The Lack of Help Seeking By At-Risk Undergraduate Students

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(Abstract)

Large classes are becoming inevitable at large research Universities. The sociology department at Virginia Tech University routinely offers a course with approximately 600 students. Each year approximately a sixth of those students fail the first exam. To increase the performance of at-risk students a mentoring program was created, but many did not participate. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that contribute to at-risk students choosing not to take advantage of the academic mentoring program offered in their class. A survey was received from sixty-eight students who failed the first exam, in which only thirty-seven students participated in the tutorial program. The analysis will focus on eight domains and nineteen hypotheses that might be associated with help seeking. The domains are: classroom behavior; students' self-perception; classroom practices and institutional policies; general perceptions of help seeking; history with mentors; time commitment; college demographics; and respondent demographics. Some of the major findings suggest that student's self perception; time commitment; and college demographics are related to help seeking. Findings related to the classroom practices suggest that some students do feel that the different options (withdrawal rule, dropping the course, and dropping the lowest exam grade) led to their non-enrollment in the mentoring program.

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Wow!!!! This has been quite an experience so far. I know that I have a lot more to accomplish, and I am confident it will be done. I have learned two main lessons while going through the process of writing my thesis. The first lesson I learned is to start writing a little each day, because it is better to have something written than to have nothing. Finally, the second lesson I learned is to ask for help when things get a little tough (how ironic). I will carry these two lessons with me when it is time to write and complete my dissertation. There are many people to thank, but I would like to first, thank God for the guidance and motivation I received through this process. I would also like to thank my parents for their love, support, and understanding. My parents taught me the value of hard work, dedication, and commitment, all of which has made me successful thus far in my journey towards my Ph.D.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

<u>Statement of the Problem</u>

After spending thousands of dollars a year obtaining a college education, students usually expect long term benefits. For instance, having a bachelor's degree is usually associated with higher income than having a high school diploma. Unfortunately, the reality is that far too many students who begin college do not graduate. Some may drop out due to the lack of money or family pressures. Others are asked to withdraw because of poor grades associated with bad study habits, lack of effort. Employment may also interfere with the academic priorities of the student.

Some colleges and universities offer academic support programs for students. However, these programs often rely on students taking the initiative to seek the help when it is needed. Unfortunately, students don't always seek the help, therefore, suffering the consequences. This study focuses on factors that prevent students from taking advantage of tutoring or mentoring programs designed to assist them academically.

This research is an analysis of a mentoring program offered in conjunction with a section of Introductory Sociology at Virginia Tech. This study examines factors that might inhibit at-risk undergraduate students from participating in a peer-mentoring program designed for their class.

Each semester the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech offers one section of Introductory Sociology to approximately six hundred students. Approximately a sixth of those students receive a "D" or a "F" on the first exam, putting them at-risk for failing the

course if their performance did not radically improve. In an effort to reduce the failure rate of students, Dr. Snizek applied for a grant in 2000 to implement and coordinate a peer-mentoring program in his large (600 plus student) section of Introductory Sociology.

The peer-mentoring program consisted of individual study groups with two peer mentors per group. The groups usually met right after class and scheduled other times to meet to further prepare for exams. The goal of the program was to help at-risk students improve their note taking skills and study habits in the course, which would ultimately lead to better grades on exams and class assignments. In the past, students who participated in the mentoring program averaged a "B" in the course while students who did not avail themselves of the mentoring program averaged a "D" or an "F" in the course. During the fall semester of 2000, out of approximately 100 students that failed the first exam only, 21 students chose to take part in the peer-mentoring program. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify factors that contribute to at-risk students choosing not to take advantage of academic assistance when it is readily available.

This study examines various factors that inhibit help seeking habits among at-risk undergraduate students who did not avail themselves of the peer-mentoring program organized for the class the fall semester of 2001. Previous studies have identified factors that inhibit help seeking among undergraduate students, but few studies have included classroom practices and institutional policies that might inhibit help seeking among at-risk undergraduate students. Therefore, a contribution of this work is the inclusion of structural variables, both on the classroom and institutional levels, in the analysis of help seeking. Data for this study was obtained by a self-administered survey given to at-risks students in Dr. Snizek's Introductory Sociology class. The results of this study have

potential for improving academic programs geared to decreasing the dropout rate among

at-risk students.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORY AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this research is to explore factors that might account for why at-risk students do not choose to receive academic help when it is available. In this chapter, I discuss the diverse theoretical perspectives that have been used to explain help seeking. The four main theoretical approaches that have been used in the literature to explain help seeking are equity, reactance, attribution, and threat to self-esteem. Each theory aids in conceptualizing what help seeking is and what factors might affect the likelihood of seeking help. The theories have both strengths and weaknesses with regards to explaining help seeking behavior. After summarizing the various theories, I will review the empirical literature on help seeking.

Theoretical approaches to the study of help seeking

Equity theories

Equity theories place receiving aid in the "context of exchange relations"(Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982:31). According to this theory, the main assumption concerning human social behavior is that people aspire to maintain equity in their interpersonal relations because inequitable relations produce discomfort (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Therefore, discomfort motivates individuals to try to reduce the unpleasant feelings (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).
The equity model generally assumes that the recipient's distress is positively related to the amount of inequality in the relationship (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

4

Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna's (1982) review of the literature on help seeking identified evidence for the aversive nature of inequity. The studies they reviewed primarily examined the influence of the ability to reciprocate on help seeking behavior. For instance, Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna (1982) reviewed literature that found that individuals who do not anticipate being able to reciprocate aid often refrain from seeking help, are slow to ask for it, and are more likely to discontinue the aid relationship before reaching their performance goals. Furthermore, Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna (1982) also stated in their literature review that recipients tend to seek help less when help received in the past was not reciprocated.

The equity model suggests that alleviating the discomfort associated with inequity depends upon the reciprocation of information between the donor and the recipient of that aid (Fisher, Nadler, Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). According to Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna (1982) research indicates that individuals will reciprocate to reduce feelings of indebtedness if given the opportunity.

Limitations of equity theories

With regards to making predictions in certain contexts, the equity model may be inadequate (Fisher, Nadler, Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). For example, some variables that that may affect reactions to aid may not be easily classified on an equity-inequity dimension (Fisher, Nadler, Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Furthermore, there is still some confusion about what conditions lead a recipient to choose certain methods in an effort to restoring equity (Fisher, Nadler, Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Finally, there are some predictions that could be derived from equity theories that are not fully supported (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

Reactance theory

The second theory discussed by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna (1982) is reactance theory. They rely heavily on the work of Brehm (1966) in their discussion. In contrast to equity theories, which assume that equity is important in determining reactions to help, reactance theory assumes that restriction inherent in aid can deter help seeking. This theory asserts that individuals value their "freedom of choice," and any reduction in this freedom can be associated with the motivation to restore the perceived loss of freedom. Therefore, according the reactance framework, aid that is seen as threatening will arouse reactance because the freedom to perform present or future actions is perceived to be threatened by that aid. However, such conditions are probably a part of certain types of aid. Hence, when aid is given with stipulations, recipients perceive their freedom to be threatened. In addition, recipients may be more constrained by aid that is more positively than negatively motivated. The major assumption of reactance theory is that freedom is perceived to be restricted through the helper/helped relationship because of "socialized beliefs about how one should respond to help, to benefactors, and to beliefs about the true nature of helpful individuals" (Brehm, 1966 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982: 31-34).

The theory predicts that reactance is greater when more freedoms are restricted by aid than when aid restricts fewer freedoms. In addition, reactance is predicted to increase depending upon how important the freedoms are to the individual. However, by acting as though aid does not restrict their behavior or freedoms, recipients can reduce reactance to aid. (Brehm, 1966 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

Limitations of reactance theory

As a model for predicting reactions to aid, reactance theory has limitations. First, reactance theory excludes many situational variables that may be associated with help because the theory implies that only important condition in deciding to seek help is the recipient's perception of restrictions in freedom associated with aid (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Second, reactance theory only predicts reactions for which threats to freedom are experienced and does not predict reactions to aid that are non-threatening (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Furthermore, reactance may not always be appropriate for predicting reactions to aid because other factors may have an impact (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

<u>Attribution theories</u>

Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna's (1982) review of the literature concluded that equity and reactance theories tend to posit the recipient as a passive individual placed in inequitable relations or whose freedom is threatened by aid. In contrast, attribution theories view the recipient as an active agent who attempts to make sense of the help interaction (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Attribution theory suggests that individuals who receive help want to have an understanding of "the donor's behavior, their own behavior, and the situation" (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982:34). Some individuals might want to know "Why did the donor help me?" In addition, "Why did I need help?" (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982:34)

Research pertaining to the first question (Why did the donor help me?) has generally used the theory of correspondent inferences as a conceptual framework (Jones & Davis, 1965; and Jones & McGillis, 1975 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-

Alagna, 1982). The focus of the theory deals with the attribution of intent made by the recipient and is normally applied to the donor's intentions in helping (Kelley, 1975 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). The theory of external attribution has generally been used in studies that relate to the second question (Why did I need help?).   In general, the applications of attribution theory centers on conditions "under which recipients attribute the need for help internally (e.g., their own incompetence) or externally (e.g., task difficulty)" (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982:34).

The theory of correspondent inference focus on how the recipient of aid makes sense of the helping interaction between themselves and the person giving aid (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). This theory specifically seeks to explain and understand the perceptions of donor intent and evaluations of donor aid (external perception) from the point of view of the person receiving aid (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Furthermore, this theory provides a conceptual framework that deals with the perceptions of donor in a help seeking context (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

Another important component to attribution theory is the theory of external attribution. External attribution examines conditions under which "an event is attributed to the environment (external attribution) not the personal disposition of the actor (internal attribution)" (Kelley, 1967 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982:36). External attributions are primarily based on information from two sources. These sources are expectations that one brings to a situation and the information that arises from the conditions of interaction (Kelley, 1967 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

According to this theory, the locus of causal perception has important implications for reactions to aid (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). For instance, if the need for help is attributed to personal inadequacy then less help seeking will occur than if inadequacy were attributed externally (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). In addition, if there was a situation where many people need assistance on a similar task then individuals would tend to attribute inadequacy externally (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Attribution theory suggests that individuals are unwilling to expose internal inadequacy by seeking help, and therefore, in that instance lower help seeking may be observed (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

Limitations of attribution theory

The main difficulty with the attribution theory is the difficulty applying this theory to the aid recipient (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). First, the theory has direct application only for recipient's perceptions of self and other (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Second, the criteria for making attributions appear to be too rigid (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Finally, attributions are frequently made in contexts in which the recipient encounters the donor and the circumstances for the first time, and this interaction might not be enough to draw conclusions (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

<u>**Self-esteem theories**</u>

A final approach is termed threat to self-esteem. Unlike the equity, reactance, and attribution theories, this approach assumes that "self-related consequences of aid are critical in determining the recipient's actions" (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna,

1982:38). According to this approach, aid contains both self-threatening and supportive elements that can threaten self-esteem (Merton, 1968 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). For example, receiving help may be threatening because of the implication of an inferior/superior relationship between the person giving aid and the person receiving aid (Merton, 1968 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Conversely, help may be supportive and caring and provide instrumental benefits (Merton, 1968 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Based on this assumption, the approach makes two major predictions concerning recipient's reactions to help:

  1. Institutional conditions (donor, aid, and context characteristics) and recipient characteristics may determine if help is primarily threatening or supportive in a given setting.

  2. When help is perceived as threatening, reactions will potentially be negative and the recipient may experience lowered self-concept. Conversely, when help is primarily supportive, reactions are positive and the recipient may experience enhanced self-concept (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982).

  Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna's (1982) review of the literature found evidence that suggest that individuals are motivated to maintain positive self-attitudes and defend their self-concept. Therefore, information that threatens feelings of self-worth can cause anxiety (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). This restoration of self-esteem may include devaluing the source of information or the blaming others for their problems (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982)

Review of the literature on help seeking

Help seeking

The literature on help seeking is highly diverse. What help seeking is, the context in which it occurs, who gives, and who receives varies from study to study. In this literature review, I will primarily focus on help seeking in academic settings, particularly among college students. Help seeking can be primarily seen as the act of effort; that is, the student is actively using available resources or assistance in order to increase the probability of getting good grades throughout the course. Ames and Lau (1982), conceptualized help seeking as "…an achievement behavior involving the search for and employment of a strategy to obtain success" (p.414). However, there are many elements identified by the literature that affects one's effort to seek help.

Definition of help seeking

Help seeking is not monolithic. The variable help seeking is conceptualized in a variety of ways. For example, Magnusson and Perry (1992) distinguish between two types of help seeking. The first is instrumental help seeking, which is described as "requesting the donor to demonstrate or explain the method by which the problem can be solved" (Magnusson and Perry, 1992:228). In this type of help seeking, the receiver is responsible for the solution. In contrast, executive help seeking is "requesting the donor to solve the problem" (Magnusson and Perry, 1992:228). In this type of help seeking scenario, the person seeking help is not responsible for the solution. The differences between executive and instrumental help seeking are important since they are distinct from each other. Hence, awareness of the distinctions between instrumental and executive help seeking also clarify situations in which help seeking is optimal, as

opposed to damaging. In this study, the mentoring program is classified as instrumental. The mentors assist the students in building study skills; they do not solve sociological problems for the students.

Magnusson and Perry (1992) define help seeking simply as asking a professional or another student for help. In this study, I define, help seeking as signing up for the peer-mentoring program.

Variables related to help seeking

Many variables related to help seeking have been identified in the literature. The variables that I am going to focus on in my review of the literature include personal characteristics of the student; attributions made by the student; past performance; formal vs. informal help, and various sociological variables. These psychological and sociological variables have been shown to affect students' willingness to seek help when needed. Although there is a scarcity of research on undergraduate help seeking, these key elements were still identified throughout the literature.

Personal characteristics of the student

A series of articles focused on the personal characteristics of the students. These characteristics include self-esteem, self-confidence, and neediness. This research is complex because some researchers look at the effect of help seeking on self-esteem, while others explore the effect of self-esteem on the likelihood of seeking help. For example, Fisher and Nadler (1974) indicated that receiving aid from a similar person had a negative effect on the recipient's situational self-esteem and self-confidence, while aid from a dissimilar person had a positive effect on situational self-esteem and self-

12

confidence. Fisher and Nadler (1974) state that when the donor is similar to the recipient the magnitude and salience of the inferiority and dependency cues, which are transmitted by that help, are strong enough to over-shadow the potential positive effects of aid. Therefore, the researchers suggest help seeking may not occur because receiving aid from a similar other may stress the inferiority and dependency of the recipient (Fisher and Nadler, 1974). More relevant for this research, is the study done by Karabenick and Knapp (1991). In their study of 612 college students, they found that students with lower self-esteem regarded seeking help as more threatening than those with higher self esteem (Karabenick and Knapp, 1991).

Another personal characteristic is the level of neediness of the help. For example, a study done by Gergen (1974) dealt with neediness and its association with how help was offered. For example, if help was automatically offered, (participants did not have to seek it out) the needy participants were more likely to obtain the help than if they are required to ask for it themselves (Gergen, 1974). This study may be relevant to my work, not because I explore neediness, but because the help was not required.

Attribution

The many different types of attributions in the literature present different results. One type of attribution is characterized by attributing performance to one's ability (Peterson and Barrett, 1987). Students who ascribe failure to their own low ability are less likely to seek help (Peterson and Barrett, 1987). Attributions also can be described in terms of relevant and help-irrelevant (Ames and Lau, 1982). It was reasoned that an attributional pattern relevant to help seeking involved the following beliefs: "that one's basic ability is adequate, that effort results in increased chances of success, that one did

not put forth sufficient effort on the prior test, and that external factors, excuses in the form of uncontrollable factors associated with the task [….] did not inhibit performance" (Ames and Lau, 1982:415). Help-relevant attribution states that the individual is capable, but did not try hard enough (Ames and Lau, 1982). Furthermore, external forces did not inhibit the student from doing better if more effort was put forth by the student (Ames and Lau, 1982). Therefore, when such help-relevant belief s are combined with information that help sessions are useful, the likelihood that a student will attend a help session may be further increased (Ames and Lau, 1982).

Ames and Lau (1982) used a survey containing twenty-eight statements that assessed help seeking within an attributional framework. The survey was separated into four dimensions: "ability," "effort," "task difficulty excuse"and"interest excuse" factors (Ames and Lau, 1982:416). These dimensions were assessed by using the answer choices of "agree" or "disagree." A sample statement measuring ability is, "I think I usually have a good understanding of things taught in the course" (Ames and Lau, 1982:416). A sample statement measuring effort is, "I studied very hard for this exam" (Ames and Lau, 1982:416). An example of a task difficulty excuse statement is "I think I will have better luck on the next exam" (Ames and Lau, 1982:416). Finally, an example of an interest excuse statement is "I find the course very boring" (Ames and Lau, 1982:416). The researcher in this study found that low performers were much more likely to attend a help session when they made help-relevant attributions (Ames and Lau, 1982). Moreover, the students most likely to attend help sessions are low performers who received positive information about the usefulness of help sessions and who made help-relevant attributions (Ames and Lau, 1982). Thus, when students are confronted

with the problem of increasing their chances for future success, they seem to base their decisions about seeking outside help on their prior performance, the ascribed cause for that performance, and the apparent usefulness of available resources (Ames and Lau, 1982).

Ames and Lau outlined a set of attributions that was related to seeking help. For low performers this included: (a) a "global attribution," which means to have a general understanding of things taught in the course; (b) the ability to identify certain key concepts that need to be grasped; (c) the understanding that effort is necessary for success on the exam but one did not study hard enough; (d) a rejection of excuses ("tricky test items") as causes of poor performance (Ames and Lau, 1982). Thus students in their study who sought help appeared to believe, at a "global" level, in their general ability to perform and to believe that effort is necessary for success (Ames and Lau, 1982). At a more specific level, however, they appeared to acknowledge that they had not learned key concepts and that they did not try hard enough (Ames and Lau, 1982). Further, students making help-relevant attributions avoided external attributions that could have served as excuses for their poor performance (Ames and Lau, 1982).

Past performance

Another factor identified in the literature as being related to help seeking is past performance (Ames & Lau, 1982 and Karabenick & Knapp 1988). Ames and Lau (1982) found that students making help-relevant attributions in terms of their past performance on tests were more likely to seek help. Additionally, Karabenick and Knapp (1988) noted that it is a curvilinear relationship. This work casts doubt on the literature that did not include academic need and tested only for linear relationships (Karabenick and

Knapp, 1988). Karabenick and Knapp (1988) assessed need for assistance in two ways: grades and self-ratings. Students were first asked for their expected overall performance for that term on a 12 point grade scale (A through E). Therefore, need was inferred from the grades, with the assumption that students who rated themselves lower on the scale was an indication that students required a greater need of assistance during the term (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988).

Then the researchers measured the students' self-perceived academic need during the term by asking them "(a) whether they need help in one or more of the courses they were taking during the term" and "(b) whether they needed help with their study skills in general" (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988:406) Responses to these questions were on a 7 point scale " 0=I feel I did not need any help at all, 7=I feel I need help very badly" (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988:406). Finally help seeking activity was assessed by asking students whether they had actually obtained help for anyone (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988). If the students responded yes, then they were asked to estimate the frequency of help seeking (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988). The results from this study revealed that there is a curvilinear relationship between help seeking and academic need (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988). In addition, this study indicates with considerable specificity the point at which increasing need no longer increases the likelihood of help seeking, which is the B- to C+ range of expected academic performance (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988). Below the range of B- to C+ help seeking decreased, approaching zero at an expected overall grade of approximately D (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988). The results of this study seem to suggest and confirm that those who need help the most are often less likely to seek it (Karabenick and Knapp, 1988).

Formal vs. informal help

Although most college students might express some need for academic assistance, informal sources of help were used more frequently than institutional resources (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988). Institutional formal support services, which were defined as instructors, student tutors, instructional support centers, career planning and support centers, and instructional support centers for general study skills (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988). This study suggests that students tended to use more informal support services, which were described as friends and other students in the class (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988).

In a study done by Knapp and Karabenick (1988), need was assessed by asking students the following questions "(a) whether they needed help in one or more of the courses they were taking during the term" (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988:224) and "(b) whether they needed help in their study skills in general." (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988:224). The students responded to this question on a seven point scale ranging from "I feel I did not need any help at all" (0), to "I feel I need help very badly (7)" (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988:224). Students were also asked to answer yes or no to whether or not they had obtained help from anyone (professors, friends, tutors) (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988). If students answered yes, then they were asked to estimate the amount of help solicited from each source (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988). The article speculated that students could be moderately satisfied with formal sources, and the belief that other students and friends can provide adequate help might account for the greater use of informal sources (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988). Furthermore, in this study the researchers found that the most common reason why neither informal nor formal help

17

was sought by students reporting some degree of need was due to the students feeling that they should have tried harder on their own (Knapp and Karabenick, 1988).

Social structures

Most learning is rarely accomplished in an asocial context. The acquisition of knowledge and skill often occurs in a socioculturally organized environment. Learners are influenced directly and indirectly by social constraints and cultural norms that contribute greatly to their learning experience and their success or failure. There are many social factors that might encourage or inhibit someone from seeking help. Some of the major social factors identified in the literature include classroom influences, race, gender, social structure, and institutional and classroom policies.

<u>Classroom influences on help seeking</u>

Student's social goals and social competence perceptions are relevant to the understanding of help seeking (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). Therefore, the academic and social characteristics of the student need to be considered in models pertaining to help seeking (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). In addition, it is also important to consider the context of the classroom environment and how help seeking may be influenced (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985 as cited by Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). Instructors may set up learning environments that vary with regards to "fostering or discouraging" students' help seeking (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998:127). Ryan and Pintrich (1998) identify three dimensions of classroom organization that may have an impact on student help seeking:

1. Classroom rules and norms

2. Classroom goals

3. Social/interpersonal climate of the classroom

Classroom rules and norms

The structure for student help seeking can be influenced by the norms and rules established by the instructor (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). For example, Ryan and Pintrich (1998) cite Karabenick and Sharma (1994), who found that college students' were more likely to ask questions if they felt supported by the instructor. Support from the instructor was characterized by the instructor providing opportunities for question asking and specific instructions on good question asking. In addition, in the study, students expressed that informational or procedural responses to questions, emotional renounces to questions, and the value placed on questions by the instructor were important.

Rules and norms for completing tasks, participating in class, and interacting with students also can have an effect on help seeking (Karabenick and Sharma, 1994 as cited by Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). Rules and norms of the classroom environment can determine how students react to their awareness that they may need help (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). For instance, some instructors may allow students to talk to others during work sessions as a way to receive help; therefore, help seeking behavior is facilitated by the instructor (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). However, in a classroom that prohibits interaction with other students during work sessions and doing so is constructed as cheating then such a restrictive environment can constrict help seeking behavior (Ryan and Pintrich, 1998).

Classroom goals

Students' personal achievement goals influence their help seeking, and given that students' personal goals are so intimately related to their help seeking, it is important to examine the antecedents of students' personal goals (Ames, 1992 cited by Ryan and Pintrich, 1998). Ryan and Pintrich's (1998) review of the literature revealed that

classroom context has an influence on shaping students' goals. For instance, students are more likely to adopt task-focused goals when an instructor emphasizes mastery and self-improvement of materials. Conversely, if the instructor puts more emphasis on performance relative to others and competition then students are more likely to adopt relative ability goals. Hence, when students adopt relative ability goals, then they are less likely to seek help because there is a competitive atmosphere where it is perceived as a weakness to seek help.

Social/Interpersonal climate of the classroom

Help seeking in general combines aspects of both a learning strategy and social interaction with others (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985). With regards to social interaction with others, Ryan and Pintrich (1998) found research that implied that if a student is familiar with the person giving aid, and has a positive relationship, then there is an increased likelihood that the student will continue asking for help. The reasoning for this increased likelihood pertains to the student perceiving themselves as comfortable and skillful in relating to others. Finally, research has also shown that students who are concerned with forming and maintaining close friendships are more likely to seek help. On the other hand, students are less likely to seek help if they are concerned about their social image or status among their peers.

Race

Race is a key sociological variable. Sociologists have demonstrated that race is a factor in almost every aspect of the lived experience. For example, blacks generally have lower incomes and live in different neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). African American also have lower life expectancies than whites (National Center for Health

Statistics, 2002). It would be surprising if race were not a factor in help seeking as well. Unfortunately, the literature on help seeking and race is almost non existent. Thus, I use Karabenick's theoretical arguments on putative race differences in white and African American rates of help seeking.

Karabenick's (1998) review of the literature on cultural socialization and help seeking provides insight to differences in help seeking among whites and African Americans. Karabenick states that most standard U.S educational practices provide contexts and environments that orient students to "performance goals" rather than to "learning goals" (pg.47). In classrooms that operate under this model, direct comparison of one student's work and learning outcomes to another occur often in public ways. Therefore, under this model teachers and students find it normal that some students do not learn what is taught and do not achieve as well as others (Karabenick, 1998). Also, typically schooling in the United States tends to reflect and promote notions about the desirability of autonomous functioning and individual problem solving, even though the classrooms in which this schooling is delivered are intensely social in both form and function (Karabenick, 1998). This type of rational could restrict help seeking behaviors, and, as will be explained below, particularly for African Americans.

Karabenick (1998) suggests that socialization patterns with regards to learning are different for African Americans than and whites. African American socialization patterns stress the traditional family and community which in turn, shapes children's behavior toward learning and help seeking (Karabenick, 1998). Reflecting their group-oriented culture, African Americans tend to value collaborative learning more than competitive learning as a viable strategy in "goal-orientated" situations (Tolson & Wilson, 1990 as

21

cited by Karabenick, 1998). However, the learning strategies that African Americans are socialized to value and incorporate in their lives are not valued in most of the school systems in the United States (Karabenick, 1998). Therefore, requiring students to accept without question an individualistic interpretation of learning, when their own experience has been based on interpersonal relations within the context of the family unit or ethnic or racial community, can led to cognitive dissonance (Karabenick, 1988).

Gender

The literature on gender and academic help seeking among undergraduate students is scarce. However, there are a few recent studies that attempt to explain gender and help seeking behavior.   In the past, findings have suggested that women request more help than men (Merton, Merton, & Barber, 1983).   This has been attributed to the supposed greater social acceptability of passive dependency in women (Merton, Merton, & Barber, 1983). In contrast, Greenglass (1993) has interpreted such findings to mean that women may reflect active social coping while males' under use social support. A reason for males under use of social support can be attributed to males being more invested in maintaining favorable perceptions of ability (Roberts, 1991). Roberts (1991) also suggests that in academic settings, males may be more likely than females to underuse help because of concerns about exposing poor ability.

A recent study by Butler (1998) stressed those societal expectations concerning ability may be crucial in mediating academic help seeking in males and females. In her study, she found that overall girls were more likely than boys to engage in executive help seeking. Butler's (1998) finding is consistent with Greenglass' (1993) proposal that females' greater willingness to ask for help reflects active social coping rather than

passive dependency. Furthermore, Butler (1998) concluded that boys may be more willing to seek help than is commonly thought, as long as they do not perceive help seeking as threatening to their perceptions of competence.

Social class

The importance of structural factors, such as social class, affecting everyday behavior is almost a truism from a sociological perspective. Social class was not included in the studies I reviewed on help seeking. Sociologists have generated a strong base of research that demonstrates the importance of social class on college success. Thus, social class may well be an important variable for understanding help seeking.

One vehicle through which social class influences college success is the additional time demands often placed on the poorer students. These students often have to work because they are paying for their college education or providing significance amounts to pay the costs. The time demands of being in the labor market could make it less likely for these students to take advantage of the mentoring program. Even if they might want the help, they cannot avail themselves of it because they simply do not have the time. Other time commitments, while assumed to be greater for those working themselves through school, may have an affect on help seeking for all busy students. For example, those students who are busy with their sororities or take a large number of classes may not have the time or scheduling conflicts that prevent them from seeking help.

Institutional and classroom policies

Numerous theoretical explanations have been posited to explain why at-risk students may or may not seek help. The empirical literature, while sparse as it applies to

college students, has identified key variables related to help seeking. What is missing from this literature is an examination of the role that institutional policies and classroom practices might have on help seeking. Therefore, a contribution of this work is the inclusion of additional non-psychological factors.

Virginia Tech has a series of rules that could putatively affect the likelihood of help seeking. Two rules that are particularly relevant are: Virginia Tech allows students to withdraw from a class within the first nine weeks within the semester, and Virginia Tech also allows students to drop an entire class from their record (the freshman rule). In addition, Dr. Snizek gives the students the option of dropping their lowest exam grade. It could be the case that these options might be justifications for those students who know they are weak (freshman rule and dropping the class) and for those students who feel confident that they can do better (dropping the exam) to not seek help. Without these options, they might decide to participate in the mentoring program.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are based on theoretical explanations, the review of the literature, and concepts that were identified above as missing from the literature. Additionally, variables that may be important as controls, even if not discussed above, are included in the hypotheses.   The hypotheses to be tested are:

I. Classroom behavior

Hypothesis 1: Students who miss a lot of class will be less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 2: Students who frequently leave early or arrive to class late are less likely to seek help

II. Students' self-perception

Hypothesis 3: Students who are certain that the mentoring program will improve their grades are more likely to seek help

Hypothesis 4: Students who are certain that they can improve their grade on the next exam without the mentoring program will be less likely to seek help

III. Institutional policies and classroom practices

Hypothesis 5: Students who agree with the option of withdrawing from the class are less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 6: Students who agree with the option of dropping the class are less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 7: Students who agree with the option of dropping the lowest test exam score are less likely to seek help

IV. Perceptions of help seeking

Hypothesis 8: Students who have a clear understanding of how the mentoring program works is more likely to seek help

Hypothesis 9: Students who are embarrassed about seeking help from a mentor are less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 10: Students who perceive help seeking as a weakness are less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 11: Students who perceive being mentored are for students less intelligent than them are less likely to seek help

V. History with mentors

Hypothesis 12: Students who have had previous experiences with mentors at Virginia Tech will be more likely to seek help

Hypothesis 13: Students who have had previous experiences with mentors in high school will be more likely to seek help

VI. Time commitment

Hypothesis 14: Students who work a lot of hours are less likely to seek help

Hypothesis 15: Students who indicate that they have commitments that prevent time for being mentored are less likely to seek help.

Hypothesis 16: Students who are taking many credit hours this semester are less likely to seek help

VII. College demographics

Hypothesis 17: Freshmen students are more likely than other students to seek help

VIII. Respondent demographics

Hypothesis 18: Students who are female are more likely to seek help

Hypothesis 19: White students are more likely than students of other races to seek help

The methodology used to test these hypotheses is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to identify factors that are related to non-participation in a mentoring program designed for at-risk students in an introductory sociology class. A description of the program and procedures for addressing the research question are detailed in this chapter.

The tutor mentoring program

Generally mentoring is associated with a long-term helping and learning relationship between an experienced person (mentor) and a person in need of assistance (mentee) (Gergen, 1974). This mentor usually shares his/her knowledge, experience and insights about a particular matter (Gergen, 1974). The goal of mentoring is for the less experienced person to profit from the exchange (Fisher and Nadler, 1982). Mentoring programs exist for a large range of purposes. For example, mentoring could emphasize life skills, professional skills, or academic skills (Fisher and Nadler, 1982).

The mentoring program of interest for this study was established by Dr. Snizek in 2000. The major component of this mentoring program was academic mentoring. The program was designed to help students who were at-risk for failing Dr. Snizek's introductory sociology course to achieve better grades. The focus of the mentoring sessions was to assist at-risk students with note taking and study skills. Each mentoring group were lead by two honor students enrolled in the class who earned "As" on the first exam. The group mentoring sessions were held after class, usually twice a week, for about an hour. Groups also met prior to exams for one to two hours for intensive studying.

Prior to the beginning of the mentoring program, students were made aware of the program by Dr. Snizek, through verbal and visual communication, as well as personal e-mail. Students were also given information about the purpose of the program, the success rate of students that participated in the program, and the time commitment required of the program. In order to participate, students that received a "D" or an "F" on the first exam were required to submit a sheet with their name, exam grade, contact information, and availability for the study sessions.

Procedures

The method of data collection used for this study was a self-administered survey. The 42 question survey was designed to measure factors that inhibit help seeking among at-risk undergraduate students. I created the survey questions based on factors identified in the literature as being related to academic help seeking. There was an Institutional Review Board approval received prior to the administration of the survey.

The survey was given to at-risk students who decided to take part in the mentoring program as well as to at-risk students who chose not to take part in the mentoring program. At-risk students were defined as students who received "Ds" or "Fs" on the first exam. The participants took approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

Prior to the administration of the survey, the respondents were informed that their responses were confidential. They were asked to put their social security numbers on the survey to identify who was a participant in the mentoring program and who was not. The social security number also was used to provide extra credit for completing the survey. The students were given 1 extra credit point out of approximately 175 points for the class.

Respondents understood that they could skip any questions or stop the survey at any time. Hence, if a respondent skipped a question or didn't complete the questionnaire they were automatically deleted from the analysis.

<u>Sample</u>

Students who received a "D" or an "F" on the first exam were told of an opportunity to receive extra credit by completing a survey. Students were asked to fill out a survey to assess factors that were associated with help seeking. There were 621 students in the class and 109 of those students failed the first exam. Forty of the students who failed the first exam chose to participate in the mentoring program, while sixty-nine students decided not to participate in the mentoring program.

My sample consists of those students that chose to participate in my study by completing a survey. Of the 40 students that chose to take part in mentoring program 37 completed the survey. While 31 of the 69 students who did not participate in the mentoring program completed a survey. The response rate for the students who participated in the tutor-mentoring program and completed the survey was ninety-three percent (N=37). While the response rate for the students who did not participated in the tutor-mentoring program but completed the survey was forty-five percent (N=31). The survey had an overall response rate of sixty-five percent (N=68).

<u>Measures</u>

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is Help-seeking. Help-seeking is defined as whether or not students who failed the first exam chose to participate in the class mentoring program. The respondents were not asked on the questionnaire if they selected

to participate in the mentoring program. Rather, to determine participation or non-participation, the social security numbers provided by the respondents on the surveys were used. Dr. Snizek had a list of social security numbers of the at-risk students who chose to take part in the mentoring program and another list of social security numbers of those who did not participate. Using the list, I separated the surveys into two groups and added the variable Help-seeking with a "1" indicating that they participated and "2" indicating that they did not participate.

Independent Variable

There were eight dimensions identified in the literature that inhibit academic help seeking. The dimensions are: classroom behavior; students' self-perception; classroom practices and institutional policies; perceptions about help seeking; history with mentors; time commitment; college demographics; and respondent demographics. Each of these dimensions was measured by a series of variables discussed below.

Classroom behavior

Classroom behavior was measured by two questions on the survey, questions four, and five. The variable, <u>Frequency of Missing Class</u>[1], was operationalized with the question "Approximately how many times did you miss class prior to exam 1." The variable <u>Coming Late or Leaving Early</u> was measured with the question "Approximately how many times did you either come late or leave early, prior to exam 1?" The response options for these two indicators were "1," "2," "3," "4," "5," "6," " 7or more," and "none" and the level of measurement is ratio.

Students' self perceptions

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[1] Using variable names needed for data analysis packages such as SPSS and SAS are confusing to the reader. I am using short, and I hope descriptive, variable names for ease of presentation.

Students' self-perception with regards to help seeking was measured by two variables on the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two statements. These statements correspond to items fifteen and, seventeen on the survey. The first variable, Mentoring Improve Grades, was measured by the statement "I am certain the tutoring/mentoring program will help improve my grade." The second variable, Improve Grade on Next Exam Without Mentoring, was measured by responses to the statement "I am certain I can improve my grade on the next exam without being tutored or mentored." Both variables were measured using an ordinal scale. The response options were "strongly agree," "tend to agree," "tend to disagree," and "strongly disagree."

Institutional policies and classroom practices

The association of classroom practices and institutional policies with help seeking behavior was measured by three statements that correspond to items nineteen, twenty-one, and twenty-three on the survey. Statements nineteen, twenty-one, and twenty-three assessed whether Dropping an Exam Grade, Dropping the Course, or the Course Withdrawal Rule affected the students' decision to participate in the mentoring program. The variable Dropping an Exam Grade, was measured by the responses to the statement, "The option of dropping this exam grade led to my not enrolling in the class mentoring program." The variable Dropping the Course, was measured by the responses to the statement, "The option of dropping this course led to my not enrolling in the class tutoring/mentoring program." Finally, the variable Course Withdrawal Rule, was measured by the responses to the statement, "The course withdrawal rule led to my not enrolling in the class tutoring/mentoring program."

31

All three statements were measured using an ordinal scale. The statements had the following response options, "strongly agree," tend to agree," tend to disagree," strongly disagree," "don't know about this option," and does not apply since I enrolled in the program."

Perceptions of help seeking

There were four statements that measured the student's perceptions of help seeking behavior. Having a Clear Understanding of the mentoring program was measured by the statement, "I have a clear understanding of how the tutoring/mentoring program works for this class." Embarrassment was measured by the statement, "I am embarrassed to get tutoring/mentoring." Weakness was measured by the statement, "I think seeking help from a tutor/mentor is a sigh of weakness." Finally, mentoring for Less Intelligent Students was measured by the statement, "Being mentored/tutored is for students less intelligent than me." The four statements are measured ordinally. The response categories were, "strongly agree," tend to agree," "tend to disagree," and "strongly disagree."

History with mentors

Question twelve and thirteen measured whether or not students had previous experiences with tutors/mentors. Previous experiences with Mentors at Virginia Tech was measured by the question, "Have you ever had previous experiences with tutors/mentors here at Virginia Tech." Finally, previous experiences with Mentors in High School was measured by the question, "Have you ever had previous experiences with tutors/mentors in high school." Both of these questions were measured nominally, with the response options of "yes" or "no".

Time Commitment

Questions twenty-nine, thirty, and thirty-six assessed time commitment and time constraints students experienced that could impact participation in the tutoring/mentoring program. Work Hours was measured by the question, "If you work, as well as go to school, how many hours a week do you work?" Other Time Commitments was measured by the question, "Do you have other commitments (clubs, athletic, other courses) that prevent you from having time to be tutored/mentored." Finally, Credits Taking was measured by the question "How many credits are you taking this semester."

The questions on the survey are measured ordinally. The response options for Work Hours were, "0, I don't have a job," "less than 10 hours per week," "10-20 per week," "21-30 per week," "31-40 per week," and "more than 40 per week." The response options for Other Time Commitments were "yes" and "no." Finally, Credits Taking had the following response options, "1-5," "6-9," "10-12," "13-15," 16-18," and "19 or more."

College demographics

There was one question on the survey that I used to assess Status at Virginia Tech and the likelihood of seeking help. Question thirty-four on the survey states "What is your approximate GPA at Virginia Tech." I used that question to determine Status at Virginia Tech by recoding the response category classifying students not having a grade point average as "freshmen" and those who reported having a grade point average as "other." The response options for GPA were, "Don't have one yet," "1.0-1.5," "1.6-2.0," "2.1-2.5," "2.6-3.0," "3.1-3.5," and "3.6-4.0."

Respondent demographics

Both Questions forty and forty-two were used to assess the respondents' demographic information. Gender was assessed by the question," What is your gender?" Finally, Race was assessed by the question, "What category best describes your ethnicity/race?" The responses categories for Gender were, "female" and "male". The response options for Race were, "African American, Black American, Black," "Asian American, Pacific Islander," "Hispanic/Latino," "Native American, American Indian, Alaskan Native," "White," and "Other."

Data Analysis

Univariate Statistics

I will begin the data analysis with frequency distributions for all variables. Means and modes will be presented as appropriate for the level of measurement. These univariate analyses will be presented in Appendix B.

In an exploratory portion of the analysis, additive scales will be computed for some dimensions and reliability coefficients computed. The scales will be adjusted accordingly. An additive scale will be created from all the variables that measure Self Perception, another one from the variables that measure Classroom Practices, and the last scale from the four variables from Time Commitment and Institutional Policies. However, during the main portion of the analyses, the items in these scales will be treated separately.

Bivariate Statistics

The data analysis is organized around two parts. First, those students who participated will be compared with those students who did not participate in the

mentoring program on all the variables. Depending upon the level of measurement, t-test difference of means test or cross-tabulations with appropriate statistics will be computed.

In the second portion of the analysis, more exploratory analysis will be done using the additive scales briefly described above instead of the single indicators.

The presentation of the data will be organized around the eight dimensions. The dimensions are: classroom behavior; students' self perception; the association of institutional policies and classroom practices; history with mentors; time commitment; college demographics; respondent demographics; and general perceptions of help seeking.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I provide descriptive information about my sample. This is followed by the results of the tests of the hypotheses.

Full sample description

The full sample, both those who signed up for mentoring and those who did not, consisted of 68 participants identified as at-risk for failing the course because they failed the first exam. Of those 68 students, 37 (54%) chose to participate in the mentoring program, while 31 (46%) students decided not to take part in the mentoring program.

Fifty-four percent (N=37) of the sample were male, and forty-six percent (N=31) were female. Eighty-six percent (N=59) of the sample was either 18 or 19, with a modal category of 18 years of age (67%, N=46).   This pattern, of course, may reflect the class age distribution and not necessarily an indication that the younger students are doing less well in the class.

 When asked to report their race/ethnicity, sixty-nine percent (N= 47) identified themselves as white, eleven percent (N= 8) as black, eleven percent (N= 8) as Asian, four percent (N= 3) as other, and two percent (N= 2) as Hispanic. Eleven percent black is higher than Virginia Tech's black undergraduate population which is approximately five percent. All the frequencies for these demographic characters and additional demographic characteristics that are not used in the analyses are presented in Appendix A through D.

Mentored sample description

Of the 37 students that chose to participate in the mentoring program fifty-one percent (N=19) were female, and forty-eight percent (N=18) were male. Note that, while

the differences are minor, a greater number of males (54%) than females (46%) failed the first exam; the gender pattern for help seeking is reversed.

Seventy-three percent (N= 27) were 18 years of age. All but three students were under the age of 19 with the modal category again being 18 years of age (49%, N=17), compared with 86% of the full sample who were under the age of 19.

Sixty-four percent (N= 24) self identified as white, sixteen percent (N= 6) as Asian, ten percent (N= 4) as black, five percent (N= 2) as other, and two percent ((N= 1) as Hispanic.

Students were asked to report the highest level of education in their family (mother, father, or guardian). Thirty-seven percent (N= 14) reported a parent or guardian having a four year college degree, followed by thirty-two percent (N= 13) who had a graduate degree or more, indicating that most students who signed up for mentoring come from families with high levels of education. At the other end of the educational continuum, two students (5%) indicated that no parent or guardian received a high school diploma.

There was data collected on the educational history of the students where the mentored group was asked to report their high school Grade Point Average (GPA) (on a 4.0 scale). Forty-five percent (N= 17) reported having between a 3.6 and 4.0, thirty-seven percent (N= 14) reported having between a 3.1 and 3.5, and sixteen percent (N= 6) reported having between a 2.6 and 3.0. When the mentored students were asked about their current GPA here at Virginia Tech (on a 4.0 scale) ninety-four percent (N= 35) indicated they didn't have one yet, which meant that they were in coming first years. Two percent (N= 1) indicated that they have between a 1.6 and 2.0, and two percent (N=

1) has between a 3.1 and 3.5. Finally, students were asked about the amount of credit hours they were taking this semester. Forty-eight percent (N= 18) indicated that they were taking 16 to 18 credits, twenty-seven percent (N= 10) are taking 13 to 15 credits, and twenty-four percent (N= 9) were taking 10 to 12 credits.   Appendix B through Appendix H provide complete frequencies for these demographic characteristics.

<u>Non-mentored sample description</u>

Of the 31 students that chose not to participate in the mentoring program thirty-eight percent (N= 12) are female and sixty-one percent (N= 19) are male. Sixty-one percent (N= 19) are 18 years of age, twenty-two percent (N= 7) are 19 years of age, twelve percent (N= 4) are 20 years of age, and three percent (N= 1) are 23 years of age or greater. Seventy-four percent (N= 23) self identified as white, twelve percent (N= 4) as black, six percent (N= 2) as Asian, three percent (N= 1) as Hispanic, and three percent (N= 1) as other (see Appendix D).

Students were asked to report the highest level of education in their family (mother, father, or guardian). Forty-five percent (N= 14) reported a parent or guardian having a four year college degree, followed by twenty-five percent (N= 8) who had a graduate degree, nine percent (N= 3) had a diploma, six percent (N= 2) had some college or associate degree, six percent (N= 2) had some high school, and six percent (N= 2) had a post college degree.

According to the data collected on the educational history of the students in the non-mentored group was asked to report their high school GPA (on a 4.0 scale). Forty-eight percent (N= 15) reported having between a 3.6 and 4.0, thirty-two percent (N=10) reported having between a 3.1 and 3.5, sixteen percent (N= 5) reported having between a

2.6 and 3.0, and three percent (N= 1) reported having between a1.6 and 2.0 GPA. When the non-mentored students were asked about their current GPA here at Virginia Tech (on a 4.0 scale), fifty-four percent (N= 17) said they didn't have one yet, which meant that they were in coming first years. Sixteen percent (N= 5) indicated that they have between a 2.1 and 2.5, and twelve percent (N= 4) have between a 2.6 and 3.0, nine percent (N= 3) has between a 1.6 and 2.0, three percent (N= 1) have between a 1.0 and 1.5, and three percent (N= 1) have between a 3.1 and 3.5. Students were asked about the amount of credit hours they were taking this semester and forty-one percent (N= 13) indicated that were taking 16 to 18 credits, twenty-nine percent (N= 9) were taking 10 to 12 credits, and twenty-two percent (N= 7) were taking 13 to 15 credits, three percent (N= 1) were taking 1-5 credits, and three percent (N= 1) were taking 19 or more credits. Appendix B through H provide complete frequencies for those demographic characteristics discussed above.

Independent variables

I organized the independent into the following seven domains: classroom behavior; students' self-perception; institutional policies and classroom practices; history with mentors; perceptions of help seeking; time commitment; college demographics; and respondent demographics. Nineteen hypotheses were generated. The results of the hypotheses tests are presented below.

Classroom Behavior

As discussed in the previous chapter, classroom behaviors may affect the likelihood of seeking help. The two variables used as indicators of classroom behavior

were the number of classes missed and the number of times the students came late or left early. Each of these variables is used in a hypothesis.

The first hypothesis is that students who miss a lot of class will be less likely to seek help. This hypothesis was tested using a t-test. The results of this test indicate that there is not a significant relationship between the number of classes missed and mentoring. The mean indicates that those who decided not to be mentored indicated they missed more classes than those who did get mentored which is in the direction predicted. However, neither group indicated, on average, that they skipped many classes. Class attendance is good for both groups since neither group averages less than one class at this point in the semester (see Table One).

Table 1: T-test difference of the means of the number of classes missed and for mentored and non-mentored

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Mentored	37	.3514	.75337	-2.343
Non-Mentored	31	.8710	1.02443	

* <=.05, **<=.01

The second hypotheses related to class behavior states that students who frequently leave early or arrive late are less likely to seek help. As shown in Table 2, the t-test of this hypothesis indicated that there is not a significant relationship with arriving late or leaving early and mentoring. Surprisingly, the relationship is not in the direction

expected. On average it was mentored students that reported arriving late or leaving class early more often than the non-mentored students.

Table 2: T-test difference of the means of number of times came late or left class early
for mentored and non mentored

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Mentored	37	.2162	.71240	.623
Non-Mentored	31	.1290	.42755	
* <=.05, **<=.01				

Students' self-perception

Two variables were used to measure students' self-perception. The first variable is the perception that mentoring will improve their grades. Hypotheses three stated that students who are certain that the mentoring program will improve their grades in the course are more likely to seek help. The crosstabulation for this variable and mentoring is presented in Table 3.   Hypothesis three was supported by these data. Students who chose to be mentored thought that their grades would improve. Students who did not choose mentoring did not believe that the mentoring program would improve their grades.

Table 3: Crosstabulation and frequencies between improving grades and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Improve grade		
Strongly Agree	18 48.6%	8 25.8%
Tend to Agree	19 51.4%	14 45.2%
Tend to Disagree	0 0%	9 29.0%
Strongly Disagree	0 0%	0 0%
Total	37 100%	31 100%

Chi-square 13.177*
N=68
* <= .001

The second variable used to measure students' self-perception is the belief that they could improve their grade on the next exam without mentoring. Hypothesis four states that students who are certain that they could improve their grade on the next exam without the mentoring program will be less likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of this variable and mentoring is presented in Table 4. Hypothesis four was supported by these data. Students who chose not to be mentored thought that they could improve their grade on the next exam without mentoring. However, students that choose mentoring thought that being mentored would be instrumental in improving their grade on the next exam.

Table 4: Crosstabulation and frequencies between improving grade on next exam and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Improve grade on next exam		
Strongly Agree	4	13
	10.8%	41.9%
Tend to Agree	11	16
	29.7%	51.6%
Tend to Disagree	17	0
	45.9%	0%
Strongly Disagree	5	2
	13.5%	6.5%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 23.631*
N=68
* <=.001

Institutional policies and classroom practices

Three variables were used to measure the association of institutional policies and classroom practices on mentoring. Students were asked if they thought that the course withdrawal rule influenced their decision not to be mentored. Hypotheses five stated that that agreeing that the possibility of them withdrawing from the course influenced their decision not to be mentored. The frequencies and percentages for the influence of the course withdraw rule among the non-mentored students are presented in Table 5. Although no statistical tests were done, the pattern of responses did not support the

hypothesis. Students that did not choose mentoring did not report that the withdrawal rule contributed to them not seeking help. In fact, the non-mentored students mostly disagreed that the withdrawal rule option had an important role in whether they sought help or not.

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages on withdrawal rule and mentoring

	Not Mentored	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Course withdrawal rule		
Strongly Agree	N/A	N/A
Tend to Agree	1	3.2%
Tend to Disagree	8	25.8%
Strongly Disagree	17	54.8%
Don't know about this option	5	16.1%
Total	31	100%

The second variable used to measure the association of institutional policies and classroom practices on mentoring is the option to drop the course. Hypotheses six stated that agreeing with the option of dropping the course as a reason for not being mentored. The frequencies and percentages for the option to drop the course among the non-mentored students are presented in Table 6. Again, no statistical tests were done, but hypothesis six was not supported by the pattern seen in the data. Students that did not choose mentoring didn't agree that dropping the course contributed to them not seeking help. In fact, the non-mentored students mostly disagreed that the option to drop the course had a role in their not being mentored.

Table 6: Frequencies and percentages on dropping course and mentoring

	Not Mentored	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Course withdrawal rule		
Strongly Agree	N/A	N/A
Tend to Agree	3	9.7%
Tend to Disagree	6	19.4%
Strongly Disagree	17	54.8%
Don't know about this option	3	9.7%
Total	31	100%

The third variable used to measure the association of institutional policies and classroom practices on mentoring is the option to drop the lowest exam grade. Hypothesis seven stated that among those who were not mentored, more students would agree than disagree that the option of dropping the lowest exam score influenced their decision. The frequencies and percentages of dropping an exam score as an influence among the non-mentored students are presented in Table 7. Hypothesis seven was not supported by the data, although statistical tests were not done. Twenty-five percent agreed that dropping the lowest exam score contributed to them not seeking help. The majority (75%) of the non-mentored students disagreed that the option to drop the lowest exam grade played a role in whether they sought help.

Table 7:   Frequencies and percentages on dropping lowest exam grade and mentoring

	Not Mentored	
	Frequency	Percentage
Dropping exam grade		
Strongly Agree	2	6.5%
Tend to Agree	6	19.4%
Tend to Disagree	14	45.2%
Strongly Disagree	6	19.4%
Don't know about this option	2	6.5%
Total	31	96.8%

Perceptions of help seeking

Four variables were used to measure student perceptions of help seeking. The first variable was having a clear understanding of how the mentoring program worked. Hypothesis eight states that students who have a clear understanding of how the mentoring program works are more likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of having a clear understanding and help seeking is presented in Table 8. Hypothesis eight was supported by these data. Students who choose mentoring indicated that they had a clear understanding of the program. In contrast, students who did not chose mentoring indicated that they did not have a clear understand of the mentoring program.   Among those who were not mentored, an almost equal number of them agreed and disagreed that they had a clear understanding. In contrast, 96% of those mentored had a clear understanding.

Table 8: Crosstabulation and frequencies between clear understanding and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Clear understanding		
Strongly Agree	18	1
	48.6%	3.2%
Tend to Agree	18	14
	48.6%	45.2%
Tend to Disagree	1	12
	2.7%	38.7%
Strongly Disagree	0	4
	0%	12.9%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 28.712*
N=68
* <= .001

The second variable used to measure perceptions of help seeking was responses to the question if they would be embarrassed to be mentored. The ninth hypothesis related to perceptions of help seek states that students who are embarrassed about seeking help from a mentor are less likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of being embarrassed and mentoring is presented in Table 9. Hypothesis nine was not supported by the data. Surprisingly, the relationship was not in the direction predicted. Contrary to expectations, more of the mentored students agreed that being mentored is embarrassing than did those who did not elect to be mentored. Although the hypothesis is not

supported, most students in both the mentored and the non-mentored group indicated that it is not embarrassing to be mentored (76% and 87% respectively).

Table 9: Crosstabulation and frequencies between embarrassment and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Embarrassment		
Strongly Agree	3 8.1%	1 3.2%
Tend to Agree	6 16.2%	3 9.7%
Tend to Disagree	10 27.0%	20 64.5%
Strongly Disagree	18 48.6%	7 22.6%
Total	37 100%	31 100%

Chi-square 9.720
N=68
* <=.05

The third variable used to measure perceptions of help seeking was that seeking help is a sign of weakness. The tenth hypothesis related to perceptions of help seek is that students who perceive help seeking as a sign of weakness are less likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of perceiving help seeking as a weakness and participation in mentoring is presented in Table 10. Hypothesis ten was not supported by the data. Furthermore, the results were not in the direction specified in the hypothesis. A greater percentage of the mentored students than non-mentored students agreed that being mentored is a sign of weakness. However, most of the mentored (86%) and non-

48

mentored (90%) students disagreed that seeking help from a mentor is not a sign of

weakness.

Table 10: Crosstabulation and frequencies between weakness and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Weakness		
Strongly Agree	2 5.4	0 .0%
Tend to Agree	3 8.1%	3 9.7%
Tend to Disagree	13 35.1%	16 51.6%
Strongly Disagree	19 51.4%	12 38.7%
Total	37 100%	31 100%

Chi-square 3.388
N=68
* <=.05

The fourth variable used to measure perceptions of help seeking was the belief

that help seeking is for less intelligent students. The eleventh hypothesis states that

students who perceive being mentored are for students less intelligent than them are less

likely to seek help. The crosstabulation regarding the belief that mentoring is for less

intelligent students and help seeking is presented in Table 11. Hypothesis eleven was not

supported by the data.   However, the results were in the direction predicted. A greater

percentage of the non-mentored (20%) students than mentored (8%) students agreed that

being mentored is for students less intelligent than them. However, most of the mentored

and non-mentored students disagreed that seeking help from a mentor is for students less intelligent than them.

Table 11: Crosstabulation and frequencies between less intelligent students and mentoring

	Mentoring	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Less intelligent students		
Strongly Agree	2	1
	5.4%	3.2%
Tend to Agree	1	5
	2.7%	16.1%
Tend to Disagree	17	11
	45.9%	35.5%
Strongly Disagree	17	14
	45.9%	45.2%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 4.078
N=68
*<=.05, ** (not sig.)

History with mentors

Two variables were used to measure the students' history with mentors. The first variable dealt with having mentors at Virginia Tech. Hypothesis twelve states that students who have had previous experiences with mentors at Virginia Tech will be more likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of having mentors at Virginia Tech and help seeking is presented in Table 12. Hypothesis twelve was not supported by the data and the results were not in the direction predicted. The data suggested that more of the non-mentored students had previous experiences with mentors than the mentored students at

50

Virginia Tech. However, the majority of both the mentored and non-mentored students indicated that they did not have previous experiences with mentors here at Virginia Tech.

Table 12: Crosstabulation and frequencies between mentors at Virginia Tech students and mentoring

	Mentored	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Mentors at Virginia Tech		
Yes	**3**	**6**
	8.1%	**19.4%**
No	**34**	**25**
	91.9%	**80.6%**
Total	**37**	**31**
	100%	**100%**

Chi-square 1.858
N=68
* <=.05

The second variable dealt with having mentors in high school. The thirteenth hypothesis related to perceptions of help seek is that students who have had previous experiences with mentors in high school will be more likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of having mentors in high school and help seeking is presented in Table 13. Hypothesis thirteen was not supported by the data.   However, the results were in the direction I predicted. It is evident that more of the mentored students than non-mentored students indicated that they had previous experiences with mentors in high school. Furthermore, most of the non-mentored students indicated that they didn't have previous experiences with mentors in high school.

Table 13: Crosstabulation and frequencies between mentors in high school and mentoring

	Mentor	
	Mentoring	**Non-Mentored**
Yes	16	8
	43.2%	25.8%
No	21	23
	56.8%	74.2%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 2.246
N=68
*<=.05

Time commitment

Three variables were used to measure time commitment. The first variable was number of hours work. Hypothesis fourteen states that students who work a lot of hours are less likely to seek help. The t-test difference of the means for mentored and non-mentored for work hours is presented in Table 14. Hypothesis fourteen was supported by the data. The data suggested that non-mentored students reported having on average more work hours that the mentored students.

Table 14: T-test difference of means for mentored and non-mentored for work hours

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Mentored	37	.6216	1.16312	-.931*
Non-Mentored	31	.9355	1.61112	

* = <=.05, **=.01….* = <=.05, **=.01….

The second variable used was other time commitments. The fifteenth hypothesis states that students who indicate having other commitments that prevent time for tutoring are less likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of students having other time commitments and help seeking is presented in Table 15. Hypothesis fifteen was supported by the data. Non-mentored students have more time commitments that the mentored students that prevented time for mentoring offered in the class. Some of the time commitments may include: clubs, athletics teams, and time spent with other courses.

Table 15: Crosstabulation and frequencies between other time commitments and mentoring

	Mentor	
	Mentoring	Non-Mentored
Other time commitments		
Yes	12	23
	32.4%	74.2%
No	25	8
	67.6%	25.8%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 11.777*
N=68
*<=.05

The third variable used was the amount of credits taking. The sixteenth hypothesis states that students who are taking many credit hours this semester are less likely to seek help. The t-test difference of the means for mentored and non-mentored for credits taking is presented in Table 16. Hypothesis sixteen was not supported by the data. Both the mentored and non-mentored group reported taking on average the same amount of credit hours.

Table 16: T-test difference of means for mentored and non-mentored for credits taking

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Mentored	37	4.243	.8302	.619
Non-Mentored	31	4.097	1.0756	
* = <=.05, **=.01….* = <=.05, **=.01….				

College Demographics

One variable was used to measure college demographics. The variable was status at Virginia Tech. The eighteenth hypothesis states that first year students are more likely than other students to seek help. The crosstabulation of whether the student was a first year or not and help seeking is presented in Table 17. Hypothesis seventeen was supported by the data. Most of the mentored students reported not having a GPA which is an indicator that they may be a first year student. However, more of the non-mentored students reported having a GPA here at Virginia Tech which supports that they may not be first year students.

Table 17: Crosstabulation and frequencies between status at Virginia Tech and mentoring

	Mentor	
	Mentoring	Non-Mentored
Status at Virginia Tech		
Freshmen	35	17
	94.6%	54.8%
Other	2	14
	5.4%	45.2%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 14.817*
N=68
*<=.05

Respondent demographics

Two variables were used to measure respondent demographics. The first variable was gender. Hypothesis eighteen states students who are female are more likely to seek help. The crosstabulation of gender and help seeking is presented in Table 18. Hypothesis nineteen was not supported by the data. However, the percentages show that females were slightly more likely than males to be mentored.

Table 18: Crosstabulation and frequencies between gender and mentoring

	Mentor	
	Mentoring	Non-Mentored
Gender		
Female	19	12
	51.4%	38.7%
Male	18	19
	48.6%	61.3%
Total	37	31
	100%	100%

Chi-square 1.087**
N=68
*<=.05, ** (not sig.)

The second variable is race. Hypothesis nineteen states that white students are more likely than students of other races to seek help. The crosstabulation of race and help seeking is presented in Table 19. Hypothesis nineteen was not supported by the data. However, the percentages show that white students (64%) were more likely than students of other races (35%) be mentored.

Table 19: Crosstabulation and frequencies between race and mentoring

	Mentor	
	Mentoring	Non-Mentored
Race		
White	24	23
	64.9	74.2%
Other	13	8
	35.1	25.8%
Total	37	31
	100	100%

Chi-square .688**
N=68
*<=.05, ** (not sig.)

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study examined various factors that inhibit help seeking among at-risk undergraduate students who did not avail themselves of the peer-mentoring program organized for their introductory sociology course. To examine factors that inhibit help seeking among the mentored and non-mentored students in the introductory class I designed a survey. Most of the survey items were gleamed from theoretical constructs and the empirical literature that address help seeking. I administered the survey to Dr. Snizek's introductory sociology class where the mentoring program was being implemented. The survey and data were organized into seven domains. The domains were: classroom behavior; students' self-perception; institutional policies and classroom practices; perceptions of help seeking; history with mentors; time commitment; college demographics; and respondent demographics. From these seven domains, twenty hypotheses were generated.

Among the 68 students who were eligible to take part in the mentoring, only 37 did. Why students would not take advantage of a program that is free and designed to help them is puzzling. The theoretical literature provides some guidance. For instance, Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna (1982) reviewed literature that found that according to equity theory that people aspire to maintain equity in their interpersonal relations because inequitable relations produce discomfort (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). Therefore, individuals who do not anticipate being able to reciprocate aid often refrain from seeking help, are also slow to ask for it, and are more likely to discontinue the aid relationship before reaching their performance goals. Thus, maybe one reason the

students did not seek help because they were not able to return the aid. Another clue as to why students might not seek help can also be explained by this theory. Equity theory suggests that individuals are least likely to seek help from someone like themselves. This theory suggests that receiving aid from a similar other may stress the inferiority and dependency of the recipient (Fisher and Nadler, 1974). Given that this is a peer-mentoring program, the use of peers might deter some, although other research has found the effectiveness of peers as mentors.

Reactance theory, in contrast to the above, predicts that individuals want to preserve their "freedom of choice" and any reduction in this freedom can be associated with the motivation to restore the perceived loss of freedom. Therefore, according the reactance framework, when aid is seen as threatening it will arouse reactance because the freedom to perform present or future actions is perceived to be threatened by that aid (Brehm, 1966 as cited by Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna, 1982). The mentoring program offered in the sociology class requires students to give up free time. Students are also required to give up the freedom of choosing when they can receive aid because the aid is only available during certain times. Thus, reactance theory would predict students might not take advantage of the aid.

Similar to the diverse theories which attempts to explain help seeking, the empirical literature shows a range of variables that putatively relate to help seeking.   In this study, I organized the literature review into five categories: personal characteristics of the student, attributions made by the student, past performance, formal vs. informal help, and gender. In my study I tested hypotheses derived from these categories and added variables missing from the literature. The following are the results from my study.

Classroom behavior

According to the data, missing class did not affect whether students chose mentoring. Also, coming to class late or leaving early was not related to seeking help. However, it was surprising to find that on average the non-mentored students were less likely to come to class late or leave class early than the mentored students, but the differences were small with both groups missing less than one day.

However, not having a clear understanding of what the mentoring program is was related to enrolling in the mentoring program. One could assume that skipping class or arriving late or leaving early might be a reason for not clearing understanding of the mentoring program since it was discussed in class. However, since neither of the groups reported missing a lot of class time, not having a clear understanding of the mentoring program cannot be explained by class attendance.

Students' self-perception

Attributions have received a great deal of attention in the literature on help seeking. Ames and Lau (1982) suggest that an attributional pattern relevant to help seeking involved the following beliefs: "that one's basic ability is adequate, that effort results in increased chances of success, that one did not put forth sufficient effort on the prior test, and that external factors, excuses in the form of uncontrollable factors associated with the task [….] did not inhibit performance" (Ames and Lau, p. 415).

This study provides support for the importance of attributions, or self-perceptions on help seeking. The data supported both hypotheses regarding students' self-perception. Students that chose mentoring believed that the mentoring program would help improve their grades. However, those students who were confident that they could improve their

grade without the mentoring program were less likely to participate in the mentoring program.

Institutional policies and classroom practices

While reviewing the literature, I found that there were very few studies that included institutional policies and classroom practices and their association with help seeking, especially among undergraduate students. Therefore, my unique contribution in this work is the inclusion of institutional policies and classroom practices variables that might have an impact on help seeking. In my analysis, I expected to find that both institutional policies and classroom practice negatively impacting help seeking. The three variables that I used to assess this domain were the withdrawal rule, the option of dropping the course, and the option of dropping the lowest exam grade in the course.

The data indicates that the majority of the non-mentored students tended to disagree that the course withdrawal rule option prevented them from seeking help. The data showed that one student out of thirty-one students tended to agree that the option to withdraw from the class prevented them from seeking help. The majority of the non-mentored students also tended to disagree that the option of dropping the course interfered with their decision not to seek help. Finally, the option of dropping the lowest exam grade tended not to interfere with the majority of the non-mentored students' decision to not seek help. However, eight out of thirty-one students agreed that the option of dropping the lowest exam grade led non-enrollment in the mentoring program.

Perceptions of help seeking

In the literature, Ames and Lau (1982) found that low performers were much more likely to attend help sessions when they made help-relevant attribution. Moreover,

the students most likely to attend help sessions are those who both receive positive information about the usefulness of help sessions and who made help-relevant attributions.

In my study mentored students tended to have a clearer understand than the non-mentored students about the mentoring program and the benefits of the program. Therefore, it can be suggested that according to Ames and Lau (1982), the students that sought help made help-relevant attributions. However, it appears that mentored students are more likely to believe obtaining help is embarrassing. This finding is opposite of what I hypothesized. I hypothesized that non-mentored students would perceive being mentored as embarrassing. It is worth noting that most students in both groups indicated that they did not see getting help as embarrassing. Also, the majority of the non-mentored and mentored students did not think that seeking help was a sign of weakness or perceived help seeking for students less intelligent than them. Clearly, students did not see mentoring as a stigma to be avoided.

History with mentors

Although having a mentor from high school or Virginia Tech was not associated with students seeking help, more non-mentored students indicated that they had mentors at Virginia Tech than the mentored group. This was not in the direction of my hypothesis. However, the mentored students did report having more mentors in high school than the non-mentored group. This finding was in the direction I hypothesized.

Time commitment

I hypothesized that time constraints would prevent students from participating in the mentoring program. For this domain, I included variables that asked about work

hours, other commitments, and credit hours taking. The data showed that both work hours and other commitments (clubs, athletics teams, and time spent with other courses) were related to students not participating in the mentoring program. However, the amount of credit hours taking was, on average, the same for both the mentored and non-mentored groups. Therefore, credit hours did not inhibit the non-mentored students from seeking help.

College demographics

The affect of college GPA and year in school was tested using one variable. This variable was status at Virginia Tech. I hypothesized that students who were first year students would be more likely to seek help. The hypothesis was confirmed with the first year students more likely than the other groups to be mentored.

Respondent demographics

I used the variables of race and gender to test the domain of respondent demographics. I hypothesized that females are more like to seek help than males. I also hypothesized that white students are more likely that other students to seek help. Neither of my hypotheses were confirmed by the data.

Limitations of the research

There are a few limitations to my research that affected my results. In the 109 that failed the first exam, only 68 decided to complete my survey. Therefore, this contributed to my limited sample size.   Statistical tests are affected by sample size and thus may be a factor in why some of my hypotheses were not shown to be supported.

The lack of a probability sample affects the ability to generalize from this study. What I have learned is informative about this one particular class in this one semester.

However, I would not generalize to Virginia Tech or beyond. Nonetheless, I do think my results are informative and could be useful for future studies.

Finally, a weakness of this study is that the survey was created and distributed prior to a complete review of the literature. The survey would have been considerably different if time constraints had not dictated the order in which this study was done. I also should have added questions about social class to my survey.

<u>Summary</u>

Studying factors that contribute to the lack of help seeking among at-risk undergraduate students is important because students and parents spend thousands of dollars towards college education. Hence, both students and parents usually expect long term benefits.   However, the realty is that many of those students and parents will be disappointed because students often discontinue their college education, many because of poor academic performance. Schools that value high graduation rates should be encouraged to develop supportive programs that help students succeed. Peer mentoring has been shown to be effective. However, not all students take advantage of these programs. Consequently, research such as this that explore

why students do not seek help needs to continue.

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STUDENT STUDY HABITS SURVEY

We are interested in learning more about student study habits and their willingness to take part in mentoring/tutorial sessions and study groups. <u>For the purposes of this study, mentoring and tutoring have the same meaning</u>. For each item, please circle the answer that best fits your opinion or situation. Your answers are <u>confidential</u> and will not affect your grade in any way. However, we need for you to include your ID number on the form for possible future follow-up studies, and to award you one extra credit toward your final grade in the course.

1. This <u>course</u> is <u>interesting</u> to me.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

2. This <u>course</u> is <u>important</u> because it fulfills a <u>core requirement</u> for graduation.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

3. This <u>course</u> is <u>important</u> to me because I need the <u>credits for graduation</u>.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

4. Approximately how many <u>classes</u> did you miss <u>prior</u> to Exam I?
    1. 1
    2. 2
    3. 3
    4. 4
    5. 5
    6. 6
    7. 7 or more
    8. none

5. Approximately how many times did you either <u>come late or leave class early</u>, <u>prior</u> to Exam 1?
   1. 1
   2. 2
   3. 3
   4. 4
   5. 5
   6. 6
   7. 7 or more
   8. none

6. Approximately how many <u>hours</u> did you spend studying for Exam I?
   1. 0-1
   2. 2-3
   3. 4-5
   4. 6-7
   5. 8-9
   6. 10 or more

7. I know I am capable of doing better than I did on Exam I.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Tend to agree
   3. Tend to disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

8. I now have a better idea of <u>how to study</u> for the <u>next exam</u>.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Tend to agree
   3. Tend to disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

9. The opportunity to <u>drop this exam</u> affected how much I studied for Exam I.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Tend to agree
   3. Tend to disagree
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Don't know about this option

10. The opportunity to <u>drop this course</u> affected how much I studied for Exam I.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Tend to agree
   3. Tend to disagree
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Don't know about this option

11. The "Course Withdrawal Rule" affected how much I studied for Exam I.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
    5. Don't know about the rule

12. Have you ever had previous experiences with tutors/mentors here at Virginia Tech?
    1. Yes
    2. No

13. Have you ever had previous experiences with tutors/mentors in high school?
    1. Yes
    2. No

14. I have a clear understanding of how the tutoring/mentoring program works for this class.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

15. I am certain the tutoring/mentoring program would help improve my grade.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

16. I don't have time for the tutoring/mentoring offered in this class.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

17. I am certain I can improve my grade on the next exam without being mentored/tutored.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

18. I plan to get help if I don't do well on Exam II.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

19. The option of dropping this exam grade led to my not enrolling in the class tutoring/mentoring program.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
    5. Don't know about this option
    6. Does not apply since I enrolled in the program

20. Right now, on a scale of 1 to 7, how likely do you think you are to drop the grade you earned on Exam I?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely will not drop			don't know			Absolutely will drop

21. The option of dropping this course led to my not enrolling in the class tutoring/mentoring program.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
    5. Don't know about this option
    6. Does not apply since I enrolled in the program

22. On a scale of 1 to 7, how likely are you to drop this course?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely will not drop			don't know			Absolutely will drop

23. The "Course Withdrawal Rule" led to my not enrolling in the class tutoring/mentoring program.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
    5. Don't know about the rule
    6. Does not apply since I enrolled in the program

24. On a scale of 1 to 7, how likely are you to use the "Course Withdrawal Rule"?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Absolutely
will <u>not</u> drop

don't
know

Absolutely
will drop

25. I'm embarrassed to get tutoring/mentoring.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

26. I think seeking help from a tutor/mentor is a sign of weakness.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

27. Being mentored/tutored is for students less intelligent than me.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree

28. Do you know of other services offered by Virginia Tech that could help you improve your grade on the next exam?
    1. Yes
    2. No

29. If you work, as well as go to school, how many <u>hours a week</u> do you <u>work</u>?
    1. 0, I don't have a job
    2. less than 10 hours per week
    3. 10-20 per week
    4. 21-30 per week
    5. 31-40 per week
    6. more than 40 per week

30. Do you have other commitments (clubs, athletic teams, other courses) that prevent you from having time to be tutored/mentored?
    1. Yes
    2. No

31. How would you rate your time management skills?
    1. Very good
    2. Good
    3. Average
    4. Below average
    5. Very bad

32. Approximately how many total credits have you accumulated <u>here at Tech</u>?
    1. 0, This my first semester here at Tech
    2. 1-15
    3. 16-30
    4. 31-45
    5. 46-60
    6. 61-90
    7. 91-120
    8. over 120
    9. Not sure

33. What was your overall approximate Grade Point Average (GPA) <u>in high school</u>?
    1. 1.6-2.0
    2. 2.1-2.5
    3. 2.6-3.0
    4. 3.1-3.5
    5. 3.6-4.0
    6. Does not apply to me

34. What is your approximate Grade Point Average (GPA) <u>here at Virginia Tech</u>?
    1. Don't have one yet
    2. 1.0-1.5
    3. 1.6-2.0
    4. 2.1-2.5
    5. 2.6-3.0
    6. 3.1-3.5
    7. 3.6-4.0

35. In what College is your current major(s)?
    1. College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
    2. College of Architecture and Urban Studies
    3. College of Arts and Sciences
    4. Pamplin College of Business
    5. College of Human Resources and Education
    6. College of Engineering
    7. College of Natural Resources
    8. Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine
    9. Universal Studies (No Major)

36. How many credits are you taking this semester?
    1. 1-5
    2. 6-9
    3. 10-12
    4. 13-15
    5. 16-18
    6. 19 or more

37. Are you a Transfer student?
    1. Yes
    2. No

38. I am less like to worry about the outcome of this course because I have extra credits.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Tend to agree
    3. Tend to disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
    5. Does not apply to me because I don't have any extra credits

39. What is the highest level of education of your parent(s) or legal guardian(s)?
    1. Elementary (Grades 1-5)
    2. Middle School (Grades 6-8)
    3. Some High School (Grades 9-11)
    4. Diploma
    5. Some College or Associate College Degree
    6. Four Year College Degree
    7. Graduate Degree(s)
    8. Post college

40. What is your gender?
    1. Female
    2. Male

41. What is your age?
    1. 17
    2. 18
    3. 19
    4. 20
    5. 21
    6. 22
    7. 23 or greater

42. What category best describes your ethnicity/race?
   1. African American, Black American, Black
   2. Asian American, Pacific Islander
   3. Hispanic/Latino(a)
   4. Native American, American Indian, Alaskan Native
   5. White
   6. Other

Appendix B. Gender: Frequencies and Percentages

Gender	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Males	18	48.6%	19	61.3%
Female	19	51.4%	12	38.7%
Total	37	100%	31	100%

Appendix C. Age: Frequencies and Percentages

Age	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
17	1	2.7%	*	*
18	27	73.0%		19 61.3%
19	6	16.2%		7 22.6%
20	2	5.4%	4	12.9%
21	*	*	*	*
22	*	*	*	*
23 or greater	1	2.7%	1	3.2%
Total	37	100%	31	100%

*There were no students in the following age category.

Appendix D. Race: Frequencies and Percentages

Race	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Black	4	10.8%	4	12.9%
Asian	6	16.2%	2	6.5%
Hispanic	1	2.7%	1	3.2%
White	24	64.9%	23	74.2%
Other	2	5.4%	1	3.2%
Total	37	100%	31	100%

Appendix E. Highest Level of Education of Parent or Guardian: Frequencies and Percentages

	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Some High School	2	5.4%	2	6.5%
Diploma	4	10.8%	3	9.7%
Some College/Associate Degree	4	10.8%	2	6.5%
Four Year College Degree	14	37.8%	14	45.2%
Graduate Degree	12	32.4%	8	25.8%
Post College	1	2.7%	2	6.5%
Total	37	100%	31	100%

Appendix F. Grade Point Average (GPA) in High School: Frequencies and Percentages

	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
GPA	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.6-2.0	*	*	1	3.2%
2.1-2.5	*	*	*	*
2.6-3.0	6	16.2%	5	16.1%
3.1-3.5	14	37.8%	10	32.3%
3.6-4.0	17	45.9%	15	48.4%
Total	37	100%	31	100%

* There were no students with the following GPA

Appendix G. Grade Point Average (GPA) at Virginia Tech: Frequencies and Percentages

	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
GPA	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Don't have one yet	35	94.6%	17	54.8%
1.0-1.5	*	*	1	3.2%
1.6-2.0	1	2.7%	3	9.7%
2.1-2.5	*	*	5	16.1%
2.6-3.0	*	*	4	12.9%
3.1-3.5	1	2.7%	1	3.2%
3.6-4.0	*	*	*	*
Total	37	100%	31	100%

* There were no students with the following GPA

Appendix H. Credits Taking this Semester: Frequencies and Percentages

	Mentored		Non-Mentored	
Credits	**Frequency**	**(Percentage)**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1-5	*	*	1	3.2%
6-9	*	*	*	*
10-12	9	24.3%	9	29.0%
13-15	10	27.0%	7	22.6%
16-18	18	48.6%	13	41.9%
19 or more	*	*	1	3.2%

*There were no students taking the following credits

Vitae:

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Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Blacksburg, VA
Masters of Science, July 2003
Department of Sociology

Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH.
Bachelor of Arts, May 1999
Majors: Psychology and African American Studies

Professional Experience

2002-Present   Graduate Assistant
               Sociology Department, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University,
               Blacksburg, VA.

2001-2002   Assistant Coordinator for the Student Transition Program Center For
               Academic Enrichment and Excellence, Virginia Polytechnic & State
               University, Blacksburg, VA.

2000-2001   Coordinator of the Roxbury Prep. Charter school After School Program
               Roxbury Prep. Charter School, Roxbury, MA.

1999-2000   World History Teacher
               Roxbury Prep. Charter School, Roxbury, MA.

Certificates and Honorary Organizations

2002   Race and Social Policy Certification

| 2002 | Phi Kappa Phi |
| 2001 | Alpha Kappa Delta |

Teaching Experiences

2003	"Martin Luther King, Jr.-The Man Behind The Legend." Lecture presented in Social Problems, course taught by Dr. Dale Wimberley. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg.
2002	"The Death of Black Women's Bodies: The Role of Welfare Reform Policy." Lecture presented in The History of Black Women in America, course taught by Tiffany Gayle Chenault. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg.
2002	"What is Suicide? And Social Factors that Contribute to Suicide". Guest lecture presented in Medical Sociology, course taught by Dr. Deanna Alexander. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg.
2002	"Panel Discussion: Dating Practices." Guest Panelist in Dating, Marriage and Divorce, course taught by Maria Macabuac, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg.

Teaching Interest

Social Problems
Inequality
Deviances
Minority Group Relations
Race and Social Policy

Presentations

| 2003 | James, Nicole E. "African American Women and Depression: New Directions for Research" Presentation schedule for the Southern Sociological Conferences, March 26-30 in New Orleans, LA. |
| 2002 | James, Nicole E. "The Lack of Help-Seeking Among At-Risk Undergraduate Students" Presentation schedule for the Southern Sociological Conferences, April 3-6 in Baltimore, MD. |

Workshops and Panels

| 2003 | Panel member on success for minority graduate students, sponsored by the Graduate School, Virginia Tech. |

2003	Participant in the "Diversity Summit," sponsored by the Dean of Students Office, Virginia Tech.
2002	Panel member on success for minority graduate students, sponsored by the Graduate School. Virginia Tech.
2002	Panel member for "Preview Weekend," sponsored by the Graduate School, Virginia Tech.
2002	Attended a grant writing presentation, sponsored by the Graduate School, Virginia Tech.
2001	Panel member on diversity, sponsored by the Black Graduate Student Organization, Virginia Tech.

Services

2002	Sexual Assault and Violence Educator, Virginia Tech.
2002	President of the Black Graduate Student Organization, Virginia Tech.
2002	Black Graduate Student Organization liaison to the Graduate Student Association, Virginia Tech.
2001	Acting Vice-President of the Black Graduate Student Organization, Virginia Tech.

Research Experience

2002	"The Resiliencies of Battered Women Who Seek Shelter Assistance in Rural Communities". Research Assistant to Dr. April Few. Grant sponsored by ASPIRES of Virginia Tech.
2002	"The United States Air Force Gender Symmetry on Domestic Violence". Research Assistant to Dr. April Few. Grant sponsored by the United States Air Force.

Fellowships in Progress

2002	Pre-Doctoral Award, Ford Foundation

Professional Organizations

Southern Sociological Association
Black Graduate Student Organization
Graduate Student Association