement, where one has established a secure ethnic identity after a period of exploration and growth (achievement). Utilizing this conceptualized construct, Phinney then assessed the validity of this theory on adolescents. She found that approximately half of her subjects were in unexamined ethnic identity, a quarter of the subjects were in ethnic identity development, and the last quarter of the subjects was in ethnic identity formation. Further, ethnic identity status was significantly related to ego identity status.

Phinney and Alipuria (1990) continued with Phinney’s (1989) previous exploration, addressing how ethnic identity development occurs within a body of college students. They found that in regards to ethnic identity exploration there was a significant effect within different ethnic groups, with Blacks having scored the highest overall on ethnic identity exploration, Latinos having scored the second highest, followed closely by Asians, and finally Whites. Unfortunately, a post hoc analysis was not conducted to determine whether or not these differences were significant. Interestingly, no significant differences were found in ethnic identity commitment. In regards to the perceived importance of ethnic identity, 77% of Blacks, 69% of Latinos and 66% of Asians
reported that ethnicity was important, compared to a smaller proportion of Whites who said it was important, at 24%. Another interesting finding suggested that all four groups (including Whites) possessed a significant relationship between ethnic identity search and commitment as well as ethnic identity commitment and self-esteem, which provided further evidence of the importance of ethnic identity status within identity formation.

Since Phinney’s (1989) research, other researchers have addressed how ethnic identity affects one’s psychological well-being and emotional state. For example, St. Louis and Liem (2005) addressed the extent to which ethnic identity, ego identity, and well-being were related in ethnic minority and majority college students. Similar to the results of Phinney and Alipuria (1990), St. Louis and Liem found that ethnic minority students (Latino, Black and Asian) were more likely to report positive ethnic identification than White students. St. Louis and Liem also found that while ethnic identity was not related to scholastic competence or intellectual abilities, ethnic identity had a significantly positive correlation with self-esteem and job competence, and a significantly negative correlation with depression. These findings are also supported by research conducted by Lewis (2003). She also compared the differences in ego identity status across ethnicity and found that the prevalence of Marcia’s Foreclosure was found to significantly higher among Asian and Hispanic groups than White groups, while the prevalence of Identity Achievement was significantly higher within Whites than Latino and Asian. Blacks were not significantly different than Whites, to which Lewis concluded that this was either due to high standard error or the fact that Black subjects who
participated were enrolled in college and had higher levels of identity development prior to enrolling into college.

Ethnicity studies not only addressed ethnic identity formation in the minority groups, but the majority as well. A study conducted by Miville, Darlington, Whitlock and Mulligan (2005), addressed ego and ethnic identity within White college students. They used research conducted by Helms (1990), which described the developmental states of racial identity status in White populations, which includes 5 stages: 1) Contact, where a person is oblivious or generally naïve about racial issues and differences ; 2) Disintegration, where a person is confused on a personal level of the social implications of being White; 3) Reintegration, where a person idealizes White culture and denigrates minority cultures; 4) Pseudo-independence, where a person internalizes a more realistic image of whites, along with curiosity about racial issues, and 5) Autonomy, where a person deliberately integrates positive White identity marked by a true value of racial and cultural differences. Miville and her colleagues then sought to determine the extent to which Marcia’s Ego identity, Helms’ White Racial Identity, and gender identity were related to each other. Within women, they found feeling positively about oneself as a woman was linked with having made important commitments, that adopting a naïve stance regarding race was predictive of positive ego identity, and that Contact racial identity stage was related to Marcia’s Foreclosure status. They concluded that for young White college women, adopting parental values typically match traditional societal values, including potentially naïve views about oppression and discrimination. Within men, Miville and her colleagues found moratorium was significantly linked with gender
identity conflicts, that feeling positively both about oneself as a man and as a White American were linked to the establishment of important commitments in one’s personal life, and that successful resolution of aspects of personal life, such as relationship and philosophical approaches, was related to resolving conflicts regarding gender and racial issues. Taken together, Miville and her colleagues stated that defining one’s gender identity may be important to defining more personal areas of their lives, such as allowing White men opportunities to see how dimensions of their identities are related and can promote each other – fighting racism to promote ego growth, and allowing women to resolve issues of gender oppression and discrimination.

Most of the research in ethnicity identity development recognizes that ethnicity identity typically occurs before college (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; St. Louis & Liem, 2005). However, theories of emerging adulthood state that emerging adulthood may be a stage in which an individual develops a strong sense of personal identity and growth. Recognizing this, Tsai and Fuligni (2012) conducted a two-year longitudinal study that analyzed how moving from high school and enrolling and staying in college, as well as the type of college enrolled (2 years versus 4 year colleges) would affect ethnic labeling (how a person identifies themselves, for example: Mexican versus Latino versus Mexican-American) ethnic identity, and sense of belonging. They found that over time ethnic identity exploration decreased regardless of institution type. However, they also found differences in the extent to which emerging adults endeavored to explore ethnic identity between 2-year and 4-year colleges, with students enrolled in 4-year colleges engaging in greater levels of ethnic search than did students in 2-year colleges.
Furthermore, students in 4-year colleges were more likely than their 2-year counterparts to be involved in clubs and organizations, which seemed to have a positive effect on ethnic identity regardless of whether the organization emphasized ethnicity as its central focus. Finally, while there were no differences in label identification, students who enrolled in 4-year colleges were more likely to self-identify their ethnicity with the “prefix” –American (Asian-American, Mexican-American) than those that were enrolled in 2-year colleges. Tsai and Fuligni suggested this identification may indicate that these students were figuring out how they could relate to the broader majority of other ethnicities without completely disassociating themselves from their ethnic heritage.

Taken together, these findings conclude that changes in ethnic identity is not simply a result of just the developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood but rather is related to the context in which the emerging adults enter. Furthermore, a successful resolution and establishment of ethnic identity may be important to non-minority and especially minority students as they engage in emerging adulthood. The extent to which ethnic identity formation is supported and fostered during emerging adulthood, however, has not been completely explored. More research should be conducted in order to provide a more accurate account of the significance of ethnic identity within all ethnic minority groups, as well as ways colleges and institutions can endeavor to develop and/or support ethnic identity development.

F. Risks in Emerging Adulthood

The previous section provides a context for the challenges and opportunities in which individuals within emerging adulthood face as they attempt to determine what
goals they wish to achieve and how to go about doing it. As we have seen, there is a wealth of evidence to support Arnett’s (2001) description of the period of time between the ages 18 and 24 to be noted as a time with incredible freedom with distinct developmental challenges. Unfortunately, not everybody leaves these encounters unscathed. In addition to the potential for interpersonal and developmental growth, the time between ages 18 and 24 is also considered a period in which a person is faced with uncertainty due to a fear of failure, unseen circumstances, and increased expectations and responsibilities. In addition, as an individual moves away from their home to develop autonomy they are also reducing the social resources which could make addressing some developmental concerns seem insurmountable. As a result, some emerging adults begin to act out. The next section provides an account of the problematic behaviors associated with emerging adulthood, as well as provide an analysis to both psychological well-being and of psychosocial pathology that may occur during this time.

1. Risk taking and criminal behavior. One of the most commonly observed trends of emerging adulthood is the increased levels of performing illegal and risky behaviors. Historically, the transition period between 18 and 24 years of age has been shown to have higher prevalence rates for illegal drug use, consumption of alcohol, and online solicitation. The U.S Department of Health and Safety Services (2011) reported that in 2009, 21.2% of this group used any illegal drug, 18.1% used marijuana and 6.3% abused psychotherapeutic drugs for nonmedical use. The U.S. Department of Health and Safety Services further stated that this demographic has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption (61.8%, just a few percentage points below the highest age
group, 26-34), the highest rates of binge drinking (as defined as 5 or more drinks in one setting once during a 30 month period, at 41.7%) and heavy alcohol use (as defined by 5 or more drinks in at least 5 days during a 30 month period, at 13.7%). Finally, they were reported to have the highest rates of cigarette (31.6%), tobacco (35.8%) and cigars use (11.4%).

The prevalence of risk taking may be a residual result of the process of identity development. Arnett (2005) proposed that the reasons for illegal drug use may be a result of either increased identity exploration, identity confusion, sensation seeking, perceived instability, or a result of when an individual places increased emphasis on self-focus at a time when a person possesses less social (outside) controlling variables. This theory is supported by an extensive analysis of 9,034 emerging adults in 30 colleges and universities around the United States by Schwartz et al. (2011). They found that individuals who had little interest in engaging in identity formation had nearly two to three times higher prevalence rates of dangerous drug use (hard drugs, inhalants, injecting drugs, and misuse of prescription drugs). Individuals who possessed a highly diffused identity status were also more likely to drive while intoxicated, to have sexual relations with a stranger, and to engage in anal sex. Individuals with diffused diffusion (marked by having not begun to explore identity formation due to nonproductive actions toward developing identity either through procrastination or due to worrying about future outcomes) also possessed increased prevalence of risk-taking and unhealthy behaviors relative to individuals in moratorium) and undifferentiated statuses (an individual who has yet to encounter the crisis and has yet to engage in identity formation). Finally, they
found that individuals in the achieved and foreclosure states had the lowest levels of health-compromising behaviors. Beyers and colleagues (2003) believed these results demonstrate that failing to engage in meaningful identity activity may pose serious health hazards that can place the person at risk. Another study conducted by Lewis and Gouger (2007) provided evidence that suggests ideological achievement (that is, an achieved status in one’s politics, religion and philosophy of life) was related to less prevalence to drinking behaviors, but interpersonal identity achievement (such as Marcia’s theory of identity development) did not. Thus, when it comes to drinking and substance use, agency that establishes or move towards an establishment of a mature, adult identity may be important to reduce risky activities.

Violence and criminal behavior has also been noted to be prevalent within this demographic. Marcus (2009) analyzed 14,098 respondents in a cross-section study from the National Longitudinal Study of National Health in order to assess prevalence rates of violent behavior and potential predictor variables. He found that violence decreased from age 19 to 25, but significantly more so for men compared to women (26% to 12% for men and 7.4% to 0.7% for women). He further reported that 11.3% of individuals in this age group report committing at least one violent or physical crime. Variables that appeared to affect the prevalence of violence were marriage, which decreased its prevalence, and depression and sensation seeking, which both increased the prevalence.

Piquero, Brame, Mazerolle, and Haapanen (2002) took a different approach to determining violent behavior. They noted that there are two predominant theories for the explanation of criminal behavior. The first cited theory is a general explanation which
states that all criminal behavior can be attributed to variations in self-control and available opportunities mitigated by social controls such as family, school, and marriage. The second cited theory approaches criminology from a developmental theory which identifies individuals to be either life-course persistent (an individual who possesses both neuropsychological deficits and deficient family and neighborhood environments) and adolescent-limited (an individual who possesses a maturity gap within the peer social context of adolescence). As can be expected, the prognosis for life-course persistent criminals is poorer than one that is adolescent-limited. Their sample drew from the criminal careers of serious offenders in the California Youth Authority who were released between the ages of 16 to 20 and were subsequently followed for 7-year post-parole period. Piquero and his colleagues found that within this group, arrests appeared to peak in the early 20s and declined afterwards. They further found a profound heterogeneity in the trends of future criminal behavior, noting different trends of criminal behavior over the seven years: some individuals showed increases in nonviolent behavior before a gradual reduction in criminal behavior at the end of the seven years, while others participants desisted from crime altogether. This research provided evidence for the developmental trajectories of criminology. While most individuals desisted over time, others appear to take on a “life-course persistent” trend which may cause these individuals to have a much harder time adapting to developmental challenges and may be related to deep-rooted environmental or neuropsychological factors.

Inderbitzin (2009) provided a heartbreaking study that confirms this theory of life-course persistent offenders. In her study, she followed a group of emerging adults in
a juvenile correction facility with qualitative interviews in which participants state their aspirations and fears on being released, and then she followed their progress for a few months post-release. Her qualitative interviews found that many of them recognized the importance of not breaking the law, continuing education, and finding a job, but many of these individuals perceived these expectations as lofty and unrealistic. As Inderbitzin followed the progress of these emerging adults for the first few months after being released from the juvenile correction facility, she found that of the five juveniles interviewed, two were arrested within the few months on drug-related charges, one disappeared entirely (nobody could contact him or knew where he was), the fourth began to abuse drugs in spite of having a wife and child, and the fifth was attempting to keep his job while admitting that he sometimes wishes he would still be in prison. The author attributed this to a lack of support and training that addressed the challenges in acclimating to life outside of corrections. She argued for more social support to allow for a smoother transition for these individuals and that providing help will allow for this group to be more successful.

Another potential problem area for many emerging adults may not seem readily apparent: internet and video game use. Research has shown that relative to other demographics, college students are more likely to use and abuse the Internet (Jones & Madden, 2002; McMillan & Morrison, 2006). Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Carrol, and Jensen (2010) found that within emerging adulthood, video game use was correlated with greater drug use, drinking behaviors, and lower relationship quality with friends and parents, and that within women video game use was associated with lower self-worth. Video game
play was further associated with diminished relationship quality and identity exploration. Padilla-Walker and her colleagues (2010) ascribed a more heterogeneous association in regards to internet use and behavior. Internet used for programs and applications such as chat rooms, shopping, entertainment, and pornography were linked with negative outcomes such as increased drinking and drug use, increased number of sexual partners, lowered self-perceptions and self-worth, and poorer relationships with friends and parents. However, when the Internet was used for more productive applications (such as e-mail, accessing it for research or homework at school), internet use appears to foster positive development. Thus, how the Internet is utilized may be associated with different developmental and social outcomes. Finally, a research study conducted by Baumgartner, Valkenburg, and Peter (2010) addressed the extent to which emerging adults perceived risk and received solicitations online. They found that there were no changes between adolescents and emerging adults’ ability to perceive the risks of unwanted sexual solicitation online, and that female adolescents and emerging adults possessed the greatest prevalence of unwanted sexual solicitation online.

Another potential reason for the increased prevalence of violent and risky behavior might be the notion that the time available to behave freely is finite. Research conducted by Ravert (2009) investigated the prevalence of behaviors that were viewed as “now or never,” (behaviors in which individuals take advantage of because of the freedom that emerging adulthood provides). His research found that a majority (76.6%) of students listed at least one behavior that they engage in because they think they will lose the opportunity to do so. The most commonly stated behaviors that fall in these
categories were 1) taking advantage of travel/adventure opportunities, 2) engaging in social events (partying and going out), 3) using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, 4) engaging in relationships and dating, 5) and pursuing a carefree lifestyle. Ravert recognized that while the freedom to explore and try new things may be stimulating and novel, pursuing such behaviors can be risky, for better or for worse. Experimentation and engaging in new areas may cause an individual to explore educational or career opportunities in a manner that they may not otherwise be able to later, while also allow for the opportunity to engage in behaviors that may be dangerous and potentially harmful, such as excessive drinking, the use of drugs, or unprotected sexual behavior.

This research gives a lot of credence to Baltes’ (1987) theory of human development that addressed the idea that as much as an individual is moving toward growth, they are also attempting to protect against losses. To many, emerging adulthood is perceived as the “highlight” of one’s life, suggesting a bias towards youth and possibilities and potentially causing some to view “growing up” as something to fear or dread. Indeed, a study conducted by Lacey, Smith, and Ubel (2006) addressed this effect by asking young adults (aged 30) and older adults (aged 70) their present level of happiness, where their level of happiness lies relative to the general population, and what level of happiness people that were younger and older than themselves were perceived to have. Unanimously the people interviewed reported that their happiness was just a little bit higher than the general population, and that they perceived their happiness to be higher than those younger and older than themselves. These results were consistent regardless of age, with older adults reporting themselves being happier than their younger
counterparts. This finding is further corroborated by research conducted by Sheldon and Kasser (2001), who found that as people age and mature, their psychological maturity and psychological well-being improves. Thus, despite the fact that older adults report equal level of happiness, young adults perceive that their present level of happiness is as high as it is ever going to get, which may cause them to engage in risky behaviors.

2. Psychological problems that occur in emerging adulthood. One area of increasing concern has been emerging adult’s psychological well-being (Arnett, 2007b; Blanco et al., 2010). Arnett (2007b) provides a brief overview of the historical myths associated with emerging adulthood such as the German literary concept of sturm and drang (literally, storm and stress) as a means of conveying excesses of youthful behavior and emotion. He further described Anna Freud’s view of this period, who claims that adolescence is a period where oedipal motivations of childhood reassert with the new added challenge of being sexually mature. In this conceptualization, this period is intended to be traumatic within not only the adolescent, but everyone around them. Most recently, Robbins and Wilner (2001) provide a harrowing account of this developmental transition in their book Quarterlife Crisis, where they identified this period as one where an individual experiencing the sheer volume of choices, opportunities and expectations are all but crippled in the fears, anxieties and doubts of transitioning into adulthood and the “real” world and lifelong careers. However, Arnett challenges these conceptualizations, stating that while developmental challenges within this period certainly exist (such as anxiety stemming the increased responsibility of being
autonomous), overall most emerging adults are content and optimistic as they move from the beginning of this period towards more mature roles.

Not everyone agrees with Arnett’s claim, however. In a massive, 5,092-subject study, Blanco and his colleagues (2010) assessed the mental health of 2,188 college students and 2,904 non-college emerging adults. They found an increased prevalence of acquiring psychiatric disorders in individuals who were male, had experienced stressful life events in the past year, had lost a steady relationship, were widowed, divorced, separated, US born living in a rural setting, or living away from their parents. Interestingly, factors associated with a decreased chance of developing a psychiatric disorder included being Black, Asian, or Hispanic, being married or having a cohabitation relationship, or rating overall health as good to excellent decreased the odds of having a psychiatric disorder. They further found that nearly half on their college sample met the criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder in the previous year, but that this psychiatric symptomology was similar to that of the general population. However, while this college aged group may have had similar prevalence rates of psychiatric and personality disorders compared to the rest of the population, Blanco and his colleagues found that the prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse was double what would found in the general adult population. Even more alarming, college students were the least likely to seek treatment for their problems. In comparison, the most frequently reported psychiatric disorders within non-college emerging adults were personality disorders and nicotine dependence.
Galambos, Barker and Krahn (2006), by contrast, support Arnett’s claims. They performed a seven year longitudinal study to assess how depression, self-esteem, and anger changed within emerging adults and whether gender, levels of parental education, family relationship type, and social support were intervening factors. They found that depression and anger decreased over time and self-esteem increased. Interestingly, while women began the study with greater prevalence of depression, over time, the gap between men and women diminished to the point of non-significance seven years later. One possible explanation for this could potentially lie in the protective power of establishing an adult identity and role for women. In regards to parental education, individuals who came from parents who both possessed a university degree had significantly less depression and expressed anger over time. The researchers ascribed this result to greater availability of resources for these emerging adults, which would result in greater developmental trajectories. This result is further supported by the finding that addressed the effects of social support, in which results seem to imply a link between social support and psychological well-being. The relationship between social support and well-being further suggests that reducing social support could potentially have negative effects on an emerging adult’s psychological well-being. This is particularly prevalent for individuals who moved away from home, potentially reducing the availability of family and friends for the sake of establishing autonomy.

Individual factors may also have an effect on one’s psychological state. In an analysis of emotion and coping towards a midterm, Folkman and Lazarus (1985) found that, in the process of approaching a test, college students tended to utilize problem-
focused coping strategies (characterized as developing strategies or understanding the problem better) and at least one emotion-focused coping strategy (such as wishful thinking, distancing, emphasizing the positive, or self-blame). They further found that coping strategies tended to remain consistent both before taking an examination and while waiting for the results. They further found that most emotion-focused coping such as self-blame or wishful thinking may impede problem-focused coping – the one exception being the emphasis of the positive in a situation. Thus, how an individual responds to and addresses ambiguous or stressful circumstances may be related to psychological well-being.

In another study 4-year longitudinal study, Frye and Liem (2011) addressed the prevalence of depression in emerging adults. Through an analysis of 1,148 emerging adults, they were able to separate the course of depression into four trajectories: 1) a low stable group (a group which started with low depressive symptoms and maintained this level over the four years), 2) a decreasing group (a group which started with moderate depressive symptoms which diminished over the four years), 3) an increasing group (a group which started with moderate depressive symptoms that increased over the four years), and 4) a high stable group (a group that started with high depressive symptoms that were maintained over the four years). Fry and Liem found that individuals who fell within the two highest groups of depressive symptoms constituted 8% of their total population. However, while the decreasing group (which constituted 17% of the total population) may appear to be cause for celebration, Frye and Liem cautioned that members of this group were at potential risk for developing depressive symptoms later on
in life. Factors that appeared to mediate depressive symptomology within these groups, however, were complex and difficult to determine. Women, for example, were found to be significantly correlated to both the “decreasing” and “high stable” groups — which taken together creates a contradictory finding. Frye and Liem interpreted the relationship by stating that the “decreasing” group appears to be developing adaptive coping mechanisms which reduces the occurrence of depressive symptoms, while those in the “high stable” group may be unwilling to or unable to develop these coping mechanisms, which has the negative effect of increasing the prevalence of depression over time. They also found another difference in the prevalence of depression within African Americans, who appear to have an increased likelihood of being in the increasing depression group, which Frye and Liem theorized, may be due to feelings of frustration towards discrimination and difficulties in finding a career. Finally, family poverty was associated with both the increasing and decreasing group of depressive symptoms, which is also another contradictory finding. Frye and Liem hypothesized that the increasing frequency of depressive symptoms may be due to being in an impoverished state, which appears to continue to cause feelings of worthlessness and depression even after the condition of being impoverished diminishes. In regards to the decreasing depression group, they suggest that this correlation may be related to increased self-esteem and self-efficacy related to the ability to striking out on one’s own and seizing new opportunities that they may not have had available to them. By going out and being successful, these emerging adults would increase their sense of worth, foster a strong psychosocial identity, and protect their psychological well-being.
Salmela-Aro, Aunola and Nurmi (2008) conducted a 10-year longitudinal study to explore the antecedents and consequences of depressive symptoms during emerging adulthood. Following 297 students over ten years, they separated depressive symptomology into three different trajectories – a high (16% of the population), medium (61%) and low (23%). As with Fry and Liem, the four-year trajectories found that the low and medium groups diminished in the prevalence of their depressive symptoms, while those in the highest depressive group gradually increased over time. Unlike Frye and Liem, no gender differences were found in the membership of each trajectory. In regards to antecedents, Salmela-Aro and her colleagues found that high and increasing trajectory groups typically possessed difficulties with social interaction, which emphasizes the need for developing and facilitating social networks during this period. They further found that individuals in the high depression trajectories tended to utilize maladaptive achievement and social strategies, such as possessing fewer expectations for success and self-handicapping, compared to the medium and low groups. Comparatively, the low depression group deployed functional achievement and social strategies. As far as consequences of depressive symptomology, Salmela-Aro and her colleagues found that the high depression group had difficulty attaining the achievement developmental identity, earned less money, and suffered more burnout in comparison to the other groups. Overall, these results underscore the long-term consequences of depressive symptoms and also suggest that depressive symptomology may be related to poor coping and social skills, and that an inability to form and create social interactions may be
related to less psychological well-being and resources to cope during this transition period.

Identity styles may also have an effect on adaptive psychological behavior. One study conducted by Berzonsky and Luyckx (2008) explored the relationship between identity processes style on adaptive and maladaptive behavior. They identified three different processing styles: 1) informational (characterized by actively processing relevant information to establish self-insight and self-improvement), 2) diffuse-avoidant (characterized by procrastinating and avoiding identity conflicts and decisions as long as possible), and 3) normative (characterized by passive internalization of prescriptions and expectations of significant others). They found that informational styles were related to adaptive aspects of self-reflection and self-awareness. Individuals in the normative style, by contrast, were not positively associated with the positive aspects of self-reflection and self-awareness, but rather were associated with ruminative exploration (a thought processes of being stuck in exploration where one continuously second-guess one’s own decisions). Finally, diffuse-avoidant styles tended to avoid the process of self-analysis and possess little interest in self-exploration, perhaps as a way to avoid personal shortcomings, which may be associated with other maladaptive behaviors.

Continuing the exploration of identity formation processes on psychological functioning, Schwartz et al. (2011) conducted a massive study of 9,034 emerging adults across 30 U.S. universities. In addition to determining six identity status clusters which included Marcia’s achievement, foreclosure, and searching moratorium, they identified undifferentiated as an identity type (characterized by not reaching the stage of identity
exploration) and two types of diffusion styles: 1) diffused diffusion, characterized by high ruminative exploration and broad exploration of breadth; and 2) carefree diffusion, characterized by a lack of commitment, exploration, and commitment. In regards to psychological well-being, both the diffusion states scored lowest on self-esteem, internal locus of control, satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and eudemonic well-being. Furthermore, both diffusion types were associated with depression, general anxiety, and social anxiety, but only carefree diffusion was associated with externalizing problems in a kind of antisocial-like manner.

Individuals with the achieved status, by contrast, scored the highest on all psychosocial functioning indices, while achievement and foreclosure status scored equivalently on general well-being. Although individuals with the foreclosed identity state may be lower than achievers on self-discovery and sense of personal meaning, they also were less likely than achievers to possess symptoms of general anxiety and depression. Schwartz and his colleagues (2011) suggested that the process of self-discovery may cause anxiety and distress. Finally, moratorium and differentiated states scored comparatively on most psychological measures, with moratorium scoring somewhat higher on overall well-being, but also scoring higher on depression and anxiety. In an analysis of risky behaviors, both achievement and foreclosure statuses were related to less prevalence of health-compromising behaviors such as illicit drug use and impaired driving, while carefree diffusion scored the highest on dangerous drug use, drinking and driving and engaging in sex with a stranger. These findings suggest that as an individual engages the process of identity formation, the process they undergo may
have a significant effect on psychological well-being. Furthermore, the process of choosing a direction – either through identity achievement or through foreclosure identity formation – appears to be related to positive psychological and behavioral outcomes, emphasizing the importance of this transitional period.

G. Providing Support for Emerging Adults

As educators, our challenge then becomes how to address and provide support for emerging adults while they grapple with the challenges during this period. So far we have seen how emerging adulthood is a period of dramatic personal and professional development and growth. Emerging adults are faced with many challenges and difficult decisions which may indicate or cause various psychological (depression, diminished self-esteem and self-efficacy), and behavioral outcomes (such as violence or alcohol consumption). The developmental transition could be related to changes in identity development and psychosocial growth. For example, Schwartz et al. (2011) found that there is a link between identity states and psychological well-being, and satisfaction with life. The question that remains is what can be done? As mentioned previously, Côté (2002) suggested that one way in which individuals may receive structure and support is through the formation of identity capital. His conceptualization of identity capital possessed both environmental resources and individual agency, and his research suggested that individuals require both in order to transition through emerging adulthood successfully.

One source of support appears to come from the family. For example, research conducted by Johnson, Gans, Kerr, and LaValle (2010) addressed the extent to which
family function, emotional coping, and college adjustment are related in emerging adulthood. Their study assessed two cohorts of 320 first-year undergraduates over two consecutive years (94 in the first year and 226 in the second year). Their study found that college students’ perceptions of their family environment were all linked to their academic, social, and emotional well-being when making the transition to college. For example, when students perceived their families to be less cohesive prior to beginning college, they tended to report experiencing less academic adjustment, more dissatisfaction with their social adjustment, and more general psychological distress. However, Johnson et al. further note that when emotional coping variables were included while assessing college adjustment, family factors appeared less influential, with the one exception being the relationship between family conflict and college adjustment. Thus, individuals who tended to avoid their emotions had fewer beneficial outcomes than those who effectively manage their emotions. Thus, an individual who possesses good emotional management skills can mitigate the negative outcomes normally associated with an less expressive and cohesive family, while those who came from less expressive families and had lower ability to manage their emotions were at greatest risk for poor adjustment.

Adams, Berzonsky, and Keating (2006) conducted another study which addressed the extent to which identity process and social relationships were related. Utilizing a sample of 351 first-year university students, they provided measures that assessed psychosocial resources, university relationships, family relationships, identity status, and Berzonsky’s identity processing styles (informational, diffuse-avoidant, and normative).
These researchers found, while controlling for the effects of identity variables that just one social variable—family cohesion—was directly related to psychosocial resources such as trust, initiative, effectiveness, competence, and fidelity. One finding that they expected but did not find was that a mediating effect of families that encouraged individuals to openly express their feelings and views was not positively associated with an informational identity style (characterized by actively seeking out and processing self-relevant information). However, family expressiveness was negatively correlated with normative and diffuse-avoidant approaches to identity, suggesting that these family structures may encourage informational identity processing by discouraging avoiding or automatizing identity processing. Furthermore, different identity styles and identity status may be related to the availability of resources: identity-avoidant styles, for examples, were found to have a negative relationship with psychosocial resources. Informational processing, conversely, was associated with increases in psychosocial resources. Likewise, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion were also associated with similar decreases. Adams, Berzonsky and Keating noted the importance of identifying moratorium to be potentially negative, as this developmental identity has traditionally been recognized as an active identity outcome. They theorized that perhaps moratorium represents a future-oriented “wait and see” approach, which may be indicative of procrastination and a diffuse-avoidant identity style.

Spencer and Patrick (2009) conducted another study that explored the effects of parental support on psychological well-being. Primarily interested in whether or not parental support would be beneficial for lesbian and gay (LG) emerging adults, Spencer
and Patrick provided an online survey to 306 participants (32 gay men, 61 heterosexual men, 34 lesbian women, and 179 heterosexual women) addressing their social resources, self-esteem and depressive symptomology. They found that all emerging adults have higher prevalence of depressive symptoms than the average population, with a significant relationship between the different sexual orientations (with a frequency rate of 17.08 depressive symptoms within the heterosexual groups and 20.42 depressive symptoms within the lesbian/gay (LG) group, which is above the ideal cutoff of 16 depressive symptoms). In regards to the benefit of personal resources, Spencer and Patrick found that these resources were associated with more positive psychological outcomes for the entire sample. However, in regards to the LG subjects, a combination of personal resources and personal mastery was required to mediate the relationship between sexual orientation and well-being. Their explanation for this effect was that, although LG individuals may be able to receive social support from outside sources, in periods of crisis or societal homosexim they will need to rely on their own sense of self.

As we have seen, a supportive family environment may be indicative of positive psychosocial outcomes. One proposed challenge for educators in higher education is to be able to provide this type of supportive environment to students to facilitate student development and growth particularly for those students who lack support at home. Astin (1984) provides a classic analysis of the constructive effects of student involvement. His research addressed three pedagogical means of providing a supportive environment. The first theory, subject-matter theory, states that student learning and development depends primarily on exposure to the right subject matter. By this theory, a broad spectrum of
course content and academic opportunities would be sufficient in order to encourage
development and growth. Astin’s criticism of the theory involved the increasing
fragmentation of the faculty interests, as well as assigning students to the passive role in
the transmission of information in classrooms. The second theory, resource theory, states
that a wide range of services (such as tutoring, counseling and financial aid) and physical
resources (laboratories and libraries) are the most conducive to student learning and
development. By this theory, providing services and effecting the amount of resources
available would provide the greatest benefit. The stated criticisms to this theory are the
finite nature of the resources in question, such as intelligent faculty and high-achieving
students, and the potential to accumulate resources with little attention given to how
frequently and effectively those resources are being utilized by the student body. The
third and last theory, individualized (eclectic) theory, states that no single approach
would be beneficial to all students in all circumstances and that individualized instruction
and services should be utilize to address specific student’s needs. By this approach, each
individual student would have a tailor-made set of course instructions and services
specifically intended to ensure success. The stated criticism of this method lies in the cost
of implementation, as well as the difficulty in defining how this method needs to be
implemented with accuracy and precision.

In order to get a better determination as to how student involvement affects
developmental outcomes, Astin referenced a previous longitudinal study (Astin 1975),
which investigated how various factors addressed individual development. For example,
living in an on-campus dormitory was associated with greater artistic interests, liberalism,
interpersonal self-esteem, and greater forms of involvement such as higher prevalence of interacting with the faculty, more involvement with student government, and greater participation in fraternities and sororities. Likewise, academic involvement was associated with decreases in liberalism, hedonism, artistic interest, and religious apostasy while it was associated with increased satisfaction in all aspects of college life except friendships with other students. Increasing student-faculty interaction was also positively related to satisfaction with all aspects of institutional experience including friendships with other students, satisfaction with the intellectual environment, and satisfaction with the administration. Finally, athletic involvement was associated with satisfaction in academic reputation, intellectual environment, student friendships, and instructional administration. Thus, Astin encouraged increasing interactions between students with faculty and staff, as well as increasing the roles of counselors and student personnel workers.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified seven principles grounded in research of how to best foster student learning. These seven principles included 1) encourages contact between students and faculty, 2) develops reciprocity and cooperation between students, 3) encourages active thinking, 4) gives prompt feedback, 5) emphasizes time on task, 6) communicates high expectations, and 7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. In addition, during his work on the Project on Student Development in Small Colleges Chickering (1969) identified 6 “conditions for impact,” or qualities and supports that he identified as conducive to college student development. These were expanded upon by Chickering and Reisser to seven and included 1) clarity of objectives and
internal consistency; 2) institutional size which cautioned against intuitions becoming too big that college students are restricted and denied opportunities; 3) curriculum, teaching, and evaluation, which recognized the importance of providing the opportunities of choice, evaluations that address behavior and performance, increasing analysis and synthesis, and providing opportunities for relationships, autonomy, integrity, and purpose; 4) residence hall arrangements, which recognized the importance of providing an opportunity for diverse groups and community-building opportunities, 5) faculty and administration, which identified the importance of frequent and friendly interactions between the students in a variety of different contexts; 6) friends, groups, and student culture, which recognized the importance of a community which is open, enthusiastic, and helpful; and 7) student development programs and services, which offer help and support for students.

A more recent study that addressed the positive effects of academic involvement was conducted by Brenner, Mietz, and Brenner (2009). Their study addressed how the effects of college involvement (the amount of different college-based activities, as opposed to the quality of time invested) within college athletes (making a distinction between team-based athletics and individual-based athletics) was related to decreases in problematic alcohol consumption. Their study assessed 720 men and women from three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, II, and III institutions in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, for a total of nine universities. Brenner, Mietz and Brenner provided an assessment for campus involvement, campus connection, and alcohol use. They found that higher levels of campus involvement were significantly related to lower-
risk alcohol use by college athletes. In this regard, Division III universities possessed
greater campus involvement than both Division I and II. They believed that this may be
due to an increase in the number of emerging adults who attended college community,
programs, and a collegiate environment which develops a broader base of community
support. Somewhat surprising, college connection was related to increases in alcohol
consumption. Brenner, Mietz, and Brenner believed that perhaps this may indicate a lack
of connectivity throughout the college, which reduces social relationships and may result
in a stronger connection within communities that foster alcohol consumption. In regards
to specific teams, individual-based athletics tended to have greater college involvement,
while team-based athletics tended to have greater college connection. The researchers
believed this was due to the fact that relationships within their team were particularly
high and that the team often supported problematic alcohol consumption.

As we can see, there have been many studies that have suggested how we might
be able to address the challenges and encourage adaptive developmental outcomes during
emerging adulthood. However decisively determining how we can do this is more
difficult. If we were to only consider the developmental context, specifically identifying
one resource, activity, or service that is beneficial to all students within this group is
difficult due to the heterogeneity of identity states and identity styles. Indeed, the
discrepancy of differences within this group is incredibly challenging for a group this
diverse. For example, Folkman and Lazarus (1985) found that there are many ways
students respond to a stressful situation: a college midterm. In their study, 261 college
undergraduates were assessed during three different times: 1) two days before the test, 2)
five days after the midterm and two days before the grades were announced, and 3) five
days after grades were announced. Folkman and Lazarus provided measures that
addressed 1) the frequency of emotional responses (such as threat emotions, challenge
emotions, harm emotions, and benefit (mastery-gain) emotions); 2) the frequency of
coping strategies (such as problem-focused, wishful thinking, distancing, seeking social
support, emphasizing the positive, self-blame, reducing tension, and self-isolation); and
3) the frequency in the ways social support was utilized (informational support,
emotional support, or tangible support). They found that coping is not a static process and
changes as an individual responds throughout periods of ambiguity. For example, before
a test more students reported the most problem-oriented coping strategies and sought
informational support than in the five days after the midterm and two days before the test
results were posted and end, which tended to emphasize seeking emotional support and
increased prevalence of distancing coping strategies in all students. Their second finding
suggested that in any phase of an encounter, people are likely to experience seeming
contradictory feelings and emotions. The example they used showed that in the pre-
encounter phase, students reported higher frequencies of threat and challenge mastery-
oriented emotions in regards to the upcoming midterm. Further, individuals cope in a
variety of different ways which include problem-focused and emotion-focused coping.

Another study conducted by Smits, Doumen, Luyckx, Duriez, and Goossens
(2011) addressed how fostering feelings of empathy within emerging adults would serve
to moderate identity styles. In order to address this, Smits et al. assessed 343 Belgium
undergraduates using measures that assessed identity styles, empathy, and interpersonal
behavior. They found that within the different identity styles, information-oriented style was related to adaptive pattern of interpersonal behaviors, with high scores on prosocial behavior and other-oriented helping behavior. Normative oriented and diffuse-avoidant identity styles, by contrast, were associated with more maladaptive of interpersonal behaviors. For example, normative orientation was not related to prosocial behavior, such as performing a specific behavior for another person’s approval or appreciation. Diffuse-avoidant styles tend to be physically and relationally aggressive and individuals perform prosocial behavior when it is self-oriented in nature. Thus, it was expected that empathy would be related to decreases in maladaptive behavior and increases in prosocial behaviors. However, Smits et al. found that empathy was positively correlated with information-processing and negatively correlated with diffuse-avoidant identity styles. This suggests that empathy may serve as a mediating role in identity development as well, and fostering empathy within individuals who possess diffuse-avoidant styles may be a valuable step in moving these individuals towards more adaptive and prosocial behaviors. However, no relationships were found within the normative style. The theory is that normative identity styles seek to satisfy specific individuals and that empathy would be addressed by promoting the social relationships they already are actively seeking to foster, narrowing where they address their attention. Thus, for individuals with the normative style, attempting to intervene with empathy may not have as much positive results.

Another study conducted by Cox and McAdams (2012) assessed how volunteerism would affect emerging adult’s understandings of themselves and their
commitment to volunteer service. Cox and McAdams followed 36 college students from four institutions in Virginia (mean age 21). These subjects participated in a service trip to Nicaragua over spring break. Both at one week and at three months after the trip the participants were directed to a website where the researchers sought information on the rates in which a student participated in volunteer service and utilized qualitative narratives to account their experiences at Nicaragua. Their qualitative data found that many of these students encountered positive transformative experience such as developing a global understanding of need, recognizing the importance of addressing service and support to the needy, developing a global sense to the sanctity of humanity, and increasing sympathy for the needs of individuals who were impoverished. However, in addition to these uplifting findings, other participants stated a sense of helplessness, and developed feelings of being overwhelmed at the extent of need. The researchers noted that these helpless accounts tended to not be as long as the accounts that were positive in their transformative effect, suggesting that once agency was lost, there was little left to say. Furthermore, this service trip was not significantly related to general volunteerism at 1 week or 3 months, suggesting that the narrated transformation did not reflect lasting change. Sympathy, one of the stated outcomes in the narratives, was positively related to volunteerism 1 week later, but not 3 months. However, the researchers stated that the transformative factors were related to idealized selves and projected future behavior, stating that many of the participants perceived themselves as becoming more service minded in the future. The difficulty in determining the transformative outcome for emerging adults is very challenging. Some individuals may
receive future benefit from transformative experiences, while others only experienced a moderate change that did not last.

Taken together, the difficulty in addressing the developmental needs of this group, combined with the broad range of identity statuses, identity strategies, parental background, and coping strategies make the process of forming effective interventions a challenge that has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature at this point. Managing the challenge between providing services and support that are beneficial to the growth of a broad range of developmental needs while also ensuring those services are effective will be a relevant challenge as we continue to address this developmental period.

H. Measuring Identity Development

Like all social sciences, developmental psychology faces the challenge of answering the question “how do we know what we know?” Early developmental psychologists, such as Freud and Erikson, undertook the first steps in addressing and establishing theory by making observations and analysis of the world around them. When he compared his theory of psychosocial development to Freud’s theory of psychosexual development, Erikson (1963) observed that Freud’s theory was conceived through an analysis of his patients with expressed psychological deviations. However, not satisfied with this conceptualization, Erikson (1963) created his own theory of psychosocial development through an analysis of a wider range of people – from case studies of individuals who expressed problematic behaviors, to ethnographical observations of Native Americans at play. Through the use of qualitative methodology,
Erikson was able to conceptualize and contextualize his theory through the lived experiences of those around him.

Since the emphasis of identity development in psychology, research has gone through many shifts in response to different theories within the field, with emphasis on how Erikson’s stages can be assessed. The purpose of this section is to address different measures that have been constructed to assess individual development while at college. The first measure that attempted to assess Erikson’s entire theory quantitatively: Rosenthal, Gurney, and Moore’s (1981) Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI).

The second sub-section will then address two measures that specifically assess the developmental period that occurs while at college: 1) Bennison and Adams’s (1985) Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity (EOM-EIS-II), and 2) Balistreri, Bush-Rossnagel and Geisinger’s (1995) Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). The third sub-section will discuss two measures that address how identity is approached in college: 1) Berzonsky’s (1988, 1989) Identity Styles Inventory (ISI), and 2) Luyckx’s et al. (2008) Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS). The fourth section will return to a discussion of quantitative analysis highlighting changes in methodology such as Hill, Thompson, and Williams’ (1997) Consensual Qualitative Research. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for research and the application of these measures.

1. Quantifying the theory of psychosocial development: The Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI). One of the first challenges of establishing a measure to validate Erikson’s (1963) theory was to develop a measure that would be able to quantitatively identify and qualify the construct. Rosenthal, Gurney, and Moore (1981)
identified this as one of the main criticisms in the experimental methodology of developmental psychology, since the basis of his theory relied on its validation through clinical impressions and logical arguments rather than empirical data. As mentioned previously, Erikson (1963) utilized qualitative analysis to establish the formulation of his theory. In his book he describes his theory in detail through the narratives, observations, stories, and clients that he worked with over the course of his professional life. Following in this methodology, Marcia (1966) also utilized interviews as a means of determining different states of identity status.

In light of the lack of a quantifiable means of measuring interpersonal development, Rosenthal, Gurney, and Moore (1981) created the first instrument that assessed the extent to which an individual achieves a successful transition among Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development. Their measure, the Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI), possessed six subscales based on the first six stages—Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Imitative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Role Diffusion, and Intimacy vs. Isolation. Each subscale consisted of 12 items for a total of 60 items and is intended for participants ages 13 and older. Half of the items consisted of responses that would indicate a successful transition and the other half consisted of responses that would indicate an unsuccessful transition. Respondents would report their response on a five point Likert scale for each item with 5 being “almost always true” and 1 being “hardly ever true.”

This questionnaire was provided to a pilot sample of 97 secondary school students. Of the sample, 58 of these students were in their freshman year, while 44
students were in their sophomore year. Following their analysis, the survey was given to 622 additional secondary school students. Of this sample, 320 of these students were in their freshman year, while 302 of these students were in their sophomore year. Mean scores (on a scale of 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating a more successful transition) and standard deviations and alpha coefficients for the pilot and test sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Alpha Coefficients from Two Samples of the EPSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pilot Sample (N = 97)</th>
<th>Test sample (N = 622)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note From (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981, pg. 530)*

They further note that while their correlations were generally lower than the alpha coefficients observed in the pilot, they were deemed adequately valid by Rosenthal, Gurney and Moore (1981). They further state that the removal of one item within the subscales would greatly improve the correlations for Autonomy (α = 0.69) Initiative (α = 0.64), and Trust (α = 0.68). The researchers stated that this was primarily due to ambiguous items and that through revisions they should become adequate test items in the future. For example, the item “I can stand on my own two feet” was endorsed by 84% of the sample, suggesting that the subjects interpreted this statement literally rather than
metaphorically. Rosenthal, Gurney and Moore stated that a more direct statement of the aspect of autonomy would be desirable for future uses of the EPSI.

Further, the interscale correlations that they observed for their measure were moderate and significant and can be viewed on Table 2. The only exception to this was a nonsignificant industry-intimacy correlation within the pilot sample. Within the larger test sample, this relationship was noted to be very significant.

Table 2. Interscale Correlations of the Subscales for Two Samples of the EPSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Trust</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Autonomy</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Initiative</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Industry</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identity</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intimacy</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* From (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981, p. 531)

Overall, the researchers felt that this measure was a valuable tool to process not only the information on one stage (like most other measures), but identify the importance of all stages in Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development. Erikson’s theory states the importance of the overlapping of psychosocial stages, as past difficulties and successes of previous stages play an indirect effect to present and future stages. As an individual moves from one psychosocial stage, they are supported or hindered by a successful
transition in the previous stages, and may even revisit a different challenge during their current “crisis.” For example, an individual within the stage of Intimacy vs. Isolation may revisit the challenge of Trusting or Mistrusting their partner. The EPSI recognizes this through the intercorrelations of the subscales. As all the subscales are moderately correlated, the measure is capable of observing the full range of an individual’s interpersonal development and how previous stages are affecting the current one.

2. Measures of identity development: The EOM-EIS II and the EIPQ. While the EPSI provides us with a good overview of an individual’s progress through the stages in Erikson’s theory for the first six psychosocial stages identified by Erikson, I also feel that the measure itself may be a bit too broad in its scope. In order to address the challenges specific to college students, I would want to utilize an instrument that is intended to address the developmental challenges specific to this group. This is also reflected in the demographic of the samples taken, which were entirely secondary school students and may not be generalizable to college students.

According to Erikson (1963), individuals in college typically are in the process of resolving the psychosocial crises of Identity vs. Role Diffusion and/or Intimacy vs. Isolation. However, recent research suggests that many college students are delaying the transition towards adulthood (Parker, 2012; Robbins & Wilner, 2001; Sallie Mae, 2012). Erikson further recognized the potential for individuals within the Identity vs. Role diffusion stage to become delayed through moratorium, which he conceptualized a prolonging of exploration by embarking on activities that allow an individual to explore identities and develop expertise—such as attending college.
According to Arnett (2004), emerging adulthood possesses five main features: 1) a time when a person focuses on identity formation, 2) a time when a person feels instability in their social and interpersonal state, 3) an time when a person has the opportunity to emphasize attention on themself, 4) the time of feeling in-transition, and 5) a time when a vast number of possibilities are available. Thus, measures that assess an identity formation will allow us to address the extent to which an individual is successful during their college years.

The two most commonly used measures for identity are Benison and Adam’s (1986) revised version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS-II) and Balistreri, Bush-Rossnagel and Geisinger’s (1995) Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ).

a. The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS-II). One early measure of identity development was developed by Adams, Shae, and Fitch (1979) called the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status. This measure utilized Marcia’s (1966) theory of identity status, which identifies an individual’s identity state through 1) the extent to which a person had explored alternatives towards determining their identity, and 2) the extent to which a person had committed toward any one specific identity. By doing so, Marcia was able to identify four distinct states: 1) identity diffusion, which is characterized by low exploration and low commitment, 2) moratorium, which is characterized by moderate to high exploration and low commitment, 3) foreclosure, which is characterized by high commitment and low exploration, and 4) identity achievement, which is characterized by high exploration and high achievement.
The original OM-EIS consisted of 24 items on a six point Likert scale that assessed the subject’s identity status toward an occupation, politics, and religion. However, in addition to scales that measure ideological domains (which were identified within the OM-EIS), Benison and Adams (1986) sought to expand the scope to include interpersonal domains (such as friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation). To address this, they wrote new questions that were added to the OM-EIS and submitted the questions to 9 judges (all college students) to determine which state of identity status the question identified (diffusion, moratorium, identity achievement, or foreclosure). The internal consistency of the judges was very high with agreement within the judges reaching 94.4%, indicating high theoretical and face validity. Their final measure consisted of 64 items on a 6-point Likert scale. This measure was given to 106 volunteers. The Cronbach’s alphas for each subscale and suggest good to strong internal consistency for all subscales of ideology and interpersonal identity measures. Results of their study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach’s Alphas ($\alpha$) for the Subscales of the EOM-EIS-II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note From (Benison & Adams, 1986, p. 186)*
The Pearson correlation for each factor is provided in Table 4, which indicates that there is a significant degree of shared variance between similar ideological and interpersonal content. For example, ideological and interpersonal achievement scores were shown possess a moderate correlation (0.45), which suggests that achievement in ideological achievement may play a role in or suggest a successful transition in interpersonal achievement (or vice versa).

Table 4. Pearson Correlation for Each Subscale in the EOM-EIS-II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MOR</td>
<td>FOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>-0.41***</td>
<td>-0.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.71***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>-0.36***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)  ** \( p < .01 \)  *** \( p < .001 \)

**Note 1** From (Benison & Adams, 1986, p. 187)

**Note 2** MOR = moratorium, FOR = foreclosure, DIF = diffusion, ACHI = achievement

To determine the concurrent validity, this measure was compared with the identity and intimacy scales from the EPSI as well as scales for self-acceptance, authoritarianism and social desirability. The Pearson Correlation of the EOM-EIS subscales and the various measures utilized can be viewed on Table 5. Their results suggested that the identity achievement subscales of the EOM-EIS-II were positively correlated with the ESPI. They also found that the subscales of diffusion, moratorium and foreclosure were negatively associated with a successful identity transition. Furthermore, achievement was
positively correlated with, while moratorium, diffusion and foreclosure were negatively correlated with, intimacy. Overall, these results matched the relationships the Bennison and Adams (1986) expected on these subscales.

Table 5. Pearson Correlations of the EOM-EIS-II with EPSI and other Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACHI</td>
<td>MOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>0.38***</td>
<td>-0.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>-0.29***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigidity</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

Note 1 From (Benison & Adams, 1986, p. 189)
Note 2 MOR = moratorium, FOR = foreclosure, DIF = diffusion, ACHI = achievement

Finally, Bennison and Adams (1986) used factorial validity to determine the extent to which factors could be drawn from the data. Factorial validity is the process through which the subscale constructs are correlated with each other in order to determine if they represent distinct factors. Ideally, Bennison and Adams expected four different factors to load: one factor for achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion. In order to assess this, they used factor analysis with Varimax rotation. The results are provided in table 6. They were able to find three factors (while expecting four). This result suggested that while achievement and foreclosure represented distinct factors, diffusion and moratorium may be related and may be distinct from achievement and foreclosure identity status.
Table 6. Factor Analysis of the Subscales of the EOM-EIS-II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FACTOR 1 DIFFUSION/ MORATORIUM</th>
<th>FACTOR 2 ACHIEVEMENT</th>
<th>FACTOR 3 FORECLOSURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance Accounted for by Factor</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* From (Benison & Adams, 1986, p. 191)

Overall, Benison and Adams (1986) were pleased with the EOM-EIS-II. They stated that the new items appeared to possess good internal consistency and discriminant, convergent, concurrent and predictive validities. However, their factorial analysis revealed only three identity statuses, where they were expecting four. Identity achievement and foreclosure were unique and separate from each other, but diffusion and moratorium appeared to merge into one factor. Benison and Adams stated that this merge has occurred in past research studies and may be due to a lack of sampled individuals who were of the diffused identity type or perhaps a weakness in the conceptual understanding of diffusion and moratorium states. Overall, they believed the EOM-EIS-II would be a valuable tool for individuals who were in late adolescence to address and assess their identity status in a variety of interpersonal and ideological domains.
b. Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). The second measure, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ), was designed by Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995). These researchers created the EIPQ in order to address the limitations of the OM-EIS and EOM-EIS-II: specifically, the content of the items related to sex roles only dealt with marriage as opposed to a more general view of gender roles, as well as the positive correlation between diffusion and moratorium for both the OM-EIS and EOM-EIS-II, which may have been due to the wording of the items. In response to this, Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger came up with a new measure. They began with the eight domains covered in the EOM-EIS-II and changed one item within both the ideological and interpersonal domains: replacing “recreation” within the interpersonal domain with “family” in recognition of the importance family plays in establishing an identity, and replacing “philosophy” was replaced with “values” in order to be a less ambiguous construct. Further, they generated a new set of questions from the literature and modified some of the items on the EOM-EIS-II by changing the original open-ended questions into close-ended questions.

They provided an original pool of items to a sample of 73 participants, and removed items based on low corrected item-scale correlations, high correlations with social desirability, and low standard deviations for the full range of responses. Their total pool culminated into 53 items, which were reduced from the original pool of 67 items. These 53 items were then reduced to 32 items which were determined by a panel of 5 advanced graduate students rating which dimension the item intended to measure. The internal consistency estimates on commitment and exploration scores were 0.80 for
commitment and 0.86 for exploration. This new measure was provided to an additional sample of 46 students, for one-week test-retest reliability coefficients, which were determined of 0.90 ($p < 0.01$) for commitment and 0.76 ($p < 0.01$) for exploration.

In order to determine the construct and predictive validity of this new measure, it was provided to 260 college students divided by sex (130 males and females) and by grade (84 freshman, 95 sophomores, 45 juniors, and 36 seniors). The EIPQ was correlated with other factors such as Rosenberg’s (1965) Self-Esteem scale, the Rotter’s (1966) Internal-External (I-E) scale the authoritarian submission and conventionality subscales of the California Fascism (F) scale, the Form Y of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and the Bem (1974) Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The results are shown in table 7.

Table 7. Correlations of Exploration and Commitment of the EIPQ with Other Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.19*</td>
<td>-0.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$  ** $p < .01$

Note From (Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger, 1995, p. 187)

Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995) stated that both the test-retest reliability and the internal consistency estimate were moderately high (but not reported). However, some of the expected correlations were not met. Exploration correlated negatively with authoritarianism only in males, and the main effects of identity status for authoritarianism and anxiety were not significant. The researchers stated that one possible
reason for this was that the measure itself may have been different from measures of the past, since they sought to avoid the mistakes of past measures, as well as past biases and confounders (such as the measures tested on only males, for example). They conclude by stating their belief that the EIPQ avoids some of the shortcomings of previous measures and offers the advantage of short completion time, objective scoring and separate exploration and commitment scores.

c. Comparison of the two measures. Schwartz (2004) noted that one difficulty between the two measures of the EIPQ and EOM-EIS-II is the low levels of convergent validity. In order to address this, Schwartz compared the two measures to Cote’s Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale (MAPS) in order to deduce whether or not the two measures have similar construct validity in spite of the lack of convergent validity. To do this, he presented all three measures to 758 undergraduate students.

In regards to ideological status, all of the MAPS scales differed significantly by both the EIPQ (Wilks’ $\lambda = 0.81$, $F (15,958) = 4.94$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$) and the EOM-EIS-II (Wilks’ $\lambda = 0.80$, $F (15,972) = 5.44$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$). For the interpersonal status assignments, all of the MAPS scales differed significantly by EIPQ status (Wilks’ $\lambda = 0.81$, $F (15,1002) = 5.28$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$) as well as the EOM-EIS—II interpersonal status (Wilks’ $\lambda = 0.81$, $F (15,1016) = 5.35$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$). Schwartz inferred that, due to these differences “it must be concluded that the findings of identity status studies may depend somewhat on the measure used to assign statuses to participants” (p. 482). He suggested that the use of the EIPQ when the objective of the research is to differentially associate personality characteristics or other traits within
identity status categories. These categorizations, however, may be artificial constructs intended to “fit” real-world data within a theoretical design. Likewise, he suggested that the EOM-EIS-II was a stronger instrument to use in studies where the goal is to investigate correlates or predictions of continuous measures of the identity statuses. In this way, the identity status may not necessarily conform to the expectations of Erikson, but may also be a more naturalistic assessment of how an individual’s current identity status in a more naturalistic way.

3. The way identity is approached: The ISI and the DIDS. Another way to assess current identity status that can potentially be utilized in by assessing the process through an individual establishes their identity. These next two sets of measures may not necessarily address where a person is in their identity status, but rather how they are going about achieving it. The first inventory to do address this was Berzonsky’s (1989) Identity Style Inventory (ISI), while a more recent measure is Luyckx’s et al. (2008) Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS).

a. The Identity Style Inventory (ISI). The ISI was formulated through Berzonsky’s (1988, 1989) previous work in which he states that there are different ways that a person approaches their identity. He proposes three orientations. The first 1) is informational, the “moratorium” leading to “achievement.” Individuals with this processing style actively seek out, elaborate and utilize self-relevant information when making identity-relevant decisions and solving personal problems. The second 2) is normative, the “foreclosed” state. Individuals with this processing style primarily concern themselves with conforming to the prescriptions and expectations of significant others
(ex. parents) and other reference groups. The third and last 3) is diffuse/avoidant, the “diffusion” or “maladaptive moratorium” state. Individuals with this processing style characteristically avoid dealing directly with personal problems and basic identity questions, instead procrastinating and delaying the process as long as possible.

According to Berzonsky (1989), the relationship between an information-oriented style and identity status has been found to be moderated by identity commitment. For example, in two studies, significant moratorium status and information style relationships were not obtained until the effects of commitment was statistically controlled. Berzonsky states that this may make sense in that the process of being in Moratorium does not persist until a commitment has been made.

To address this, Berzonsky (1989) created a 30-item inventory set on a 7-point Likert scale. He piloted this measure using 155 college students and found that his measures had an internal consistency of (Cronbach’s alphas) of 0.54 for informational, with a retest reliability (over 5 weeks later) of 0.86, 0.53 for normative with a retest reliability of 0.78, 0.59 for diffuse with a retest reliability of 0.78, and a commitment Chronbach alpha of 0.77 with a retest reliability of 0.84.

To determine validity, Berzonsky conducted two measures that compared the identity styles with Authoritarianism, Locus of Control, Simmon’s Identity Inventory, the ISI, and measures of Facilitative and Debilitative Anxiety, and sex (Male = 1, Female =2). The correlations for these measures are provided in Table 8.
Table 8. Pearson Correlation of Personality Measures and Subscales of the ISI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informational</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Diffuse/Avoidant</th>
<th>Identity Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debilitative Anxiety</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitative Anxiety</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>-0.37**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simmon’s Identity</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.25*</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>-0.57**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse</td>
<td>-0.36**</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)  \quad ** \( p < .01 \)

Note From (Berzonsky, 1989, p. 273)

In his discussion, Berzonsky (1992) states that an information-oriented style was inversely related to authoritarianism, debilitative anxiety and external control expectancies, but positively associated with facilitative anxiety, which suggest a nonsource-oriented, internally controlled, effective coping strategy. Diffuseness, however, was associated with external control and debilitative anxiety, and was negatively related to Simmons’ Identity which appears to index strength of commitments. Berzonsky admitted surprise at this finding, stating that the diffuse status appears to indicate Foreclosure status, due to the association with authoritarianism.

Berzonsky’s second test assessed the correlation between identity styles and identity status. In order to address the association, Berzonsky used the OM-EIS. The results of this correlational assessment can be seen on Table 9.
Table 9. Correlations Between Subscales of the OM-EIS, EPSI, and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Style Variables</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Diffuse/Avoidant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong>deological <strong>S</strong>tatus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
<td>-0.51**</td>
<td>0.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.40**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>-0.40**</td>
<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>0.65**</td>
<td>-0.64**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong>nterpersonal <strong>S</strong>tatus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong>otal <strong>S</strong>tatus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>-0.40**</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>-0.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>-0.28**</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td>-0.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong>tyle <strong>V</strong>ariables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td>-0.23*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note From (Berzonsky, 1989, p. 276)*

These correlations matched what was expected, with one unexpected finding: a correlation between normative state and achievement. A regression analysis that accounted for commitment did not find sufficient variance accounting for of the shared variance. In light of this, Berzonsky theorized that perhaps the process of committing may indicate “closeness” to the identity status, which may allow the person to reach a level of achievement through their identity style.

**b. The Dimension of Identity Development Scale (DIDS).** The second measure, the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS), is a systematic measure created...
by Luyckx and his colleagues (2007) to further address the complexity of the different states of identity formation by “parsing out” the components that underlie identity status, rather than specifying an identity status and inferring these qualities from that status. These five components included: 1) commitment making (CM), which pertains to the state of making a commitment toward a specific identity, 2) identification with commitment (IC), which pertains to the extent to which the individual identifies with that commitment, 3) exploration of breadth (EB), which pertains to the extent to which an individual has explored options, 4) exploration of depth (ED), which pertains to the extent to which an individual reassesses and revises their commitments, and 5) ruminative exploration (RE), which pertains to the extent to which an individual approaches identity exploration with anxiety, worry, or hesitation in other words the “neurotic” process of identity exploration.

Their subjects included a sample of 263 Caucasian university students from Flanders, Belgium, and a second sample of 440 twelfth grade students from the same area. In regards to the construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis determined that their items strongly fit a five-factor model. The results of the correlations of the five factors can be seen on Table 10. Luyckx et al. (2009) found that these correlations were consistent across both samples and in line with the hypotheses with one exception: CD and CM were positively related to EB in Sample 2, but not in Sample 1. EB, ED, and RE were positive interrelated which indicated they shared some variance with each other. These result suggested that their five-dimensional model was internally valid and demonstrated adequate internal construct validity.
Table 10. Correlations of the Five Factors of the DIDS within Two Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>1. CM</th>
<th>2. IC</th>
<th>3. EB</th>
<th>4. ED</th>
<th>6. RE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>-0.49***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. IC</td>
<td>0.62***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.20***</td>
<td>-0.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EB</td>
<td>0.30***</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.56***</td>
<td>0.36***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ED</td>
<td>0.28***</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
<td>0.54***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.28***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. RE</td>
<td>-0.38***</td>
<td>-0.34***</td>
<td>0.24***</td>
<td>0.28***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01 *** p < .001

Note 1 From (Luyckx et al., 2007, p. 70)
Note 2 The correlations of Sample 1 are placed above the diagonal and the correlations of Sample 2 are placed below the diagonal.

In regards to external correlates of three exploration dimensions, they utilized bivariate and regression coefficients and were able to determine. The results can be viewed on Table 11. The results suggest that ruminative exploration was associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and with lower levels of self-esteem. Further, exploration of depth and breadth were not associated with self-esteem, depressive symptoms and anxiety with one exception: exploration of depth possessed a small positive association with anxiety in 12th graders. Finally, exploration of breadth and exploration of depth were both associated with higher levels of self-reflection.
Table 11. Correlations Between the Three Identity Dimensions with Other Variables within Two Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Zero-order correlations</th>
<th>Regression Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EB</td>
<td>ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>-0.10/-0.14**</td>
<td>-0.09/-0.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressive symptoms</td>
<td>0.26***/0.09</td>
<td>0.20***/0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>0.20***/0.18***</td>
<td>0.22***/0.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-attentiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td>0.22***/0.32***</td>
<td>0.27***/0.40***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-rumination</td>
<td>0.26***/0.27***</td>
<td>0.21***/0.33***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

Note From (Luyckx et al., 2007, p. 71)

Finally, Luyckx and his colleagues (2008) performed a cluster analysis and determined six identity states: achievement, diffuse diffusion (characterized by a lack of commitment, identification with commitment, some exploration in breadth, and moderate ruminative exploration), carefree diffusion (characterized by a lack of exploration, commitment or ruminative exploration), ruminative moratorium (characterized by moderate exploration, and high ruminative exploration), foreclosure and undifferentiated (characterized by some exploration, with little commitment).

Overall, Lucykx et al. (2007) were pleased with their findings and believed that their research demonstrated both the validity of their new construct and the importance of ruminative exploration in the process of approaching identity status. This is an exciting
new way to observe how an individual may seek out or avoid establishing an identity and may be an important area of exploration in the future.

4. Qualitative Research Methodology. In addition to quantitative methods, qualitative methodology may also provide valuable insights in the perspective, philosophies, and beliefs of college students. For example, Peshkin (1993) challenged the traditional viewpoint, stating that no one research methodology has the monopoly on truth and veracity. Through the incorporation of qualitative methodology, a richer humanistic perspective of theory can be achieved, which may allow us to explore aspects of concepts and ideas in a way not possible to quantitatively. In their discussion of ethnographic interviewing, a qualitative style in which a researcher conducts interviews and spends time living with the population they wished to observe, Marshall and Rossman (2011) comment that “the value of the ethnographic interviewing lies in its focus on culture—broadly defined—from the participants’ perspectives and through firsthand experience” (pp. 148), making this an especially effective method of uncovering subjective perceptions and lived experiences.

One of the most commonly utilized methodologies for quantitative theory lies in Glasser and Straus’s (1967) grounded theory method. Martin and Turner (1986) describe the process of grounded theory research by beginning with an open mind and taking well-organized and thorough notes on the phenomenon that the researcher seeks to assess from interviews, naturalistic observations, or assessment of case studies. Once a researcher receives enough data (based on their own subjective sense), the researcher organizes that data into themes, establishes relationships and patterns, and attempts to determine the
underlying theory that guides the construct that they have been reassessing. Thus, the established theory that is generated is “grounded” in the observations that a researcher observed.

One branch of Grounded Theory lies with Hill, Thompson, and Williams’ (1997), Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR). Following the interview, the interviewer will record notes about the length of the session, and make impressions and comments on the flow. Data are then organized based on similar domains (context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences), and then researchers develop core ideas (the primary themes captured in the interview with less words and greater clarity). The biggest difference between Grounded Theory and CQR lies in the CQR’s utilization of a team to arrive at a consensus as well as one outside arbitrator to ensure consistency and utilize discourse to make a determination of the theory, which reduces the effects of bias and increases reliability of this methodology. Their steps include 1) organizing the responses to open-ended questions from questionnaires and interviews into topic areas, 2) constructing core ideas (abstracts and/or brief summaries) within each domain for all the subjects assessed, and 3) cross-analyzing from collaboration of a group of researchers to determine consistency in core areas within the domains.

Qualitative methodology has developed into a valuable resource of assessment in its own right. Research in the behavioral sciences could benefit from utilizing these methodologies, which provide another means to gather a wealth of information and further learn about the construct.
I. Conclusion and Research Aims

Thus, as we can see, emerging adulthood as a developmental stage that contains numerous challenges that emerging adults must address. Our present understanding of the difficulties of this age range is still fairly new. As a concept, emerging adulthood gained acceptance in the early part of this century with Arnett’s (2001) publication. We are just beginning to develop and validate theories of how people within this demographic handle and address the tribulations of becoming an adult in this modern landscape, and recognize that many other avenues have not been adequately explored.

One of the biggest difficulties within studying this demographic is its inherent complexity. As we saw in the section of internal and external motivators that determine adulthood, the process of becoming an adult is controlled by both internal and external factors. For example, we saw how an individual becoming an adult during the Depression era of this country’s history would have much different normative expectations compared to somebody who is becoming an adult today (Hareven & Masaoka, 1988). Likewise, the expectations of previous generations can also shape and affect societal expectations of how an individual achieves becoming an adult as well as the evaluative processes that determines the success of a person’s progress (Bangerter et al., 2001, Low, Akande, & Hill, 2005). These assessments, however, may no longer be applicable as environmental factors appear to be constantly changing. The economic and occupational difficulties of today are much different than they were twenty years ago: computers and technology was beginning to become affordable and utilized in a variety of educational an occupational avenues and the Internet was relatively unknown at the time. Furthermore, economic and
occupational challenges are also different than the ones experienced twenty years ago, which has seen rises in civil disobedience, the cumulative effect of the Cold War, and governmental programs that supported advances in math and science (STEM). As these ecological systems are temporally embedded, research in one era may not be sufficient to explain the challenges, problems, and behaviors of a group in another era. However, this is also not true for all factors. As Arnett’s (1997) research suggested, there may be fixed traits that commonly are cited as important factors that indicate an individual as being an adult, such as developing autonomy, taking responsibility for one’s decisions, and determining one’s life course.

Unfortunately, a major challenge when addressing this group is reconciling the conflicting results prevalent within the research. This is most prevalent in the literature that addresses how to provide interventions to emerging adults since there is very little research on the subject. For example, while family and social support was beneficial for lesbian and gay emerging adults, Spencer and Patrick (2009) suggested that a combination of personal resources and personal mastery was most facilitative of psychological well-being. College involvement was also associated with increases in psychological well-being and reduction of problematic behaviors, but the results of Brenner, Mietz, and Brenner (2009) found that college connection (that is, the amount an individual feels connected to the college) was correlated with higher rates of alcohol consumption, while college involvement (the extent to which an individual is involved) was correlated with lower rates. The literature is replete with findings that uncover
exceptions or clash with other findings, which makes determining resolute conclusions regarding this group difficult.

Another major challenge occurring within this demographic lies in the heterogeneity of circumstances, decisions, and goals available to this group. For example, research describing the states of parental support and parenting styles show how previous environments can have an effect on an individual’s progress towards moving out (Kins et al., 2009). Likewise, research that assessed the expectations and beliefs of emerging adults who were exiting the juvenile correction facility has shown that these individuals are often hopeful, but anxious of the challenges and difficulties. Further, when these individuals were no longer provided support by the correctional system (which was unable to monitor and support these emerging adults) they often regressed into their criminal behavior or experienced feelings of anxiety or helplessness. Lastly, as an individual explores and moves into college they can vary in the degree of study they wish to pursue, the extent to which they approach or avoid identity formation during this developmental stage, and whether or not they choose to withdraw from higher education to pursue an occupation, start a family, travel, or to address a personal or familial crisis.

While it is practically impossible to address the full range of historical, familial, and personal factors during emerging adulthood, we can seek out commonalities in order to determine normative patterns of growth as well as establish facilitative resources and support that could be beneficial for healthy development and a successful transition.

As we have also seen, sufficient evidence exists to question the effectiveness of college in promoting college student development. Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, and
Pollock’s (2008)’s research observed that excessive exploration can create a negative cyclical pattern of ruminative exploration, where indecision in an identity path becomes further exacerbated when they attempt to explore possibilities that only serves to increase available options and reducing certainty in forming an identity. Berzonsky (1989) also recognized diffuse-avoidant which have been correlated to hedonistic desires and emphasized situational consequences more than emphasizing long-term goals. With these potential pitfalls that may occur within college education, as well as the increasing costs of tuition, student loans, and living expenses (Kins et al., 2009; Project on Student Debt, 2012; U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid, 2011), we must scrutinize how college effects the developmental transitions of college students, as well as address the effectiveness in college services and programs in fostering growth.

One such area that has not been adequately explored lies in how the different sub groups within education address and are affected by the challenges that occur during emerging adulthood. Another area that has not been explored is intervention strategies that would be effective to provide support for emerging adults. At present, the only strategies that currently exist address the specific problem the emerging adult faces (for example, interventions on problematic behaviors such as binge drinking or addressing psychological depression). While this may be partly sufficient, more research needs to determine whether the results found within this research can be used to directly address psychological, developmental, or behavioral challenges that are often associated with this group.
Thus, more research needs to be conducted if we are to know how we can provide successful transformative experiences for these individuals that support their developmental needs and fosters lifelong development and growth. In order to address this, I conducted a series of assessments that will attempt to determine changes in identity status that occur within different programs throughout four years of college, as well address what aspects of emerging adulthood students have in this developmental stage. The hypotheses I choose to analyze are: 1) an individual’s identity will change from freshman, to sophomore, to junior, to senior years, with freshman and sophomores possessing diffusion and moratorium identities more often than juniors and seniors, and juniors and seniors possessing foreclosure and achievement more often than freshman and sophomores. 2) That there will be a difference between the identity status between students who are enrolled in a hard science courses and those that are enrolled in a non-hard science course, with students enrolled in a hard science courses possessing more foreclosure identity status, while students enrolled in non-hard science courses possessing more diffusion, moratorium, and achievement identity statuses. In addition, I will explore the extent to which gender and ethnicity effects identity status while at college. Finally, my qualitative research will be exploratory ethnographic interviews, which will attempt to identify how a student’s identity status is shaped by their previous experiences, identify experiences that the student believed were significant in their transition to adulthood, and finally address their perceived effectiveness in college programs and curriculum toward fostering psychosocial and occupational growth.
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

A. Quantitative Methods

Participants were contacted either through classroom visits that arranged at the course instructor’s convenience, or via open participation by responding to an e-mail sent from the Music department’s listserv to attend one of two pre-arranged sessions. Site authorization from respective departmental heads and instructors were received prior to the contacting course instructors to schedule days to conduct surveys. The number of students who took part in each in-class session ranged from 22 to 143 students, with variability due to location. A total number of 23 performing arts students participated in the walk-in sessions. All facets of the research plan were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

On the scheduled days, the primary investigator introduced himself and provided the group or class a brief overview describing the nature of the nature of the study. After giving a brief description, the primary investigator passed out informed consent forms, offering time for students to read it while vocalizing that participation is voluntary and that they may stop the survey questionnaire at any time without penalty. In addition to the informed consent form, the researcher included a recruitment page for qualitative interviews to be held at a later date, requesting e-mail contact to all interested participants. Participants were given the option to take part in the survey but not the later qualitative interview if they were so inclined. Students who complete the interview in the walk-in sessions were provided with pizza for compensation. Students who were surveyed in the classrooms did not receive compensation.
1. Sample. The participants for this study were undergraduates who attended a land-grant university in the Southwest. For the first part of the study 482 college students were surveyed from three courses in the Department of Educational Psychology, two courses from the Department of Nutritional Science, and two walk-in sessions conducted in the College of Music and advertised via e-mail. Of these 482 original participants, 44 were removed from this study due to either not providing informed consent (18 participants), not being within the targeted age range of 18-24 (23 participants), or for failing to complete more than 75% of the survey (3 participants). Of the remaining 464 surveys analyzed, 248 students were drawn from a non-hard science source (53.4%; which included participants from both the social science and performing arts course), and 198 students were drawn from a hard science class (42.6%). The distribution by academic year were 116 freshman (25%), 115 sophomores (24.8%), 94 juniors (20.2%), and 121 seniors (26%). An assessment of ethnic demographics found 261 White (58.5%), 92 Hispanic (20.6%), 34 Asian American (7.6%), 16 African American (3.6%) 24 of mixed ethnicities (5.2%) and 19 who either choose not to identify as an ethnicity or were not of the other six groups (4.3%). In regards to gender, 103 participants identified as male (23.1%), 342 participants identified as female (76.7%), and 1 participant did not report being male or female (0.2%)

2. Instrument and procedures. As we have seen in the discussion of the various measures, there is a wealth of tools and resources that can be used to address how an individual develops while at college. The EPSI provides a broad overview of an individual across the life span, while the EOM-EIS-II and the EIPQ provide measures
that focus specifically on the Identity versus Role Diffusion crisis that occurs during emerging adulthood and address a variety of interpersonal and ideological domains. Further providing means of addressing the process of identity development are the objectives of the ISI and the DIDS, emphasizing how an individual goes about approaching their identity formation. Finally, qualitative methods such as Grounded Theory and Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) round out the analysis by allowing the individuals being addressed to have the opportunity to express their own viewpoints, opinions, and experiences which the quantitative methods may not be able to do as well. Opportunities to explore the developmental stage of identity are plentiful, and the proper utilization of these measures will allow us to understand and explore the challenges of this age group like never before.

In order to develop a better understanding of how college effects students’ development, I chose to use the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Bush-Rosnagel, Geisinger, 1995). As Schwartz (2004) highlights, the EIPQ is a better instrument of addressing differences in personality or traits within different identity status categories. Thus, the EIPQ will determine how academic level (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors) affects identity development. We may further be able to address how identity status affects and may be affected by the academic program pursued (for example, an education program, a nutritional science program or a music program). In addition, the EIPQ was constructed to better address Marcia’s (1966) theory of psychosocial statuses. Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995) developed the EIPQ in response to the EOM-EIS-II’s factors of moratorium and diffusion. By contrast,
the subscales of the EIPQ assess a participant’s levels of commitment and exploration, and utilize these scores to determine their identity status (with low commitment and high exploration to recognize moratorium, high commitment and high exploration to recognize achievement, and so on). By assessing a cross-sectional study of many students in a variety of different academic programs, the EIPQ may allow us to see changes in commitment and exploration status, which directly translate into ego identity status.

Permission was obtained from Dr. Bush-Rossnagel in order to use the measure (see Appendix A). The EIPQ provides 32 statements on a 6-point Likert scale that allows the respondents choose among options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The measure assesses the extent to which an individual has explored potential identities (high exploration/low exploration), and has committed to a specific identity (high commitment/low commitment). A copy of the EIPQ can be seen in Appendix B. For reliability checks, half of the items are reverse-coded. The EIPQ took approximately 20 to 40 minutes to complete.

After surveys were completed, the researcher compiled total commitment and exploration scores in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. In order to determine whether an individual was high or low exploration or commitment, the median score of the total scores for exploration and commitment were used. Individuals who scored above the median in exploration/commitment was classified as “high exploration,” while individuals that scored below the median in exploration/commitment was classified as “low exploration.” In this study, 87 of the participants were identified as in the
achievement identity status (19.6%), 134 in the foreclosure identity status (30.2%), 146 in the moratorium identity status (33%), and 75 in the diffusion identity status (17.1%).

2. Qualitative Methods

Yet a questionnaire may not be sufficient to address the contextual environment and perceived experiences of the participants. Thus, qualitative interviewing may provide us with an opportunity to tap into these constructs, which is often difficult for questionnaires and surveys (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). While the subjective nature of the qualitative assessment may be a concern, through the use of CQR we may be able to avoid the biases of an individual researcher and instead form a consensus of the themes and important events expressed by the participants (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Through CQR, we will have the benefit of assessing not only how a student’s time in college and in a particular program may affect identity development, but also have an opportunity to gather what the participants perceive as challenges, resources, and hindrances that they experience while at college. Thus, by utilizing a mixed-method approach, we may be able to gather a richer data set of how college affects students, which ultimately allows us to better understand how college influences student development and what we can do to ensure that we as educators and student service providers are to better ensure positive interpersonal growth.

In order to better assess how emerging adults of varying identity statuses perceive college has affected their transition to adulthood, qualitative analysis was conducted. This research was conducted utilizing face-to-face interviews, recording statements and impressions which were later analyzed in order to determine themes and domains that
were pertinent to the experiences of college students as the students attempted to move through college.

1. Sample. In order to provide the most complete difference among identity statuses while at emerging adulthood, specific criteria were followed. I sought to identify and interview two participants that possessed achievement, foreclosure, and moratorium/diffusion identities. Moratorium and diffusion were collapsed in this analysis, as research had suggested that moratorium could be related to indecision, procrastination, and rumination (Adams, Berzonsky, & Keating, 2006; Berzonsky, 1989; Luyckx et al., 2008). In order to identify potential candidates to be interviewed, I initially decided to interview only individuals who scored beyond two standard deviations above the median for both commitment and exploration. As such, an individual was required to be two standard deviations above the mean in both exploration and commitment to be qualified for “achievement” status, below two standard deviations and above two standard deviations for “moratorium,” and so on. However, as the individuals from the first study had the opportunity to choose not to participate in this second part of the study, of the six participants who were identified as eligible under this criteria (1 Achievement, 2 Foreclosure and 3 Moratorium), only two individuals in this group were able to be contacted (1 Foreclosure, and 1 Moratorium). I then extended the criteria to require one of the two scores to more than two standard deviations, and the other to be within one standard deviation from the median. Once again, however, this method only produced three additional (3 Foreclosure) participants who were available to be contacted out of a pool of nine candidates that fit this criteria (6 Foreclosure, 2
Moratorium, and 1 Diffusion). I then extended the range to require at least one standard deviation in both exploration and commitment. This method identified 48 additional participants (3 Achievement, 28 Foreclosure, 14 Moratorium, and 2 Diffusion). As I had the desired two (out of a pool of four) participants from the foreclosure identity status, only achievement and moratorium/diffusion were considered. Of these, only two individuals with achievement identity status and two individuals with moratorium/diffusion identity status were available to be interviewed. As this satisfied the minimum number of participants for the first volley of interviewing (two with a moratorium/diffusion status, two with an achievement status, and two with a foreclosure status) I contacted these six participants. Of these six, only three – one person with a moratorium status, one with an achievement status, and one with a foreclosure status – contacted me to schedule an interview.

Thus, I contacted another six participants. However, as the achievement and moratorium/diffusion statuses no longer had enough participants to fulfill the one standard deviation requirement established in the third sweep, another extension of the criteria was implemented. This identification required one of the two commitment/exploration status to be within two standard deviations of the mean, and made no requirements for the other. This method produced nine participants (2 Achievement, 4 Moratorium, and 3 Diffusion). Of these nine, only three were available to be contacted (2 Achievement, 1 Moratorium). Thus, I contacted the two participants with achievement status that were identified with this group, the previous two foreclosure participants from second sweep that had not been contacted, the participant who was
identified as diffusion from the third sweep, and the one moratorium participant identified with this group. Of these six, only three – the two identified as achievement, and one of the participants identified as foreclosure – agreed to be interviewed. Thus, the final group consisted of three participants who were identified as possessing an achievement identity status, two that were identified as possessing a foreclosed identity status, and one participant who was identified as possessing a moratorium identity status.

2. Coding Procedure. One interviewer conducted all six interviews. Each participant was scheduled to have a one hour interview. The interviews were held in an unoccupied conference room. The interview times ranged from 28 minutes, 31 seconds to 80 minutes, 51 seconds (Mean: 56 minutes, 19 seconds; median: 34 minutes, 19 seconds). All interviews were conducted within two weeks. Participants were provided with $10 compensation on the completion of the interview. I used a series of open-ended questions (See Appendix C). Questions 1 and 2 and their sub questions were intended to get background information as well as assess students’ expectations prior to coming to college. Questions 3 and 4 sought to address the participants’ conceptualizations of adulthood, similar to the research conducted by Arnett (1997). Question 5 asked the student to state how they perceived that college has affected them. Questions 6 and 7 were directly related to the categories addressed in the EIPQ, focusing specifically on how college has affected developing mature relationships and their occupational growth. The last question was prospective, inquiring about the participants’ expectations for after graduation, as well as their perceived readiness for adult life and prospective careers after college.
All responses were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim using the procedures outlined by McClellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003; see Appendix D for an example of a transcribed session). The transcripts were checked over before finalizing and coding. In order to code and assess the interviews and establish reliability, Consensual Qualitative Research was used (Hill, Thompson, & Wilson, 1997). As it suggests, this methodology draws on a consensus of a group of researchers in order to observe trends and determine themes. Prior to introducing the transcripts to the team, the primary investigator provided both coders with a primer of Erikson’s stages (Thatcher, 2011), Marcia’s (1966) theory of identity status, Arnett’s (2000) theory of emerging adulthood, and Hill et al.’s (1997) guide to Consensual Qualitative Research to two graduate research students. The two graduate research assistants and myself would then perform the Consensual Qualitative Research procedures. On our first meeting, the primary investigator allowed the coders an opportunity to ask for more information and provided more context for Marcia’s theory of identity status as well as the procedures that were about to be used.

Copies of the transcripts were provided to both graduate student research assistants. The primary investigator instructed the research assistants were to code the interviews based on four domains developed based on a preliminary analysis of the transcripts: 1) identity status statements, which identified statements that indicated exploration, commitment, or both simultaneously in order to determine the identity status of the participant and address the validity of the EIPQ in qualitative analysis; 2) goals and plans, which identified objectives and valued skills and outcomes that the participant aspired to achieve (goals), as well as the means and actions intended to achieve them
(plans); 3) supports and catalysts, which identified resources that facilitated the future success (supports) as well as opportunities and experiences that individual, relational, and occupational growth (catalysts); 4) challenges and difficulties, which identified difficulties that was potentially related to future development (challenges) and difficulties that were obstacles and detriments to future success (difficulties); and 5) a general domain of not specified, which provided the research assistants and the primary investigator the opportunity to identify statements that did not fit the other four domains and would be discussed as a group.

The primary investigator and both research assistants then worked independently to code the six transcripts, using these five domains as guides. After two weeks of analysis, all met together and discussed the interviews, starting with the first transcript in the order they were conducted and moving to the next sequentially until all interviews were discussed. In order to better address how college students developed, the primary investigator used Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors of college student development as a model for understanding and coding the transcripts. Between the two research assistants and the primary investigator, initial agreement was 32% and 33%. However, the research assistants had a 37% agreement together, which indicated discrepancies between all the researchers in the interpretation of the statements in the transcripts and different understanding of the codes.

There are several factors that could have potentially contributed to this low percent agreement: 1) confusion on some of the codes, for example some codes for "catalysts" and "challenges" appeared to have been confused. There was also some
confusion between "goals" and "identity status." In regards to this, all three coders marked a lot of the same key statements, while coding differently. Also supporting this claim were observations made during the collaborative discussion that while the statements were coded differently “but we seem to be marking the same statements” and that "while we coded our statements with this domain, we can see how they would be interpreted differently." 2) Similar to the first point, the three researchers had little experience working with each other and understanding each other’s coding protocol, (i.e. full paragraphs versus short statements) which caused some disparity in how often items in the transcription were coded. 3) The primary investigator utilized a different and more specific coding scheme using Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors of college student development, which caused a different type of understanding of how the items were interpreted and analyzed within the previously constructed domains that the other coders did not possess.

However, one of the benefits of Consensual Qualitative Research is that it provides researchers the opportunity to come together and draw consensus on these items as a collaborative group. In that regard, the primary investigator instructed both research assistants to discuss the key findings in each interview while going through each domain and identifying statements that were relevant to those domains. For each interpretation, the research assistants provided feedback and offered suggestions as necessary. After consensus was reached, each domain was pooled into similarly themed domains for the final analysis and brought before two auditors to confirm validity and accuracy in the interpretation. After discussing the interviews, consensus was reached and the initial four
domains were maintained. One additional domain was discussed for the “other” category: 5) age as a factor of adulthood, which discussed the importance of biological age as construct for adulthood.

In the future, one way to ensure greater accuracy in interpretation of the transcripts is to analyze at least one transcript together using the same domains. This way, while there may be some differences in the interpretation, but would be able to better account for potential confusions in the domains and have better accuracy within the codes. It should be noted that differences in analysis should be expected in this sort of interpretation, and that consensus allow for these different opinions to be discussed, which allows for greater validity.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

A. Quantitative Results

All research was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Grad Pack 20. In order to assess differences between academic program, a 2 (hard science course and non-hard science) x 4 (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) two-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. Subjects were excluded using a pairwise deletion. The dependent variables were total exploration and commitment scores. Assumption testing checked the normality of distribution, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, and covariance matrices. In regards to normality distribution, the distribution of the subjects per each cell is described in Table 12 and 13.

Table 12: Distribution of the Sample by Class Type Enrolled and Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Scientific</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Distribution of the Sample by Ethnicity and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic/Mexican-American</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Asian-American</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, some groups within these cells are low relative to the other sells (such as Sophomores and Junior students enrolled in scientific courses in the class type x academic year group, and in all of the minority groups compared with the white group
and especially white women). This could potentially inflate the Type I error for the study, however, as these numbers were representative of the group, statistical analysis was continued in order to explore these relationships as they occur in the class). In regards to tests for normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov assumption was violated for commitment \( (p < 0.01) \) but not exploration \( (p = 0.10) \). This assumption is normally violated in large sample sizes. In regards to outliers, a Mahalanobis distance was found to be 18.71, which is greater than the Mahalanobis critical value of 13.82. This indicates a violation of the distribution and could potentially skew results and could potentially inflate Type I error. In the future non-parametric statistical analysis may be a better method to assess this data. In regards to the assumption of nonlinearity matrix scatterplots showed no major evidence of linearity. Finally, an analysis of the assumption of multicolinearity only found a significant and small correlation between “academic year” and “exploration” (Spearman’s rho = 0.13, \( p = 0.01 \)) and a significant and moderate correlation between “commitment” and “exploration” (Pearson’s \( r = -0.36, p = 0.01 \)). As these correlations were not especially high (Spearman’s rho/Pearson’s \( r > 0.80 \)), the assumption of multicolinearity can be assumed.

After performing the statistical analysis, no significant results were found between class type and academic year for both exploration \([F (2, 434) = 1.99, p = 0.14, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = -0.99]\) and commitment \([F (6, 868) = 1.16, p = 0.33, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = 0.98]\). Within-subjects analysis also found no statistically significant results \([F (6, 868) = 0.93, p = 0.47, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = 0.99]\).
In order to assess the differences within ethnicity and gender on identity status, a 2 (gender) x 6 (ethnicity) two-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. The independent variables were gender (male and female), and ethnicity (White, African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, Mixed ethnicity, and Other/Not reported). The dependent variables were total exploration and commitment scores. After performing the statistical analysis, there were no significant results found for gender and ethnicity for both exploration \(F(2, 429) = 1.16, p = 0.31, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = 0.99\) and commitment \(F(10, 858) = 1.15, p = 0.32, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = 0.97\). Within-subjects analysis also found no statistically significant results \(F(10, 858) = 0.57, p = .84, \text{Wilks’ } \lambda = .99\).

**B. Qualitative Results**

Overall, the initially established domains remained consistent, even prior to reaching consensus. Further elaboration and features were added to identify common trends and themes within the domains “Goals and Plans” (Developing Autonomy and Developing Competence), “Supports and Catalysts” (Social Support, Unique Opportunities at College) and “Challenges and Difficulties” (Academic challenges, Managing Emotions, Dealing with Financial Difficulties, and Personal Crises).

Frequencies of the cases are provided in Table 12. Using the terminology of Hill et al. (1997), I describe a category as “general” if it applied to 6 cases (all cases), “typical” if applied to 4-5 cases (pertaining to over half of the cases, but one less than all), and “variant” if it applied to 3 cases (pertaining to over a quarter of the cases, but less than half).
Table 14. Summary from the Cross-Analysis of 6 Cases of Qualitative Interviews

| Domain 1: Consistency to EIPQ Identity Status | Typical |
| Domain 2: Goals and Plans                   |         |
| Developing competency                       | General |
| Developing autonomy                         | General |
| Domain 3: Supports and catalysts            |         |
| Social support                              | Typical |
| Unique opportunities at college             | General |
| Domain 4: Challenges and difficulties       |         |
| Academic challenges                         | Variant |
| Managing emotions                           | Variant |
| Financial difficulties                      | Variant |
| Personal crises                             | Variant |
| Domain 5: Age as a factor for adulthood     | Typical |

*Note:* “General” categories apply to all 6 cases. “Typical” categories apply to 4-5 cases. Variant categories apply to 3 cases.

In order to protect the identities of the participants, pseudonyms will be used. The six participants included Augusto, a soft-spoken 22-year-old male Mexican-American senior in the moratorium status drawn from a social science course caught between two identities: his actual self, and the identity that he has perceived his communities expect him to be; April, a beleaguered but passionate 19-year-old female White freshman in the foreclosure status drawn from a hard science course with long-time aspirations to be a nurse; May, an energetic and positive 21-year-old female White senior in the foreclosure status drawn from a hard science course who came with to the university to study nutrition and joined the track team; Jun, a confident and succinct 24-year-old male Asian-American senior in the achievement status drawn from a performing arts course who had a wealth of life experiences; Julio, an enthusiastic and thoughtful 19-year-old male mixed White/Hispanic freshman in the achievement status drawn from a social science course whose unique experiences provided him a year of college before returning to high school.
to complete his junior and senior years; and Jan, a friendly and receptive 21-year-old female White senior in the achievement status drawn from a social science course who came from a small, local community who experienced a broader range of people and cultures in college that she did not have at home.

Quotes included in this analysis are paraphrased for the sake of clarity, such as removing nonsensical words (um, er, ah, etc.) or to delete repeat statements (because because, etc.). Within comments non-bracketed ellipses (“…”) indicate pauses within the conversation, while bracketed ellipses (“[…]”) indicate statements that have been broken up and set closer together, either for the sake of truncating answers where multiple topics are discussed or to indicate where the interviewer asked a question. Thus, the paraphrasing allows for ease of reading while still maintaining the beliefs, views, and tone that the person interviewed sought to convey, unadulterated by potential bias.

**Domain 1: Identity Status.** The domain of identity status suggests that the identity status identified by the EIPQ is consistent with the comments and conversation in the interview. For example, Augusto, who was identified as having a moratorium identity status, reported conflict in establishing an identity while at college:

I feel like college has affected me in the sense that as much as I as much as I try not to aspire to do this, or as much as I tried not to let this happen, I feel like sometimes college has led to some sort of sense of dual identities. […] For example, I find myself acting differently around family than when I am around friends, or even just speaking about friends. I may find myself acting differently around one group of friends rather than another group of friends.
His identity status also benefited from opportunities to explore while at college:

Regardless of my ability to learn and apply the material, I simply did not enjoy what I was learning, what I was applying in my education. So then I eventually did change my major, either at the end of my freshman year or by the beginning of sophomore year. I did change it to psychology. Originally it was biology, so I changed it to psychology. And the reason why I changed it specifically to that was because originally I was going to choose music as a major, but after thinking about it for a long time, about what sort of career path I would take upon graduating with a major in music, I realized that … there might not be a lot of stable financial options in terms of career choices with a major of music.

And in regards to relationships, particularly with his high school girlfriend:

So, when we entered college, for us, being in a completely new place and being able to explore so many different things and just to be able to have time to ourselves. We took advantage of that as much as we could. We would spend a lot of time with each other during our freshman years of college, and we basically were just around each other every day

One of the biggest challenges he found was navigating different groups’ expectations. As he became more aware of people’s different backgrounds and beliefs, he became more stressed. This fear to establish an identity could potentially be identified as “ruminative exploration” as stated by Luyckx et al. (2006). It is best expressed when he said:
And also, so many of these people on this college campus, sure, a lot of them may be from [the state], especially in the [city’s] community, but also so many of them are from different states in the country some many people are from different countries and, really, in the world. That the pressure for being able to fit in, to abide by social norms, to conduct yourself in a way that, at least a majority of people, would favor. It was a strenuous pressure on me. And I think a lot of it may be because I, as a person, have a lot of different insecurities and, perhaps, self-esteem issues. So those issues then combine with the idea that other people may be judging me or perceiving me in a negative way it was kind of like a snowball effect, really. As time went on I felt like these issues became even worse. And, for that reason I feel like personal identity is one of those issues, one of those fields where I’m trying to grow and trying to get better.

The italicized statement provides the clearest indication of this individual’s identity status. While he possessed some sense of self in regards to his personal identity, he was conflicted with how he could match this identity within the expectations of the group at large. This conflict between his perceived self and his perception of group expectations troubled him and caused him to question his identity and strengthen his identity. With regards to relationships in this quote, Augusto had many opportunities to explore different perspectives, beliefs, and values, but found difficulty committing to his own identity. This is a source of anxiety and frustration for him, as he does not feel as though he has successfully navigated himself through this challenge and confidently established his own sets of values and beliefs.
The classifications were also supported by the words of individuals in other identity status. For example, April, one of the individuals identified as foreclosed, knew what her career was very early:

Everyone growing up has their careers they want to do? And it mine has always been a nurse. It was, I mean, when I was younger in kindergarten I drew a picture of myself being a nurse. So it’s just for some reason I have just always known that’s was what I wanted to do and it hasn’t changed and come to college it’s still is … nursing.

While that might appear as an early indication of career direction, this desire becomes more identified in a foreclosed identity status was again evident when she discussed the importance for adults to accept consequences of actions, using her roommate as an example:

I mean, we’ll go back to my roommate, but she just made a decision to completely stop what she’s doing with her career. She wanted to be a doctor, and now she wanted to do something and she realized that was going to be too hard and is doing psychology. But has no desire of really anything within psychology. So I think right now she’s understanding that’s her decision, that’s what she wants to do. But I just feel like it’s going to have that negative thing where she’s going to get four years and be like “I didn’t even love this career and I just took the easy road out. I really wish I would have stuck with it and done what I loved to do.”

May, the second individual with a foreclosed identity status, stated that her initial interests were running and nutrition. She spent most of her time running and was
involved in winter and spring track meets. However, during her junior year she received an injury that prevented her from competing, which she called a blessing in disguise:

So, yeah, so I haven’t traveled [for track] in a while, which has kind of been a blessing in disguise because I gotten to do things that I didn’t expect I would get to do. And just the people, you never know who you are going to meet and what it has to offer so those are pleasant surprises.

These surprises included:

So one is the team and just as I have gotten older and we have new people come in and just taking on that leadership role? And I’m a Peer Athlete Leader, it’s called PAL, and just being able to mentor underclassman and people coming and it and helping them with the transition. I’m on SACs, the Student Advisory Committee, and this past November I got to go to San Francisco, with two representatives from each PAC-12 school, and that was incredible. We did, like, an eight-hour community service activity and we got a tour of the PAC-12 network studios. And I just met people from all the different PAC-12 schools wanting to make a difference. And we kind of serve as a bridge between the athletes some of the athletic directions or the head people.

Thus, while her injury provided her with more opportunities to explore her decision in depth, the amount of exploration that she did was still low.

This consistency in identity status also extended to the participants in the achievement status group. For example, Jun stated that his experiences in a traditional Asian family provided him with few opportunities to explore, stating:
Growing up I had a, mildly traumatic period of growth. Mainly described of as the pressures of an Asian family to where it was particularly abusive. At that point, my parents were always co-consistently [sic] comparing me to other children they viewed as superior in … skill, in mentality, or in mental faculty. Now, in addition to that there was a little physical abuse as well where, if they were to get excessively angry there would be periods of minor injury. Nothing particular particularly … how should I say … oh, long term. In addition to that there was a particularly traumatic experience where, for whatever reason I believe it to be minor, my dad took both of my arms, put them down on a cutting board and threatened to chop off my hands. So, to give you an idea, that was basically what my childhood was like. That was only one instance where it got that severe.

He stated that his expectations for college were optimistic, and he sought to remove himself from the situation which he found abusive:

I was expecting [college] to be very liberating, actually. My first experience in college was in Massachusetts, where my parents had moved from California to Peoria dragging me with them taking me with them kicking and screaming. And during my last year, right before my last year of high school. So when I moved, I took the immediate opportunity to leave early. And I planned to get as far away from them as possible without crossing an ocean or country border. So, at that point I found college very, very liberating and as a result, regardless of what my experiences would be, I had a breath of fresh air.
Not only did he remove himself from what he viewed as an abusive situation, he was also provided the opportunity to explore and experience life on his own. He was employed in a variety of occupations, such as security, and encountered numerous situations that were difficult, such as the time that a woman he knew was evicted from her apartment and he offered her the opportunity to stay with him. He also faced challenging situations, such as the time that he found that he could no longer pay rent and spent a year living out of his car, maintaining a membership with an LA Fitness gym in order to keep clean. However, in spite of these difficulties:

I am coming back to college for my second degree, having been in a … having [sic] to basically fail to apply to med school. I have asked most of my contacts while I was out working in order to survive. Case in point, the period I went homeless? I was still working at that point and I was just trying to get experience out in the world. In order to get more for my resume for my medical school. Right now I’m trying to get into nursing school in order to bridge that gap between basically my bachelor’s degree and medical school. And so, it’s preparing me for what I wanted to do since I was 14 years old actually. […] To become a doctor. To devote myself to basically the need of others.

While this might appear to be an individual who is foreclosed (high commitment, low exploration), the commitment to this career path after the period of exploration and overcoming obstacles indicate that his decision to pursue this career path was made after a long period of exploring a wealth other options.
Fortunately, not all individuals who acquire an achievement status necessitate this level of adversity. One such person, Jan, who also possessed an achievement identity, found that moving from a small mountain town to a large college an opportunity of great exploration:

Because [her hometown] is just such an isolated view of the world, very conservative and I mean very … just, yeah, it’s just old-school. Old fashioned. And now I feel like if I were to move back home they would look at me like a liberal which I’m not [laugh] a liberal at all! But compared to how I grew up I have definitely changed. Like recycling. I like recycling now. And I don’t eat a lot of meat. And they would be like, “what, no hunting? What are you doing with your life?”

This perception was primarily due to the vast wealth of opportunities available at college, which included meeting people from a wide range of cultures and to having access to events that allowed her to learn more about different groups around the city:

And I think a lot of that was one on one interaction with different kinds of people. And I wasn’t racist. I didn’t have bad feelings towards anyone but it was interesting to like get to know people from these other backgrounds. And people that who weren’t Christian. Who had different beliefs and different religious beliefs. And I also… went to go to [a local cultural event], which was mostly just a food thing, but some of the performances at [a local cultural event] and like cultural dances and thing like that. A lot of my classes also has introduced different things. […] And I and it actually opened my eyes to a lot of different
cultures and things like that in [the city]. That I was then able to like read more about through classes or sometimes just on my own. I would just Google stuff and look it up.

Unlike Augusto who was identified to have a moratorium identity status and had difficulty maintaining his sense of self in a wide group of people from differing values and beliefs, Jan had more of a sense of other’s identity, particularly when she was asked about encountering a philosophy or mindset that she didn’t agree with:

And I think that within I mean there was never really an event where I freaked out and was like “I can’t do this!” Although sometimes the religious people on the mall can be really rude. And then [laughs] that’s kind of one of those things where I’m like “please stop.” But, I mean just reading through it, there has never been really a time where I’ve been like “Ah … I need to reject this. Like burn it! Get it away from me,” or anything. Just, as I’ve thought about it, and thought about if it fits into what I believe or what I want to become. And if it hasn’t been a good fit I would just … let it go.

These statements suggest a much more established identity, which is open to new experiences while still possessing a sense of self that allows for these new experiences to enrich their currently established identity commitment. When asked whether or not she felt split between the two identities, she replied:

I definitely feel like there are parts of me that are still very much hometown. But a lot of parts of me are definitely more, like, I don’t know. I don’t want to say city, because a lot of people laugh when you call [the city] a city because it’s not that
big. But [laughs] to me, it’s big. But there are definitely parts of me that are still very much associated with my hometown. I’m still like a small town girl, I guess. But I suppose. I don’t know I feel like, yeah, a part of me has stuck with how I grew up and part of me has been changed by moving out and seeing new things.

Thus we can see that these participants, some of those not quoted previously, have had experiences that parallel their EIPQ score identity classifications. These findings suggest that the identity status categories from the EIPQ were validated by the qualitative interviews. However, not all qualitative findings were consistent with the EIPQ results. For example, Augusto’s statement about his experience with politics:

And, my personal opinion, politics, to me, is very corrupt. Very prone to being coordinated based on how much money a certain politician can earn or be bribed with or something like that. So, that’s one reason why I don’t feel the need to either register to vote or really get myself involved with politics. I know it’s a major source of conflict. It’s a major source of stress to a lot of people. And, to me, it seems like an unnecessary source of stress. One that I don’t really need to add to myself, especially considering the stressors I do have.

This identity status for politics appears to reflect little exploration, while a committed decision has been established. Thus, Augusto appears to possess a foreclosed identity status when it comes to the political process. Likewise, Jan stated in regards to the direction of her occupational plans and goals:

It changes all the time. [laugh] But for the past semester or so I decided I would like to be a child life specialist. […] But yeah I think what would really like to do
that, is working with kids. Which is what I’d like to do, and also helping which is my very big like passion is, um. Not volunteer work necessarily because I would get paid, but service, so. Right now, yeah, child life specialist is kind of where I think I’m headed but it changes all the time.

While some sense of direction has been established, there is still some uncertainty to the direction and commitment of the future career choice, which may indicate moratorium. This may be due to an unpredictable job market or personal indecision. One interpretation is that no individual is in a constant identity state. One domain (such as personal identity) may be well explored and committed, while another domain (such as occupational or relational identity) may be less certain or less explored. The second possibility lies within the EIPQ, which includes four domains to determine identity status (personal identity, relational identity, values, and occupational identity). Thus, an individual who is classified in one identity status in some domains may not in other domains. This may also be the reason why more individuals were identified as highly in a state of moratorium and foreclosure, as they required a high score in either commitment or exploration, and a low score in the opposition, such as seen in moratorium and foreclosure. In the quantitative analysis, the frequencies of the population with achievement and diffusion identity classifications, which require both scores to be either high or low respectively, took up a little over a third (36.7%) of the sample, while moratorium and foreclosure took up two thirds (63.2%) of the sample.

**Domain 2: Plans and Goals.** The second domain, plans and goals, attempted to deduce commonalities in what college students attempted to achieve while they entered
college. In an analysis of the qualitative interviews, the two most common plans and goals pertained to two general categories: 1) developing competence, which pertains to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and capabilities that are identified as important to personal/every-day tasks, interpersonal proficiency, and occupational abilities, and 2) establishing autonomy/personal responsibility, which pertains to developing independence and being self-sufficient. In addition, smaller, more individualized goals included establishing a direction for a future career and establishing meaningful relationships, which were too rare to be included in the table but noteworthy for exploration.

**a. Developing competency.** Developing competence appears to be one of the biggest reasons for students in this sample to enroll in college. Competence primarily focuses on developing professional and technical knowledge for use in a future career, such as when May stated:

> Another thing was just kind of the conversations I had with my parents about what I wanted to study when I got in college. I really like math and science and so I knew that I wanted to do something in that field, I also just wanted to help people. So I talked about them with some different options. I know my dad suggested engineering, and I came in to biomedical engineering.

Likewise, April viewed college as an opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to become a nurse:

> Oh, yes. The whole reason I came to the university was for the nursing program. So my whole goal is these first two years to get my GPA up so I can get into the
nursing program. And then from there just, that’s always been my goal nursing. And that was kind of what I’ve looked at this whole college experience is just my road to nursing.

In this regard, college appeared to provide students with a variety of educational opportunities which many of the participants viewed as valuable. These experiences included educational coursework and hands-on projects, such as when May, who desired to be a nutrition science major, mentioned:

I really do feel ready. One, academically I have a strong, even stronger foundation now as I go into grad school. I had so many different social interactions so I know that that’s going to be good. And like I said I’ve taken on kind of a leadership role and mentor and I’m going to be an occupational therapist and a lot of is about the therapy and the interactions with patients and clients and stuff. So it’s helped, it’s absolutely helped. And even some of the classes like a community nutrition class we had to go out and I taught nutrition lesson to a beat cancer boot camp group. So I’ve gotten experience with interacting with the public. Yeah, so it’s been great and I feel really prepared.

While Julio found the opportunities to explore invaluable in order to establish what he didn’t want to be:

I feel that, college has helped me in the sense that it has given an idea of being able to rule out certain fields for career opportunities that I may want pursue. It has essentially allowed me to bring down my career future choices to a more minimized list rather than a near boundless repertoire of job ideas.
He also corroborated the benefit of taking part in on-the-job learning opportunities:

I feel like I’m actually pretty prepared for internships and, getting accepted to one or two of those. Because I have already taken part in a lot of internships and other sorts of practical, hands-on experience that would enable me to have references and sources for letters of recommendation. So that I think pretty much assesses how prepared I am for each of those each of those specific areas of post-college. Thus the development of skills that are believed to be valuable and important in the future career is a significant factor in why college students enroll, but also in how they make determinations of whether or not the education that is acquired is evaluated as valuable and important. For example, in regards to how well classes were preparing the participant for nursing, April commented:

So right now with like the education portion of it I don’t feel prepared at all. Like, chemistry is my one class really I feel like has helped me. Other than that I just feel like I’m taking classes that, yeah they’re opening my eyes but not really preparing me for my career.

This sentiment was especially common in the general education courses, which several students felt were not beneficial, such as Jan when she said:

But, my gen eds, yeah. It’s just mostly I can’t see a practical application in my life so I have a really hard time committing to studying for them. And also, because I don’t feel that commitment towards them and they are such big classes, a lot of times attendance isn’t mandatory or the projects are so vague, or like group projects. I hate group projects. And so just like a combination of everything I
hate. [laughs] I don’t appreciate the material. I don’t how it’s going to apply. I don’t have to attend, so I don’t.

This statement appears to be related to some of the qualities Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified as being relevant to fostering academic success, specifically clarity of purpose and institutional size. Jan continued to express ambivalence toward these courses when she said:

Just if you’re taking gen eds, then forcing a student to take maybe a [cultural awareness] course when they have no interest in it? When like even if they’re a science major they can have interest in a language course, that is perfectly fine but when you force them to take everything. Like [beginning cultural course], indiv 101, it bogs students down. They waste resources taking those courses when they can fill up their schedule with more things toward their requirements towards their major, or things that they find interesting.

However, in spite of her difficulties, she still recognized the importance of general education courses as factors relevant towards her overall goals while at college:

But then there are classes that I looked at and was just like “Nnnn … [laughs] I don’t see why this is important, I don’t see why I should be spending my time on this.” And that’s difficult, because obviously those classes still factor into your GPA, so you can’t just blow them off. I guess I kind of tripped and stumbled my first semester with that. I ended up kind of not putting any effort into those classes and the grades reflect accordingly. Which, I don’t want that, because it’s kind of stupid to like “oh, yeah, my GPA got lowered on a throwaway class.”
Jun was much narrower in his conceptualization of how college should be structured:

Because one of my views is that the university system should be for pursuit of academics, where most students are coming her for, basically, technical their aiming for a technical degree. So that can be focused more on technical schools where a pursuit of research is not necessary. And so if you draw that distinct line and make go[ing to] college in order to develop the students that wish to pursue knowledge, then you develop very specific groups who go to college, and so can better facilitate the development of each other. So it’s more pure cooperation versus throwing these huge mixes into these lecture-hall level classes. And so, rather than getting – I have actually seen a professor teach a 200 student discussion style class and not a single student participates. It’s really depressing. […] And, that’s not fundamentally what college should be based on the history of the system.

These descriptions show that college students attend college for a very specific purpose: to develop competency and develop knowledge in areas that they perceive would be beneficial for their future success. Furthermore, these perceptions determine the value of the course material and academic programs that they are enrolled in. When the purpose of the material is difficult to discern, or when they perceive the purpose of enrolling is just to fulfill requirements of the university or the program, then their interest and motivation to achieve is going to decrease.

However, the development of competency is not restricted to academic competency. Life competency and the ability to satisfy financial and personal challenges
are also viewed as important goals that occur during this time. This is primarily due to the challenge of establishing and creating autonomy, claiming responsibility for oneself, and managing one’s own personal affairs and finances. For example, when asked what qualities he possessed that made him perceive himself as an adult, Jun stated:

After all my life experiences I have found a very stable foothold on my thoughts, my personality. My interactions with other people, being able to read other people. Basically, being taking risk-analysis and empathizing with people, knowing how they feel, how they react. Seeing a unique situation and attempting to build a schema for it. So, for me, adulthood would be having a stable foothold to all of my mental faculties in addition to attempting to empathize with other people.

When asked to elaborate what made him feel this way, he mentioned:

That process was mostly founded on my experience as I was progressing through adolescence. In that I was encountering a lot of unique scenarios with quite a lot of detrimental outcomes. […] So I understood I was very naïve growing up, regardless of what unique scenarios I had come across, that my college experience showed me that I had quite a lot to learn.

Such unique scenarios included establishing boundaries with his roommate, managing the difficulties of sharing an apartment with only one key, and living in his car for a year.
Other participants also discussed the importance of establishing personal competency. However, that competency was created before perceived adulthood. For example, Jan mentioned:

I would like to think I’m more than half, I mean, I’m almost an adult. I pay my own taxes. I have three jobs, plus I’m a student. My parents are not on my lease. I own a car. I make all the payments. Like, my parents don’t pay for anything for me. I cook. I clean. Like, I feel like I’m an adult I just don’t have the … I’m still a student too. So, I don’t know. I mean I would like to say as soon as graduate I’d be a real adult. The real job.

Julio also stated his own concerns about his ability to manage the expectations and responsibilities of being an adult:

So, I know that I’m capable, at least, of being able to live on my own and taking care of myself. Once I do have my job. But even then, once I first finally do get my job, since I have had a lack of work experience in my past, I’ll simply have to get used to what it is like to coming to work 40 hours a week and to possibly take any work home with me that I might need to do. In case there is not enough time in my eight hours of work per day. I’ll have to get used to managing my own bills whether it’s phone bills or car payments or insurance payments, whatever it may be, little things like that. And then also just knowing that, eventually, all the responsibility for how my life will turn out will be on my own hands it will be on myself, and that emotionally will be difficult for me eventually to overcome. Is
the idea that, that emotionally, at least, that eventually I won’t be able to rely on my family anymore. I’ll have to eventually know how to take care of myself. Especially if in the future, eventually, if I would like to settle down, marry somebody, and have a family.

Other students, however, had concerns about their current abilities, but felt that in time their proficiency would progress toward mastery. May mentioned this in her experiences with school:

But I like I said I don’t think I’m fully there yet. I’m not in my career. And I think once I have looking for that job and my career completely by myself, no roommate or its partner [sic] that’s when think I will hit it. So it’s but I think this journey gonna, in college, these next four years will get me to that point.

When asked to elaborate further, she mentioned:

Well, I am not 100% financially independent. And I’m now actually I’m in a developmental psych class as a pre-req for the OT program. And we talked about what makes you an adult. So I think, maturity-wise and know I’m ready for kind of just the next step in life and being on my own. But I don’t have the means to do that quite yet? So … I am … I don’t know, I guess, early adulthood. Whatever. [laugh] I’m on my way there.

Julio also mentioned a lack of proficiency of managing his personal and prospective affairs, which makes him feel as though he had yet to entirely reach a point in his life in which he is able to identify as an adult.
To be honest, I don’t [feel like I’ve mastered the identified aspects of adulthood]. I don’t think that I have completely 100% managed the school environment. There are still things that that get past me. Like missed deadlines, not quite anticipating […] the workload implied by a course. Things like oversleeping, small things like that. I don’t think that I’ve fully, arisen to [them] yet. And then trying to add on aspects like career, or a job at first and then a career. And then interpersonal relationships with other people. Whether romantic, or a social, or business relationships. Those are all things that that get added over time that you need to. I guess incorporate into your life.

These discussions implied recognition that college is a time period removed from the adult experience. While there are many skills that can be fostered and developed while at college, it is the process of graduating, applying to the work force, and taking part in the “real” world that marks an individual as being in a position to be regarded as an adult. Taken another way, college is perceived as both an opportunity to develop competency, but also a challenge to overcome to receive the skills and credentials necessary for success in the adult community.

**b. Developing autonomy.** The second most common goal and plan, developing autonomy, is similar to developing competence, however it consists of achieving a sense of financial and personal independence, as well as claiming responsibility and consequences for one’s own actions. The most readily apparent way that this occurs is through physical separation from one’s parents. For example, Jun mentioned previously in this paper that he moved to Massachusetts from Arizona to gain a sense of
independence from his parents and that it was “a breath of fresh air.” Thus the transition toward college is sometimes seems as an exciting opportunity, such as when May reflected on her feelings before entering college:

I was nervous about being away from my family but I knew that joining a team I would kind of have an extended family in that and that would make my transition easy? So I wasn’t really nervous about getting involved with [college]. But I was excited, I was ready, like I said I was nervous about leaving but I was excited and ready to try something new and gain some of that independence, that you don’t have necessarily [have] when you’re living with your parents.

April recalled her first day in college away from her parents in describing the significance of college to her adult development:

I think that the day I was dropped off here and the parents said goodbye I think that’s kind of when it changed. And it was a matter of months I had to do all this. So I think if I were to not gone to college and would have stayed home. That I would probably be a little bit farther than what I was in high school, but nowhere near where I am today. So I think it’s really, and opened my eyes to what.

Included in the challenges that she needed to address was difficulties managing her financial bursar account.

I will admit, my parents definitely did all the work. If I had an issue I would kind of go to them in high school they would figure it out for me. So I was not used to [that] at the very beginning of school. I had an issue with my transcripts or bursar account. So I was on like hold. So I couldn’t switch out of a class that I didn’t
realize I didn’t have to be in. So, I was the one. My parents live in Colorado, they could do nothing. So I’m the one that is having to call the office, go in, kind of fight to get this hold off and it was not even really it was kind of their more mistake. But I’ve the one that had to figure it out. So I’ve got out, I was the one that is in charge of this stuff and like I said my parents could give me advice, but in the long run it’s down to me. So, that was hard that instead of after class I really would just want to go home but I needed to figure out this whole hold on my account.

Not all experiences developing autonomy meant isolation. Indeed, developing a new social support while at college can be an important skill. For example, Jan, after a roommate unexpectedly left her with no way to cover the cost of rent on her own, and with the crisis her car stolen, stated that reaching out to her local community was an important resource for her:

So, during that time I was able to reach out and a lot of the friends I made and kept up in through my church so it was kind of like two-fold I was able to reach out through my faith and like, pray a lot. There was a lot of praying and also make friends through continuing my church attendance and being able to meet people and I relied on those people a lot. Just as far as like support and days I wouldn’t want to cook they would come over and [laugh] help me out. So it was good. I definitely wouldn’t have been able to do it by myself, but definitely through faith and through the people I was surrounded with I was able to came through.
Other participants placed a high importance on establishing and maintaining this autonomy. For example, during the time that he lived inside his car, Jun stated that he would have refused receiving aid from his family.

My parents have stated that if I ever needed help, I could come to them. But I don’t like any of my family except for maybe three members. I don’t enjoy going to them for help, and I honestly personally don’t feel like I get along with them, though they feel otherwise.

Due to his dislike of his family, Jun placed greater importance on maintaining his independence than on seeking help to alleviate a difficult financial situation. Julio also placed high importance on maintaining autonomy. He came from a situation in which he enrolled in college at the age 15, but “due to a series of circumstances” found that he needed to re-enroll in high school after a year of college. However, this year of independence made him appreciate the autonomy, and he found returning to high school very difficult:

But, again, at that point especially during senior year I viewed it more like kind of like jail time. [laughs] I just needed to do my time and then get out. But the lack of you know, now the teachers were like “okay, well you have to ask to go to the bathroom.” Or like “we’re going to take attendance.” And just constantly rolling my eyes to that kind of thing.

Thus, his experience at college made the prospect of returning a highly appealing one:

So I started to I guess kind of inflate [college] a little bit in my mind in terms of “oh man, once I get to college, like, I won’t have to deal with stupid people and
everything that will be great.” And at some level I understood that wasn’t true, necessarily. I knew it wasn’t going to be perfect. But at the same time, I knew kind of like classes are going to be. They’re not going to be like “fill out this worksheet,” and like “we’re going to be constantly checking in on you to make sure that you’re doing your work.” It’s going to be a lot of them you could come to class, you could not come to class, depending on your performance on certain things like tests, that’s … where your grade is. So I really looked forward to that, and that kind of freedom from minutia.

This desire for autonomy also extended to his parents, who he stated were a source of hindrance in achieving independence:

There had been a lot of tension between us that we were able to resolve. Which I really admire them for because I understand the difficulties of knowing what kind of autonomy to allow your child while still wanting to protect them. By the end of high school I was … essentially my parents had trusted me enough that I was essentially living on my own except I slept at home with my parents. I had a job that I would use to pay for my own clothes, gas, and I could drive at that point. So I was I was essentially living my own life, which they trusted me enough to do. Which I really respect, especially meeting other people whose parents were not so open to that kind of thing. It wasn’t like they were calling me every 20 minutes while I would drive to Seattle, they wouldn’t be worried about me. […] But they but they eventually did adapt. Which in any person I admire when they have the introspection to acknowledge when their behavior is not effective and then change
it. Especially when that is a difficult process. And, because I talk to my parents, I know that saying, “alright, we taught you everything that we hope that you internalized and so now we’re just going to just let you live. And hope that you made the right decisions. Because we’re not going to make those choices for you.”

In addition to physical separation and the opportunity to make and choose their own decisions, another aspect of autonomy that was identified as important was accepting responsibility for one’s own actions. For example, Jan stated that responsibility was her one quality of identifying an adult:

If a person can choose to … make the responsible choice based solely on the fact that it is the more responsible choice when face with an opportunity [laugh] that is not as responsible. […] Okay, so, yeah just being able to when faced with a decision making the responsible decision. And plan ahead for things rather than just making the fun decision at the time without thinking ahead.

April also stated that taking responsibility as a particularly important but lacking skill for college students to acquire.

It is the … for me right now it’s “where’s the party?” “Yeah I have a test tomorrow, but I’d much rather go drink.” “Who’s the cutest boy/where’s the girls at?” It’s that lack of maturity, or, “I have a test but I don’t want to study for it right now, so I’ll study for it tomorrow.” And then tomorrow it’s the next day, and the next day, and then it’s the test. I think it’s kind of prioritizing but prioritizing your stuff with the things you should put behind in front of things you should be
doing. If that makes sense, and I think also maturity in the fact that “it’s not my problem I don’t need to deal with it.” Or my parents will take care of it or blaming everything on the professor when it’s you need to take responsibility. […] I think [the qualities of determining when a person is an adult] is going to be different for everyone. But I think it’s when they realize that they’re the ones running their life. That they need to take the responsibility. I really do think a lot of people and I think myself as when you’re in the real world. So, a job, or kinda finding what you want to do. Being responsible with, finances even a family. And make some people don’t even have reached adulthood till they have to take care of a kid themselves.

All six interviewed participants stated that autonomy was a goal at one point in the interview, making it one of the most cited goals. College also appears to provide students a unique opportunity to establish autonomy while moving towards adulthood. Yet, there is a sense that an individual cannot achieve a full adult identity while they remain in college. While many college students appear to value and are excited by the opportunity to establish autonomy, other students find moving out to be on their own a source of uncertainty and stress.

Other goals were present but specific to particular individuals. One was establishing an occupational identity, or determining what career would be the most desirable to them. Julio said:

I hope that I will be able get a four year degree and I was hoping to do graduate work. At some point getting married and having a family is going to be important
to me. And then, hopefully being able to go from that to a career that I enjoy and that I feel is important.

One potential reason for few participants stating that they had yet to establish a personal or occupational identity may be that the sample only consisted of two freshman participants – one which possessed a foreclosed identity, and the other achieved, but was only one point above the median in identity commitment. Future research should continue to examine this, for a more thorough analysis of freshman college students, such as April when she identified establishing meaningful relationships as an important goal in her future development:

Before coming to college, my expectations were … I definitely thought it was … I don’t know, I just kinda thought it was going to be more about, the education but also really finding a group of friends that I would be friends with the rest of your life. Once you have your college friends and that. […] I was coming here. One, my main purpose was education, and, two, going and finding this group of friends that I really felt comfortable with, that they had all the same interests with me, and that, kind of establishing a different friend group outside of Colorado.

However, April found that she often prioritized the educational component more than the relational component. Later in her freshman year she identified that establishing educational priorities and maintaining relationships were significant problems for her:

Like I was saying, social my social life wasn’t as important. Now I’ve realized, getting to second semester, that I don’t have as many friends here and that those social activities are big. So just a really recent one, is we had a little like movie
night with my club. If I would have seen that I would have been like “I can watch a movie by myself,” or “I can do that later. I should probably do my paper right now.” And then, [now] that’s worth it because I was meeting all these other people because it was also with another club and it was going to give me a break.

One challenge that resulted from pursuing two different goals was mitigating the dilemma that occurs when goals are at odds with each other. This would make finding a way to make both goals a possibility potentially an important task for college students.

**Domain 3: Supports and Catalysts.** After establishing the goals and direction that students reported while enrolled in college, the next step was to identify potential sources of growth and support. The identity capital model (Côté 2002) suggests that a major source of support lies within the individual’s environment and community. A catalyst is a circumstance or opportunity that facilitates personal, occupational, or social growth. This is different from a support, which is a person, group, or program that a person can draw on for personal, occupational, or social aid. Indeed, interview results were consistent with Côté’s theory. Specifically, there were two most frequently identified resources in the interviews: 1) social support and 2) unique opportunities available at college.

**a. Social support.** Not surprising, social support was cited as a major resource in all but one of the interviews (the exception was Jun, who had moved away from his family to live in the North East). Those who viewed social support as important usually cited their families as a source of finances, advice, and encouragement prior to college. Augusto mentioned that:
My parents always emphasized me placing my education above everything else and they always lectured me growing up. Telling me that “We’ll take care of everything else for you. We’ll help you out in any way that we can. Just focus on your education. Doing well in high school so you can go on to college and get whatever degrees you need and to so that you can become successful and won’t have to worry about any sort of manual labor jobs that will affect you physically as you get older.”

April also identified her family and previous experiences as a source of support and direction:

Growing up and coming to college, I felt family was extremely important. I kind grew up with that … we were just all very close. And then also my faith. I grew up going to a Christian school. So that was extremely important.

May’s family also helped her prior to enrolling in college by helping her establish a future direction where she could begin her adult exploration:

Another thing was just kind of the conversations I had with my parents about what I wanted to study when I got in college. I really like math and science and so I knew that I wanted to do something in that field, I also just wanted to help people. So [sighs] I talked about them with some different options. I know my dad suggested engineering, and I came in to [the college’s] biomedical engineering. […] even my extended family cuz I grew up living really close to them. My parents I have a brother and I live with my two parents, and they are super
important to me and really close. Every break I go home and, because miss them and I talk to them almost every day.

Yet, not all experiences prior to college were necessarily supportive. In addition to Jun’s difficulties fulfilling his role in what he identified as a traditional Asian family, Jan faced the challenge of a parental divorce two years before her high school graduation:

My parents got divorced my senior year of high school, so that was … like, that definitely put a strain on it. As far as, like, my relationship with my parents. Because I couldn’t really take sides, but I wanted to take a side, but I didn’t know which side to take! [laughs]

Another example of strife occurred when Augusto found that a language barrier prevented him from being able to take part in the community he identified with:

Well, for one thing, language barriers is [sic] a major source of these feelings that I have. Despite me being of Mexican descent I do not know how to speak the language of Spanish. And so many people of Mexican descent who I have ever known in the past have questioned me, wondering why I don’t speak Spanish despite me being Mexican. […] With that community, like I said, the language barrier of not knowing Spanish automatically is a source of conflict, because if I ever run into somebody who or meets [sic] somebody who thinks that I do know how to speak Spanish and I’m forced to tell them “I’m sorry, I don’t speak Spanish.” Either, I feel like they’ll judge me, they’ll look at me in a certain way or they’ll look at me and saying “Really? You didn’t know Spanish? You look like you would speak Spanish. You look like you would be Mexican enough to
know this language.” And what I feel like also is a major source of conflict for me is that other people around me, people who I know may in a way lack the ability to be empathetic. For example, I have been forced a lot of times to explain myself, in saying that “yeah, I don’t know the Spanish language. I was raised with very Americanized Mexican parents who did not know how to speak Spanish either, therefore I never learned it.” And a lot of times when I would tell this, uh, would tell people this experience of mine, they simply would not understand it. They would not even comprehend it. It was like they were talking to an alien or something.

Another challenge in college is the duplicity of pursuing one’s own individual autonomy while still maintaining social support. As described in the plans and goals sections, while parental and family supports is important for future success, a part of the transition towards adulthood is accepting responsibility and developing a sense of independence. Thus, relationships move away from exclusively family towards finding a social group to be a part of while at college. For some, this opportunity is a significant opportunity to explore different cultures and interpersonal experiences, such as what Jan found when coming from a small mountain community:

College has helped my social life greatly! [laughs] And I think it’s because in my high school we all grew up together. Like, it was a small town, so cliques were pretty well established in high school. If you weren’t in one group, then you weren’t in that group and like you weren’t going get in that one group no matter what. So then coming to college there was so many more people that I was able to
socialize with. And then I realized I could be friends with a lot of different kinds of people? […] And it’s fascinating because I look back at the people I went to high school with and like we were all the same type of person. [laugh] Like all of us, mountain-town people, and there are so many different kinds of people in the world. So, it’s interesting how homogenous my home town now looks, compared to college. And I mean I associate myself with them still, it’s not like I’m not one of them. But the people that have stayed in my hometown and never left? I just am like “you are the same type of person and your kids are going to be the same type of people.”

Others, meanwhile, looked at familiar areas for support. May looked for a church like the one she had previously attended as a source of support while at college:

And then I found a church here where I have been able to teach Sunday school, so I love doing that. And just event the hiking here, like, I really enjoy just what [the city] has to offer. The nutrition club has been great and I’ve got to go out and teach elementary kids about health and wellness, and, so it’s just been really fun.

And her track team:

I had a really close with a lot of my friends. A lot of them I met through running. So, just because we spent a lot of time together and we understood each other’s routines and what was important. So, yeah, I had really good friends. But I now that I’ve spent a lot of time focusing on school and running, so I think when I came to the [college] I was able to develop deeper relationships because I focus a little bit more on them. […] [College] has really improved it! Well, ever since I
[laugh] got injured I’ve been able to form ever, more close relationships. Because like I said in high school it was about school and running and then I would go home and it was about family life. Where, now, I, like I said, I don’t have my family with me. So, my friends become more of that social support. So when I go home it’s my roommates that I talk to, or I go get coffee with friends. And so, I have the deepest friendships I’ve ever had. Which is really neat.

Thus, in the absence of parental support, finding friends within the community is a valuable opportunity for students to establish relationships and resources. Jan found that, after her roommate left her unexpectedly and she had her car stolen in a short time period, being part of a community provided support, resources, and encouragement.

However, the availability of social support may not always be a benefit, as when Augusto mentioned:

I came to college, and sure, college does certainly have a large Hispanic community itself, but, also … there were also so many other different communities of other races and ethnicities as well. So, in that regard, culture shock was a relevant factor when I came to college. Also, I did certainly meet a lot of people that were from much different backgrounds than my own.

As he continued to explore a more diverse group of people than he had previously, he indeed developed culture shock. Further, he felt that his actions and ways he presented himself were constantly scrutinized. Such as his long hair:

That, no matter what I think is best for myself or what best for me as a person that not everybody is going to agree with it. So just knowing that, in general, that that
not everything I do will either be socially approved or tolerated or, in general, accepted. That’s a major way that I still have to become an adult. […] For example, during spring break I had finally cut my hair after having growing it long for three years. But during that three years of time I received a lot of criticism for having my long hair. Now, it wasn’t a crazy hairstyle that I wore it in. That many people would turn their heads right away to look at. It wasn’t a crazy hairstyle but still the idea that I, a male, had long hair. It’s not a social norm in this time period and for me to have had it at all. I knew that, on a daily basis, I was being judged for it. Whether it was directly with words, or whether it was indirectly with mannerisms or facial expressions, eyes looking in a certain way. And I was happy with myself in being able to keep that long hair for three years simply because I had enough integrity and self-respect to be able to do what I wanted as an individual. But, because of it, though, I faced a lot of conflict with dealing with the idea that no matter how much I may have enjoyed having long hair, no matter how I may have enjoyed being able to stick to doing something that I had set out for myself. That, ultimately, people around me did not like what I was doing.

These experiences caused him to feel especially uncertain of his identity status and insecure to make a commitment. He stated:

I think really also what is the big issue is that, in general, people growing up they want social approval. They want to be able to be praised for their actions, their goals, their thoughts on world issues and world topics and everything. And, I
certainly want social approval like anybody else does, and it’s certainly difficult to receive that kind of social approval when you don’t fit certain criteria in society. For example, if you may not look a certain way in terms of physical being, or in terms of clothing style or hair style or just your general way of presenting yourself to the public.

He further recommended that colleges could do more to improve acceptance of difference:

I feel college could not only help me but also help other college students in general. It could help us, for one thing, by educating everybody on multiculturalism and other certain topic areas that would help people to essentially develop the quality of empathy. To be able to understand that, with so many different people around us that so many people are going to have different life experiences, different views on life and how they express and hold their specific opinions and values and beliefs, ideals, et cetera.

Other social experiences while at college were identified as not being beneficial. Among them are experiences with roommates, a common source of difficulties that may increase the challenge of other college problems. May said:

Just trying to find that balance of … you know, household cleanliness, or just routines and appreciating people. You know like if one of us has to wake up earlier than the other just trying to be quiet or if somebody has to go to bed. So that’s always a challenge and I think it’s a challenge for anyone. So I’ve experienced some challenges with that, with the roommate situation.
Julio commented that living in the dorm allowed him to see different sides of people that he would not have ordinarily have had access to:

Well, living in the dorms you get to see people as they live. In high school you see people at school, and in contexts outside of school that are specifically designated. In the dorms, you see a person’s life all the way around. Including the less flattering things, or the quirks. For example what really sets a person off. I know that my roommate unfortunately can’t stand um my playing guitar. That’s something that if I had met him in a different context I wouldn’t know [that about him], because that that interaction never would have taken place.

Or for Jun when he was faced with the challenge of developing a sense of social competency for the first time:

Because of the way I had grown up, there were a lot of experiences and a lot of, how should I say … trains of thought that I was not exposed to that gave me a naïve outlook when I started college. And that was at the age of 16. And so, I had failings in certain human relations especially in terms of dorm mates, roommates and such and equal distribution of space and basically setting my own boundaries. […] I grew up in a very, very large family so there was no room for the concept of personal space. So, walking around the house, entering people’s rooms, it was very common. Just being able to wander through all areas of the house regardless of who it was. There was just not enough space to give anyone a comfort zone. So, therefore, I didn’t learn … I didn’t have a concept of that going into college. So I was always overstepping boundaries that should have been there but not
really necessarily form. [...] To give you an idea, I used to hang out with a pair of friends in their dorm room quite often. I believe it was, at one point, three or four times a week. The actual friend of that pair had gone out for the evening and his roommate had a girl over. And I was just used to just walking in. [I] open the door and lo and behold …

In spite of these difficulties, many participants felt that the depth and significance of their relationships improved while at college. They believed that college provided them the opportunity to talk to and experience different modes of thought and communicate with different types of people. Thus, exploring and establishing mature relationships while at college is an important resource emerging adults appear to benefit from achieving.

b. Unique opportunities at college. In addition to social support, college itself appears to be a very important catalyst in promoting personal and professional growth. All participants mentioned some benefit from enrolling into college, by promoting autonomy (see the section “Plans and Goals”), providing opportunities to form new relationships (previous sub section), and presenting professional educational experiences. Some participants took to this readily, such as Jan who found opportunities to explore a variety of career paths:

So, for the last … two-three years? Yeah, three years. I have been working at the [tutoring] center on campus, which is a tutoring center. I’m a receptionist, so that’s like … fine [laugh]. Like, it’s developed my work in like filing and like Excel spreadsheets, things like that. But I mean it’s not super exciting at all. And
then also I had worked for [the county] and I teach after-school science lessons. Like I do a program then I have also done like birthday parties with them and stuff like that to elementary school kids. And so that’s more relevant because I’m about to work with kids. So, that’s, has more relevance in my life than being a receptionist. And then for the last year or two years I worked at the [specified medical clinic]. And I am just a student worker there so I just proof-read their courses and just like check up on the website and make sure that everything is working out all right and everything like that. So that’s has helped me gain more office skills and work with online platforms. And then, also introduce me to the world of [medical research].

May found that injury that prevented her from running track competitively increased her opportunities to explore her options increased dramatically, allowing her the opportunity to participate as a peer athlete leader, the student advisory committee, and explore her community more:

I didn’t expect to be presented with so many different opportunities? I think that I just assumed that I would come and go to classes and run and that would still kind of be my routine. But there are so many different things that I wanted to be a part of and that I learned about throughout my years, so I don’t I think that was something new?

Her experiences also included the opportunity to use what she learned in the community setting, offering first-hand experience to apply her knowledge. In describing her community nutrition class:
Yeah, so the entire semester we’re learning about how nutritionists can go into the community. We learn about grant writing. We learn about policy and stuff. We learn how to make a nutrition education plan. How to do site analysis and assess who the population is what their needs are and stuff like that. And then we get in groups of four. And we do a site analysis and so we go to the place. […] And then we make the nutrition education plan and then we go and teach it to the group. So some people are teaching to an elementary class. I talked to this beat cancer boot camp. And then we ask them what some of their financial needs are and then we write an actual grant and we give it to them if they want to go through and submit it. So it’s pretty neat.

Thus, in regards to her time in college, she felt that her experiences provided her a great opportunity to grow:

I just imagine myself if I hadn’t come or if I. I just don’t think that I would have. It’s almost like a kick start taking on that responsibility and this independence? Because if I was. So, four years ago … or these past four years if I was at home just kind of trying to do the same thing I don’t think I would have … grown, or I don’t think I would be at the same place I am now.

Jan also felt that college sped up her development towards becoming adult more quickly than if she stayed at home:

[College] definitely put a lot of responsibility on me right away. I think if I had not gone to college I wouldn’t have moved out of my parent’s house. So I wouldn’t be paying my rent, so that whole like decision-making process of like “I
have a paycheck, I could spend it or I could save it and pay rent” and not and have somewhere to stay [laugh] for the next month. And then also it has made me have to budget my time more as far as when I have to study. If I wasn’t in college, I probably would still have a job but I probably wouldn’t have had the jobs that I have right now. There wouldn’t be as much stress in my jobs right now. So I feel like college has kind of just threw me in this world and be like “well you’ll learn” [laugh] instead of, like, had I not come I would have still be living at home and maybe learn more slowly. So it sped up my process.

Other participants felt that college provided them with the opportunities to interact with experts in the field that they were interested in pursuing. This exposure inspired and encouraged participants to pursue their professional goals. Such as Julio when he said:

I met with one of the computer science professors once. And he said something that I very much agree with that kind of summarizes my interest in the field. He said, “Computer software is some of the most complex things humans are building today. It’s the pinnacle of our technology.” The software is immense. It’s kind of our greatest creations at this point in terms of scale and impact. And that is something I want to be a part of.

April also found unique opportunities to explore her future career path as a nurse by meeting individuals in her field:

Also being able to get involved with the [medical center]. So I volunteer over there. Not on a regular basis, but anyways that has helped me immensely. Because
it’s, first of all, solidified that that is what I want to do. I love being in hospital. And also I think that’s been the biggest actually education part because I’m able to sit down with the nurses and they’re like “so this is what you want to do, this is how you do it.” So that’s really been positive. And also understanding that I can handle the stress: that I am getting through. It’s hard, but I can handle it.

So, in addition to providing students the opportunity to develop competency, college provided valuable experiences to develop autonomy, form relationships with a broad spectra of people, and have access to unique learning and occupational experiences that may not be readily available elsewhere. For the most part, the participants interviewed perceived college as being a beneficial time both personal and occupational development.

**Domain 4: Challenges and difficulties.** While college does provide a variety of unique opportunities for emerging adults to establish adulthood, not all of their experiences were beneficial. However, simply because an event requires concentrated effort does not necessarily indicate that growth does not occur. Thus, I made a distinction between challenge, which is an event or circumstance which allowed for potential growth but also required increased effort and focus in order to be successful, and difficulty, which is an event or circumstance which required increased effort and focus, but had less potential for growth.

One difference between this domain and the other three presented previously is that, while there were certainly individual differences between the participants, challenges and difficulties was much more diffuse. As displayed in Table 12, the
previous domains was general (relevant to all participants), or typical (relevant to all but one participant). The challenges and problems domain, in contrast, was in the variant category (relevant to over a quarter but less than half of the participants). While some commonalities existed, the individual challenges and difficulties people faced were more likely to be unique in scale and in available resources. This uniqueness made interpretation more difficult, as few challenges and difficulties were reported by all individuals. Through an analysis of the transcripts, two challenges were commonly observed to qualify as variant: academic challenges and managing emotions. The two most frequently stated difficulties were dealing with financial difficulties, and personal crises.

a. Academic challenges. One of the most common challenges, and one that should be expected for college students, was managing academic content. Overall, the participants felt that college was distinct from high school in that the academic rigor was much more intense, such as when Augusto mentioned:

I expected the homework load and the general coursework to be much more difficult than what it was in high school. Just because of how advanced college education is compared to high school education. […] And, in my opinion, a large amount of that is based on the idea that in high school and my education before that too. It seems like I would be fairly easy off just by memorizing the material, passing the quizzes or tests, and moving on to the next material. A lot of it was very just “memorize it for what needs to be done and then do what needs to be done and you’re done.” […] It was kind of pressuring for me and it was
something that I was not used to. So for me a lot of there actually was some level of anxiety that I incurred because of it.

Jun mentioned that, not only were the requirements more difficult, but so was the frequency of coursework:

As of right now I have had, including spring break, seven weeks of exams out of the past nine weeks. And multiple of those weeks have been several exams at the same time. And during the week of Spring Break and the week after I was writing papers. So, it’s the gauntlet is very mentally taxing [sic].

However, while this educational rigor was a source of challenge for some, Julio found that the increased expectations and academic difficulty more preferable to the format used in high school:

It’s a little bit strange to think but in high school your control over even your own grade isn’t as much as … you would think. I’m not sure how to really elaborate on that. But the idea in college of you study, you’re in charge of your experience. You get in exactly what you get out what you put in. That was fully what I expected. No one is going to dictate how much you are supposed to study. You study as much as you need to for certain topics. […] I tend to do better when there is not someone trying to hold my hand. [laughs]

And, as expected, some participants viewed this as a source of anxiety, such as April when she mentioned:

I did not expect it to be this challenging in the aspect of … you can have four tests, four midterms on the exact same day. You need to figure out how you are
going to study for them on top of going to your other classes, and keeping up with that work. So I just didn’t expect, I knew that the I knew the work was going to be hard, but on top of that the stress level you are on constantly, the lack of sleep, the having to cut live with a roommate, and that relationship. I just didn’t expect everything else to be piling it on while you are trying to do well at school.

Most participants appeared to have been able to manage some organizational and study skills in order combat this increased work load. However, April found that maintaining her academics came with considerable stress:

I think stress makes you feel [accountable]? It’s when you got three projects to do and they’re all due right around the same time and that stress you’re feeling. I think that really makes you feel like an adult and you need to go “okay, what is the most important?” Do that, and then you know all these other things. Well, you know that’s not as important. I think that’s really makes you see it, stress. But also … I don’t know it’s just the whole education process open your eyes to it.

Because in high school you get leeways. You get, “Okay you didn’t do that project, can just give it to me by the end of the week.” Here it’s, they don’t care. You know, you’re given it. And it’s due when it’s due and if it’s not due you know it, oh well. They’re not there to help you get to that point. So I think that’s really, they can see those deadlines, understanding it’s due, and how are you going to get it done when you have all this other stuff going.

April found that the challenges of managing academic requirements not only affected her mental health, but other aspects of her life as well:
[The stress] makes you kind of not want to go on being an adult. But just slow down, if that makes sense. You know, it’s in a way you feel not ready because it is stressful and a lot of responsibility so you kind of just want to be like “whoa, stop.” And also I think it kind of makes it, right now I’m not completely looking forward to it because if I’m stressed or busy now, how am I going to be when I’ve got all these other things I need on top of it? Right now I’m not the only one paying for my college. I’m having help from my parents. So what’s going to happen when I’m completely on my paying for a house, a car? So in a way, it kinda makes it feel like this awful thing and I want to take as long as I can to get there because I’m not ready yet.

Prioritizing school over other aspects of April’s life also affected her social network, causing her to feel isolated:

I went from being very social in high school, being a part of all of these activities, to now not as much. I’m a part one really big group and that’s kinda my social life. Other than that, I’m in the library or you spend a lot of time alone in college, and that’s something that I wasn’t also expecting. Is you really have to kind of be by yourself [sic]. And I was always with friends or family or something. So I think it definitely affects it big time.

Unsurprisingly, April’s list of recommendations to how college could be improved included the opportunity to work closely with an upperclassman who is close to graduation to receive both relational and academic support:
I think they could really do better helping the students [sic]. Kind of with your advisor, I guess. I know they are not there to baby you and let it all out, but I feel like I’m kind of the one having to fight and figure it out completely by myself instead of them being like “well here is kind of a good list [of courses], look through these and then figure it out.” I’ve been told three different things from three different people, and that advising departments could just be there more for you academically instead of trying to figure out how you’re going to do an internship or something. I just want right now the school and then help me with that. I think, mentoring they could do a lot better with. […] I almost think a requirement one where you need to sit down with someone and hear what they are talking about so you can look at their how they did it and take advice from them and then also learn from their mistakes. I think would really help. This suggestion may be a valuable resource for students who feel overwhelmed and have limited social resources. Julio also suggested a course that emphasized developing skills that would benefit students as they being their time at college:

I definitely think it would be useful for first-year students to [attend] some kind of seminar or potentially a class that kind of aligns you more with the college mentality. Because there is definitely a shift there that you have to take from high school, that um I was able to make. And most people I know were able to make. But I definitely know a lot of people that it surprises them. The uh I guess there are things that you come into that if you are not expecting are surprising and you have to deal with the fact that this was unexpected and the fact that you have to
now kind of adjust your habits. I think a program that was like “alright, you know so you’re in college now, this is what that implies.”

Unfortunately, these courses exist and provide valuable support for students at this campus. Julio’s statement of these courses as a desirable resource could indicate that they need to be made more widely known to college students, especially freshman.

b. Managing emotions. In addition to challenges managing academic content were challenges managing emotions. Once an individual begins to feel overwhelmed, they may possess strong feelings of negativity and worthlessness. For example, Augusto mentioned:

There actually was some level of anxiety that I incurred because of [the amount of application-based tasks in college]. I wouldn’t say extreme to where I had any like panic attack or anything. But it was certainly a new pressure that I wasn’t used to. It was a new anxious feeling that I never had before. The context of anyway. And gradually, more and more, over the course of the four years that I’ve been here, I’ve been able to cope with it easier but still, sometimes, it’s kind of difficult.

These feelings of insecurity and inadequacy extended or perhaps were caused by feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Augusto described his feelings of anxiety communicating in front of a group of people:

For me, especially, what’s most difficult for me is talking to big crowds of people. Whether or not, I’m just talking by myself or with group members. Still kind of difficult. So that I think that really is where a lot of the struggles came in. It’s just application and then public speaking for me is kind of a big issue too.
As well as future career success:

I’ll simply have to get used to what it is like to come to work 40 hours a week and to possibly take any work home with me that I might need to do. In case there is not enough time in my eight hours of work per day. I’ll have to get used to managing my own bills whether it’s phone bills or car payments or insurance payments, whatever it may be little things like that. And then also knowing that, eventually, all the responsibility for how my life will turn out will be on my own hands will be on myself.

And dating:

And the relationships also made me realize that perhaps maybe I may not be suited for a relationship simply for the idea that, as the saying goes, “there are plenty of fish in the sea.” Well, on a college campus, the community itself, already, is filled with so many more women than I have seen in my life in one place. And, trying to keep a stable relationship with one woman, while, at the same time, being face with perhaps either, negative thoughts, or negative temptations, or anything really that would hinder the status of a significant monogamous relationship. I felt also that that was a major source of me questioning myself and my views towards relationships and my personal abilities to be in long, stable relationships.

Similar concerns were also identified in other participants, such as April as she accounted how overwhelmed she felt by the academic challenges as mentioned previously. Difficulty in managing emotions could also potentially affect identity
development. In addition to creating feelings of anxiety, Augusto attributed his insecurities as a source of inadequacy in establishing his identity:

I think a part of adulthood is finally coming to terms and realizing what your personal identity is. What attitudes you hold. What behaviors you want to conduct of yourself. What thoughts you have and the way you perceive yourself. Your level of personal confidence and self-esteem and the sense of personal security. I think those definitely come with adulthood as well. Being able to finally know who you are as a person.

Establishing a secure sense of self and being able to overcome anxiety and insecurity could potentially be an important goal as one progresses through college to maintain a secure sense of self and establish self-efficacy. Alternatively, perhaps it is through being successful that a person develops confidence in their abilities which then leads towards establishing a secure sense of self.

c. Financial difficulties. In addition to these challenges in maintaining emotions, another common non-academic difficulty that college students reported was difficulties with the costs of education and maintaining finances. As college has become increasingly more costly, students are much more aware of cost to attend college. For example, during his first year in Massachusetts, Jun mentioned that in one year his tuition and living expenses was $40,000. He further explained that he decided to live in a car for a year because he was not able to afford rent. The difficulty of paying costs for tuition and living expenses were felt by other students as well, such as May, who made finances a primary consideration when she determining which college offer to accept:
Um, money was a huge factor, what academics and athletic scholarships I can get. I initially wanted to go to a smaller school on the East coast. And Brown originally was one of my top choices. But the [Brown] coach wanted me to commit before we talked about financial aid, and so, I was like “Well, I’m not in a position to do that.”

Augusto mentioned that even when financial aid was provided, the amount of money provided was not sufficient to cover the cost of living and tuition. The ability to maintain financial independence was an important consideration in determining whether or not a person had achieved adult status:

Just being able to know that I’ll take care of enough to be able to buy on a weekly or monthly basis the little things that I need, but also still have enough money saved up for emergency situations, like medical bills or something like that. And, the reason also I say that this is a major thought of mine is because so far in my college education my major source of financial aid has been a scholarship that I receive here from the [college]. But, the scholarship it really only covers tuition and even then for this year, my senior year, the cost of tuition went up so the scholarship couldn’t even cover it fully. The rest of the necessary payments that I would need to make for either the rest of the tuition or other fees that are associated with tuition and then also rent and housing and food and everything like that – all the rest of these payments were made responsible by my parents.
This also became a source of anxiety for him:

So, for these four years that I have been in college, they’ve put a lot of money into being able to support me as I continue my education. And for that reason, a lot of the money that they have put in so far could have been put toward something else perhaps that they may have needed. Like, to put into their retirement fund or something. Over these past four years I’m sure they spent at least a few thousand dollars on me, alone, just with rent payments, and everything like that. Monthly groceries et cetera et cetera. So when I talk about putting the responsibility on taking care of myself, a major reason why I want to do that is so that, I can satisfy their wishes for me to be able to grow up and be able to be a mature responsible adult that can take care of himself, but also so that they’ll no longer have to worry about needing to set a lot set aside a lot of money for any financial needs that I may have.

Finances are notable obstacles because, as indicated in the establishing autonomy section, managing the costs and maintain financial independence was an important factor for establishing oneself as an adult. Financial factors are also a significant concern in future plans. Jan identified the availability of financial resources as an important consideration when applying for a graduate degree:

Also it’s going to be expensive because it’s a certification program not a degree program so there’s not really financial aid offered. Something I’ll have to just end up living off of loans for a semester or two while I finish class, where I feel if I
had known before, I could be taking some of the classes concurrently and maybe like shortened it down to only one semester.

In response to the increasing difficulties of affording a college education, Jun recommended utilizing a European or Japanese system of providing support:

Those systems focus primarily on the students, where the government structure facilitates student development. In Europe, they don’t pay for college, whatsoever. If you can get into college, it’s paid for. All [students] have to do is make sure they pay for their living expenses. Here, you get in debt so fast. My first year of college alone, including living expenses were $40 grand. So, just based on that alone it’s not conducive to students.

Thus, college affordability was an important consideration, prompting students to further consider the importance of receiving skills and a degree in an area that they find relevant to their prospective occupation.

**d. Personal crises.** The last difficulty, personal crises, is unique in that there is no realistic way to manage and prevent them prior to enrolling in college. Rather, they pertain to significant and dramatic events that further add stress or could potentially eliminate future opportunities. For example, financial burdens caused Jun to live in his car for a year:

Honestly, even the negative experiences have helped me to develop as an adult, as there are instances where I have where I was very economically unstable. To give you an idea, during one week of work, I worked a 23-hour day and made $700 from that day. I only worked 24 hours that week. So, at that point, my hours were
so skewed so that I couldn’t expect to pay rent and so I went homeless for a year. I lived out of my car, rented a storage space and had my LA fitness membership. So I could shower, keep up my hygiene and still be able to survive. I was like “well, it’s just rent is a very, very, um, heavy financial burden.” Especially, if you can’t count on paying it.

In addition, Jun also suffered medical conditions which further inhibited him:

I’ve had hepatitis B since birth, and it causes certain, um, how should I say, symptoms? Where it’s associated with fatigue and other stuff. In addition to that I had one of my discs in my vertebrae is compacted. And so I get lower back pain overworking my back. So, that’s just a summation of everything I’ve been through.

For Jan, managing the transition from a small community to a large one was alarming:

Um, well, I got here and I had no idea how many classes were available. I didn’t realize how large [the college] was. I grew up in a small town. So my high school, my graduating class was, like, 150 students. And my first college class I ever actually sat in and took had 900 students in it. So it was the size of my high school. [laughs] […] I did not expect there to be so many students. And I didn’t expect the professors to be so, well, in general. So my freshman year especially, cause I was taking all gen eds. So the professors were very separate. As is in high school all my teachers knew me, knew who I was. Like, they knew my brother they knew my whole family. And then I got to college and they didn’t really care to get to know me because they just, well, you’re one of, so many students. […]
So that was surprising to me. Um, I wasn’t expecting just to be lost in the crowd. I think, in my high school I was kind of a … big fish in a little pond?

In addition, Jan faced additional crises through her roommate and the disappearance of her car:

My first semester was awful. And looking back at that it’s a miracle like I didn’t leave. I just had a really bad roommate experience where she moved out a month early and I didn’t have the money to pay rent for both of us. So I managed to find somebody else to fill the spot. But my car was stolen, two weeks after I paid cash for it, and so I was without a car my first semester and I was overwhelmed with all the people of I didn’t know. And I had broken up with my long-term boyfriend. He and I dated for three years and I broke up that semester and then I rebounded and I ended up breaking up with another guy that same semester!

[laugh] So it was just, so much was going on and I was … I got the first B that I had ever gotten my whole life.

Finally, May was faced with the crisis of not being physically able to continue to compete:

And I got injured about a year ago, so I haven’t been able to compete so I’m not traveling as much. So I have more time to kind of do different roles that I haven’t been able to do my past couple years here. […] Um… it’s called osteitis pubis, so it’s inflammation of my pelvis area and stress reaction in my femur. So it didn’t break, but it’s a step before the stress fracture. So, yeah, so I haven’t traveled in a
while which have kind of been a blessing in disguise because I gotten to do things that I didn’t expect I would get to do.

Each of these crises represents unpredictable outcomes that few, if any, were able to predict and prevent. While educators may not have the ability to impact personal crises, this does not preclude the importance of these events in a student’s college experience and development. Some, such as the participant who was homeless, develop a plan to ensure that their needs are met. Other crises, such as navigating a new environment, can be mitigated through fostering social groups that are able to provide encouragement and support. Some crises, such as the injury that prevented the track athlete from continuing her competitive career, could potentially allow an individual to explore new avenues of skills and knowledge use in ways that they would not have been able to otherwise. Yet, we must also recognize that in the face of academic and personal challenges, there will be individuals who get overwhelmed when a significant crisis occurs and that this becomes the reason why they choose not to continue their higher education.

Domain 5: Age as a factor of adulthood. One interesting factor that was mentioned by four different participants and that did not fit in any of the other four domains was age as a determinant of adult status. Surprisingly, participants were fairly consistent in the importance of age, such as Julio when he comments:

I’m I definitely feel, uh although I’m I guess a legal adult. I guess at 18, uh the other age would be 21, I suppose. But I feel that I’m not fully an adult. Obviously, when we talk in psychology about the transitional period in late adolescence [and]
early adulthood, I definitely feel that we still have certain elements that that would be akin to um adolescence or children, but then we also have responsibilities or elements of being an adult.

Then, when asked when a person is an adult:

That’s a funny thing, because I often hear from people who are young adults that they still feel like they’re a child with like a cardboard cutout of an adult that they kind of hide behind. So … I don’t think that it’s a something that one day you’re gonna, just wake up or have the epiphany like “wait a second, I’m an adult now!” I think it’s something that’s gonna that, again, since it’s something you’re developing once you’ve reach that point it won’t be incredibly obvious to you. Even though other people may look at you and be like “yeah, now you’re a fully functioning adult.”

This recognition that age is not a sufficient factor was stated by two other participants, with uncannily similar descriptions despite being completely separate interviews. For example, Jan mentioned:

Forever I thought that [being an adult] was just based on age. And when you reach a certain age you are considered an adult. But I guess that’s just kind of in the eyes of maybe our culture? Whatever, but I really think that there is a maturity level and I think the finances does have play a key role because … when you are able to be independent I think that that helps kind of solidify adulthood a little bit. So not only is it age. There’s not a magic … number “oh! Now you’re…” I think
there is a maturity and just a cognitive development? And as well as the financial component.

Julio also expressed similar sentiments:

I know for one thing that becoming an adult is not simply based on age. It’s not like you reach 25 and “oh, I’m an adult now!” A lot of people may think that they become adults when they either reach the age of 18: voting age. A lot of people may think that they become adults when they finally reach legal drinking age of 21. Some people may think that they’ve just finally become an adult by the time they either enter college or graduate from college. But I know for a fact that personal development is as much as there can be correlations in age in terms of stages of development or something, I know for a fact that there is no specific age for everybody.

In spite of consistency in the participants identifying age as insufficient toward establishing adulthood, Jun recognized the importance of age to evaluate how well he was progressing in achieving the goals of adulthood:

And, considering now that I’m 24, that’s not very very early in my life. [chuckle]

And when asked what his expectation was:

I was expecting myself to have matured at … Amongst my peers, and amongst everyone in my family, adulthood is 18 just like driving, er, just akin to graduation age, the age you start college You start to become more financially independent but not really. Because my family everyone helps each other out, regardless of age. So financial independence is not a qualifier for adulthood. Now,
when I realized that I had so many, inadequacies in regards to human relations, or mental faculty. That not only was I not sure if [achieving adulthood] would come at 19, I wasn’t sure when I would be able to judge myself as an adult. Whether or not that would ever happen.

Interviews identified adulthood as being related to age, but not established by it. Indeed, other factors established by a person’s goals and requirements adulthood as well as cultural goals and requirements of adulthood were more relevant in establishing an adult status. The differences in the dialogues of Jun and Julio provided relevant examples of how culture can shape these expectations. While Julio recognized financial independence as an important factor to determine whether one is an adult, Jun stated that financial independence was not a qualifier as his family’s expectations required all members of his household to contribute to the finances. While age is not sufficient, it may be an important consideration, as reaching certain ages were milestones used to determine how well one is achieving that adult status and whether or not they were being productive or idle in their endeavors.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to attempt to determine changes in identity status that occurred within different programs throughout four years of college, as well as to address what aspects of emerging adulthood are common for individuals in this developmental stage. The hypotheses were that: 1) there are differences among freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students’ identity statuses; 2) there will be a difference between the identity status between students who are enrolled in a hard science course and those that have enrolled in social science and performing arts courses. In addition, I attempted to explore the extent to which gender and ethnicity effects identity status while at college. Finally, my qualitative research sought to identify how students’ identity status is shaped by their previous experiences, identify experiences that the students believed were significant in their transition to adulthood, as well as address their perceived effectiveness in college programs and curriculum toward fostering psychosocial and occupational growth.

A. Discussion

The results reveal quite a few interesting findings in regards to the exploration of interpersonal development while at college. Quantitatively, since the sample size of this study was fairly high (\(N = 464\)), and since the MANOVA utilized attempted to provide the greatest reduction in obtaining a Type I error, the non-significance for both exploration and commitment scores was fairly certain. While the initial results of the quantitative analysis may initially appear disheartening, finding no identity differences among types of academic course enrolled, academic year, gender, and ethnicity validates
that identity status is separate construct from these domains. This finding suggests that identity status should be regarded as a separate identity construct to assess academic performance, occupational growth, and psychological well-being. And indeed, a review of the literature has found that identity status has been used separately to examine these factors (Berzonsky, 1992; Luyckx, De Witte, & Goossens, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011).

1. Validation of the EIPQ. The results of the EIPQ were validated by the qualitative interviews, suggesting that the measure is consistent with the construct it is attempting to assess. As mentioned previously, there were only a few inconsistencies between the interview statements and the EIPQ identity status. This is to be expected, since, as mentioned in the process of contacting participants, very few people fit the criteria of scoring two standard deviations above the mean for both exploration and commitment, and none of those individuals were available to be interviewed. Thus, the fluctuations in commitment and exploration scores were possibly due to fluctuations in these factors that occurs naturally within the participants, or error that was embedded within the instrument. Overall, the consistency between the interviews and the EIPQ validates the accuracy of the measure.

2. Comparison to the seven vectors. Another important result found in the qualitative analysis is the parallel between the coded categories and Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory. With the exception of two (financial difficulties and personal crises), the categories in this research were similar to vectors identified by Chickering and Reisser. Those seven vectors are 1) developing competence, 2) managing emotions, 3) moving through autonomy towards interdependence, 4) developing mature
interpersonal relationships, 5) establishing identity, 6) developing purpose, and 7) developing integrity. Most of these vectors are represented in the statements made by the participants, providing support to the relevancy of this model in conceptualizing and understanding factors related to college students’ development. In addition, the identified categories may suggest how these factors correlate with adult development while at college. Four of these vectors appear to indicate goals that occur during emerging adulthood, such as establishing an identity, developing autonomy, managing emotions, and developing competency. Social support and unique opportunities also appear to correlate with developing mature relationships and developing competency, while academic challenges appear to correlated with developing intellectual competency.

3. Analysis of identity statuses. Some similarities were found among identity statuses. There was not enough evidence to completely account for Augusto’s inconsistencies as a person identified as possessing a moratorium identity status with statements that reflected ruminative exploration (Luyckx et al., 2006). Interestingly, his rumination did not necessarily come from his analysis of different occupational identities, but rather from his desire to fit in with different cultural groups. This could indicate that those insecure in establishing an identity with the group which may ruminate. The inconsistencies also show the struggles that an individual faces when forming a confident and secure sense of self within a variety of societal norms and expectations. Further making his particular challenge more complex were Augusto’s struggles for ethnic identity. As St. Louis and Liem (2005) found, Latinos and Blacks individuals’ ethnic identity significantly positively correlated with self-esteem and job competence, and
significantly negatively correlated with depression. Augusto, however, felt a disconnect between himself and the group he identified as being a part of, primarily due to the fact that he did not speak the language of this group and felt alienated by this community for this perceived deficiency. While there is not enough evidence to suggest that these are common challenges for ethnic minorities, it does emphasize the importance of further exploring the struggles of minority students may have as they attempt to form their identity and develop a secure sense of self while at college.

The two individuals who possessed a foreclosed sense of identity also provided interesting insight. April appeared to have begun her college with the intention of becoming a nurse. This ambition has almost been to the detriment of other identify aspects that she deemed important, particularly finding and developing friendships while at college. In addition, April provided clear indications of an individual in foreclosure closing off opportunities for further career or academic exploration, as she openly stated that she could have been interested in teaching or psychology. April recognized that she would have less academic expectations if she chose to pursue these different directions, but would come at the cost of precluding her initial aspiration. Her description of her roommate is also particularly poignant, as she appears to personally identify with the struggle to choose a path in psychology instead of the roommate’s stated goal to be a doctor. To April, this decision to pursue something else is “giving up,” which she identified as risking regrets later down the line. However, April’s pursuit of becoming a nurse appears to be taking its toll as she expressed feelings of stress and loneliness when she prioritized academic pursuits instead of developing social pursuits at college. This
harkens back to Côté (2002), who found that while an individual may possess a high degree of agency, without the presence of newly acquired identity capital through school, could potentially be a source of stress and burnout in the future.

May, by contrast, has a much different kind of foreclosure. Her initial desires in college were also very specific: she wanted to enroll in a college as part of a track team, with the intention of studying nutrition. Her social support would also come from organizations and groups (specifically, her church and track team) as she had done in the past. She even admited that she had few expectations to the vast wealth of opportunities that would be presented to her. Indeed, prior to her injury, May’s goals appeared to have not changed while at college. However, suddenly being unable to compete due to her injury forced her to consider other options. While this could have potentially been a disastrous situation, May regards this event as a “blessing in disguise.” For, while the injury did prevent her from running competitively, it also freed up her time to explore other areas where she could be successful (such as becoming a peer athlete leader, and a member of the student advisory committee), while also further allowing her the opportunity to develop deeper social bonds. This appears to be what Luyckx and his colleagues (2009) identified as exploration of depth. However, Luyckx et al. (2009), found no relationship between exploration of depth and satisfaction, which may indicate the extent to which that exploration satisfied one’s goals and expectations. Since May found a way to use her knowledge of track productively and was able to use her nutritional skills in a way that was meaningful, her exploration in depth provided her with
experiences and opportunities that were closely related to her goals and aspirations. Other individuals may not be as fortunate.

Thus, we can see in both of these examples how foreclosure could be positive and affirming (in the case of May), and restrictive and potentially detrimental (in the case of April). Commitment with little exploration is more susceptible to challenges and variances that are unforeseeable and due to chance that achievement, which has explored and established more options.

The individuals who possessed achieved identity status also had incredibly diverse stories to tell. Jun, for example, appeared to have had many life experiences that he drew from to establish a secure sense of self. Leaving Massachusetts, dealing with roommate problems coordinating his schedule around another person’s life so that she may have access to his apartment, going homeless for a year, securing work, and dating, his identity status appeared to have forged his identity status. Yet he was able to survive each encounter and develop confidence in himself and establish direction. Indeed, of the six participants interviewed, he was the only one who stated with absolute certainty “I am an adult.”

Jan and Julio, by contrast, have had fewer difficulties in establishing their identities, but have also had unique experiences. Jan, for example, encountered and was enthralled by the numerous opportunities to meet and experience a culture that was very different from her small community. She enjoyed the opportunity to explore the arts, talk to very different people, and express behaviors (such as not eating meat and recycling) that would be less prevalent where she came from. Further, college provided her with a
wealth of career opportunities, from working at the tutoring center, the county, and the medical clinic. While she possessed less security in the direction of where she was going (as she had less certainty of what her next steps were going to be), she established a clear direction of what she hoped to finally achieve and had numerous opportunities to explore different beliefs and occupations.

Julio also had a unique experience by spending a year in college when he was 15, and being forced to return to high school to earn his diploma. Julio mentions that this early opportunity to enroll in college was eye-opening but made him feel estranged once he returned to high school. He stated that the group he was within in high school had little understanding of how college was structured, and he disliked how little autonomy was provided for him while at high school. He perceived college as an opportunity for liberation and independence, and compared the experience during his two years of high school as “jail time.” Like Jan, he had numerous opportunities to experience different career paths, such as his time working on the newspaper, and he experienced different philosophies from people while at college. Also, like Jan, he had less future career direction. However, as he was finishing his freshman year, he had numerous opportunities to establish what field to pursue and how he was going to achieve this.

This variety of accounts of individuals who possessed an achieved identity status is somewhat heartening, as it suggests that an individual does not need to overcome strenuous hardship in order to feel secure in their sense of self. What does appear congruent is the opportunity to explore a variety of encounters, groups, and career possibilities, while secure and resolute in the direction one wishes to achieve. Or, as
Luyckx and his colleagues (2009) might describe high exploration in breadth, high commitment making, and high identification with commitment.

4. Plans and goals. While there may have been some variability with other domains, the goals and purpose that drove college students were very similar. While the direction and magnitude varied, the two most commonly stated goals were to develop competence and to develop autonomy.

Developing competence appears at the forefront of most students’ purpose for attending college. Whether it was April striving to develop the skills to be a nurse, or Jan who had numerous occupational opportunities, or even Augusto who worked towards attending graduate school, there was a common understanding that the reason they were attending college was to acquire and develop knowledge and to foster abilities. Indeed this purpose conforms to the research which identified the development of skills and abilities as important factors in determining motivation and establishing whether or not a person is an adult (Eccles, 2009; Roisman, Masten, Coalsworth, & Tsellgen, 2004; Profeli & Skorikov, 2010; ) Perhaps this, in combination with the increased cost and debt needed to acquire a college degree (Danziger and Rouse, 2007; Project on Student Debt, 2012), may cause college students to perceive a sense of alarm about whether or not colleges are providing them with the knowledge and skills that are relevant to their future success (Mangan, 2012). This may also account for why there seems to be a general distaste for general education courses, which were perceived as “irrelevant.” While these results do not explicitly state that general education courses should be removed (particularly since this could indirectly contribute to foreclosed identity status and restrict
potential options), educators and staff need to account for change in emphasis, as well as understand the framework through which students identify college as contributing to future success.

Developing autonomy is a very important factor to developing adults. All of the participants interviewed expressed a recognition in taking responsibility for themselves and their actions, whether it was being responsible for the use of one’s time and resources (Jan), being in control of their own emotions (Jun), feeling confident in the face of outside scrutiny (Augusto), keeping focused and on task of their goals (April), establishing boundaries and independence from significant others (Julio), or simply preparing for the time when they will need to be financially independent (May), all six participants recognized that independence and accountability was an important goal to pursue. This is consistent with Arnett’s (1997; 2000; 2007a) research, which identified “taking responsibility for one’s own actions” as the primary indicator that an individual is an adult. In addition, most participants also identified moving away from home, and the challenges associated, as another important factors in fostering development and growth. Kins et al.’s (2009) and Kins and Beyers’s (2010) identified that individuals who left home reported more satisfaction with their living situation, a higher state of psychological well-being, and more development than those who predominately stayed at home.

5. Supports and catalysts. In regards to supports, the interviews also support Côté’s (2002) recognition of the importance of identity capital. With the exception of one individual (Jun), all participants identified social support as a relevant factor in
establishing a secure sense of self. For most of these five, these relationships were formed and provided good support during difficulties (such as Jan and Augusto), as well as recreation and meaningful relationships. The research also highlights the importance of establishing autonomy from their parents while also viewing them as a source of support. This finding supports Murphy et al.'s (2010) and Tognoli’s (2003) findings which suggest that family support benefits psychological well-being.

One interesting finding was how college provided students with unique opportunities that would not be available to them where they come from. Primarily, this manifested itself as either growing independent of their parents, or meaningful hands-on experience with experts in their field. As was mentioned here previously in the section on autonomy (Kins and Beyers, 2010), being away from parents relates to a greater sense of responsibility and requires greater independence. For some, this could be related to establishing more autonomy than they would have at home (such as April and May), while others embraced the opportunity to be by themselves and to experience things that they had not been aware of before college (Jan and Julio). While usually productive and conducive to growth, at other times these challenge were difficult such as when April had to correct a mistake at the college bursar’s office, or when Jun chose to help a friend live with him instead of leaving her on the street. Other experiences were related to developing competence and included unique employment opportunities (such as Jan and May’s unique opportunities) or meeting with people in the field that was relevant to their future career (such as April’s meeting with the nurses at the hospital and Julio’s conversation with his technology professor). In these ways, college can be conceived of
as a large opportunity to establish oneself, to experience new things that would not have been readily available elsewhere, and to communicate with experts in the field related to future goals.

6. Challenges and difficulties. Not everything about college is going to be easy, of course. However, not everything that is challenging is also necessary disruptive to a person’s well-being or growth. This makes it important to distinguish between challenges, which represent problems or circumstances that have a definite solution that can stimulate growth, and a difficulty, which is a problem or circumstance that has a solution that is difficult to discern or in which less growth can be derived.

As expected, academic challenges were identified as prevalent problems for college students. For the most part, however, this increase in difficulty was expected and desirable. Julio even mentioned that this increased difficulty was indicative of increased expectations, which was much different from his experiences in high school. While Augusto mentioned that application of concepts were difficult to him, what was more common and expressed between Jun and April, was the volume of academic assignments. This is an important point to be aware of, and could potentially be a source of future support for teaching college students time management and study skills. Related to this, college students also expressed feeling overwhelmed and stressed over the challenges they experienced. April mentioned anxiety toward their school experiences, which is drawn from the difficulties and challenges that were related to maintaining her goals in her program. This is similar to the findings of Galambos, Barker and Krahn (2006), who identified that individuals in emerging adulthood had higher prevalence of depression,
lower self-esteem, and increased anger. This may be exacerbated by the difficulties found in college. These responses may also be related to the coping strategies they chose to use, such as wishful thinking, distancing, emphasizing the positive, and self-blame (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Faculty need to address proper coping strategies and community support during difficult times as instrumental in increasing psychological well-being in students and reducing college attrition.

In addition to the challenges, however, there are two difficulties that have less opportunity for growth: financial and personal crises. Finances appear to be relevant to all participants. Even when the finances are taken care of through work (Jan and Jun), loans (Jan, April, and May), or with help from parents (Augusto and Julio), students were acutely aware of how much their education cost and worried how they would be able to afford it. However, when the availability of funds disappears, then the possibility of continuing the pursuit of education becomes an impossibility. Jun, for example, spent a year living in of his car in lieu of paying rent. Jan, too, expressed concerns about how she was going to afford graduate school, since there were no scholarships available and May and Julio expressed worry about affording things in the future. Unfortunately, financial concerns is not often identified as a factor in developmental psychology, although its effects on college student development could make the difference between continuing one’s college experience or ending it.

Personal crises also do not get identified enough as a factor affecting the quality of students’ lives. This may be due to the difficulty in predicting how and when they occur, as they are usually affected by hugely varying chance variables that are often
impossible to predict. For example, Jan could not have predicted that her roommate would move out and that her car would be stolen at roughly around the same time. Jun could not account for the limited availability of working opportunities, which was further exacerbated by previous medical condition that restricted the number of hours he could work. Likewise, May’s injury put an end to her plans as an athlete. While it was fortunate that she was able to find another way to use her knowledge and skills productively for her team, her injury could have been far more devastating if these opportunities were not made available. Thus, these factors, while impossible to predict prior to coming to college, are nonetheless significant obstacles that need to be addressed by students in order for them to continue in college. The one thing that appeared to make a difference in allowing for at least two of these three individuals to continue on was a strong foundation of social support at college (Jan and May), as well as personal grit and fortitude to stick out these difficult circumstances. This emphasizes the importance of group dynamics in providing aid for students when they need it, and recognizes the importance of educators and faculty to find ways to make this support available for our students.

7. Age as a factor of adulthood. The final domain, added after an initial analysis of the interviews, identified the relevance of age as a determining factor in identifying adult status. Curiously, Augusto, Julio and Jan all shared the same sentiment: that age was not a sufficient factor alone to determine adulthood, and that there is no moment “when you wake up and say ‘I’m an adult now.’” This suggests that the transition between adolescence and adulthood is a progression of events and actions that a person recognizes as being relevant toward achieving adult status. Arnett (1997) identified a
series of factors that college students frequently recognized as being related to adult status 1) “achieve financial independent from parents,” 2) “no longer living in parent’s household,” 3) “has decided one’s personal beliefs and values independently of parents and other influences,” 4) “established a relationship with parents as an equal adult,” and 4) “acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of your actions.” Molgat (2007) found three qualities identified as being indicative of adult status: 1) developing autonomy from one’s parents, 2) establishing financial independence, and 3) defining responsibilities. Both of these theorists described qualities that are not easily or quickly established. Therefore, rather than a specific moment where one person immediately identifies as being an adult, it is when the qualities and goals that a person has identified as being important coalesce that a person is able to identify as having achieved adult status.

Jun, however, provides another interesting wrinkle in the relevance of age. In his account, he expresses disappointment in having not achieved identity status when he was younger, and recalls that he felt upset in having not only being unable to achieve an adult identity status at 19, but also expressed that he had concerns over whether or not he would ever be able to achieve his criterion for adulthood. He also mentioned that since members in his household contributed to the overall finances, financial independence was not a qualifier for adulthood. Instead, he placed greater importance on managing what he called his “mental faculties” and interpersonal relationships on achieving an adult status. While only indicative of one individual’s experiences, this account does provide an excellent example of how different cultural groups could possess different norms for
adult status similar to the differences found between The United States and South Africa and India. (Low, Akande, & Hill, 2005; Seiter & Nelson, 2011) Thus, while age may not be sufficient to identify an individual as being an adult, age does appear to be an important benchmark that establishes how productive one has been towards achieving what they and their community as normative progress toward achieving an adult identity status.

B. General Discussion

In regards to both hypotheses, none of the tested independent variables—academic year, academic class enrolled in, gender, nor ethnicity—have a predictive effect on identity status. As the statistical analysis technique to reduces the prevalence of Type I error, and the study a relatively modest sample size ($N = 464$), these results indicate that identity status is a separate and distinct construct from academic year, academic classes, gender, and ethnicity in a public land-grant university for undergraduate students enrolled in liberal arts and science programs.

The qualitative interviews provided valuable information about what factors contribute toward identity status, relate to goals and plans, promote growth as resources and catalysts, challenges individuals, and the importance of age. In regards to identity status, the qualitative interviews showed that the EIPQ instrument is valid to assess identity status. In regards to goals and plans, two categories were consistent to all groups. The two goals and plans were devised to 1) develop competence, which emphasized occupational, relational and individual skills and proficiencies, and 2) developing autonomy, which included moving away from the demands of parents and family in order
to pursue individual goals and values, as well as taking accountability for one’s own actions.

Several factors were also noted to be particularly beneficial to future growth. These include 1) supportive relationships, including friends and family, as well as establishing and creating new relationships and support groups while at college, and 2) unique experiences at college were also identified as valuable catalysts in promoting competence and raising awareness, such as opportunities to explore different communities and cultures, opportunities to engage in a variety of different career opportunities, and opportunities to communicate with experts in potential fields that a participant was interested in. In addition to factors and experiences that foster growth, several factors were also identified as being challenging or potentially detrimental to growth. However, unlike previous categories, factors identified as challenges were not as prevalent within the entire group and appeared to more likely pertain to individual experiences. The challenges were 1) academic challenges, such as increased work load, increased expectations, and more application-based learning, and 2) managing emotions, particularly in the face of challenging scenarios and outcomes. In addition, two factors were identified as being potentially detrimental to future growth while at college, which were 1) financial difficulties, which were addressed by everyone to some degree, and 2) personal crises that were also relevant factors in their pursuit of their goals. Age was also identified as being an important but insufficient factor in establishing whether or not an individual was an adult, which recognized the importance of individual goals and personal expectations as being more conducive to identifying adult status that may
represent a relevant consideration as an important benchmark that identifies a biological marker.

Finally, the results were highly supportive of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors of college student development, as establishing identity status was observed for all six participants, three of the categories (developing competence, developing autonomy, and managing emotions) were all directly identified as important considerations in college student growth, while the other three (establishing meaningful relationships, developing purpose, developing integrity) were considered and talked about in the remaining categories. The only two factors that were not stated considerations in Chickering and Reisser’s theory were financial difficulties and personal crises, which could potentially represent difficulties that may be considered in the future.

How this study contributes to our theoretical understanding of college student development and emerging adulthood is threefold. First, the quantitative findings raises interesting implications that suggests that identity status is a highly internalized and individualized construct that represents a combination of individual goals, beliefs, and values drawn from a larger set of group beliefs and established through the numerous events, crises, and activities that they have experienced during their lives. As Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted, establishing a secure identity is an important vector in human development, as it provides a direction and magnitude toward future goals, and recognizes an individual’s success up until this point. Thus, establishing a clear sense of identity is both a goal to establish, as uncertainty and insecurity that needs to be resolved, as well as the means to achieve future needs, goals, and ambitions.
Second, the qualitative analysis also provides context for Arnett’s (2000) theory of emerging adulthood and provides evidence of how emerging adulthood manifests in college, specific supports and catalysts that have been identified as pertinent to promoting success, and challenges and difficulties that occur. Particularly noteworthy to theoretical understanding is the acknowledgement that the opportunities available at college can potentially catalyze college student development, by providing specifically how college provides unique opportunities to develop autonomy, forge meaningful relationships, and experience unique occupational opportunities and have conversations with meaningful experts in their fields of interests. This adds to and clarifies Kins and Beyers’s (2010) results, which found that individuals who have moved away from their parents possessed more growth toward adulthood relative to emerging adults who have stayed at home.

Finally, the results of the qualitative analysis also acknowledge unique difficulties that are not usually mentioned in research that addresses college student development. Specifically, financial difficulties provide an important context in how college students observe and understand their educational experience. The second set of difficulties, personal crises, acknowledge that college student development does not occur in a vacuum and can be negatively affected by a variety of circumstances outside of a college student’s control. Each of these experiences, however, has an effect on college students and their future success while at school. While impossible to predict prior to attending college, recognizing and acknowledging that these problems occur and has an affect is curiously absent in any discussion of college student development.
C. Limitations

This study had several limitations. While the quantitative analysis did address how college student identity status differs over the four years at college, the heterogeneity of the groups enrolled in hard science and non-hard science courses may confound the results. In addition, non-independence may also be a concern, as individuals enrolled in a hard science major (such as nursing and nutrition) may be enrolled in the social science and performing arts courses. In order to address this, I should have compared the differences between academic major as a better indicator of the type of program enrolled in. However, this result may not be a relevant issue, as identity status was not associated with gender, academic year, or ethnicity. In all likelihood, the effect of academic program enrolled in may share similar results as to the one identified in academic program enrolled in, however, research should corroborate this in order to confirm this assertion.

In regards to the qualitative analysis, the results should be interpreted with caution as it is restricted in terms of sample size. While I attempted to keep the number of individuals in each identity status balanced, the unfortunate result was that some identity status was unbalanced (such as the one individual with a moratorium status). I was also restricted in terms of the number of subjects available of the group that I identified, with the exception of the foreclosure status. This limitation calls to question the reliability of some of these findings. For example, we do not know whether or not the individual that possessed a moratorium identity status was representative of other individuals that identity status. Likewise, Hill et al. (1997) recommend analyzing roughly between 9 to 12 subjects using Consensual Qualitative Research. This provides an opportunity for during
the analysis of the transcripts to set aside two or three of the transcripts from the consensual process and adding their results later to the overall analysis in order determine whether or not their contribution raises any new information, or if all the themes have been accounted for and consistency has been reached. As a removal of two transcripts would have reduced the number of transcripts by a third, this step could not be taken and the determination as to whether additional themes could potentially exist for categories that were established could not be reached. Future research would analyze and assess a greater number of people – perhaps six to nine within each identity status that we wish to assess – in order to determine the validity of the themes that is generated in this research.

In addition to the difficulties due to number size, greater emphasis on reliability could also have been used. As was mentioned previously, the initial percent agreement for the analysis was low (below 40% between all researchers). While this percent agreement was later increased through the process of conversation in order to reach consensus, several methods could be used to help increase this percent agreement. First of all, the researchers could have analyzed one of the interviews together so as to develop a group understanding of how the codes should be used in each transcript. In addition, a better defined coding scheme could have been used which recognized the model devised by Chickering and Reisser (1993), so that all the researchers would be on the same page in terms of analysis and interpretation. In addition to better preparing the research assistants, greater reliability could have been established through the consensual process. Hill et al. (2005) stated that, after the results are processed by the auditors, the researchers would bring together the results of the audit in order to assess their changes and discuss
the themes that were generated. Unfortunately, both research assistants were unavailable for this step, so I had to conduct the final analysis without their feedback. However, as the results were consistent with the consensus that was reached collectively, this limitation was not viewed as especially detrimental to the reliability of the final analysis.

D. Suggestions and Future Directions

These findings have possible implications in policy and program design. Specifically, in order for faculty curriculum and student support services to be effective in promoting and fostering growth, they must be aware of how students develop and grow while at college in order to provide them with valuable experiences that will contribute to their long term success. In addition, the challenges and difficulties, as well as the disinterest in courses and programs that are deemed “not relevant,” are major obstacles that need to be addressed. While not necessarily suggesting that general education courses should not be offered, there may be ways of increasing relevancy and drawing out student interest. For example, fostering and developing a pool of programs available to specific majors could meet both the general education requirements while also providing pertinent and relevant information toward college student’s future goals. In addition, one of the difficulties stated of the general education courses identified class size as a significant contributor to disinterest. By increasing the number of courses available and reducing the overall class size, college students could potentially feel more connected to the instructors of the course and better benefit from the material being taught. Finally, recognizing the academic and interpersonal developmental challenges that occur during college, as well as the financial challenges and personal crises that
occur while at college could focus programs towards address these needs, and direct student support services toward tailoring programs to better address these challenges.

The result of this analysis raises interesting new possibilities for future research. For example, while we are beginning to understand how students experience and perceive college, we could still further expand our understanding to include a broader range of different demographics. As was identified in the literature, ethnic identity is sorely lacking in this research. In addition, with the exception of the one study conducted by Luyckx and colleagues (2010), there has been very little research that has addressed how individuals who do not attend college develop during this time period. What are the experiences of individuals who have entered the work force during emerging adulthood? How does identity status manifests itself in other organizations, such as the military? The recognition of identity status as its own construct can also provide us with further insight in how identity status can affect other variables, such as study skills, academic performance, coping mechanisms, and other behaviors and psychological statuses.

Another potential area of interest lies in other questions of how college students change while at college. While the emphasis of this research focused primarily on relationships and occupational goals, one other area that could be potentially enlightening is addressing how values and personal beliefs has been affected by their experiences at college. Finally, a broader range of qualitative measures could have been used, such as in-depth ethnographic interviews (Seidman, 2006) or through journal analysis over a longer period of time similar to the methods Chickering (1969) used.
E. Final Thoughts

In conclusion, while the debates may continue as to whether or not emerging adulthood is a beneficial period for individuals between the ages of 18-24, the challenges that occur during this period are important factors that many individuals face as they attempt to take on an adult role. Developing competence, establishing autonomous towards interdependence, managing emotions, developing meaningful relationships are all factors that need to be addressed as an individual takes more responsibility in their lives. College educators and faculty needs to be sure to provide students with programs and services that are focused on these skills. While the qualitative interviews suggest that colleges have been highly supportive and beneficial towards developing college students to address these challenges, we must always be aware of the ways in which we are not contributing to their growth, and find ways of making these experiences meaningful toward their future development.
APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO USE EIPQ INSTRUMENT

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your request for the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). We want the EIPQ to be used as broadly as possible, and we want to be able to know as much as possible about the instrument by coordinating feedback from those who are using it. Thus, there needs to be some standardization across investigators. We have proposed some guidelines for use of the EIPQ, which we ask colleagues to follow.

1. You will not modify the EIPQ without written approval from the scale developers.
2. You will not distribute copies of the measure to others without written approval from the scale developers. We will be glad to grant requests made directly by them.
3. You may use the measure for one study or two years from the date that it is received by you. Renewed authorization for use may be obtained by written request to the scale developers. We will send you any revisions or updates.
4. You agree to report the results of your use of the EIPQ to the scale developers after each study or two years of use, whichever is sooner.
5. In some cases, we would like to pool raw data to obtain a larger or more diverse sample. We hope that in such cases you will share your EIPQ data with us.

In recognition of an agreement with the above conditions, we request that you sign the bottom of this form. Please make a copy for your records and send the original back to me. Thank you for your cooperation. As we continue to gather information on the EIPQ we shall, of course, share it with you.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Busch-Rossnagel
Professor of Psychology

Name (printed or typed): __________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature: __________________________

Organization: __________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________

E-Mail Address: __________________________
APPENDIX B: THE EGO IDENTITY PROCESS QUESTIONNAIRE (EIPQ)

The EIPQ

Instructions

Listed below are a number of statements describing college student behavior. Please indicate how you feel about each statement.

For example:

xx) Politics are very important in my life.

Write a 1 if you strongly disagree.
Write a 2 if you disagree.
Write a 3 if you slightly disagree.
Write a 4 if you slightly agree.
Write a 5 if you agree.
Write a 6 if you strongly agree.

__________________________  ____________________________
Academic Year                  Age
(Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior)

__________________________  ____________________________
Gender                      Ethnicity

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1) I have definitely decided on the occupation that I want to pursue.
2) I don’t expect to change my political principles and ideals.
3) I have considered adopting different kinds of religious belief.
4) There has never been a need to question my values.
5) I am very confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.
6) My ideas about men’s and women’s roles have never changed as I became older.
7) I will always vote for the same political party.
8) I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.
9) I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviors involved in dating relationships.
10) I have considered different political views thoughtfully.
11) I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.
12) My values are likely to change in the future.
13) When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.
14) I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.
15) I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.
16) Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the near future.
17) I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.
18) I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.
19) I have undergone several experiences that made me change my view on men’s and women’s roles.

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<td>I have had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like my friends to have.</td>
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<td>I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.</td>
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<td>I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.</td>
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<td>I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.</td>
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<td>The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.</td>
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<td>My beliefs about dating are firmly held.</td>
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APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS ASKED DURING QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

1) Tell me a little about yourself before you came to college:
   o What moments, experiences or conversations were really important to you growing up?
   o How would you describe your relationships with your friends? Family? Significant others?

2) What were your expectations of college before you got here?
   o How did college meet these expectations?
   o What did you not expect?

3) Where would you place yourself in your journey towards adulthood?
   o What makes you feel that way?

4) When is a person an adult?
   o What actions, attitudes, or beliefs indicate that a person is an adult?
   o How will they know?

5) How do you feel college has effected your transition to adulthood?
   o What makes you feel this way?
   o If negative – what was positive? If positive, what was negative?

6) How had college affected your social life?
   o If negative – what was positive? If positive, what was negative?
   o How about how college has affected dating and romantic relationships?

7) How has college prepared you for your future career?
   o If negative – what was positive? If positive, what was negative?
   o What could they do better?
   o What programs or events do you think should be implemented?

8) What are your expectations of what will happen after college?
   o What are your plans?
   o How prepared do you feel?
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Interview # 3
Class Drawn From: Social Science Class
Grade: Junior
Ethnicity: White
ID Status: Achievement

I: Thank you again for choosing to participate in this study. As you are already aware, the purpose of this study is to address how college student's identity development effects their development and growth during their time at college. This time, however, I would like to know a bit more detail on your specific views and experiences. What will follow is a series of questions that will ask you a little background information about yourself before enrolling college, your perceptions of adulthood, how well you perceive college is helping you prepare for a career and future success, and your next steps and future directions. I should point out that there is no right or wrong answers to these questions: I want to hear about your experiences and your beliefs.

I will be tape recording this interview so that I may write it down for future reference. You may choose not to answer a question at any time at no risk to you. You may also choose to leave the interview at any time; however should you choose to do so you will no longer be eligible for compensation. If you need clarification or wish to ask me a question, please feel free to do so. If you wish to contact me, my contact information is on the informed consent form you have already filled out. I would be more than happy to provide you with a copy if you choose.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

P: Nope.

I: Then if there are no objections, I will begin.

P: Alright. No objections from me! (P: laughs)

I: So, uh, tell me a little about yourself before you came to college: What moments, experiences or conversations were really important to you growing up?

P: Um … something that was really important to me in high school I was involved in, um, student council, and student leadership. A lot of volunteer work, (I: mhm) and things like that. Um … I … really liked going to church? (P: laughs) I don’t know. Is there…? What moments or experiences? (I: mhm) Um, those were probably two of the most important one. I mean, I had, as far as college is
concerned my, um, teachers as I was growing up were always very encouraging of me to go to college and none of my parents went or anything like that so I had no idea what it meant, but I knew that I would go, because all of them told me I would. (P: laugh) So!

I: Sure. Um, do you mind giving me a little more detail on why those… you know, student council and church experiences were important to you?

P: Um, so student council was important to me because I felt like it was helping me learn skills that I would be able to use for the rest of my life and I also just really enjoyed it? Um, I really enjoyed the services experiences that I got through student council. (I: mhm) I have always just been really service-oriented. (sounds of I checking recorder) Um, and … church was important to me because I mean I grew up as a member of my church and it, um, definitely shaped my morals and kind of my standards for myself? (I: mhm) I was able to like perceive more potential for me.

I: Sure, um. So, how would you describe your relationships with your friends? Family? And significant others?

P: Right now, or before?

I: Before.

P: Before? Um … my relationship with my family … was good. My parents got divorced my senior year of high school, so that was … like, that definitely put a strain on it. Um, as far as, like, my relationship with my parents. Because I couldn’t really take sides, but I wanted to take a side, (I: right) but I didn’t know which side to take! (P: laughs) Um, and then, with my friends, I had really good friends. I had a few falling, like, there was, my junior year I um, lost a lot of my really good friends, just for that year and then they came back my senior and just high school drama. (I: Oh, I see) And, um, I dated a guy for three years while I was in high school. (I: mhm) He was in college, (I: mhm) and that was a solid relationship. He actually, like, looking back, he helped me so much through everything that was going on with my parents and the divorce and everything like that. Um, and it was a really solid, like, friendship and relationship. That I … got out of when I came to college. (P: laugh) So, haha there ha was no overlap between high school to college. But, (I: mhm) my relationships were, um, I mean overall they were pretty good. I was happy most of the time…

I: Sure. Okay, I just wanted to get a little background information. (P: okay) So, what were your expectations of college before you got here?
P: Ho my. Um, so all I knew about college before I came was that it was a place where you went if teachers told you were smart in high school? And that um it was expensive, and that I got to choose my own schedule and that was really all I knew. I had no idea, um, how the classes were set up or how anything would (P: laugh) happen. I was just, uh, completely lost and I feel like I got to college and was totally overwhelmed with everything, (I: mhm) I had no idea what I was doing. Um, so I I guess my expectations was just being able to choose whichever classes I wanted and finding things that I enjoyed doing.

I: So, how did college meet these expectations?

P: I mean I have gotten to choose a lot of classes and I was able to choose a major that I actually really enjoy? So picking class for my major and the minor have been classes that I like. (I: mhm) For the most part, I mean (P: chuckles) there’s always those classes that I hate. But, uh … and, eh, since I didn’t have very many other expectations, I can’t say (P: chuckle) um … any of those … I mean, in that, in my expectations. For sure, it was… overwhelming.

I: Overwhelm- what do you mean overwhelming?

P: Um, well, I got here and I had no idea how many classes were available. I didn’t know I didn’t realize how large [the college] was. (I: mhm) Um, I grew up in a small town. So my high school, my graduating class was, like, 150 students. (I: mhm) And my first … my first, like, college class I ever actually sat in and took had 900 students in it. So it was the size of my high school. (P: laughs) (I: mhm) And I was in this class and I was completely just blown away. I was just “oh no. (I: mhm) How am I ever going to get to know anyone?” And, I mean, my teachers in high school knew me. And, so, it was just so many people and so much that I didn’t know what to do or how to sign up for classes or who to talk to to sign up for classes (I: mhm), or anything like that. So

I: Um, how did you… how did you cope with that, you know, sudden change of like 150 to 900?

P: (P: laughs) It was, um … I … kind of, I mean, it was like I didn’t have a choice. I just had to deal with it. I was on scholarship, I still am on scholarship, and I knew if I didn’t do well that I would lose the scholarship and not be able to continue going to college. (I: mhm) Um, and I wanted to finish. I am very goal-oriented and I decided I would come and graduate from college so that was what I had to do. At so I just, um, I mean that there were a lot of nights I would just sit up crying in my bedroom (P: laugh) just “I don’t know what to do! Or who to talk to!” Um, but I did make friends fairly quickly and they were able to help me out, um, and then I also had a class through the honors college, I think Paladin? And that was a lot about college resources so I think that helped me out.
I: Okay. Um, what did you not expect coming into college?

P: Um… okay. (P: laugh) I did not expect there to be so many students. And I didn’t expect the professors to be so, well, in general. So my freshman year especially, (I: mhm) cause I was taking all gen eds. (I: mhm) So the professors were very separate. Um, as is in high school all my teachers knew me, knew who I was. Like, they knew my brother they knew my whole family. (I: right) Um, and then I got to college and they didn’t really care to get to know me because they just, well, you’re one of, so many students.

I: 852…

P: Yeah, exactly! (P: laugh) So that was surprising to me. Um, I wasn’t expecting just to be lost in the crowd. I think, in my high school I was kind of a … big fish in a little pond? Like, I mean I graduated 4.0, like, all those things and then I got to college and realized how many more people that are smarter and better at everything than I am! (P: laugh) (I: right) So that was shocking. Which I’ve adjusted now, but, that I wasn’t expecting that. (I: mhm) To just be lost in the crowd and I totally was. (I: mm, mm)

I: So, um, where would you place yourself in your journey towards adulthood?

P: Like on a continuum, or? (P: laugh)

I: Like on a continuum.

P: Um, I would like to think I’m more than half, I mean, I’m almost an adult. I pay my own taxes. I … I have three jobs … plus I’m a student. So … um, my parents are not on my lease. I own a car, I make all the payments. Like, my parents don’t pay for anything for me. (I: mhm) Um … I cook. I clean. Like, I feel like I’m an adult I just don’t have the … I’m still a student too. So, I don’t know. I mean I would like to say as soon as graduate I’d be a real adult. The real job.

I: So, what is it that, you know, I mean, aside from being a student, (P: mhm) that is preventing you from saying definitively “I am an adult?”

P: Um, I think it’s my lack of responsibility right now. I’m completely, like, I am self-sufficient, but I only have myself to care for. So, I … you know, I don’t have to worry about kids, or someone else in my life. I’m not in a relationship. Um, so I think I’m very … egotistical right now (P: laughs) in my life. Which, makes sense, because I was nnn, I mean, who else would I care for right now?

I: What do you mean “egotistical?”
P: Just every decision I make is based on what I want to do, (P: oh, okay) what would be best for me (P: okay) what would help me instead of, you know, basing it more on other people. So, and I don’t think that, like, is necessarily bad for where I am right now. I don’t know who else I’d be basing my decisions off of. (I: mhm) But, um, but I feel like I don’t have that adult responsibility of, you know, having that 9 to 5 job … Every, you know, five days a week. Like, (I: mhm) having to worry about other people. And I’m just myself right now.

I: Aha, ah… that pretty much answers the second question I had. (P: Oh, great! Awesome! laughs) “What makes you feel that way?” (P: oh) If there was anything else you wanted to add…

P: Mmm… no, I can’t think of anything else.

I: Okay, so, when is a person an adult?

P: I think a person is an adult when they have. Oh … that’s such a sketchy definition. Um, I mean, the definition I’ve been going off of was “when somebody has other people to take care of and they are able to separate what’s good for them to what’s best for everyone.” (I: mhm) Um, but I also think there are adults that, you know, maybe never get married or have kids or have any other dependents and they are just … basing decisions off of themselves the whole time. Um … so being an adult, I don’t know. I guess it’s someone who chooses to be responsible, (I: mhm) before choosing to do things that they want to do. (I: mhm)

I: So, to clarify, what actions, attitudes, or beliefs indicate that a person is an adult?

P: If a person can choose to … make the responsible choice based solely on the fact that it is the more responsible choice (I: mhm) when face with an opportunity (P: laugh) that is not as responsible.

I: Well, like what?

P: So … a way I am not an adult right now. With my first paycheck for this year I bought a Disneyland annual pass instead of, like, putting it towards savings. (I: mhm) Or, like, you know, doing things that I probably should have done with it. Um, so, I mean, in that way… and it’s worked out fine, so I guess it’s like not super irresponsible, but I probably should have saved for that? And thought about it. And then bought it instead of just like deciding that I was just going to by this $400 annual pass to Disneyland. (I: mhm) Um, does that answer the question? Is that unclear?
I: Um … a little more clarification couldn’t hurt.

P: Okay, so, yeah just being able to when faced with a decision making the responsible decision. Uh, and plan ahead for things (I: mhm) rather than just making the fun decision at the time (I: yeah) without thinking ahead.

I: That’s clear. So, wow will a person know that they have become adult? You are talking about responsibilities, but that still seems like a little bit of a vague notion.

P: Yeah it is still a bit vague, I suppose. Um, how will they know? When they are an adult. (I: yeah) They will. Oh, I don’t know. When they can look back and realize the patterns that they’ve made (bells ring in background), er, decisions the patterns in the decisions that they have made have been responsible.

I: So this is a gradual process as opposed to

P: I think so, yeah. (I: okay) I don’t think that there’s one day where you will wake up and “today I’m an adult! (P: laughs) I will make all the right decisions!” (I: mhm) I think it’s definitely gradual.

I: And you would say that, for right now, you are not quite there yet.

P: No, not yet. (I: okay) (P: laughs)

I: So how do you feel college has affected your transition to adulthood?

P: Um, I think a lot of. So I don’t think I am, you know, ready to be an adult yet. But, um, it definitely put a lot of responsibility on me right away. Um, I think if I had not gone to college I wouldn’t have moved out of my parent’s house. So I wouldn’t be paying my rent, (I: mhm) so that whole like decision-making process of like “I have a paycheck, I could spend it or I could save it and pay rent” (I: mhm) and not and have somewhere to stay (P: laugh) for the next month. Um, and then also it has made me have to budget my time more (I: mhm) as far as when I have to study, um, if I wasn’t in college, I probably would still have a job but I probably wouldn’t have had the jobs that I have right now. There wouldn’t be as much stress in my jobs right now. (I: mhm) Um, so I feel like college has kind of just threw me in this world and be like “well you’ll learn” (P: laugh) instead of, like, had I not come I would have still be living at home and maybe learn more slowly. So it sped up my process, (I: right) becoming an adult.

I: So, um, what makes you feel this way? I’ll just go ahead and ask.

P: Um … well, just because I think … if I still lived at home a lot of my responsibilities wouldn’t be there, so I wouldn’t have to have those hard decisions
to make. You know, I wouldn’t have to be paying rent. (I: mhm) So, I would never have to decide, like, am I going to pay rent or am I going to go … to a movie tonight. (I: mhm) That sort of thing. (I: right)

I: So, it sounds like, for the most part, uh, college has been a very positive experience for you. Has there been any negative experiences towards your transition toward adulthood?

P: Oh my, yes. (P: laughs) So college, I like to look at things positively, but um. My first semester was awful. And looking back at that it’s a miracle like I didn’t leave. Um, my I just had a really bad roommate experience, uh, where she moved out a month early and I didn’t have the money to pay rent for both of us, so … I managed to find somebody else to fill the spot. But my car was stolen, two weeks after I paid cash the for it, and so I was without a car my first semester and I was overwhelmed with all the people of I didn’t know (I: mhm) and I had broken up with my long-term boyfriend. He and I dated for three years and I broke up that semester and then I rebounded and I ended up breaking up with another guy that same semester! (P: laugh) So it was just, so much was going on and I was … I got the first B that I had ever gotten my whole life. I got two Bs that semester, um, in my gen eds, because I just wasn’t aware of what would go on. (P: laugh) So, yeah, that first semester was rough, definitely. And since then gen eds. have been the bane of my existence. (P: laugh) So, I… I hate them so much! But I think, overall I had a pretty positive experience. I can, I mean, I can definitely look back and think fondly.

I: Well, uh… two questions come to mind. First off, how did you end up coping with all of that because it sounds like it was a really overwhelming experience? So what did you do that was helpful?

P: Um … so, during that time I … was able to reach out and a lot of the friends I made and kept up in through my church so it was kind of like two-fold I was able to reach out, um, through my faith and like, pray a lot. There was a lot of praying (I: mhm) and also make friends through um, continuing my church attendance and being able to meet people and I relied on those people a lot. (I: mhm) Um, just as far as like support and, you know, days I wouldn’t want to cook they would come over and (P: laugh) help me out. (I: mhm) So it was, it was good. It was definitely a I definitely wouldn’t have been able to do it by myself, but definitely through faith and through the people I was surrounded (I: mhm) with I was able to came through. I struck strong, so (P & I: laughs).

I: And then you were mentioning about your gen eds that they have been very difficult (P: yes), so what has been difficult about them?
P: Um, it’s difficult for me because I don’t see their practical application in my life. (I: mhm) I mean, I take classes and some of them have been interesting! And that’s been good. One of them actually lead me to my minor, so

I: What was that class?

P: That was … the [specified humanities course]. (I: okay) And something… something something. [specified humanities course]? (I: mhm) Um, that one made me decide I wanted to be an [selected] minor. But, my gen-ends, yeah. It’s just mostly I can’t see a practical application in my life so I have a really hard time, umm committing to studying for them. And also, because I don’t feel that commitment towards them and they are such big classes, a lot of times attendance isn’t mandatory or the projects are so vague, or like group projects. I hate group projects. And so just like a combination of everything I hate. (P: laughs) I don’t (I: okay) I don’t appreciate the material, I don’t how it’s going to apply. (I: mm) I don’t have to attend, so I don’t. Um, which in most of gen ed’s I’ve got A’s in, but a lot of them I’ve gotten B’s in because I just I can’t find my motivation to see how it is going to apply in my life. (I: gotcha) So

I: Um … how had college affected your social life?

P: College has helped my social life greatly! (P: laughs) Um, and I think it’s because in my high school we all grew up together. Like, it was a small town. Um, so cliques were pretty well established in high school. (I: mhm) You know, if you weren’t in one group, then you weren’t in that group and like you weren’t going get in that one group no matter what. Um, so then coming to college there was so many more people that I was able to socialize with. And then I realized I could be friends with a lot of different kinds of people? And I didn’t necessarily need to find a clique to get into or to like make friends with. Um, so that helped. And then just, yeah, just the exposure to so many different kinds of people. So many( emphasized) people. I was able to decide what I valued in a friend and really find that in a lot of people. (I: mhm) In college.

I: So, where there any negative interactions with social inter— in soc, you know your, with your social life?

P: Um, well the one. I mean, I’ve had some negative roommate experiences. (P: laughs) Which I’ve I have been told everyone has those. But yeah, there have been two or three of my roommates that I have just not gotten along with. And that’s been negative. As far as socially. And then also, I’ve had, like, three break-ups since I’ve been at college from people that I’ve met here. Which, I’d like to think that that is just we’re getting to know who we are, (I: mhm) so no relationships is going to be stable, (I: right) but I mean they were negative social interactions because they were sad.
I: Well, I was going to ask you—that goes with my next question, how does college have affected dating and romantic relationships?

P: Um, so in high school I dated one boy. For three years and that was it. I mean, I would hang out with a lot of people and go to dances with guys, and things like that. But I was never … like, I was steady with one guy through all of high school and then I came to college and since then I’ve able to meet and go on dates with a lot of different people. (I: mhm) So it definitely increased my dating life. But I also, I mean, a lot of that was getting out of that long-term relationship. (P: laughs) (I: right) So that just opened me(emphasized) up a whole … you know new level of dating and relationships. (I: mhm)

I: And you’ve had, like you said so far, three other relationships…

P: Yes. So I’ve had three other, like, solid steady, facebook-official, whatever relationships since being in college and then also I’ve gone on dates in-between those relationships with a lot of different people, so. It’s been fun. (P: laughs)

I: Yeah, it sounds like you’ve been meeting a lot of interesting people.

P: I have, I have, definitely. And it’s fascinating because I look back at the people I went to high school with and like we were all the same type of person. (P & I: laugh) Like all of us, mountain-town people, and there are so many different kinds of people in the world. (I: mm) So, it’s interesting how homogenous my home town now looks, (I: oh, yeah) compared to college. Yeah, and I mean I associate myself with them still, it’s not like I’m not one of them. But, um, the people that have stayed in my hometown and never left? I just am like “you are the same type of person and your kids are going to be the same type of people.” (P: laughs)

I: So, what type how would you describe the two different cultures?

P: Um, so my hometown is like, small, conservative … like … I don’t want to say hick at all, but like cowboy, kind of. (I: mhm) Um, so it’s like all about football and guns. And … trucks. And I came here and like, there are city people here who are into like music and art, and not I mean, I was like in drama and stuff in high school, so it was not like it didn’t exist? But that was never the … like mass culture was like, “let’s go watch a play!” there was never anything like that. And “let’s go to a museum!” (I: mhm) That would never happen in my hometown. Um, but here I have met people, you know, are just into tons of different things. Like, some people like hiking, swimming, photography. And like all sorts of different things, it’s not just football and guns. Which
I: So, how would you say, I mean, because you have the culture over there and the culture over here, and you have you …

P: In the middle?

I: Yeah, in the middle, so … describe that for me, a little bit.

P: Um, I think that actually I have been more influenced since I’ve been here. Um, I would never really fit in. I’m not athletic at all, so the culture for my home was never super, um … me I guess? And I, I still appreciate that culture. I don’t, I don’t hate the people there. I don’t hate that I grew up there. (I: mhm) Um, I wouldn’t necessarily want to live there again, though. I think it is very close-minded or it has a tendency to lead to close-mindedness. (I: mhm) Um, because it is just such an isolated view of the world, very conservative and I mean very … just, yeah, it’s just old-school. Old fashioned. Um, and now I feel I’m more … like if I were to move back home they would look at me like a liberal which I’m not (P: laugh) a liberal at all! (I: mhm) But compared to how I grew up I have definitely changed. You know, like recycling. (P: laugh) I like recycling now. (I: mhm) And I don’t eat a lot of meat. And they would be like, “what, no hunting? What are you doing with your life?” (I: mhm) So, and I mean of course I am like generalizing them. (I: sure, sure) But, I think, yeah, overall I have become much more liberal than my hometown is. And I think college and I think of it positively, I think it’s a good thing that I’ve been exposed to a lot of world views. Because I’ve seen world views that I’ve rejected and I’m like “well, that’s interesting that you think that but I’m not going to, you know, I guess follow that belief.” Um, But even being exposed to that (I: mhm) helps structure my mind I think. Whereas, staying in my hometown I don’t think your mind would ever be as questioned or struct-as it is when you leave.

I: So um… two thoughts again occur to me again. (P: laugh, okay) First one is, um, how do you feel like where you are now in relation to that culture? I mean is it like in addition to, or is it like “some parts I’m here and some parts I’m there,” or…?

P: I definitely feel like there are parts of me that are still very much hometown. Um, but a lot of parts of me are definitely more, like, I don’t … I don’t know. I don’t want to say city, because a lot of people laugh when you call [the city] a city because it’s not that big. But (P: laughs) to me, it’s big. So, um, but there are definitely parts of me that are still very much associated with my hometown. I’m still like a small town girl, I guess. But (I: mhm) … city views, (I: mhm) I suppose. I don’t know I feel like, yeah, a part of me has stuck with how I grew up and part of me has been changed by moving out and seeing new things. (I: mhm)
I: And, um, what were some of the… cultures and the experiences that were, uh …
most … I want to say, it allowed you to grow more in experience and in more things than you thought that the things that would have been the most evasive. How’s

P: So, what…

I: Does that make sense?

P: Kind of, so what kind of things here that … caused me growth?

I: Yeah, that caused you to grow and develop (P: okay) and the ones that were like “whoa, okay, I don’t (P: Whoa, what’s with this view?, laugh) Yeah

P: Okay, um, so, I … I think a lot of my growth has just come from meeting different kinds of people. Um, because everyone in _______(city removed) was Christian and white. Pretty much. So like, coming here and meeting people of different races with different cultures. Um, and I think a lot of that was one of one interaction with different kinds of people. And I wasn’t racist. I didn’t have bad feelings towards anyone (I: mhm) um, but it was interesting to like get to know people from these other backgrounds. Um, and people that who weren’t Christian. Who had, you know, different beliefs and different religious beliefs. And I also… went to go to [a local cultural event], which was mostly just a food thing, (I: right) but some of the performances at [a local cultural event] and like cultural dances and thing like that. Um, a lot of my classes also has introduced different things. I took a class, I don’t remember what it is called even, but, um, it was an honor’s course. And it was expose, like talking about [the city] and all these different areas of [the city] like, you know, water harvesting and how we … like, have like [the city], um, is trying to become more like sustainable and just all these different like city planning and all these weird [city] things. And I and it actually opened my eyes to a lot of, different um, cultures and things like that in [the city]. That I was then able to like read more about through classes or sometimes just on my own. I would just just google stuff and look it up. (I: mm) Um, and I think that within I mean there was never really an event where I freaked out and was like “I can’t do this!” Um, although sometimes the religious people on the mall can be really rude. (I: mhm) And then (P: laughs) that’s kind of one of those things where I’m like “please stop.” (I: mhm) But, I mean just reading through it, there has never been really a time where I’ve been like “Ah… I need to reject this. Like burn it! Get it away from me.” Or anything (I: right, right right) Just, as I’ve thought about it, and thought about if it fits into what I believe or what I want to become. And if it hasn’t been a good fit I would just… (I: okay, that’s fair) let it go. I guess.

I: I just wanted to… explore that a little more.
P: No, yeah! Definitely!

I: So what are your expectations of what will happen after college?

P: I’m terrified of after college. (P: laugh) I really don’t want to go to grad school. Um, I am not at all interested in research, I’m sorry. Um, but I’m majoring in— (P: laugh)

I: Don’t apologize to me!

P: (P: laugh) No, I’m Not interested in research at all, (bells ring in the background) and I feel like with my, um, my psychology major. And a lot I mean, grad school is going to be pretty much research, I think. For me and I looked into other certificate programs and things like that, so I know I have options, um, but I think that a lot of it will just depend on where I am over the summer. Because now … this is my junior year so I will be a senior next year. (I: mhm) Um, I think … I’ll be … okay? In whatever I do? Like I have faith that I’m not going to graduate and become a bum or anything like that. Um, because I have I’ve had work experience and I will have a degree, and um, I have experience, you know, paying rent regularly and all these things. So I don’t think I’m going to, you know, anything terrible is going to happen to me afterward, but it will be interesting to see how things go when I’m done with classes and at when I need to get that full time job (I: mhm) and I have no idea what I am going to do. (I: mhm) So (P: laugh)

I: Well, what sort of work experiences have you had?

P: Um, so, for the last … two-three years? (I: mhm) Yeah, three years. I have been working at the [tutoring] center on campus, which is a tutoring center. Um and I’m a receptionist, so that’s like … fine(emphasized) (P: laugh). Like, it’s developed my work in like filing and like Excel spreadsheets, things like that. (I: mhm) Um, but I mean it’s not super … exciting at all. Um, and then also I had worked for [the county] (I: mhm) and I teach after-school science lessons. (I: hmm) Like I do a program then I have also done like birthday parties with them and stuff like that. (I: mhm) Um, to elementary school kids. And so that’s(emphasized) more relevant because I’m about to work with kids. So, that’s, has more relevance in my life than being a receptionist. And then for the last year or two years I worked at the center of [specified medical clinic]. (I: mhm) Um, and I am just a student worker there so I just proof-read their courses and just like check up on the website and make sure that everything is working out all right and everything like that. Um, so that’s has helped me gain more office skills and work with online platforms. And then, also introduce me, (I: mhm) and also introduced me to, um, the world of [medical] (I: mm) research. (I: mhm) And things like that.
I: Sure. So you would say you’ve had a lot of office work in a lot of different positions and things like that?

P: Yeah, definitely had a lot of office work. (P & I: laughs) And it’s, I mean. I don’t I don’t feel like I’m too good to be a receptionist or a secretary for the rest of my life, I don’t know if that would make me happy for the rest of my life, but I have experience so! (P: laughs) (I: right)

I: So, would you say that you have a direction of where it is you want to go?

P: Um, it changes. All the time. (P: laugh) But, for the past semester or so I decided I would like to be a child life specialist. Um, which they have a certificate program that I would have to go through at [another college] and um then like the giant test that I would have to pass. Um, but yeah I think what would really like to do that, is working with kids, which is what I’d like to do, and also helping which is another my very big like passion is, um. (I: mhm) Not volunteer work necessarily because I would get paid, but service, so. (I: right) Um, right now, yeah, child life specialist is kind of where I think I’m headed but ah it changes all the time. So (P: laugh)

I: So um, this is related and we’ve talked about this a little bit, so, what are your plans? I mean, you’re going to decide over the summer…

P: Yes. So over the summer I am going to decide. Um, I’d like … my plans right now are to graduate in [date]. I can’t wait. And um, go to [another college], do the certificate program to be a child life specialist and get certified. And um, start work there. And really, so my ultimate goal in life is to be a youth motivational speaker. (I: mhm) I would love to go to elementary schools or high schools and middle schools, more likely, um, and just like talk to kids and motivate them and inspire them things like that. But in ordered to do that I feel like I need some more life experience rather than just like “I graduated from college, you can too!” So (P: chuckles) (I: mhm) Um, so I want to be a child life specialist and then hopefully work into motivational speaking. And I’ve started a little bit of that, um … last semester I did two motivational speaking … workshop things. So, I’m hoping to, like, be able to continue that and have that as a side job until I can get good enough to have that as a real job.

I: How prepared do you feel?

P: Actually (P: laughs) … uh, moderately. Um, I wish I had heard about this child life specialist thing when I was like a freshman or a sophomore. (I: mhm) Even now I feel like it’s kind of just getting down to the line as far as classes I can take as prereqs before I get to the certificate program? (I: mhm) And um, also it’s
going to be expensive because it’s a certification program not a degree program so there’s not really financial aid offered. (I: mhm) Um, something I’ll have to just end up living off of loans for a semester or two while I finish class, where I feel if I had known before, I could be taking some of the classes concurrently and maybe like shortened it down to only one semester? (P: laughs) Which would be great. (I: right). Um, but as far as like life goes and everything, I feel I mean … prepared other than, um, I’m still not sure what I want to do. And I’m sure I can do whatever it is that I need to. Um, like, it sounds funny, but like I survived my first semester of college. Come at me, right? (P: laugh) (I: right) I’ve got it! But it is it’s still scary… not knowing exactly what I want to do or if that’s… definitely what I want to do or not. (I: mm)

I: Well, that sounds great. Good luck.

P: Thanks! (P: laugh)

I: Um, that all the questions I have. So, thank you for your time and have a great rest of the day!

P: Oh yeah, of course! Thank you so much!

END OF INTERVIEW 3
REFERENCES


