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Canada

Transitions '98:

Evaluation of a Support Group Program for First Year University Students

By

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Abstract

The transition from high-school to university can be a difficult time in the lives of students. The present study examined the effectiveness of an intensive, small-group, long-term orientation to university program. One hundred and eleven first-year students were assigned to either an intervention-discussion group, or a questionnaire-only control group. In August, before coming to university, all participants completed measures including social support, self-esteem, perceived stress, depression and questions assessing demographic information. Those in the discussion group were assigned to one of six groups, which met regularly for 9 weeks for 90-minute sessions. During the meetings, topics focused on creating and maintaining social ties. In November, during the seventh week of meetings, a post-intervention questionnaire was completed containing all the pre-intervention measures mentioned and including an adjustment to university scale. A follow-up questionnaire was completed in March, including all the above mentioned measures. The results indicate that the control group had higher mean scores on the SACQ academic adjustment sub-scale in November when compared to the discussion group; however, by March, the discussion group participants had higher mean scores on the SACQ academic adjustment sub-scale than did the control group participants. Finally, the intervention may have had more of an effect on female participants, as females in the intervention program did not differ from those in the control group in August or November, but showed significantly lower levels of depression in March. Males in the intervention group did not show any improvement over time, relative to the control group males. Therefore, the results show promise to the benefits of a social support intervention in easing the transition to university.

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Introduction

Late adolescence is a difficult time in the human life-span, as youth undergo

various transitions. During this time, individuals strive to develop the capacity to work

towards a specific career and involve themselves in an extended intimate relationship.

Many youths undergo another major change, the transition from high school to

university. Not all students make this transition successfully; they may develop

psychological difficulties, and in the extreme, fail to complete their degrees. In order to

assist students in making the transition to university and alleviating the students'

numerous difficulties such as health and emotional problems, researchers have created

various intervention programs.

The purpose of the present research was to assess the effectiveness of an

intensive, small-group, long-term orientation to university program. There are several

issues that need to be discussed in order to understand the need for such an intervention

program. In the first section the events that occur during the transition to university will

be discussed. Next, the role that social support plays during the transition to university

will be examined. The section following will describe the expectations a student has

before beginning university, since these influence his or her experience there. Following

this, the paper discusses the experiences of depression and stress that may result from

some of the high demands placed upon the student. The next section examines student

attrition, which can be the consequence of stresses experienced by the students during the

transition. Finally, in order to address the problem of student attrition, and to assist

students through some of the difficulties they experience during this transition, a wide

range of programs have been developed. The numerous programs that have been used to

help ease this transition are examined, followed by a description of the present study.

The Transition to University

As individuals mature, they go through numerous changes in life. These

transitions often present both significant challenges for the individual, as well as

opportunities for growth. A number of models have been proposed to identify some of

the factors that influence the way one will adjust to major life changes. One such model

is that proposed by Schlossberg (1981). According to Schlossberg (1981): "(a) transition

can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about

oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and

relationships" (p. 5). Based on this definition, she proposed a model for analysing

human adaptation to these transitions. Schlossberg (1981) suggested that there are three

sets of factors that influence how individuals adapt to transition: (1) the characteristics of

the particular transition (e.g., positive or negative affect, gradual or sudden onset, and

permanent, temporary or uncertain duration), (2) the characteristics of the pre- and post-

transition environments (e.g. physical setting, internal support systems and institutional

supports), and (3) the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition (e.g.,

age, health, value orientation and socioeconomic status). These three sets of factors

combine to determine how one will adjust to a particular transition.

One major transition that individuals undergo early in their life as an adult is the

transition from high school to university. To begin, it is important to understand what occurs when a student decides to enter university. Thousands of students experience the transition to university each year. Some students make this passage with ease, while others have difficulty and may experience stress and psychological problems that may, in the extreme, lead them to withdraw from their studies.

The transition to university can be a difficult time in the lives of young people, as there are many changes occurring. Some students move away from home and their established social support system. Many students move to new cities, where they meet new people and have new living accommodations. These changes all require adjustments that have to be made and often this is the individual's first time away from home and the first time he or she is required to perform the tasks that were previously completed by parents (Koplik & Devito, 1987). Students in the transition from high school to university may lack support, in terms of meeting their social, emotional and financial needs (Rice, 1992). Entering the new university environment, there is uncertainty associated with the expectations which are placed upon the new student. Additionally, if the student does leave home, there is less parental supervision and thus the student has more freedom to make personal choices. This can be overwhelming if the youth was previously dependent on his or her parents.

At this time, peers play a large role and may pressure the student to experiment with sex, drugs and alcohol. Peers can also play a more positive and supportive role in the transition to university, making the adjustment easier. The next section discusses the role that social support plays in the transition to university.

Social Support and the Transition to University

Many researchers have examined social adjustment in the transition to university.

In a study by Compas, Wagner, Slavin and Vanatta (1986), 64 adolescents (12 males, 52

females) were asked to complete a life events scale, a social support questionnaire and a

symptom checklist as they were finishing high school, two weeks after starting college

and 3 months after the start of college classes. Compas et al. (1986) found that students

were most vulnerable to stress during the first two weeks of college. They also found

that dissatisfaction with social support was related to a tendency to view events as

negative. This suggests that having a satisfying social support system may make the

transition to university easier. The researchers suggested focussing on coping

techniques, as well as developing social networks, when creating an intervention

program (Compas et al., 1986).

Another study which examined the development of social networks was that by

Hays and Oxley (1986). Eighty-nine first-year university students (47 females, 42 males)

completed three sets of questionnaires during the fourth, eighth and twelfth weeks of

school. Both dormitory residents (34) and commuters living with their parents (55)

participated in the study. The measures included questions about university life and

social relationships. The researchers compared those who lived in residence to those

who lived with their parents and found that the two groups did not differ in the size of

their social networks. They did find that the composition of the social network differed

for the two groups, as those who lived in residence had a significantly higher percentage

of new acquaintances than those who lived at home. Those living at home had more

relatives in their social network than did those living in residence. The researchers noted that as the term continued, the composition of the commuters' social network began to change and more students entered the social network. Incorporating more students into the commuters' social network was considered adaptive. College adjustment was strongly associated with the number of fellow university students in the focus individual's social network. Hays and Oxley (1986) also found gender differences with women interacting more frequently with their social network than men.

Social support was also examined by Aspinwall and Taylor (1992). They administered measures of social support to students in their first year of university, at two points in time, during the second week of their first year, and three months later (at the start of their winter quarter). At these times, they asked students to indicate the extent to which they looked for social support in dealing with the stresses of university life ("seeking support"), as well as the amount of support they had received ("acquired support"), and how satisfied they were with this support ("support satisfaction"). They also assessed students' adjustment at each of these times. They found that students with higher levels of self-esteem and desire for control were more active in seeking social support to help them deal with the stresses they experienced when starting university. Individuals who were more active in seeking support at this time, in turn, tended to have acquired greater support after three months at university, and were more satisfied with the support they had received. Higher levels of acquired support and support satisfaction were related to better adjustment to university. As in the Hays and Oxley (1986) study, Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) found that women were more active in seeking social

support as a coping strategy than were men.

In summary, these studies suggest that social support plays an important role in the transition to university. Poor social support may make the individual vulnerable to anxiety and depression (Compas et al., 1986). The student's living situation affects his or her social network, although with time and as an adaptive mechanism, the social network of those living at home begins to resemble that of those students living in residence in terms of acquiring more students into the network (Hays & Oxley, 1986). According to Aspinwall and Taylor (1992), social support predicted a more successful transition to university and those who used social support tended to have higher self-esteem and a greater desire for control. Other factors also influence the adjustment to university. The following section focuses on students' expectations about university and how these relate to the transition to university.

Expectations About University

The expectations that a student has when he or she enters university may create problems if they are different from what he or she experiences. Berdie (1966) examined the changes in perceptions of university of first-year university students, and concluded that within the first six months, students' attitudes change from positive pre-university expectations to more negative attitudes about their university experiences (Berdie, 1966). This difference between expectations and reality may be stressful for the student, as he or she may have come ill-prepared to the university and thus experienced difficulties in adjustment.

Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger and Alisat (1995) measured expectations and assessed

their relationship to adjustment throughout university. Two hundred and twenty first-year university students completed a perceived stress scale and open-ended questions about university expectations in the fall before beginning classes. In February the same students completed an adjustment to university scale. The results indicated that those students who experienced low levels of perceived stress in the fall were fairly well adjusted in February. Additionally, those students who experienced high levels of perceived stress in the fall, but had exhibited more complex thinking about university, had better adjustment than those who had more simple thinking about university. Therefore, more complex thoughts may act as stress-buffers during major life transitions such as the adjustment to university (Pancer et al., 1995).

The expectations that a student has before starting university could also determine whether the student continues with his or her studies. Shaw (1968) asked 300 incoming engineering students to describe what they expected from university and what they thought it would be like. At the end of the first year, the same students were asked to indicate what university was actually like. The expectations a student had were compared to the student's actual experiences. Shaw (1968) concluded that those who were more accurate in their expectations about university tended to remain in the engineering program, while more of those who were inaccurate tended to transfer to other departments within the university or withdraw altogether (Shaw, 1968).

These studies suggest that inaccurate expectations about university may create difficulties in adjustment and result in withdrawal, stress or depression. The following section will address these issues in more detail in terms of the demands placed upon the

student during the transition from high school to university.

Depression and Stress During the Transition to University

Numerous demands are placed upon the student during the transition to university. This section will discuss these demands and how they can lead to depression and stress. The section also focusses on an examination of the gender differences that exist in levels of depression for university students.

Arthur and Hiebert (1996) examined how individuals cope with demands during the transition to university. They examined coping styles and student demands over the students' entire first year, taking measures at four designated times (at the start of classes, end of first term, in February and at the end of first year). Participants were classified into one of three categories based upon their age: 18-19 years (direct entry), over 25 years (mature students), and 20-24 (other students). According to Arthur and Hiebert (1996), many students indicated that academic situations were stressful because they had too much work to do, the expectations of others were too high, the material they were learning was too difficult, or they were expecting too much of themselves and the nature of the work was stressful (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996). The results also show that students were less stressed at the beginning of the academic year and more stressed at the end of the year. Arthur and Hiebert (1996) also found an age difference in terms of how individuals responded to stressful situations. Younger students relied on strategies which removed them from the demanding situation, while older students prioritized activities so that they only had to deal with immediate demands. Gender differences also existed with regards to what types of strategies participants relied upon to deal with stressful

situations. Social support was more likely to be utilized by female participants than by

male participants; however, females were as likely as males to rely on problem-focussed

coping strategies (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996).

In a study by Salmela-Aro and Nurmi (1997), self-esteem, depression and

personal goals were examined over a three-year-period to assess students' transition to

university. First-year students completed questionnaires which assessed personal goals,

self-esteem and depression during the fall of first year. One year later the participants

were asked to complete a life events scale. In the students' third year of study, they were

asked to complete measures again assessing personal goals, depression, self-esteem and

life events. They found that those participants who in their first year had goals reflecting

age-graded developmental tasks (e.g., a future family) reported an increase in their well-

being in third year, in terms of higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression

(Salmela-Aro & Nurmi, 1997).

Some researchers have studied how levels of depression vary in male and female

university students (Gladstone & Koeing, 1994; Salmela-Aro & Nurmi, 1997). Salmela-

Aro and Nurmi (1997) found that in third year, women were more depressed than men.

Their results indicated that there were not any significant differences between women

and men on depression in first or second year. Gladstone and Koeing (1994) also

investigated depression in the transition from high school to university. They asked 200

university students and 325 high school students ranging in age from 13 to 23 years to

respond to measures of depression, coping, attributional styles, sex roles, attitudes

towards women, loneliness, support, and life events. Their results suggested that

depressive symptoms were reported more by high school females than high school males, while no differences were found between university males and females.

When Gladstone and Koeing (1994) examined gender differences in depression over the transition, they found that university females reported fewer depressive symptoms than did high school females, while depressive symptoms for males were stable across the transition from high school to university, indicating that first year university students were no more depressed than high school students. Salmela-Aro and Nurmi's (1997) results did not reveal any gender differences in depression until third year. These findings indicate the importance of long-term assessment and monitoring of adjustment. It is important to complete a thorough follow-up, as transition problems may evolve over longer periods of time.

The findings of the Gladstone and Koeing (1994) study should not minimize the problems that some students have in adjusting to university. It is important that first-year students deal with the various challenges that present themselves during the transition to university. Inaccurate expectations about university may lead to adjustment problems and, in extreme cases, withdrawal. Often the type and level of social support needed for facing the challenges of university are not available. Some students find their problems so overwhelming that they feel that continuing with their studies is not possible. Student attrition is a serious problem for both students and universities. The next section will discuss the severity of student attrition and provide insight as to its frequency and occurrence.

Student Attrition

One of the most serious consequences of the difficulties experienced by students during this transition is withdrawal from university. Smith (1991) indicated that as many as 40% of students fail to complete their degree within five years. A number of studies have examined university attrition (e.g., Johnson, 1994; Levitz & Noel, 1989). Levitz and Noel (1989) indicated that there is a sensitive period that occurs between the second and sixth week of first year university. Half of all the first-year students who drop out will do so during this time (Levitz & Noel, 1989). Johnson (1994) reported that during one year, 10 percent of undergraduate students in a large western Canadian university withdrew from the institution without obtaining a degree.

Johnson (1994) created a model of undergraduate student attrition, based on student characteristics, including both personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and poor health, and also academic characteristics such as absenteeism, limited hours of study and vague educational goals. The model also ties in the students' level of campus integration and institutional variables such as support services and instructor behaviour. The influences of these student and institutional characteristics are expected to jointly determine the academic performance of the student, which influences the psychological state of the student and his or her decision to withdraw from university (Johnson, 1994). There are numerous combinations of these student and institutional factors that may influence a student to continue or end his or her education. If the student is having financial difficulty and has to work long hours to make money, does not have time to make friends or to complete school work, and finds that his or her grades are not

personally acceptable, the student may choose to withdraw from university. Another student may have all those same factors, but he or she may feel a strong bond with a professor and may choose to continue with studies. There is also a difference between a student who may withdraw from university voluntarily and one who has been asked by the university to leave. In cases where the institution asked the student to withdraw, the main criterion for making this decision was the academic performance of the student (Johnson, 1994).

Several other researchers agree with Johnson's (1994) notion that both academic and personal factors contribute to student withdrawal (e.g. Levitz & Noel, 1989; Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995). Levitz and Noel (1989), after reviewing the results of their own program of research, suggested that academic boredom, limited or unrealistic expectations and academic unpreparedness may cause students to leave their studies. One thousand one hundred and eighty first-year university students in a study by Rickinson and Rutherford (1995) completed several measures including the support they sought, the difficulties they had experienced at university and their commitment to university during the seventh week of classes. Students who had withdrawn from university during the first term were also asked to indicate their reasons for leaving. Based upon the participants' level of commitment to the university and their risk of leaving, students were identified as either low-risk, medium-risk, high-risk or withdrawers, where low-risk students indicated never feeling like leaving during the first seven weeks, medium-risk students felt like leaving at some point but no longer wanted to leave at seven weeks, and high-risk students still wanted to leave at the seventh week.

Those students who left during the first term were identified as withdrawers. The 'low-risk' students used support systems appropriately and indicated some positive experiences during their first seven weeks of classes. Those who were classified as 'medium-risk' and 'high-risk' experienced more problems with respect to their classes and also reported being homesick. As many as one third of medium-risk or high- risk students did not ask for help from any of the available sources. Results suggest that the participants who withdrew indicated feeling insufficiently prepared academically and emotionally as the main reasons for withdrawal during the first term of university. The majority of withdrawers indicated that they had chosen the wrong course or were homesick (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995). Additionally, of those who withdrew, most consulted their personal tutor for advice. A large number of those students who withdrew stated that they would have liked to remain in some form of higher education (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995).

Rickinson and Rutherford (1996) went on to examine differences between students who had withdrawn from university during first term (27) and those who withdrew in the second or third term (62). Students who withdrew were sent a questionnaire which addressed issues relating to demographics, reasons for withdrawing, sources of support sought and difficulties experienced. These students were also contacted for a telephone interview which examined the influence that the students' adjustment had in their decision to withdraw from university. The results indicated that students who withdrew had difficulties with academic adjustment as well as social/personal adjustment to university. When comparing second/third-term

withdrawers to first-term withdrawers, the second/third-term withdrawers rated

difficulties with courses higher, and difficulties concerning living away from home

lower, than did first-term withdrawers. With regard to seeking extra help, a high

percentage of students in both groups did go to their personal tutors. Additionally, in

both groups, the majority of students indicated that they wanted to continue with higher

education and hoped to transfer to another institution (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1996).

Johnson (1994) also indicated that there was a difference between those students

who were asked to leave and those who did so voluntarily, with respect to time

management and study skills. Those students who were asked to leave tended to be less

efficient with respect to time management and study skills and had lower academic

performance when compared to those who withdrew on their own. These students in

turn reported having less efficient study skills and time management and had lower

performance than students who continued with their studies (Johnson, 1994).

Other students indicated that they withdrew from their studies because there were

problems with the faculty, such as a professor not being available when necessary or that

the professor was not a good teacher (Johnson, 1994). Almost fifty percent of students

in the Johnson (1994) study who withdrew from their studies indicated that they felt the

university was not providing the necessary skills for future employment. Several studies

also cited financial reasons as one of the common personal reasons for leaving university

(Arthur & Hiebert, 1996; Payne, Pullen & Padgett, 1996), although Johnson (1994)

indicated that in terms of finances, students who withdrew from university did not

significantly differ from those who continued their studies, and that many continuing

students reported having financial difficulties.

Levitz and Noel (1989) suggested that the difficulty that a student endures with the transition or adjustment to university affects the level of attrition. When students enter university, their previous support systems may be unavailable or simply unsupportive; for example, some high school friends may not be experiencing the transition to university and family may be far away. This lack of social support is a problem for students who now face new stressors and a different environment. The new situations accompanying the transition to university may appear even more difficult if the student feels a lack of social support. Students who do not make adequate social relations at this time in their lives may be at risk of quitting their studies (Levitz & Noel, 1989).

The research described in this section has focussed on students who withdraw. In order to create a program that may prevent student attrition, it is important to examine the typical continuing student. Based upon her research, Johnson (1994) created a profile of the typical continuing student. She compared 498 students who withdrew from their studies to 153 students who continued with their education. Interviews took place over the telephone, with questions about academic, financial, personal and learning characteristics and experiences of the participants. Unfortunately, Johnson (1994) does not provide a detailed summary of the types of questions asked. Johnson (1994) concluded that those students who were asked to withdraw from their studies tended to be younger than the typical student, while those students who voluntarily withdrew from their studies tended to be older. Additionally, when comparing the final high school

grades of students who withdrew to those of the continuing student, those who withdrew had lower averages (Johnson, 1994). Unfortunately, Johnson (1994) does not provide a specific description of the typical student, instead making general statements. She states that "(t)his potentially persistent undergraduate will not be too young nor too old. He or she will have been employed prior to university attendance, but will not have worked for too long. This hypothetically persistent university student has a relatively high grade 12 average" (Johnson, 1994, p. 344).

It is clear that it is not easy to make the transition to university successfully. Students face numerous obstacles and in some cases cannot overcome them to succeed at university. Student attrition is a serious problem. The literature suggests that students withdraw for both personal and academic reasons and that the typical student who withdraws differs from the typical continuing students. In order to assist with the large percentage of students who do not successfully make the transition to university, many intervention programs have been developed and implemented. As an introduction to the present intervention program, the following sections will provide a review of some of these programs.

Intervention Programs

Many programs have been designed to help students make the transition to university successfully. These programs, although all unique, may be classified into several different types: course work, self awareness, university orientation, providing information and support. It is important to have an understanding of the types of programs that have been implemented, and to note the types of problems with them when

developing a new intervention program.

Course Work

A popular type of intervention program utilizes course work as the major

component of the program. Some of the programs discussed below focus primarily on

remedial work, designed to help students attain the level of their peers in terms of

writing, reading and mathematics when entering university, rather than on psychological

adjustment. Most of these academic improvement programs also had a smaller section

which allowed for group and personal counselling to address issues related to career

choices, academic difficulties, and personal and developmental issues. Many of these

programs have been developed and implemented in order to help new students make the

transition from high school to university (Clark & Halpern, 1993; Francis, Kelly & Bell,

1993; Scherer & Wygant, 1982).

One of the earliest programs that used course work to help with the transition to

university was called the Summer Transition Quarter (STQ, Scherer & Wygant, 1982).

This program was designed to increase educational accomplishments and personal

growth. During the summer before starting university, incoming students were required

to write English and math placement tests, as well as a reading test. All students were

assigned to groups depending upon their test results, and encouraged to improve their

reading by taking a course. The students also participated in two other programs, one

that focussed on career planning and the other on decision making (Scherer & Wygant,

1982).

The complete program lasted 10 weeks. During the first five weeks of the

program, students were oriented to the university, including the policies, procedures, facilities, resources and opportunities. They were also taught communication and study skills, which included note-taking, time management and listening. Additionally, students were taught about personal development with regard to building relationships, becoming more assertive and making decisions. The final five weeks included career-planning and decision-making courses, in order to help students examine their options and determine their interests (Scherer & Wygant, 1982).

In order to evaluate the STQ, 94 students completed questionnaires in the first and last class of the program. Students completed a general information questionnaire addressing issues related to their background, university information about majors and their reasons for coming, and career goals. The students who participated in the program were compared to national norms, and on average appeared to have higher aspirations for their university careers. The researchers concluded that this program provided support for the students during the transition to university (Scherer & Wygant, 1982).

Several course work programs were aimed specifically at students in a high-risk group of either those failing university or having problems making the adjustment (Clark & Halpern, 1993; Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993). The Intensive Learning Experience (ILE) program relied on course work to assist students in making the transition to university (Clark & Halpern, 1993). The ILE was created to assist those students who were at high risk of failure at university, for example, those in the lowest quartile on university entrance placement tests. The researchers do not indicate when the program started; however, they do state that students received a year of either mathematics or English at

the pre-baccalaureate level to provide them with the necessary skills to be successful in

university. Clark and Halpern (1993) indicated that an important part of the program was

to maintain a small class size so that the interaction level between students and faculty

would be high. Additionally, students enrolled in the ILE program were monitored

closely with regard to their progress. Advising for both academic and career-related

issues was also available (Clark & Halpern, 1993).

The ILE program was evaluated on two levels. The first 'comparison' group

consisted of students who started university the year prior to the students in the ILE

program. The group of students selected were equal to the ILE program students with

regard to their scores on placement tests. The second 'cohort' group consisted of all the

incoming students, in order to compare with the ILE students. Clark and Halpern (1993)

suggest that the ILE program did make small gains with respect to higher retention rates

and GPAs for those students in the lowest quartile. When the ILE students were

compared to the 'comparison' group, the ILE students were more likely to graduate. Of

the students who graduated from university, those in the ILE program had a significantly

higher grade point average (Clark & Halpern, 1993).

The Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge program (SEEK) was also

designed as a course program for high risk students (Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993). The

program was used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of students and to assist those

who needed extra help in reading and writing. These students were enrolled in a program

to help them attain the same level as their peers in terms of their education.

Unfortunately, the authors do not indicate when the program started. The program had

small classes to provide greater access to the teacher, and provided a group counselling component which allowed discussion of various topics. The focus of the program was on the strengths of the students and their success at the institution (Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993). The main problem with the SEEK program was that no data were reported to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The researchers also failed to provide a description of the various topics for discussion; nor did they comment on the experiences of the participants.

Numerous problems were present when examining the course work intervention programs. Several of the courses were taught using a lecture style (Clark & Halpern, 1993; Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993), whereby the participant does little discussing and is a passive learner, which might not be the best method to utilize when creating an intervention program. Another common problem was that the programs were not evaluated effectively. In many cases, the participants were not asked for their thoughts about what they experienced (Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993). These problems create a need for a better course work program that will remedy these difficulties in the design, implementation and evaluation of the intervention.

Self-awareness

Another type of intervention was used to enrich the lives of students by providing new skills and promoting personal growth during the transition to university. Birkeland (1989) described one such self-enrichment program as providing the participants with new skills and experiences, such as relaxation training, to help care for the participants' emotional needs. All of the participants lived in residence and the 2-hour sessions

occurred in the residence hall. The intervention lasted 16 weeks, with meetings twice a

week, although Birkeland does not indicate when in the academic year the program

started. Fourteen women who participated in the program were compared to 13 wait-

listed volunteers on a number of measures. These included locus of control, acceptance

versus rejection of others, and a self-esteem scale. The sessions focussed on various

issues which dealt with improving oneself through such means as meeting one's own

emotional and social needs, and meeting the needs of others in a relationship. Birkeland

(1989) indicated that with such a small sample group, it was difficult to reach

statistically significant results, although there was a significant difference between the

two groups in terms of self-acceptance. Those who participated increased their self-

acceptance when they were tested after the program, while the self-acceptance of those in

the control group decreased over the same time period. The participants were able to

discuss issues which they may not have felt comfortable discussing elsewhere, as the

group provided a safe place to share personal problems (Birkeland, 1989).

Unfortunately, Birkeland (1989) did not comment on the success of this program in terms

of keeping students in school or how well adjusted to university the participants were

after the intervention. The program allowed individuals to become acquainted with one

another and provided a safe place to share fears and thoughts, but it did not focus

specifically on resolving problems associated with the transition to university.

Higbee and Dwinell (1992) also discussed a program that was required for

students who did not meet the minimum university requirements. The Developmental

Studies Counselling program was a self-awareness program designed to assist under-

prepared students in making the transition to university. The purpose of the program was to promote student growth and development. Eighty-three students between the ages of 18 and 19 years participated in the program. The program lasted 10 weeks and students were divided into smaller groups consisting of 18 to 22 students. The groups met twice a week for a 50-minute period each time. The underlying focus of the meetings was on self-awareness, with other issues related to career objectives, academic problems, relationships, communicating and overall well-being.

During the first and ninth week of the program, students completed the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory (SDTLI; Winston, Miller & Prince, 1983), which is a measure that assesses development of traditional-age college students. This scale consists of two sub-scales: establishing and clarifying a purpose, and developing mature inter-personal relationships. Both of these contain smaller sub-tasks, which allowed the researcher access to specific information such as lifestyle planning, participation in cultural activities and educational involvement. The findings indicated that only two students from the program were no longer enrolled at the university at the end of the third quarter of first year. The results of the SDTLI indicate that there were significant differences from the pre-test to post-test on the purpose sub-scale, which indicated that students had more direction in their lives after the intervention program. However, Higbee and Dwinell (1992) admitted that there was no control group of under-prepared students who did not participate in the intervention program. This would have provided a baseline as to the number of students who would benefit from the intervention in terms of staying in university and the potential changes in attitude and development as

a result of the intervention program.

The self-awareness programs discussed above have several problems which need to be considered when creating a new intervention program. The main problem was the absence of information about adjustment to university in the Birkeland (1989) study. It is impossible to comment on the success of a program if it was not evaluated. The problem with the Higbee and Dwinell (1992) study was the lack of a control group, which made it difficult to comment on the effectiveness of the intervention program.

Orientation Programs

Orientation programs (Devlin, 1996; Martin & Dixon, 1994) typically involve a few days at the beginning of the year, when students have the opportunity to meet other people and become familiar with their new environment before the start of classes. Devlin (1996) described a 4-day outdoor orientation program for first-year university students during orientation week to help them make friends. Seventy-two students participated in this wilderness orientation as a precursor to the standard orientation program. Each participant was assigned to a smaller group of 10 to 12 people with a team leader. As part of the small group, the students participated in a variety of physical outdoor activities such as canoeing, hiking, caving and rock climbing. These participants were compared to another group of incoming students (who chose not to participate in the orientation program) on a number of measures at different times during their education. Before participating in the outdoor orientation program, participants completed measures to assess their attitudes towards the environment, their expectations about university, their expectations about the orientation program and their reasons for

participating in the program. The comparison group completed the same measures with the exception of the questions dealing with the orientation program. After the orientation program students were again asked to complete several questionnaires. These included questions about the students' attitudes towards the environment, the students' perception of their characteristics in terms of intellect and emotion, and finally a short questionnaire used to evaluate the orientation program. The comparison group did not complete any questionnaires at this time. All students completed more questionnaires at the end of their first year and also at the end of their senior year, which dealt with the following issues: college satisfaction, friendship, future plans, and for those who participated in the orientation, the top reasons the orientation program had assisted them in finishing first year and the status of their relationship with their group members after completing their degree (Devlin, 1996).

The results suggested that overall the students who participated enjoyed the program and found that the program provided insight into their lives. Devlin (1996) indicated that friendship was a long-lasting effect of the program. Those students who participated in the program were friends with other individuals who were in the program both at the end of first year and senior year. However, at the end of first year, the first, second and third closest friend tended to be from the program, while by third year only the closest friend was from the program. Unfortunately, Devlin (1996) did not compare the attrition rates or the ease of adjustment of students who participated in the orientation with those who did not, and thus the effectiveness of the program is not clear. Additionally, Devlin chose to compare the volunteer orientation group participants to

those who decided not to participate in the orientation, which may not be a good comparison group, as there may be a volunteer bias.

Martin and Dixon (1994) also evaluated an orientation program. Students were encouraged to register for one of eight conferences which were held on weekends during the summer before starting first-year university. Unfortunately, the researchers did not provide any information concerning the conferences with regard to the activities or procedure. Friends and families were welcome at the conferences and everyone was invited to stay in residence during the orientation. Between 1984 and 1986 the orientation lasted three days and there were 9 staff. In 1987 the sessions became two days long and the staff was increased to 12 people. The researchers determined that these changes did not produce significant differences in the students who registered for the conferences. Each session contained approximately 430 people (Martin & Dixon, 1994).

To assess the effectiveness of the program, Martin and Dixon (1994) compared the students in the program to a group of incoming students who did not participate in the orientation. All students were asked to complete the Freshman Transition Questionnaire (FTQ) created by Baker and Siryk (1984), which assessed the students' adjustment to university, as well as a locus of control scale, which assessed individuals' perceived control over their own lives. The results suggested that those individuals who reported higher internal locus of control levels reported higher scores on the FTQ. There were not any significant differences on the FTQ between those who did and those who did not participate in the orientation program. Martin and Dixon (1994) suggested that this

might be the result of the students knowing whether or not they needed to participate in

such a program. Those students who did not participate in the orientation program

correctly realized that they did not need the orientation. The researchers failed to discuss

the orientation in detail and also did not report on student attrition from the university;

nor did they report how the orientation program eased university transition.

The various orientation programs also had some problems. The Martin and

Dixon (1994) study failed to describe the orientation with regard to what occurred during

the sessions. In the Devlin (1996) study, the researcher failed to have an evaluation of

the program which would have provided information as to the effectiveness of the

program in terms of ease of transition.

Providing Information

The transition to university may be more successful if information about

university life or other students' experiences is provided. This was used as the basis for

several intervention programs (Baker & Siryk, 1986; Bloom, 1971). In Bloom's (1971)

intervention, during orientation week, a sample of 207 incoming students completed

questionnaires, describing their expectations about university. As part of the

intervention, Bloom sent the results to all of the students who completed a questionnaire.

A large comparison group did not complete a questionnaire, nor did they receive any

feedback. Additional questionnaires were sent out at critical times of the year, after

Christmas, the beginning of second semester, and just before second term final exams,

and the results were again distributed to all respondents. At these times, Bloom also

included articles on topics related to university life. Bloom (1971) compared the

participants who completed the questionnaires to those who did not, on "survival rate", as well as on involvement and achievement in terms of academics. The results suggested that those who completed the questionnaires had fewer members withdrawing from their studies than did the comparison group. In this sense, the information that was provided to the students about other students appeared to aid in their adjustment to university (Bloom, 1971).

A control group was also used by Baker and Siryk (1986) to determine the effectiveness of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker, McNeil & Siryk, 1985). The SACQ measures how well students adapt to university, and is divided into four sub-scales: academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal/emotional adjustment, and goal commitment/ institutional attachment. Baker and Siryk (1986) sent the scale to 549 first-year students during the eighth week of classes. Two hundred and sixteen students completed the questionnaire and were assigned to either a well-adjusted or less well-adjusted group, depending upon their scores on the sub-scales. Both of these groups were then divided into interview and non-interview groups, which were balanced for gender, size and sub-scale scores. All those in the interview group met with the researchers for a personal individual interview which lasted one to two hours. During these interviews, strategies for adjusting to university were discussed in each of the four sub-scale areas of the SACQ, and for students in the less well-adjusted group, specific information such as where to get help was provided to aid them in their adjustment. During the eleventh week of the second semester, participants again completed the SACQ. The results suggested that those students who were less well-adjusted and also

participated in the interview increased their SACQ scores more than did those who were

less well-adjusted but did not go for an interview. It is important to use caution when

interpreting the results, since the main focus of the interviews was the SACQ. Thus

those students who participated in an interview may have fared better since they knew

how to succeed on this specific questionnaire.

Support Programs

Students may rely on various individuals for support during the transition to

university. In the literature, several types of people who can provide support have been

examined, including upper-year students, counsellors, and friends. Several programs

have used peer support in the form of older students as their main tool for their

intervention program (Fedor-Joseph, 1992; Hill, 1990). According to Hill (1990) the

Transition Peer Counselling Program was implemented for freshmen in the fall to assist

students in making life transitions. The program provided new students with coping

skills, support and guidance, through one of three means: dormitory or classroom

presentations by upper-year students, three group sessions of peer counselling by upper-

year students, or one-on-one peer counselling by upper year students. In the group

sessions, there was a maximum of 10 students per group. The program followed

Hopson's (1981) transition model that describes a life transition as an interruption in

one's thoughts about one's self, which requires the individual to respond and develop a

new personal awareness. Hill (1990) stated that the Transition Peer Counselling Program

provided coping strategies for the various phases that Hopson (1981) indicated are part of

any transition (Hill, 1990).

Hill (1990) used a self-report form to develop a subjective measure of the experiences of only the participants in the group sessions, and did not evaluate the classroom presentations or the one-on-one peer counselling. Students who participated in the group sessions indicated that they found the support of individuals helpful because this emphasized that they were not alone in their experiences. All of the participants indicated that they would recommend this program to other students (Hill, 1990). One criticism of Hill's (1990) article is that it does not provide a clear description of what occurred during any of the sessions. The article also failed to discuss the types of issues that were dealt with during the counselling, or the content of the presentations. The study failed to utilize a control group, which would have provided a more accurate account of the effects of the program.

A second peer support program was the Engineering Peer Advisor Program (Fedor-Joseph, 1992). This program was designed to help recruit new students to the engineering department and to assist the students once they were at the school. The senior engineering students would visit high schools and encourage students to come to university and study engineering. After the new student arrived, the senior engineering student would act as his or her advisor. The student advisor would also participate in the university open houses, which allowed prospective students to ask questions. After new students started school, the peer advisor was there to help prepare them during their studies. The peer advisor provided a role model for new students and offered support through one-on-one discussions. This article did not present an evaluation of the program, although Fedor-Joseph (1992) indicated that feedback about the program was

favourable. Many of the new students stated that discussions with the peer advisor

helped them to decide on their major and where to go to school. Additionally, new

students stated that the peer advisor helped them feel more prepared and confident in

dealing with the course material (Fedor-Joseph, 1992). One criticism of this study is the

limited structure of the program when the students are at the university. The peer

advisors were used "as needed" and thus some students may not have interacted with

them at all.

In order to monitor withdrawal from university, Rickinson and Rutherford (1996)

established a systematic monitoring of the adjustment to university which utilized upper-

year students. Interviews were organized between the upper-year student advisors and

the new students, four to six weeks after the start of university. The interview had

several aims including: relationship building between the student and the personal tutor;

assessment of motivation level and initial adjustment; discovering any difficulty the

student had that might require academic or personal support; informing the student of

available support; distinguishing high risk students; program or course monitoring; and

detection of problems. To attain these aims, a clear interview structure was outlined,

including: a review of the aim of the interview and confidentiality; open-ended questions

to investigate adjustment on both academic and social/personal levels; a summarization

of difficulties which arose from the discussion and the assignment of a score on

adjustment; and referral of the student to appropriate support if necessary (Rickinson &

Rutherford, 1996). The researchers completed a pilot study of this monitoring system.

The feedback received from the student advisors indicated that the program was an

effective early warning signal for those students having problems. Additionally, student

advisors indicated that they found the experience worthwhile (Rickinson & Rutherford,

1996). Unfortunately, the researchers did not provide any results concerning the

effectiveness of the monitoring system with respect to keeping students at school, nor did

they discuss the impact of the system on the students.

Support can also come from a counsellor. Rickinson and Rutherford (1995)

provided access to a counsellor for high-risk students. The initial meeting with the

counsellor explored the problems that the student was having, which then allowed the

counsellor to act as a liaison with regard to academic issues, between the student and his

or her personal tutor. Additionally, the student attended an introductory workshop which

was created to help students successfully attain university requirements. The workshop

lasted four half-days with a maximum number of 20 students. It focussed on developing

learning skills, interpersonal skills and assertion, dealing with stress, and oral

communication and presentation skills. The intervention was designed to allow students

to assess their skills and develop them further. In the small groups, students were also

invited to discuss any problems and anxieties they were facing. Following the program,

students again returned to an individual session with the counsellor. At this time they

were also given the opportunity to continue personal counselling, although only two

students continued (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995). Unfortunately, Rickinson and

Rutherford (1995) used only a subjective measure to evaluate the workshop portion of

the program, and did not provide an objective evaluation of the program. They neglected

to comment on attrition rates. Additionally, they did not have a control group for

comparison purposes, and did not follow up the program participants to determine if the intervention made a difference.

Social support in terms of peer relations or friendship has been shown to be an important factor in making the transition to university successfully. Several studies have relied on this as the primary focus of their intervention program (Fondacaro, Heller & Reilly, 1984; Lamothe, Currie, Alisat, Sullivan, Pratt, Pancer & Hunsberger, 1995; Oppenheimer, 1984).

All of the research presented in this section has dealt with undergraduate students making the transition to first year university. Fondacaro, Heller and Reilly (1984) suggested that graduate students starting at new universities may also have difficulties. At their local graduate residence, a friendship network was developed to assist those who were socially isolated and lonely. The graduate residence was a 14-story building which had few common meeting areas and mostly single occupancy rooms. The building was not conducive to socializing and several lonely students had attempted suicide. To organize the program, researchers asked residence staff to select individuals on each floor who were outgoing and friendly. These 'natural leaders' were encouraged to ask less sociable individuals to join them in their social activities. The staff and leaders attended two workshops. During the first meeting, participants were taught conversation skills which they could use to engage lonely students. The second meeting occurred one month later to determine what steps had been taken to interact with socially isolated students and what sorts of problem were encountered (Fondacaro, Heller & Reilly, 1984). For this first implementation of the program the researchers did not examine any

measures of adjustment with students who participated in social events and those who did not. Thus, it is not possible to determine what type of effect this program had on the participants.

The following year, two seminars were held, over two days, in the fall and in the spring. Once again, staff selected leaders and the leaders attended the seminars. During the first meeting issues regarding loneliness and friendship networks were discussed. Participants were also asked to discuss any structural problems that the layout of the residence might pose in attempting social interactions. During the second meeting, these issues were discussed and possible solutions were offered (Fondacaro, Heller & Reilly, 1984). Once again the researchers failed to discuss the impact of this program on student adaptation and attrition. Nor did they provide any feedback from the residence or even an idea about how many individuals developed social networks and how satisfying these were to the students.

Thus far, the programs described have utilized few control groups to evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention program. One of the few well-designed studies is that of Oppenheimer (1984), who described the results of a group intervention program for incoming university students. The main focus of the program was social support. One hundred and thirty-three incoming students volunteered at the start of classes to complete several measures of social anxiety, self-esteem and social life satisfaction. Based on these results, participants were considered vulnerable if they scored below the median, and non-vulnerable if they scored above the median on life satisfaction. All students, regardless of their vulnerability score, were assigned to one of three same-sex conditions:

a focus group, a regular condition group, or a no-treatment control group. Both

intervention groups were comprised of 4 to 6 students and met every week for one hour

for six weeks. The difference between the focus and the regular group lay in what the

leaders were instructed to focus on. In the focus group only, leaders were instructed to

emphasize social support in terms of how universal it is and the acceptable manner in

which students dealt with social difficulties. Otherwise, group leaders were instructed to

treat both the focus group and the regular group in the same manner. In both groups,

leaders were to emphasis problem solving, expression of problems and group formation

and maintenance during the sessions. In both groups, members were asked to discuss

issues related to their experiences at university. All participants completed

questionnaires which included the pretest measures as well as problem severity, help

seeking, and expectations about university at the end of the intervention program and

again 4 months later.

The results indicated that the social adjustment of vulnerable students was

affected by participating in either the of the intervention groups, although this was only

visible at the time of the follow-up questionnaire 4 months later. Oppenheimer (1984)

indicates that a "sleeper effect" may be at work here and thus, long- term monitoring of

intervention programs needs to be incorporated into future studies.

The final study is a social support-based intervention that occurred in 1994 at

Wilfrid Laurier University (Lamothe, Currie, Alisat, Sullivan, Pratt, Pancer, &

Hunsberger, 1995). The present study is an extension of this study, modifying certain

problems which arose, with more participants, more groups, more sessions, different

topics and a more comprehensive evaluation.

The intervention program lasted six weeks in the fall term, with weekly meetings which were 90 minutes each. The participants in the intervention program were placed into one of three groups of nine members each. The groups were facilitated by one male and one female mature student. The program was flexible and dependent upon the interests and needs of the group members. The weekly meetings followed a similar pattern each week, starting with an opportunity to discuss issues that arose during the preceding week. Following this, the group was engaged in various exercises related to the topic for the week. The topics that were discussed during the program included first impressions and expectations about university; creating new social ties; residential issues; academic issues; past social support; and a review and impressions of the program (Lamothe et al., 1995).

In order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention program, the participants in the study were compared to a randomly-assigned control group who did not participate in the intervention. All participants completed several measures three times during their first year at university: in August before starting university or the intervention; in November just after the intervention finished; and again in March as follow-up. The questionnaire packages consisted of several measures, including social support, integrative complexity of reasoning, a checklist of supportive people, measures of self-esteem, depression, stress, coping and an adaptation to university measure. Those in the intervention program also completed an intervention evaluation during the November sampling period. One of the intervention groups had some structural

problems, including participant absences and missed meetings, and thus was not

considered in the comparison with the control group. The researchers stated that

perceived social support was higher after the intervention for the program participants

than for the comparison group, when pretest social support scores were controlled.

Additionally, in terms of adjustment to university, the intervention groups fared better

than the control group. When the participants in the discussion groups were asked to

indicate what benefits they received from participating in the groups, responses included

meeting new people, discovering that others had similar problems and being able to talk

about personal problems. Discussion group participants also offered suggestions for

improving the program, such as having more groups, meeting into the second semester,

having shorter meetings and gathering in a more central location (Lamothe et al., 1995).

As with the other types of intervention programs, the support programs do not

have all the elements of a good intervention. Using only subjective means to evaluate the

program creates problems with the evaluation of the program which prevent a complete

understanding of the effectiveness of the program (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1996).

Additionally, in some cases, there was no control group utilized, which makes it difficult

to discuss the impact of the intervention (Hill, 1990; Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995).

Some programs did not provide enough detail to be able to replicate the intervention,

while others offered little structure (Fedor-Joseph, 1992). Finally, there were limited

measures of adjustment used to determine the students' transition to university

(Fondacaro, Heller & Reilly, 1984; Hill, 1990). In the Lamothe et al. (1995) study, they

had a small number of participants, with only three discussion groups. Additionally, one

of the three discussion groups was rejected from the analysis because of some structural

complications. Finally, there were few male participants, with one of the discussion

groups only having one male participant. Only the Oppenheimer (1984) and the Lamothe

et al. (1995) studies have most of the elements of good support intervention programs,

combining both appropriate control groups and subjective means for evaluation of the

program.

Intervention Program Summary

The above review has presented numerous intervention programs for students to

help make the transition to university more successful. Some of the programs seemed to

be effective in assisting students, although there were many problems with the programs

and many of them were not evaluated thoroughly. Most of the studies failed to use a

control group, which resulted in no baseline for comparison. Other programs did not

plan the content of the intervention program and thus it is not clear what issues were

discussed. In some cases there was a limited range of the indicators of adjustment and

thus it was not clear to what extent the adjustment was made. These problems suggest

that it is necessary to create a new intervention program which will address the problems

of past programs but utilize aspects which were effective.

Based on the literature review, there are some aspects of the mentioned programs

which need to be considered when creating a new intervention program. The present

study will address the following issues. The intervention program needs to begin as soon

as the students are available, as the period of greatest risk for student problems begins as

early as the second week of school (Levitz & Noel, 1989). The use of group discussions

should provide participants with the opportunity to meet with other students undergoing the transition and should enable relationship-building and exposure to various perspectives on university issues (Birkeland, 1989). Additionally, the topics which are discussed at the group meetings need to be pertinent to the interests and needs of the participants (Rickinson & Rutherford, 1996). When considering the evaluation, it is important to remember to use an appropriate control group so that comparisons may be made effectively to determine any impact of the intervention program. Also it is essential to randomly assign students to the discussion group and the comparison group. Finally, to understand the impact of the intervention program, it is important to continue to assess adjustment at various times over the students' education. Questionnaires need to be sent out before participants begin the program to determine a baseline, and then immediately following the intervention to establish any effects. A follow-up several months after the intervention would be beneficial to note any long-term effects or delayed effects.

Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate a nine-week, small-group intervention program designed to ease the transition from high school to university. The main focus of the small discussion groups was on social support, so that participants would develop a network of people whom they could turn to for advice. In the discussion groups, it was expected that by focussing on social support, old social ties would be maintained and new social ties would be developed.

Two hypotheses were examined:

1) Participants in the discussion groups should score significantly lower on post-test measures of stress and depression than should the non-intervention control group, but the two groups should not differ on pre-test measures.

2) Participants in the discussion groups should score significantly higher on post-test measures of self-esteem, social support, and adjustment to university than should the non-intervention control group, but the two groups should not differ on pre-test measures of these variables.

Method

Participants

Questionnaires were sent to seven hundred and fifty students from the 1998 incoming class at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. In an attempt to achieve an unbiased sample, every third student was selected from all 1,981 first year students, although the last one hundred students were over-sampled from those living in the local community in order to increase the chances of having more volunteers who would not be living in residence. Only students who were coming directly from high school and who were enrolled full-time were asked to participate. All students received an introductory letter (see Appendix A), a consent form (see Appendix B) and a questionnaire package including the questionnaires discussed below (see Appendix AU). One hundred and eleven students (34 males, 77 females) returned completed questionnaires and were systematically assigned to either the intervention discussion group or the questionnaire-only control group. The male participants were over-assigned

to the discussion groups in an attempt to balance the discussion groups for gender. Of

these 111 students, 102 completed the November post-test questionnaire. Those nine

who withdrew either were not attending group meetings or did not complete the second

questionnaire. At the time of follow-up in March, 97 participants (29 males, 68 females)

had completed all three sets of questionnaires. Those 14 participants who withdrew from

the study either did not complete the third questionnaire or withdrew from university

completely. The results reported here are based on the 97 participants who completed all

three sets of questionnaires. For a complete description of the participants, refer to the

Demographics results section on page 53. Table 1 indicates how many participants

completed measures at each data collection period.

Table 1

Number of Participants Continuing in the Study at Each Questionnaire Administration

Period

Group	August	November	March
Discussion Group	60	54	51
Control Group	51	48	46
Total	111	102	97

Measures

The participants were asked to complete three sets of questionnaires: in August

before coming to university, in November at the end of the fall-term intervention

program, and again in March for follow-up. The measures used in the present study were

selected because they are major indicators of adjustment. In the literature, self-esteem

and depression were used as indicators of well-being (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi, 1997),

while others have demonstrated adjustment using social support (Lamothe et al., 1995).

For example, high levels of social support and self esteem indicate better adjustment,

while low levels of depression and stress also indicate better adjustment. The following

table shows which measures were administered at which time, although it is important to

note that these adjustment measures were part of a broader study and that the participants

answered other questions.

Table 2

Table of Measures and Time of Completion

Measure	August (Pre-test)	November (Post-test)	March (Follow-up)
Demographics	✔		
Social Support	✔	✔	✔
Self-Esteem	✔	✔	✔
Depression	✔	✔	✔
Stress	✔	✔	✔
University Adjustment		✔	✔

Demographic Variables

Demographic information was collected in the August questionnaire (see

Appendix C). All participants were asked to indicate their gender, age, the languages

spoken at home, the highest level of education completed by their mother and father,

their living accommodations while attending university, their Ontario Academic Credit

grade average and whether they were offered a scholarship by the university.

Social Support

In order to assess participants' perceived levels of social support, students were asked to complete Cutrona's (1984) Social Provisions Scale (SPS) (see Appendix E). For each of the 24 items, participants were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement using a nine-point response format, ranging from -4 (very strongly disagree) to +4 (very strongly agree). Six sub-scales consist of 4 items each, and deal with attachment, social integration, opportunity for nurturance, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance and guidance. The items included statements such as "There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it," and "I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people" (reverse- scored). All scores were recoded into a 1 to 9 response format, so that possible scores for the total scale ranged from 24 to 216. Higher scores indicated more perceived social support. Test-retest reliability as calculated for the SPS over a six-month period was .55, and correlations for validity ranged from .28 to .31 with measures of loneliness, life satisfaction and depression, which indicate that the psychometric properties of the SPS are reasonable (Cutrona, 1984). Coefficient alpha reliability for SPS in August was .92 in this study, which is also reasonable.

Self-Esteem

The Self-Esteem Scale (SES, Rosenberg, 1965) was designed specifically for adolescents; it measures their general feelings of self-acceptance or self-worth (see Appendix F). The scale consists of 10 items to which the respondent uses a 9-point response format, ranging from +4 (very strongly agree) to -4 (very strongly disagree).

Sample items include "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others," and "At times I think I am no good at all" (reverse-scored). To produce an overall score, items were recoded into a 1 to 9 response format, so that overall scores could range from 10 to 90, where a higher score indicated a higher level of self-esteem. Reliability for the SES is acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 (Dobson et. al., 1979) to .88 (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Test-retest reliability over a one-week interval for 259 participants was .82 (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Positive correlations were demonstrated between SES and social desirability (.33), general self-regard (.78), school abilities (.35), social confidence (.51) and physical appearance (.42). Negative relationships were demonstrated between SES and anxiety (-.64), anomie (-.43) and depression (-.54) (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Coefficient alpha reliability for the SES in August was .88 in the present study, which is reasonable.

Depression

Participants were asked to complete the Centre for Epidemiologic Study of Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), which is a 20-item scale measuring symptoms associated with depression (see Appendix D). Participants were asked to indicate how often they had felt this way during the past week using a 4-point scale, ranging from 0 (rarely or none of the time, less than 1 day) to 3 (most or all of the time, 5-7 days). Items included "I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me" and "I felt hopeful about the future." Con-trait items were reversed and a total score was determined by summing all the responses, so that possible scores ranged from 0 to 60. Higher scores indicate higher levels of depression. The internal consistency is adequate across samples of the

general population (coefficient alpha = .85) and patient populations (coefficient alpha

=.90; Radloff, 1977). The CES-D has moderate correlations with the Hamilton

Clinician's Rating scale for depression (.44) and the Raskin Rating scale (.54) (Radloff,

1977). Coefficient alpha reliability for the CES-D in August was .86 for the present

study, which is reasonable.

Perceived Stress

In order to assess the participants' perceived stressful feelings, respondents were

asked to complete the short form of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck &

Mermelstein, 1983) (see Appendix G). This 4-item scale asks participants to rate how

often they felt or thought about four stressful things on a 5-point scale during the last

month, ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). Items appearing on the measure

included "(I)n the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping

with important changes that were occurring in your life?" and "(I)n the last month, how

often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome

them?" (reverse-scored). Higher scores indicate greater levels of stress. Summing all

item responses (after con-trait items were reverse scored) produced overall scores which

could range from 0 to 16. Coefficient alpha reliability for the PSS was .72. The test-

retest correlation over a two-month interval was .55 (Cohen et al., 1983). Coefficient

alpha reliability for the PSS in August was .75 for the present study, which is reasonable.

Adjustment to University

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984)

was administered after the students had attended university for several months, in the

second and third questionnaires (see Appendix AT). This 67-item measure determined

how well-adjusted students were with regard to university. Participants were asked to

indicate how well the statements applied to them at the present time using a 9-point

response scale, ranging from 1 (doesn't apply to me at all) to 9 (applies very closely to

me). The four sub-scales on the SACQ measure different dimensions of adjustment to

university. Some of the items contribute to more than one sub-scale. Twenty-four items

refer to academic adjustment, with items such as, "Recently I have had trouble

concentrating when I study" (reverse-scored). Another 20 items focus on social

adjustment, for example, "I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the

university setting." The personal-emotional dimension consists of 15 items, such as "I

have been getting angry too easily lately" (reverse-scored). The final 15 items refer to

the "goal commitment/ institutional attachment" (referred to as the attachment sub-scale)

dimension, which consists of items such as "I expect to stay at this university for a

bachelor's degree." Overall scores can range from 67 to 603, with a higher score

indicating better overall adjustment to university. For six administrations of the SACQ,

Cronbach's alpha was between .92 and .94 (Baker & Siryk, 1984). Over three years,

criterion validity correlations for the SACQ with university attrition rates were

consistently low to moderate (-.13 to-.34). This indicated that there were lower drop-out

rates for those with higher scores (Baker & Siryk, 1984). Cronbach's alpha ranged from

.82 to .87 for the academic adjustment sub-scale, from .83 to .89 for the social

adjustment sub-scale, from .73 to .79 for the personal-emotional sub-scale and from .84

to .88 for the attachment sub-scale (Baker & Siryk, 1984). Coefficient alpha reliability

for the SACQ total score in November was .91 for the present study, which is reasonable.

Intervention Evaluation Measures

In November, after participating in the discussion groups, participants were asked

four open-ended questions about their overall impressions. Two of these questions asked

about their thoughts and what they enjoyed: "What are your thoughts about the

Transitions '98 groups, now that you have attended a number of group sessions?" and

"What did you like about the group and the group sessions?". The final two questions

addressed negative aspects of the group and suggestions for the future: "What didn't you

like about the group and the group sessions?" and "How do you think the groups could be

improved in the future?". Discussion-group participants were also asked to respond to

several questions about their interactions with group members outside of the group

sessions. Participants were asked to indicate how many of the group members they had

seen socially outside the group and also how many people they became friends with as a

result of participating in the group. Finally, participants were asked to answer four

multiple-choice questions indicating how often (never; almost never; sometimes; fairly

often; or very often) they did each of the following with one or more people they met

through the group: "Greeted them when you saw them outside the group sessions?",

"Stopped to chat with them when you saw them outside of group sessions?", "Made

arrangements to meet for lunch, dinner or a coffee?" and "Did something socially with

them (e.g., went to a pub, movie, etc.)?"

During the follow-up questionnaire in March, participants were also asked about

their impressions regarding the discussion groups. The open-ended questions were

identical to the November questionnaire, with one extra question at the end, "Please use

the space below to record any additional comments about the groups or the Transition '98

research project in general." At this time, discussion group participants were also asked

the same questions as in November about their interactions with group members outside

of group sessions.

<div align="center">Procedure</div>

Pre-intervention

In late July 1998, students were sent an introductory letter (see Appendix A), a

consent form (see Appendix B) and the first questionnaire (see Appendix AU). The

introductory letter explained the study and its purpose and indicated that students who

wished to participate would be placed in either a questionnaire-only group or a

discussion group. Students who were interested in volunteering for the study were asked

to complete the consent form and questionnaire and return it by the end of August, 1998.

The 111 students who returned their consent forms and questionnaires were

systematically assigned to either a discussion group or a questionnaire-only group. Both

groups were balanced for gender and residence status. A total of six discussion groups

were formed, consisting of 10 participants each and two facilitators. Those in the

discussion groups were contacted and told where and when to meet. Those in the

questionnaire-only group were informed about their role and were contacted again during

the next questionnaire time.

Intervention

During orientation week, each group facilitator met with half of the participants

in her or his group prior to the first discussion group meeting for a short interview (see

Appendix H). The interview provided the opportunity for the participant to meet at least

one of the facilitators and have any questions answered before attending the groups. The

questions used in the interview addressed issues such as why participants volunteered for

the intervention, expectations about the group and meeting new people.

The first discussion group meeting was held during the first week of classes, and

future meetings were held at the same time and place each week. Every meeting lasted

approximately one hour and fifteen minutes and was facilitated by one male and one

female whose role it was to initiate and maintain discussion. The facilitators were senior

undergraduate or graduate students in the psychology department who were involved in

this project as part of their thesis research or for research experience. The facilitators

had weekly meetings with three supervising professors to discuss issues about the group

meetings and any ethical and clinical concerns.

Each meeting was audio-taped with the prior consent of the participants and

followed a similar format, although it was flexible and related to the needs and interest

of the group members. All meetings, except the first, began with a "check-in" period,

which provided the participants the opportunity to discuss the events and concerns they

had experienced during the previous week. This activity usually lasted between 20 and

30 minutes, although if necessary, it took priority over any other structured exercises.

Following this, various activities concerning the weekly topic were completed, which led

into a general discussion about the subject for the week. After the discussion, the

facilitators concluded the meeting and both participants and facilitators completed

evaluation forms. The following is a schedule of the weekly topics and activities.

Week 1: Introduction. As the participants arrived they were greeted by the

facilitators, who served refreshments. Name tags were also distributed. An "icebreaker"

involved dual interviews, for which participants were assigned to pairs, and each partner

took a few minutes to find out about the other person. Then each person introduced his

or her partner to the rest of the group. This provided the opportunity for members to

become more familiar with one other person in the group. After the introductions, the

guidelines of the program were outlined in terms of respect, equal time, punctuality,

confidentiality, and audio-taping within the meetings. Facilitators also explained the

future topics for discussion, and any suggestions were taken from the group with regard

to other topics they wished to address or the order of the topics presented. A short

discussion provided participants the opportunity to discuss their first impressions of

university and their expectations of the future. A summary of the meeting was presented

by the facilitators, mentioning key points that were discussed. Participants and

facilitators completed an evaluation form at the end of the session (see Appendix I to

Appendix P for complete outline and all handouts).

Week 2: New Social Ties. The session began with check-in. Participants were

then asked to list the people (initials only) they had met during their first three weeks at

university, indicating how and where they met. Participants were asked to select one

individual from the list and briefly describe what happened when they met. The group

facilitators commented on the variety of methods available to meet people and the

different places where new people might be encountered. Following this, participants

were asked to brainstorm different methods and venues for meeting new people, which

led into a group discussion about new social ties. The facilitators raised issues relating to

diversity, and quality, not quantity, of friends, strategies for making friends and social

events. Facilitators and participants completed evaluations, and facilitators summarized

the main points of the discussion (see Appendix Q to Appendix T for complete outline

and all handouts).

Week 3: Balancing Work & Social Life. After check-in there was a brief

discussion of balancing academic and social life. Participants were asked to discuss

problems they might have had in keeping a balance between academic and social life.

This led into a brainstorming session on strategies for keeping academic and social life

balanced. Facilitators discussed a study skills hand-out and pointed out the role of

teaching assistants and other sources of help. Following this, there was a general

discussion on academic issues. To finish the session, participants and facilitators

completed evaluations and a summary of the meeting was presented (see Appendix U to

Appendix Y for complete outline and all handouts). In preparation for the following

week, participants were asked to describe (in writing) a time when they had felt a

conflict around their personal values. Several of the participants' experiences were used

to create 3 vignettes which were used during Week 4.

Week 4: Peer Pressure & Personal Values. After check-in, the vignettes were

read by either the facilitator or a volunteer from the group, and a discussion about the

situations pertaining to drug usage, sex, and alcohol ensued. Participants were

encouraged to brainstorm strategies for dealing with these situations. This was followed

by a general discussion on peer pressure, personal values, the development of values and

the influences of family, friends and the media. Participants and facilitators completed

evaluation forms, and a facilitator concluded the meeting (see Appendix Z to Appendix

AC for complete outline and all handouts).

Week 5. Previous Social Ties. This week's meeting occurred following

Thanksgiving weekend. The meeting began with check-in, with emphasis on events

occurring over Thanksgiving. Participants were then asked to list their social support

networks prior to starting university. After this, group members were invited to share

whether their previous support network has changed since the start of university. This

led into a discussion about how to maintain previous social ties, addressing issues such as

homesickness, long-distance relationships and growing apart from high school friends.

Participants and facilitators completed evaluations, and a summary of the meeting was

presented (see Appendix AD to Appendix AG for complete outline and all handouts).

Week 6: Expectations & Reality ("Small Frog in Big Pond"). After check-in, a

vignette about a student's first-term experiences was read. Participants were asked to

discuss their thoughts about the story from personal experience. A general discussion

ensued based upon the differences between high school and university in terms of

involvement and grades. After the discussion, evaluations were completed and a

summary of the meeting presented. This was the last discussion group meeting for the

term (see Appendix AH to Appendix AL for complete outline and all handouts).

Week 7: Questionnaire #2. Following check-in, the second questionnaire was

administered to all participants during this week's meetings. Pizza and refreshments

were provided for all the participants. The control group also completed questionnaires

this week as a group, although no formal socializing or introductions to the other control

group members took place (see Appendix AV for complete outline/questionnaire and all

handouts).

Week 8: Second Term Catching-up. This meeting was held during the second

week of classes in the second term. After check-in, participants were invited to discuss

their current living situation and their living accommodations for next year. A general

discussion developed about room-mates, parents, friends and support in general, the start

of a new semester, grades and future plans. To conclude, everyone completed

evaluations and the main points of the meeting were summarized (see Appendix AM to

Appendix AP for complete outline and all handouts).

Post-Intervention

Week 9: Questionnaire #3. The final questionnaire was administered to all

participants. In the discussion group, check-in followed the completion of the

questionnaire. Then a discussion followed about how the participants were feeling as it

was the last meeting, how useful the group was for the participants, and any

recommendations they had for future groups.

The control group also met this week to complete the final questionnaire.

Introductions to the other control group members were made and an opportunity for

socializing was provided. In the control group, the vignette from Week 6 of the

discussion groups (on "expectations and reality") was read and discussed. Pizza and

refreshments were provided and the researchers' appreciation was expressed to both the

control and discussion groups (see Appendix AQ to AS and AW for complete outline and

all handouts).

For each of the six groups, weekly attendance was recorded. In Table 3,

attendance rates by group per meeting are presented.

Table 3

Discussion Group Meeting Weekly Attendance by Group

Week	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
#1	9/10	10/10	10/10	7/10	10/10	10/10
#2	10/10	8/9	10/10	10/10	10/10	8/9
#3	8/10	7/8	10/10	7/9	10/10	7/9
#4	10/10	7/7	10/10	8/9	6/10	9/9
#5	9/10	7/7	7/10	7/9	9/10	5/9
#6	7/10	7/7	8/10	4/9	8/10	7/8
#8	6/10	7/7	8/10	6/9	9/10	6/8

Note: number of participants who attended meeting/total number of group members.

Results

Demographics

In this section, demographic data on the participants are discussed. Across the

sample, there were fewer males (n=29; 29.9%) than females (n=68; 70.1%). The entire

WLU incoming class had fewer males (n=869; 43.9%) than females (n=1112; 56.1%),

although females were over-represented in the present sample when compared to the

entire class. The ages of the participants ranged from 17 to 20 years old (M =18.5).

Most of the respondents (89.7%) indicated that English was the language spoken

exclusively in their homes, while the remaining (10.3%) participants indicated that they

spoke English and another language (including European and Asian languages) in the

house. Most respondents (88.7%) lived in residence, with some (9.3%) remaining at

home and a few (2%) living off-campus but not at home. The majority (76.3%) of the

respondents received a scholarship from the University.

In the sample, there was a wide variation in terms of parents' education level.

The total percentages do not equal 100 because some participants did not respond to

these questions. Several mothers (7.5%) did not complete high school, although a few

did (19.4%). A number of mothers (14%) went on to some college or university, while

most mothers (46.4%) had completed college or university degrees. A few (10.8%)

mothers continued with some post-graduate training. In terms of fathers' education, some

(11.6%) did not finish high school, while a number (20.6%) did. Several (15.5%) of

fathers had some college or university education, while the most fathers (35%)

completed their degrees. A small percentage (15.5%) of fathers continued with some

post-graduate training.

Table 4 contains a breakdown of demographic variables in terms of Discussion

Group (experimental) and Questionnaire-Only Group (control). There were not any

significant differences between the two groups on any of the following variables, as

determined using chi-square analysis.

Table 4

Frequency of Demographic Variables Across Groups

Variable	Discussion Group	Questionnaire-Only Group
Gender		
Male	35.3 %	23.9 %
Female	64.7 %	76 %
Age		
17 years	0	2.2 %
18 years	49 %	39.1 %
19 years	47.1 %	56.5 %
20 years	3.9 %	0
Languages spoken at home		
English	92.2 %	87 %
English & other	8 %	13.2 %
Living situation		
Residence	88.2%	89.1%
Off-campus (not at home)	2%	2.2%
At home	9.8%	8.7 %
Received WLU scholarship		
Yes	72.5 %	80.4 %
No	27.5%	19.6 %
Mother's education level		
Did not finish high school	3.9 %	11.4 %
Completed high school	19.6%	18.2 %
Some college or university	13.7%	13.6 %

Variable	Discussion Group	Questionnaire-Only Group
Completed college or university degree	47%	45.7 %
Some post grad training	11.8 %	8.7 %
Father's education level		
Did not finish high school	12%	11.1%
Completed high school	17.6%	24.4%
Some college or university	17.6%	13.3%
Completed college or university degree	37.3%	32.6%
Some post grad training	13.7%	17.8%
Religious Affiliation		
Roman Catholic	34.5%	28%
Lutheran	3.6%	6%
United	7.3%	6%
Anglican	9.1%	4%
Baptist	5.5%	2%
Presbyterian	1.8%	0
Pentecostal	1.8%	2%
Christian	12.7%	4%
United & Catholic	1.8%	0
None/Agnostic/Atheist	12.7%	10%
Unsure	1.8%	4%
Other*	3.6%	16%

* Including Serbian Orthodox, Salvation Army, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Church of Christ.

Note. There were no significant differences between the two groups on any of these variables. Not all percentages equal 100 because some participants did not respond to all questions.

Testing of Hypotheses

The correlations of the measures at outcome times are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlations of Measures at Outcome Times

	self-esteem	stress	depression	social support	adjustment
self-esteem	1	-.578**	-.726**	.531**	.606**
stress	-.589**	1	.621**	-.501**	-.648**
depression	.-661**	.545**	1	-.596**	-.685**
social support	.582**	-.386**	-.524**	1	.584**
adjustment	.598**	-.648**	-.698**	.571**	1

**Significant 2-tailed at .001.
Note: above the diagonal are correlations among measures administered in March; below the diagonal are correlations among measures administered in November.

To determine if those who remained in the Transitions '98 project were different

than those who withdrew, the two groups were compared on their August pre-test

measures. There were no significant differences found between those who continued to

participate in the Transitions '98 project and those who withdrew with respect to

depression, $t(1, 109)=-1.624$, $p=.107$, stress, $t(1, 109)=-.075$, $p=.940$, self-esteem,

$t(1,109)=-.038$, $p=.970$, or social support, $t(1, 109)=-.246$, $p=.806$.

To determine whether intervention group participants, compared to non-

intervention participants, scored higher on levels of social support and self-esteem and

lower on depression and stress, a series of mixed model analyses were performed on their

post-test scores compared with pretest scores. These hypotheses were examined by

means of a 2 (group: intervention, no intervention) x 3 (time: August, November, March)

x 2 (sex: male, female) analysis of variance. For all analyses, Group was entered as a

between variable, comparing the intervention group with the control group. Gender was

also entered as a between variable, comparing male participants to female participants.

Time was entered as a within variable, depending on whether pretest scores were taken

for the variable of interest, either with two or three levels. The following results are

reported using the above described analyses.

Stress

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would not differ from

those in the control group with regard to their August perceived stress scores, but that

they would show lower levels of perceived stress than those in the control group at the

November and March testing periods. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2

(group) x 3 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. This analysis showed a marginally

significant effect for time, $F(2, 186)=2.647$, $p=.074$. Mean scores increased from August

($M=5.49$) to November ($M=6.01$), then decreased from November to March ($M=5.32$).

However, only the decrease between November and March was significant (according to

Bonferroni t-test post hoc comparisons, $p=.042$). There were no other significant main

effects or interactions. Group means across time of testing for perceived stress are

presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for Perceived Stress

Group	August (Pre-Intervention)	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	5.44 (2.68)	5.81 (2.50)	5.21 (2.55)
Control Group	5.58 (2.87)	6.34 (2.34)	5.76 (2.68)

Note. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived stress. Possible scores range from 0 to 16.

Depression

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would not differ from those in the control group with regard to their August depression scores, but that they would show lower levels of depression than those in the control group at the November and March testing periods. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 3 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. The analysis indicated that there was a significant group effect, $F(1, 93)= 6.927$, $p=.01$, with discussion group participants ($M=13.63$) reporting lower levels of depression than the control group participants ($M=18.01$).

There was a marginally significant time by group by gender interaction, $F(2, 186)=3.026$, $p=.051$. In order to understand the nature of this interaction, differences between the intervention and the control group were examined separately for males and females (see Figure 1 for male depression means and Figure 2 for female depression means). The pattern for males indicates that in August, the control group males showed significantly higher levels of depression than did the intervention males, $t(28)=2.881$, $p=.008$. However, intervention group males did not differ from the control males in either November, $t(27)=.798$, $p=.432$, or March, $t(28)=.735$, $p=.469$. The pattern for

females was very different. The female intervention group did not differ from the female control group in either August, $t(66)=-.653$, $p=.515$, or November, $t(66)=1.295$, $p=.200$, but showed significantly lower levels of depression in March, $t(66)=2.730$, $p=.008$.

There were no other significant main or interaction effects. Group means across time of testing for depression are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Group Means (Standard Deviations) by Gender Across Time for Depression

Group	Sex	August (Pre-Intervention)	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	M	10.94 (6.01)	13.77 (9.72)	14.33 (10.00)
Control Group	M	19.72 (11.33)	16.63 (8.71)	16.72 (9.25)
Discussion Group	F	13.27 (6.61)	18.72 (8.29)	13.27 (7.60)
Control Group	F	16.40 (9.81)	16.19 (7.83)	19.84 (11.68)

Note. Higher scores reflect higher levels of depression. Possible scores range from 0 to 60.
M=Males, F=Females.

Figure 1

Time by Group Interaction For Male Participants For Depression

Figure 2

Time by Group Interaction For Female Participants For Depression
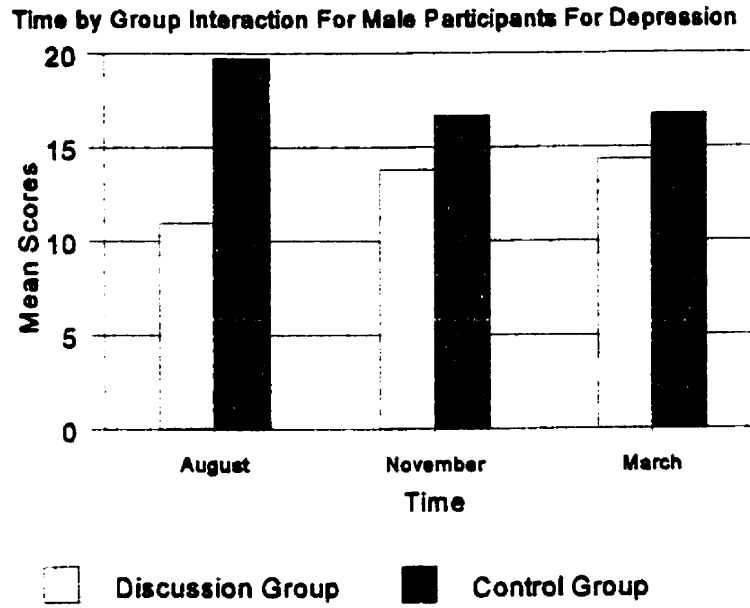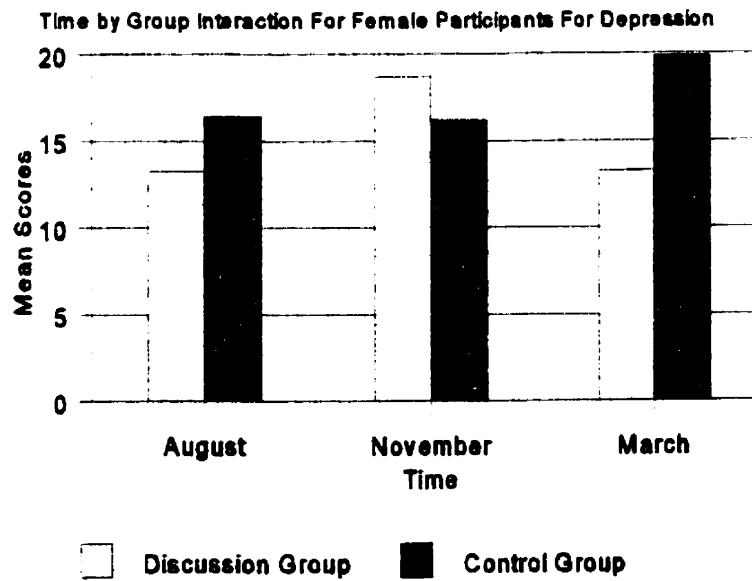
Self-Esteem

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would not differ from those in the control group with regard to their August self-esteem scores, but that they would show higher levels of self-esteem than those in the control group at the November and March testing periods. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 3 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. The analysis indicated that there was a marginally significant group effect, $F(1, 93)=3.371$, $p=.070$, with discussion group ($M=73.85$) participants reporting higher levels of self-esteem than the control group participants ($M=68.77$). There were no other significant main or interaction effects. Group means across time of testing for self-esteem are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for Self-Esteem

Group	August (Pre-Intervention)	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	74.03 (11.15)	73.03 (12.46)	73.80 (12.85)
Control Group	68.69 (13.93)	67.43 (13.81)	69.12 (14.25)

Note. Higher scores reflect higher levels of self-esteem. Possible scores range from 10 to 90.

Social Support

Group means for social support, across all time periods and by gender, are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

<u>Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for Social Support by Gender</u>

TIME

Social Support	Intervention Group August	Intervention Group November	Intervention Group March	Control Group August	Control Group November	Control Group March
Males	175.00 (28.08)	179.33 (30.06)	181.16 (33.05)	154.65 (26.33)	166.81 (22.65)	173.80 (28.96)
Females	187.00 (20.10)	187.90 (21.09)	192.42 (16.46)	183.58 (22.89)	180.28 (25.81)	183.31 (29.07)
Total	182.76 (23.67	184.88 (24.68)	188.45 (23.96)	176.66 (26.56)	177.06 (25.52)	181.04 (29.01)

Note: M=Male; F=Female

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would not differ from those in the control group with regard to their August social support total scores, but that they would show higher levels of total social support than those in the control group at the November and March testing periods. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 3 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. The analysis showed a significant time effect, $F(2, 186)=6.491$, $p=.002$. Total social support mean scores changed over the three data collection times, with mean scores increasing from August ($M=175.05$) to November ($M=178.58$) to March ($M=182.67$). Subsequent post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni t-test revealed that only the increase from August to March was significant ($p=.001$). There was a marginal group effect, $F(1, 93)= 3.918$, $p=.051$, with the discussion group participants ($M=183.80$) reporting higher levels of social support than the control group participants ($M=173.74$). Gender was significant, $F(1, 93)=7.538$,

p=.007, with females ($\underline{M}$=185.75) reporting higher levels of total social support than males ($\underline{M}$=171.79).

There was a significant interaction effect between time and gender, $\underline{F}$(2, 186)=3.556, p=.031. The mean scores for total social support by time of testing and gender are presented graphically in Figure 3. As the figure illustrates, in August, the females showed higher levels of total social support than did the males, $\underline{t}$(96)=-3.419, p=.001; however, the females and males did not differ significantly in terms of total social support in November, $\underline{t}$(95)=-1.694, p=.094 or in March, $\underline{t}$(100)=-1.538, p=.127.

There was a marginally significant time by group by gender effect, $\underline{F}$(2, 186)=2.50, p=.085. In order to understand the nature of this interaction, differences between the intervention and control group were examined separately for males and females at each time of testing (see Figure 4 for male total social support means and Figure 5 for female total social support means). The pattern for males indicates that the intervention group males showed marginally significantly higher levels of total social support than did the control group males in August, $\underline{t}$(28)=-1.976, p=.058. However, intervention group males did not differ significantly on total social support from the control group males in November, $\underline{t}$(28)=-1.187, p=.246 or in March, $\underline{t}$(28)=-.665, p=.512. The pattern for females indicated that the intervention group females did not differ significantly from the control group females on levels of total social support in August, $\underline{t}$(66)=-.653, p=.516, November, $\underline{t}$(66)=-1.329, p=.188 or March, $\underline{t}$(66)=-1.577, p=.120. Group means across time of testing for total social support are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for Total Social Support

Group	August (Pre-Intervention)	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	182.76 (23.67)	184.88 (24.68)	188.45 (23.96)
Control Group	176.66 (26.56)	177.06 (25.52)	181.04 (29.01)

Note. Higher scores indicate more perceived social support. Possible scores range from 24 to 216.

Figure 3

Time by Gender Interaction For Total Social Support

Figure 4

Group by Time Interaction For Males For Social Support-Total

Figure 5

Group by Time Interaction for Females for Total Social Support
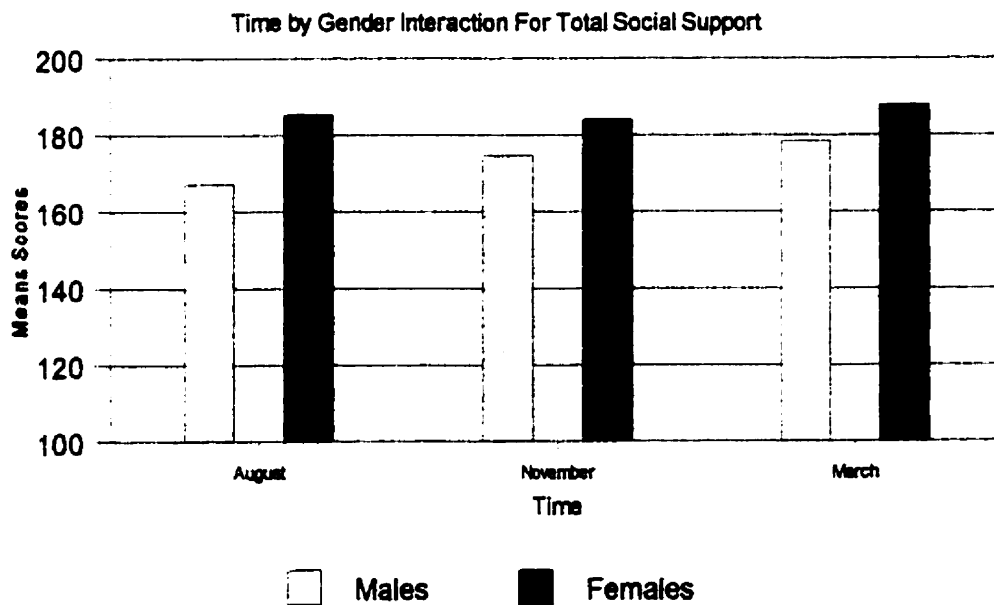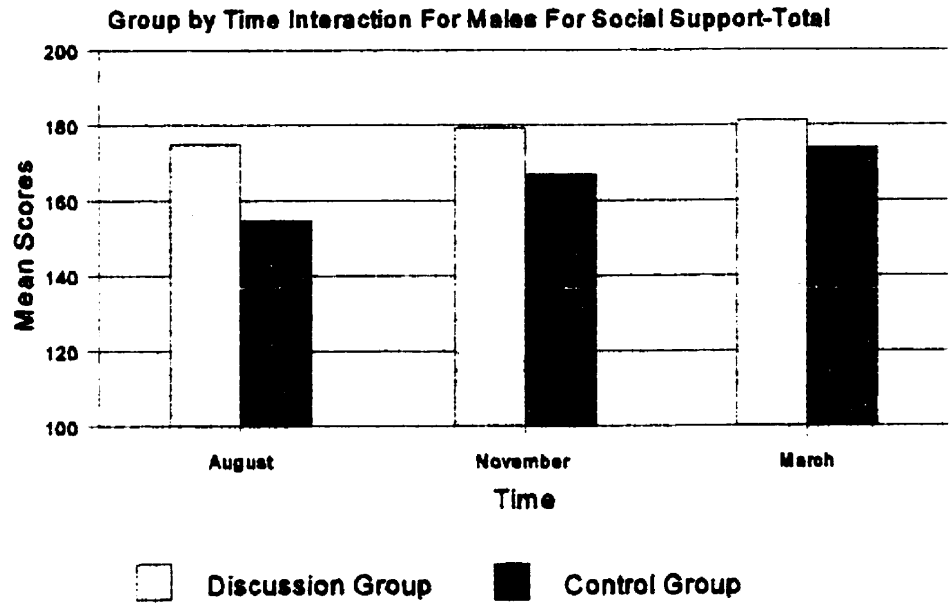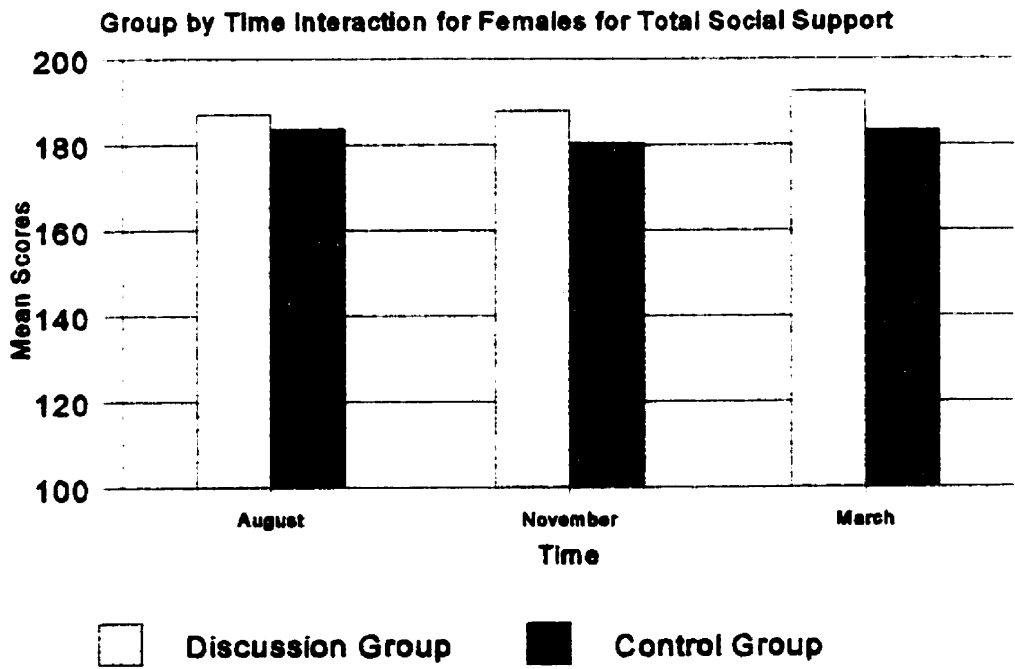
SACQ

Group means for all SACQ sub-scales, across all time periods and by gender, are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time For SACQ Sub-scales by Gender

TIME

Measure	Sex	Intervention	Intervention	Control	Control
		November	March	November	March
SACQ Total	M	450.08 (52.33)	456.48 (52.98)	414.00 (56.75)	409.96 (63.57)
	F	420.14 (57.61)	430.33 (56.91)	413.37 (54.98)	413.11 (60.38)
SACQ Academic Adjustment	M	150.60 (25.69)	150.91 (22.27)	135.90 (30.10)	132.92 (28.26)
	F	138.15 (25.77)	143.34 (29.20)	145.27 (19.08)	139.75 (24.88)
SACQ Attachment	M	113.03 (17.13)	113.50 (19.10)	104.24 (17.42)	102.52 (16.89)
	F	110.29 (15.42)	110.84 (18.85)	108.01 (18.61)	108.85 (18.23)
SACQ Personal-Emotional Adjustment	M	95.36 (18.47)	101.22 (16.47)	93.45 (14.62)	95.18 (19.97)
	F	86.95 (18.10)	89.79 (16.77)	79.68 (16.61)	81.11 (18.99)
SACQ Social Adjustment	M	139.83 (24.11)	139.75 (25.74)	126.14 (24.58)	125.86 (26.62)
	F	133.37 (23.75)	135.21 (26.03)	125.96 (28.20)	130.05 (27.16)

Note: M=Male, F=Female

SACQ Total

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would score

significantly higher on post-test measures of adjustment to university than would those

in the non-intervention control group. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2

(group) x 2 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. There was a significant group effect,

$F(1, 93)=4.671$, $p=.033$, with discussion group participants ($M=439.26$) reporting higher

levels of university adjustment than the control group participants ($M=412.61$).

Because there were no pre-test measures of adjustment to university, it is difficult to

determine whether differences between the intervention and control group in November

and March reflected pre-existing differences between the intervention and control

participants, or whether they reflected the impact of the program. In earlier research,

depression levels were utilized to assess overall adjustment (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi,

1997). To control for pre-existing differences in adjustment, a 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of

variance was completed using August depression scores as a co-variate. When

depression pre-test scores were used as a co-variate, the main effect for group (with the

SACQ total score as the dependent measure) was no longer significant, $F(1, 92)=.936$,

$p=.336$. There were no other significant main effects or significant interactions. Group

means across time for total SACQ scores are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for SACQ-Total

Group	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	430.71 (57.13)	439.56 (56.45)
Control Group	413.52 (54.77)	412.36 (60.46)

Note. Higher scores indicate better overall adjustment to university. Possible scores range from 67 to 603.

SACQ Academic Adjustment

It was predicted that the discussion groups should score significantly higher on

post-test measures of academic adjustment to university than should the non-

intervention control group. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 2

(time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. There was a marginally significant time by group

interaction, $F(1, 93)=3.871$, $p=.052$. The mean scores for academic adjustment by time

of testing and group are presented graphically in Figure 10. Upon closer examination of

the results, the intervention and control group individuals did not differ significantly in

terms of academic adjustment in November, $t(95)=.098$, $p=.922$; nor in March, $t(96)=-$

1.514, $p=.133$. There were no other significant main effects or interactions. Group

means across time of testing for SACQ Academic Adjustment are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for SACQ-Academic Adjustment

Group	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	142.54 (26.18)	146.01 (26.97)
Control Group	143.03 (22.20)	138.12 (25.57)

Note. Higher scores indicate better academic adjustment to university. Possible scores range from 24 to 216.

Figure 6

Time by Group Interaction for SACQ Academic Adjustment

☐ Discussion Group   ■ Control Group
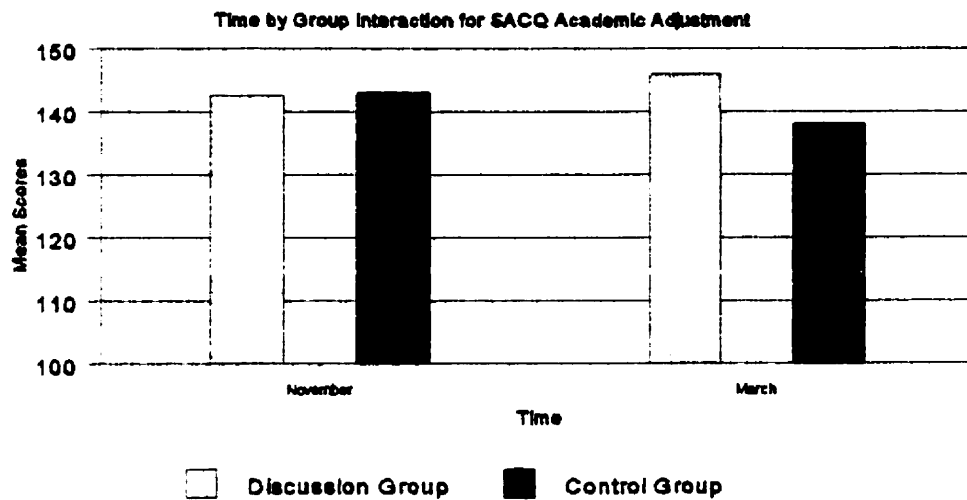
SACQ Attachment

It was predicted that the discussion group participants should score significantly

higher on post-test measures of adjustment to university-attachment than should the

non-intervention control group. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group)

x 2 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. There were no significant main effects or

interactions for the SACQ attachment sub-scale. Group means across time for SACQ

attachment are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for SACQ-Attachment

Group	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	111.26 (15.93)	111.78 (18.79)
Control Group	107.11 (18.22)	107.34 (17.94)

Note. Higher scores indicate better attachment to university. Possible scores range from 15 to 135.

SACQ Personal Emotional Adjustment

It was predicted that the discussion groups would score significantly higher on post-test measures of personal emotional adjustment to university than would the non-intervention control group. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 2 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance. There was a marginally significant time effect, $F(1, 93)=3.807$, $p=.054$, with scores increasing from November ($M=86.62$) to March ($M=89.39$). There was a significant gender effect, $F(1, 93)=10.433$, $p=.002$, with males ($M=96.30$) reporting significantly higher levels of personal emotional adjustment to university than females ($M=84.38$). There were no significant main effects for group for the SACQ personal emotional adjustment sub-scale. Additionally, there were no significant interaction effects. Group means across time for SACQ personal-emotional adjustment are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for SACQ-Personal Emotional Adjustment

Group	November(Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	89.92 (18.50)	93.82 (17.40)
Control Group	82.97 (17.06)	84.47 (19.95)

Note. Higher scores indicate better personal emotional adjustment to university. Possible scores range from 15 to 135.

SACQ Social Adjustment

It was predicted that the discussion group participants would score significantly higher on post-test measures of social adjustment to university than would the non-

intervention control group. This hypothesis was examined by means of a 2 (group) x 2 (time) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance.

There was a marginally significant group effect, $F(1, 93)=3.176$, $p=.078$, with discussion group participants ($M=137.04$) reporting higher levels of social adjustment to university than the control group participants ($M=127.00$). When depression pre-test scores were used as a co-variate, there were no significant group effects for SACQ social adjustment, $F(1, 92)=.652$, $p=.421$. There were no other significant main or interaction effects. Group means across time for SACQ social adjustment are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Group Means (Standard Deviations) Across Time for SACQ-Social Adjustment

Group	November (Post-Intervention)	March (Follow-up)
Discussion Group	135.65 (23.84)	136.81 (25.76)
Control Group	126.00 (27.11)	129.05 (26.79)

Note. Higher scores indicate better social adjustment to university. Possible scores range from 20 to 180.

Subjective Evaluation

To subjectively evaluate the intervention program, the discussion group participants responded to several open-ended questions. All 54 discussion group participants who wrote comments in November and the 51 who wrote comments in March have been included in this discussion. In March, of the 51 individuals who made comments, 44 participants had positive comments, 3 people made negative comments and 4 participants made mixed comments, with some negative and some positive comments. In response to their thoughts after attending a number of group sessions,

students made several comments which are presented in Table 17. It is important to

note that some participants may have made more than one comment.

Table 17

Participants Thoughts After Attending Group Sessions in November and March

Comment	November		March	
Fun, great, positive or enjoyable experience	13	24.1%	13	25.5%
Talk about or listen to experiences at university/ Enjoyed the discussion groups	13	24.1%	9	17.6%
Place to meet new people	11	20.4%	8	15.7%
Interesting	7	13.0%	4	7.8%
Place to relax	4	7.4%		
Gained advice for studying or dealing with peer pressure	2	3.7%	7	13.7%
Helpful	2	3.7%		
Therapeutic	1	1.9%	4	7.8%
A place to come and deal with emotional or academic issues			9	17.6%
Would recommend to other first year students			7	13.7%
Helped make the transition easier			6	11.8%
Realize they are not alone			4	7.8%
Good way to earn extra credit			2	3.9%

Responses to questions asking for participant's impressions about their group indicated,

in general, a very positive impression. Responses were varied, with a number of

students at both times indicating that it was a great or super experience. Some

mentioned meeting new people and that coming to group was a time to relax. A few

stated that it helped make the transition to university smoother or easier and that the

group helped them realize that they were not alone in their experiences at university.

Students made various other comments, including that they felt accepted by the group,

that the group provided a place to share feelings, that they learnt about themselves, that

they thought about issues, and that they had pleasant memories of the group experience.

Finally, participants commented that it was a good, well prepared, worthwhile program

and it was fun to be part of a psychological study.

Participants were also asked what they liked about the groups and the group

sessions. Their responses are summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

Things That Participants Enjoyed About the Group Sessions

Comment	November		March	
Enjoyed having a chance to talk or the discussions	24	44.4%	35	68.7%
Meeting new people	7	13.0%	1	1.9%
Everyone was friendly or respectful	7	13.0%		
Sharing common feelings	5	9.3%		
Liked the facilitators	3	5.6%	1	1.9%
Comfortable atmosphere	3	5.6%	4	7.8%
Casual structure of the group session	1	1.9%		
Liked the topics	1	1.9%	3	5.9%
Learn about the experiences of others			16	31.4%
The other group members			8	15.7%
Appreciated support of other group members			2	3.9%
Informative			2	3.9%

Almost half of the participants in November and more than half in March, indicated that

they liked the open discussion provided by the group and enjoyed having a chance to

share their own experiences. Various other comments were made about things that

participants liked, including check-in, good stories, humour, down to earth questions, a

sense of belonging, helping others with their problems, a place to release stress, and the

group dynamics. Some other comments included that the group sessions were like an

extracurricular activity and that the bonus credits were good.

In response to the question about what they did not like about the groups,

participants had several comments, which are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19

Things That Participants Did Not Enjoy About the Discussion Groups

Comment	November		March	
Completing weekly evaluation	3	5.6%	2	3.9%
Check-in	2	3.7%		
Some of the topics	2	3.7%	1	1.9%
Alcohol and sex were not a problem and thus not relevant	2	3.7%		
Time of the meetings	1	1.9%	1	1.9%
Time commitment	1	1.9%	1	1.9%
Group interfered with other things			7	13.7%
Some members dominating the discussion			2	3.9%
Not everyone participated in the discussion			2	3.9%

Most participants did not mention disliking anything about the discussion groups.

However, some people did not like filling in the weekly evaluation of the meeting, or

did not enjoy check-in. Several participants stated that sometimes group discussion time interfered with other things they had to do. Other things that participants indicated disliking about the structure of the group included the formality of the setting, being audio-taped, and the scenarios. Other comments included not liking things about the people in the group, such as the unfriendliness of some members, feelings of isolation when the expressed opinion differed from the rest of the group, the lack of commitment of some members, the difficulty at times in expressing one's views, and the notion that it was sometimes 'grump therapy' (stated by one participant).

Participants did make some suggestions for improvements. In November, six students suggested planning social meetings or activities outside the discussion groups. Two people would have preferred to have kept to a regular schedule, with either weekly or bi-weekly meetings, not changing from one to the other in mid-term. Other participants suggested using a more comfortable room, shortening the length of the meetings, having less structure during the meetings, having a less formal check-in, and starting the discussion groups in the second semester.

Some other suggestions included encouraging shy people to talk more, discouraging people from dominating the discussion, not having the focus of the discussions about living in residence, and putting similar types of people in the same group. One participant wanted a phone list of the other people in the group and another participant wanted the surveys to be less redundant. Finally, one participant suggested that every first-year student should have had the opportunity to participate in the intervention program.

In March, some people made suggestions such as having more meetings during the second term. Three participants suggested that everyone should be encouraged to participate. Other comments included involving all first-year students, more frequent meetings, less emphasis on surveys and using a shorter time frame. In terms of the group structure, participants suggested including more males, grouping people with similar interests together, having debates over various issues, and having different topics, perhaps not so psychological. Others suggested better icebreakers to make things more relaxed at the beginning, to help the shy people become more relaxed, and help the group feel more comfortable. In terms of the questionnaires, participants suggested completing them outside of discussion time, and including N/A (not applicable) as an option. Other comments included making sure no one in the group knew each other in the beginning, keeping the meetings consistent (for example, not changing from weekly to bi-weekly), providing refreshments at each meeting, giving more advice and organizing a group activity. Not all comments were positive. A student indicated that he/she would not participate in this type of program again because he or she did not like listening to strangers' problems. Another student mentioned that he or she did not get close to the other members of the group, while another participant indicated that the whole group was too shy. Overall however, the participants' thoughts were generally positive.

Participants were asked several questions pertaining to their feelings about the group. These are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

Feelings About the Group

Statement	Time	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
I made some good friends from the group.	N	39	72.2%	8	14.8%	7	13.0%
	M	33	64.7%	8	15.7%	10	19.6%
I can turn to the group for help.	N	30	55.6%	8	14.8%	16	29.6%
	M	31	57.4%	5	9.8%	15	29.4%
I learned a lot by participating in the group.	N	50	92.6%	2	3.7%	2	3.7%
	M	44	81.5%	4	7.8%	3	5.9%
I would advise anyone coming into first year to participate in such a program.	N	48	88.9%	5	9.3%	1	1.9%
	M	46	85.2%	3	5.9%	2	3.9%

Note: N=November, M=March.

There were generally very positive responses to questions asking for participants'

feelings about their group. The great majority of participants felt that they had learned a

lot by participating in the group and that they would advise anyone coming into first

year to participate in such a group. A substantial majority indicated that they had made

some good friends in the group, and a majority indicated that they felt they could turn to

the group for help.

The participants were asked to indicate the extent of their interactions with

group members outside the group sessions. These responses are summarized in Table

21.

Table 21

Interactions with Group Members Outside Group Sessions

Question	Time	none		1 or 2		3+	
How many members of the group	N	25	46.3%	18	33.3%	10	18.5%
have you seen socially?	M	21	41.2%	24	47.1%	6	11.8%
How many people in the group	N	15	27.8%	17	31.5%	22	40.7%
have you become friends with?	M	12	23.5%	20	39.2%	18	35.3%

In response to the question, "How many members of the group have been seen

socially?", almost half of the participants indicated 'none', although almost half

indicated they became friends with three or more people from the group.

Table 22 summarizes the frequency with which participants did activities with

other members of the group outside of group meetings.

Table 22

Frequency of Activities With Group Members Outside Meetings

Activity	time	never		almost never		sometimes		fairly often		very often	
greet people	N	--		--		2	3.7%	13	24.1%	38	70.4%
	M	--		--		4	7.8%	20	39.2%	27	53.0%
stop and chat	N	1	1.8%	7	13.0%	17	31.5%	18	33.3%	10	18.5%
	M	2	3.9%	7	13.7%	16	31.4%	16	31.4%	10	19.6%
arrange to meet for a meal	N	37	68.5%	5	9.3%	8	14.8%	3	5.6%	--	
	M	30	58.9%	11	21.6%	10	19.6%	--		--	
do something social	N	35	64.8%	9	16.7%	6	11.1%	3	5.6%	--	
	M	24	47.1%	15	29.4%	9	17.6%	2	3.9%	--	

Note: N=November, M=March.

In response to the question, "How often did you greet people from the group when seeing them outside of the session?", all participants indicated that they did this at least sometimes; with the majority stating that they did this fairly often or very often. When asked, "How often did you stop to chat with a member of the group outside of the group sessions?", the majority indicated they stopped to chat with group members at least sometimes. In terms of planned activities, the majority of people indicated that they never made arrangements to meet for lunch, dinner or a coffee. A similar pattern followed for responses to the question of how often the participant did something socially with one or more people from the group, with most participants indicating that they never did anything socially with other group members.

In March, participants were asked to make any additional comments about the groups of the Transitions '98 research project in general. These comments are summarized in Table 23.

Table 23

Additional Comments About the Groups of Transitions '98

Comment	Number of Participants
Good facilitators	7 13.7%
Thank you for the program	5 9.8%
Enjoyed the experience	3 5.9%
Group was super	2 3.9%

Several participants indicated they had good facilitators, and said 'thank-you' for being able to participate in the program. A few mentioned they enjoyed the experience or indicated that group was super. Other comments included having the opportunity to meet nice people, a friendly atmosphere, an accepting environment, and well-organized discussion groups. Participants indicated that they learned a lot, had fun, and that participating in group helped them realize things about the self. A participant commented that the program should be mandatory for all incoming students, and the group helped the participant "get a feel for university life". One person indicated that he or she liked the easy introductory psychology research credit, which was earned by participating in research projects, while another person indicated that he or she did not want to come to "therapy sessions."

Discussion

The present study described the effectiveness of an intensive, small-group, long-term orientation to university program. Six intervention discussion groups, with ten participants in each, were compared with a non-intervention control group of 46 participants on several measures related to the transition to university, including social support, self-esteem, stress, depression and adjustment to university.

It was predicted that participants in the discussion groups would not differ from those in the control group with regard to their August self-esteem and social support scores, but that they would show higher levels of self-esteem, social support and adjustment to university than those in the control group at the November and March testing periods. Additionally, it was hypothesized that the discussion group participants would not differ from those in the control group with regard to their August stress and depression scores, but that they would show lower levels of stress and depression than those in the control group at the November and March testing periods.

Intervention participants did indeed score higher than the control group overall on measures of self-esteem, total social support, and adjustment to university. They also scored lower on depression. Participants had been systematically assigned to either the discussion or control group and thus it was expected that the two groups would be fairly similar. Upon closer examination of the August scores, in all these cases, there were significant differences at pretest, where the discussion group participants reported higher levels of self-esteem, and total social support, as well as lower levels of depression.

There was a significant time by gender by group interaction for depression.

Females in the intervention group did not differ from females in the control group in

August or November, but showed significantly lower levels of depression in March.

The pattern for males indicated that in August, the control group males showed

significantly higher levels of depression than did the intervention males. However, the

intervention group males did not differ from the control group males in November or

March. Thus it appears that the intervention program may have had an effect on

depression levels for discussion group female participants. It is difficult to say why the

effects were not visible until the time of follow-up in March. Oppenheimer (1984)

identified a "sleeper effect" which might suggest why the effect of the intervention was

not visible until March. This again stresses the importance of long-term monitoring to

determine any effects of the intervention which may become visible later in time. There

are typically gender differences with respect to depression (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi,

1997). Perhaps the intervention groups helped lower depression levels in female

participants by providing a regular outlet for expressing any concerns or problems.

Arthur and Hiebert (1996) suggested that social support was more likely to be utilized as

a coping strategy by females than by male participants. Thus, the female intervention

participants may have relied on the group as a form of support, which eventually

reduced their depression levels.

Similar to the results of Lamothe et al. (1995), discussion group participants

reported higher levels of adjustment to university than did control group participants.

This finding is important, particularly since the main purpose of the intervention

program was to improve students' adjustment to university. Unfortunately, when depression pre-test scores were used as a co-variate, this effect was no longer significant. Therefore, it appears that some differences existed between the two groups before the intervention, and that may be the reason for the differences in the adjustment measures at post-test.

A similar trend was also noticed in the SACQ social adjustment sub-scale, with discussion group participants reporting higher levels of social adjustment. This would seem to support the hypothesis that discussion group participants would report higher levels of adaptation to university than would control group participants. Once again, however, when depression pre-test scores were used as a co-variate, the difference was no longer significant. The same pattern was present for SACQ academic adjustment. Although the mean scores for the discussion group and the control group did not differ significantly, the expected pattern is present. The control group had higher mean scores on the SACQ academic adjustment sub-scale in November when compared with the discussion group, however, by March, the discussion group had higher mean scores on the SACQ academic adjustment sub-scale when compared to the control group. The present results regarding adjustment are supported by those of Lamothe et al. (1995), who also found that those in the discussion group had better adjustment to university when compared to the control group participants, as measured by the SACQ.

There was a non-hypothesized significant gender difference on the social support total scale, with females scoring higher than males. There were also significant changes in social support over time by gender. There were differences between males

and females in August, with females reporting higher levels of total social support than males, but not in November or March. These results are consistent with previous literature. Females may place more importance on social support than males, and thus may have higher perceived levels of social support. For example, Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) found that women were more active in seeking social support as a coping strategy than were men. Hayes and Oxley (1986) concluded that women interacted with their social networks more frequently than did men. Since women actively seek social support and interact more frequently with their social supports than do men, it is not surprising that females will report higher levels of perceived social support than will males.

Males scored higher on the personal emotional adjustment to university subscale measure than did females. Since personal emotional adjustment was not measured at pre-test, males may have been better adjusted on the personal emotional level before starting university. However, depression levels were measured at pre-test, and when depression pre-test scores were used as a co-variate, males still had higher levels of personal emotional adjustment to university than did females. This may be as a result of the coping strategies males and females utilize to adapt to university. Arthur and Hiebert (1996) concluded that males and females were equally as likely to rely on problem-focused coping mechanisms, although the present results suggest that a problem-focused coping method may be more successful for males than females. This interpretation is only speculative. Additional research is needed to assess this gender difference.

Males also reported higher levels than females on the university adjustment-attachment sub-scale. This may be a result of having different goals when beginning university. For example, an individual whose primary goal for university is to find a mate, could have lower levels of university adjustment-attachment than would an individual whose primary goal for university is to graduate. The individual who plans to graduate may become more attached to the university, since staying there and completing his or her degree is important. The individual who is looking for a mate need not necessarily develop strong attachments to the university, as staying at the institution is not an essential aspect of completing the goal. More research is needed on this topic as not all the research is consistent, since gender differences have not appeared in other applications of the SACQ personal emotional sub-scale (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Baker & Siryk, 1986).

Significant time effects were also found. Total social support increased over time for both the intervention and control group. This means that both the intervention and control group participants, perceived an increase in their social support from August to March. This suggests that generally all students are increasing in their perceived social support over first year. Based on the results of Hayes and Oxley (1986), this increase in perceived social support can be seen as adaptive. These researchers found that college adaptation was strongly associated with the number of fellow students in the individual's social network, where more students in the network reflected better college adaptation. Thus, by having more social support, the participants in the present study are better adapted to university. Additionally, these results are supported by the

Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) study, which also concluded that higher levels of acquired support and satisfaction with one's support network were related to better adjustment to university.

A significant time effect was also found with regard to stress. By March scores had significantly decreased to below August levels for the discussion group participants, and lower than the November scores for the control group. These results suggest that, generally, all students are adjusting over the first year period as they reported significantly lower levels of stress in March as compared with November. These results contradict the findings of Arthur and Hiebert (1996) who found that students were less stressed at the beginning of the academic year and more stressed at the end of the year.

It is possible that some of the expected results that were not significant on certain variables, such as stress and depression, were a result of low scores on these measures, suggesting a floor effect. In the case of depression, possible scores could range from 0 (low levels of depression) to 60 (high levels of depression). For the participants, mean depression scores remained under 20, which indicates relatively low levels of depression. Thus, the discussion group participants could not lower their depression levels much, as they were already reporting low levels of depression. The same is true of levels of stress. Possible stress scores could range from 0 (low levels of stress) to 16 (high levels of stress), with our participants averaging under 6. This average score is again quite low, indicating that participants were already reporting low levels of stress, and that it would be difficult to reduce stress levels any further. Comparing the means of our participants to those in the Cohen et al. (1983) study,

whose average age was 38.4 years, the means score on for their participants on the four-item PSS was 5.6. This is similar to our participants; however, there is a large age difference between those who participated in the Cohen et al. (1983) study and those who participated in the present study.

The opposite may be true in the cases of social support and self-esteem, as the scores were fairly high, suggesting a ceiling effect. The possible scores for self-esteem could range from 10 to 90, and participants in this study scored around 70. This is a high score; thus it would be difficult for participants in the discussion group to increase their scores on self-esteem substantially. For social support, possible scores could range from 24 to 216. Once again participants in the present study reported high levels of social support, averaging scores from 180 to 185. In both these situations there may not have been much room to increase scores in terms of social support and self-esteem, thus limiting the possibility of detecting effects.

It appears that our participants are generally quite well adjusted, especially those in the discussion group, although not necessarily as a result of the intervention program. Other studies have suggest that those students "at risk" might benefit most from an intervention program (Clark & Halpern, 1993; Francis, Kelly & Bell, 1993). This intervention program may have been more beneficial for "at risk" students or had more of an effect on those who were not as well adjusted.

When examining the participants' comments regarding the study, the majority of comments were positive, indicating that the experience was worthwhile and enjoyable for many of the participants. This becomes clear when some of the subjective

comments are examined. Almost two-thirds of the discussion group participants

indicated, at both the November and March questionnaire administration times, that

they had made some good friends from the group. In terms of numbers, more than half

of the participants stated that they had become friends with at least one person from the

group. Additionally, more than half of the group participants felt that they could turn to

the discussion group for help. This suggests that the group members did form social

networks, and were able to rely on each other as a form of social support. Almost all the

participants indicated that they had learned a lot by participating in the program and that

they would recommend anyone coming into first year to participate in such a program.

Thus, the participants' comments provide a favourable picture for the experiences of the

Transitions '98 project participants.

It may be necessary to follow the performance of the participants over time to

determine any effects of the program that may emerge gradually. Oppenheimer (1984)

noticed a "sleeper effect" when monitoring the effects of the intervention program and

recommended following participants over a longer term. Thus, effects of the

intervention program may become more visible at later testing times.

Limitations

There are several problems with this investigation which need to be mentioned

in light of its findings. Some of these problems were unavoidable. In the present study,

there were fewer male participants than female participants and this may have

contributed to some non-significant findings. Males were over-assigned to the

discussion groups to try to balance the groups for gender. However, in this sample,

females were over-represented when compared with the total first-year population at

Wilfrid Laurier University. Since the participants for the study were recent high school

graduates when they were originally sampled, it may difficult to generalize these results

to other populations starting university (e.g., mature students).

Several discussion group members withdrew from the groups. Originally the

groups consisted of 10 participants each. Only half of the groups (3 out of 6) finished

their meetings with all original members attending, while three participants withdrew

from Group 2, two participants withdrew from Group 6 and one participant from Group

4. This problem with of participant withdrawal needs to be addressed in future research.

Additionally, there were some problems with attendance. Overall, most of the

participants attended the group meetings regularly, although during some high stress

times of the year (for example, mid-term exams), attendance was quite low in some of

the groups (for example, during week #4, in Group 5, only 6 of 10 participants attended,

or during week #5, in Group 6, only 5 of 9 participants attended, or during week #6, in

Group 4, only 4 of 9 participants attended). This may have had an impact on the group

process and the dynamics of the discussion groups as a whole.

Finally, the WLU environment may have been a limitation in the present study.

The campus is small and intimate and thus may make the transition to university easier

than might be the case at a larger, less personal, institution. The drop-out rate at WLU

is low, indicating that attrition may not be a substantial problem at this university. The

intervention program discussed here may have had more of an impact at a larger

university, which might not provide an environment as conducive to a successful

transition.

Future Research and Implications for Practice

The results of this study indicate that a social support group intervention

program might play a role in the transition to university. The present study has shown

that a social support based intervention program can successfully lower depression

levels in female participants.

The next step would be to design an intervention program that will also reduce

depression levels in males. Perhaps a different type of program may need to be

implemented to address this issue, although more research is needed to determine what

is effective in reducing depression levels in males.

Future research could address the issue of student attrition, following

participants throughout their education to determine the long-term effects of such an

intervention program on the success of completing a degree. Additionally, future

research could determine if the intervention had an effect on overall academic

performance, as measured by academic records.

The intervention program might also be more effective for certain groups of

students, specifically, those "at risk" (Clark & Halpern, 1993; Francis, Kelly & Bell,

1993). Thus, future research could focus on these groups of individuals in an

intervention to assist "at risk" students in making a successful transition to university.

In practice, the structure of the intervention program might modified. In some

literature (Martin & Dixon, 1994; Scherer & Wygant, 1982), the intervention programs

began the summer before starting university. Thus, the present intervention program

could have had a full day or weekend session before students made the transition to university. In this manner, the program participants would have been familiar with each other and may have been able to alleviate some of the fear about the transition to university before the start of classes. This might strengthen group cohesion. Combining the present social support-based discussion group intervention program with a university orientation program may have been more successful in assisting students with the transition to university. Additionally, continuing regular meetings into second semester, might provide support during stressful situations which arise later in the term. Finally, providing the opportunity for structured social activities outside of the discussion groups, such as a group dinner or a baseball game with the various discussion groups competing against each other, might be advantageous for strengthening the group cohesiveness.

Conclusion

These results show limited promise, in that an intensive, small-group, long-term orientation to university intervention group may be an effective means of easing the transition to university. The results suggest that all students are improving over time, but that the discussion group participants often did not improve more than controls. There are some gender differences, with females reporting higher levels of perceived social support than males, and males reporting higher levels of university adjustment than females. With respect to the impact of the intervention, the intervention appeared to have more of an impact on female participants, especially in terms of depression. Females in the intervention program did not differ from those in the control group in

August or November, but showed significantly lower levels of depression in March. Thus, during a potentially stressful time, such as the transition to university, the effects of such an intervention program might make the difference in how well an individual adjusts to university.

Although not all the proposed hypotheses were supported, the intervention program does show some promise in terms of helping students adjust to university. It is important to continue to monitor the discussion group and the control group over subsequent years, to determine if the intervention has any "sleeper effects" that might only appear after an extended period of time. Finally, research into the transition to university should continue, with the aim of implementing a similar type of intervention program for all incoming university students to ease the transition to university, as the benefits of this program show promise in helping students adjust to university.

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Appendices

Appendix A   Introductory Letter   Summer, 1998

Dear Incoming Laurier Student,

Congratulations on your admission to Wilfrid Laurier University. As part of university life you may be asked to participate in various research projects. We are writing at this time to ask for your assistance in a study of student transition to university. Your name was randomly selected from a list of incoming students as a potential participant in our research.

For several years, a research team of faculty and students from WLU's Psychology Department has been studying students' transition to university, supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Hundreds of Laurier students have participated in this research. We now need volunteers for the next phase of our study, a project to assist first-year students in settling in to university life. This study will help us learn more about ways to assist future students in making this important transition.

Please recognize that this is a research study, and not an official program of WLU. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires (at different times), each taking approximately 40 minutes. You might be asked about your expectations regarding university, information about yourself and your social relationships, your attitudes about different issues, how you are feeling about university life, and so on. Volunteers will be assigned to either a "discussion group" or a "questionnaire only group".

Discussion Groups. Meetings will involve a short workshop on one aspect of your new experiences, as well as an opportunity for discussion among group members. Discussion topics will be flexible, so that participants' concerns can be dealt with as they arise. You will find this to be an opportunity to meet and get to know other new students, and to discuss academics, living situations, social relations, and other daily life concerns. Each group will consist of eight to ten volunteer first-year students, both men and women, and two advanced-level student facilitators, one man and one woman, who will present the workshops and help with the discussions. During the week before meetings start, group members will have the opportunity to meet individually with one of the facilitators of their group to get to know them first. Please note that these discussion groups do *not* involve any *personal* counseling - that is available through the university counseling services.

Meetings (about 90 minutes long) will be scheduled in the late afternoon so they do not conflict with your courses. They will occur most (but not all) weeks, starting the first week of classes (September 14th to 18th) and ending the week of November 16th to 20th. In second term, there will be two sessions, one in January and one in February. Meetings will be audio-taped but the tapes will only be heard by members of the research team, and will be erased after we are finished with them. As part of our research, we will be assessing the extent to which participation in such groups helps students get along better in their first year at university.

Questionnaire-only Group. This group will get together once in the fall and once in the winter to complete their questionnaires. At the winter meeting, participants will be introduced to one another and will have the opportunity to discuss any issues about their transition to university. The research project staff will also be available to this group throughout the first year at Laurier to provide information on an individual basis if that is requested.

During the questionnaire sessions, both groups will be treated to pizza as a token of our appreciation. Incoming students will be assigned to one of these two groups on a random (chance) basis, after they volunteer. This is an important part of research, so that we can tell if these types of experiences make any difference to how the transition works. So both the discussion groups and questionnaire-only groups are very important to help us understand this process.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and consent form as soon as possible, but certainly before August 28th. Your name will not appear on any questionnaire, and *all information that you provide to us will be considered confidential.* Your consent form will be kept separate from your questionnaires (identified by number only), thus ensuring the anonymity of your responses. All materials will be kept in locked files and rooms. We will contact you in early September to explain your participation in the study more fully, and to let you know your group assignment.

If you have any questions about our study, please call the project co-ordinator, Susan Alisat, 519-884-1970, ext. 3520. Thank you for your time. We hope that your summer is a pleasant one, and we look forward to hearing from you soon, and to having you as a student at WLU.

Best wishes,

Susan Alisat   Dr. Michael Pratt
Project co-ordinator   Professor of Psychology

Dr. Bruce Hunsberger   Dr. Mark Pancer
Professor of Psychology   Professor of Psychology

Appendix B   Consent Letter

August 1998   Transition to University - 1998

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a research study which is being
conducted by Dr. Bruce Hunsberger, Dr. Mark Pancer, Dr. Michael Pratt, and students in
the Psychology Department of Wilfrid Laurier University. This study investigates how
incoming university students adjust to university life. As a participant in this study, I
understand that I will be assigned either to a discussion group or to a questionnaire group.
In either case, I will be asked to respond to three questionnaires, one in July/August, one in
November, and one in February. Each questionnaire should take about 40 minutes to
complete.

If I am assigned to the discussion condition, I understand that I will meet with other students
and two facilitators, seven times, between September 14th and November, once in January
and once in February for about ninety minutes each time. I understand that these meetings
will not provide direct personal counseling, as the facilitators are not trained counselors. I
give my permission for the audio-taping of these meetings.

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate in this study or
withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I may omit the answer to any
question in responding to questionnaires. I understand that my research records will be
anonymous and confidential.

Feedback on the overall results of this research will be available by letter or posting on the
Psychology Department bulletin board in May, 1999. If I have any questions about the
research, the procedures employed, my rights, or any other research-related concerns, I may
contact the project co-ordinator, Susan Alisat (884-1970, ext. 3520), or any of the faculty
members of this research group, Dr. Bruce Hunsberger (ext. 3219), Dr. Michael Pratt (ext.
2824) and Dr. Mark Pancer (ext. 3149).

I acknowledge receiving a copy of this informed consent.

_____   _____
Participant (signed)   Home Phone #
                                                     (include area code please)

_____
Participant (please print)

Appendix C

<div align="center">

Transition to University
Autumn, 1998
Background Information

</div>

1. Sex: □ male   □ female

2. Age: _____

3. Languages spoken at home: _____

4. What is the highest level of education that your parents completed?

mother	father	
□	□	less than high school
□	□	some high school
□	□	completed high school
□	□	some college or university
□	□	completed college program
□	□	completed undergraduate university degree
□	□	some post graduate training

5. Where will you be living while you attend WLU in September?
   □ residence
   □ off campus (but not at home)
   □ at home
   □ other: _____

6. OAC average (best 6 credits): _____%

7. Have you been offered a scholarship by WLU?   □ Yes   □ No

Appendix D

Centre for Epidemiologic Study of Depression Scale

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.
2. _____ I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.
4. _____ There are people who depend on me for help.
5. _____ There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do.
6. _____ Other people do not view me as competent.
7. _____ I feel personally responsible for the well-being of another person.
8. _____ I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs.
9. _____ I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities.
10. _____ If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance.
11. _____ I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.
12. _____ There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life.
13. _____ I have relationships where my competence and skill are recognized.
14. _____ There is no one who shares my interests and concerns.
15. _____ There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being.
16. _____ There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems.
17. _____ I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person.
18. _____ There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it.
19. _____ There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with.
20. _____ There are people who admire my talents and abilities.

Appendix E

Social Provisions Scale

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.

2. _____ There is no one who likes to do the things I do.

3. _____ There are people I can count on in an emergency.

4. _____ No one needs me to care for them any more.

Appendix F

Self-Esteem Scale

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree	+4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree	+3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree	+2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree	+1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. __ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. __ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. __ All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. __ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. __ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. __ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. __ On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

8. __ I wish I could have more respect for myself.

9. __ I certainly feel useless at times.

10.__ At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix G

Perceived Stress Scale

Thoughts and Feelings

The questions in this scale ask how often you felt or thought certain things *during the last month*. Answer each question fairly quickly with the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate, using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

In the last month, how often have you:

1. _____ Felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?

2. _____ Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

3. _____ Felt that things were going your way?

4. _____ Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Appendix H   Intervention – Preliminary Interviews

Introductions:

Hi. I'm _____. Thanks for coming in today. Did you have any trouble finding your way here? How's your summer been? Further chat, etc. This meeting is really just to give us a chance to get to know each other a bit before the groups actually start next week. As you know, I'll be one of the group facilitators. I'm a (3rd, 4th year student, grad. student) in psychology here at WLU, and I'm involved in this project as (part of my honours thesis, part of my MA thesis, Dr. _____'s Research Assistant). I've really enjoyed my time at Laurier, but it can be quite a change from high school, and that is one of the reasons we're having the group meetings – to help ease the transition to university.

Questions:

How have things been going for you so far? Have you spent much time on campus?   Where are you coming here from? Where will you be living while you're at school? What made you interested in volunteering for the group meetings? Did you discuss this group program with any of your family or friends? *If yes:* what did they think of you joining the group? What kinds of things are you hoping to get out of the group meetings? Are there any issues or topics that you'd like the group to discuss? Sometimes people are a little nervous about meeting a group of people for the first time. How are you feeling about starting the group? Is there anything that you're feeling anxious or concerned about? Is there anything we can do to help people relax during the first meeting? One of the things that the groups will be talking about in the first session is the fact that people come into contact with a lot of new people in their first few weeks at university. How are you feeling about the prospect of meeting new people at university? Another thing that we'll be discussing in the groups is how people plan to balance their school work with their social activities. Have you given any thought to how you'll do this? *If yes:* What kinds of things do you plan to do to make sure you get your school work done and have a social life at the same time? Are there any questions you want to ask me about the group or anything else before we finish here?

Closing Comments:

Great. Well, we're really looking forward to getting the groups together next week, and I'll be looking forward to seeing you in (room no.) at (time). In fact, on our way out, let me take you by the room where we will be meeting, so you can see it and then you'll know where to go next (day).

Appendix I
- Week One - Introduction

Materials
Snacks (timbits), drinks & glasses
Bristol Board cut for name cards
Markers
Evaluation Forms & Pencils

Greetings (5 -10 min)
Welcome from Facilitators
- as people are coming in, greet them, introduce facilitators, offer drinks
- chat while other people are arriving - weather, remember where room was...
- try to keep it light at this point

Timbits & drinks
Name Tags
Facilitators *briefly* explain their interest in the project.

Icebreakers (20-25 min)
Dual Interviews:
- Group is divided into pairs. Stipulate that if anyone is already acquainted with someone from the group (i.e., before today), they should not pair with that person. That is, they should be paired with someone who they have not met before today.
- Pairs spend about ten minutes interviewing each other (five minutes each) to find out about the other person.
Possible areas to discuss:
Hobbies, Interests, Pets, Family, Hometown, Major area of study, Career aspirations, Part-time or Summer job, Best (or worst) part of summer

Everyone in the group then takes a turn to briefly introduce the person that they had interviewed, telling a little about them.

Guidelines (10 min)
See Handout - Rationale of the Study
- pass copies to group members, read & discuss each

Outline (10 min)

See Handout - Future Topics

  -pass copies to group members

  - discuss topics: relevance, ordering, suggestions

Discussion (30 min)

The discussion is intended to flow according to the interests and input of the group members with this week's focus being on *expectations about university.*

Facilitators start the discussion by sharing anecdotes of their own first-year experiences. It may be useful to start with a question like *"How have things been going at university so far?"*

Try to keep the session as casual as possible, without it being simply a question and answer session. While it is not necessary, encourage all participants to share, without singling anyone out. Try not to change topics too quickly so that it doesn't become a question and answer session. That is, if there is a brief pause in the conversation, leave it be for a short time (although not so much as to be uncomfortable), then come back to the topic maybe with "does anyone have any other observations about their experiences at Laurier so far?" Look around the table to include everyone.

> ** Keep an eye on the time as you are introducing new questions do discuss and if possible try to END with the question: "What do you expect from this discussion group?"

Open-ended questions to get (and keep) things going:

(*Note: You don't need to go down the list, and don't need to cover every question on the list .. these are only meant as a guideline to help keep things moving.*)

What has your first week at university been like?

How was Frosh week? - Most fun event? Least fun event?

                  What kinds of things did you do to prepare yourself for university life?

What are your impressions of the university so far?

      Why did you choose WLU?

Have there been any problems finding your way around the university?

What do you expect university life will be like?

Have your families expressed any expectations about university life?

What do you think classes and school work will be like?

What do you expect social life will be like?

Does anyone know anyone who has gone to WLU (or is going)?
What are you looking forward to about university life?
What are you apprehensive about concerning university life? (Do only if adequate time for some discussion - don't end with this)

Evaluation (5-10 min)

Distribute evaluation forms to group members and allow them to complete them

Participants will deposit evaluation forms in box on the way out the door.

Wrap up (5 min)

Summary of Meeting

Comment on the meeting: mention key points that were discussed or make some observation about some commonalities among students. (e.g., "It's good to hear so many of you are looking forward to ...", "It seems like you're all settling into university life and getting used to ..")

Next week - discussion will be on New Social Ties - meeting new people

Thanks for coming this week, it was great to hear from everyone!

Facilitator's Evaluation (5-10 min)

Either while participants are completing their evaluations or after session is over, facilitators fill out evaluation form.

Appendix J

Transition to University Discussion Group Study
Facilitator's Copy

Rationale of the Study

Thank you all again for participating in our study. As you might already be aware, the transition from high school to university isn't always an easy one; you're leaving behind family and friends, and entering a completely different setting. As we've seen, some of you have moved to come here. You'll be meeting new people, studying new subjects, and experiencing higher levels of independence and responsibility, all in a matter of weeks. That's a lot to take in, in so short a time.

Most universities offer seminars to help incoming students adjust better to university life. However, those sessions involve a large number of students, and focus mostly on initial orientation. We wanted to put together sessions that involved a smaller group of students, and whose focus would be on social support; that is, the people you turn to when dealing with issues. Why this focus? Because getting feedback from others is one way of dealing with certain types of issues, like the hassles from starting university. During this time, however, your social ties are also under transition; you're in the middle between old friends and new friends, and this affects the social support you might be getting. We're hoping that discussion groups that focus on social support will help strengthen your social ties, and in the process give you feedback as you adjust to university life.

We're also hoping that a small group setting will make this easier than would a large group of students. However, to make this work, certain guidelines should be followed. We want each of you to feel as relaxed and comfortable as possible, and we want the discussions to go as smoothly as possible. On the next page are some guidelines that will help make this happen.

Just before we look at those guidelines, we do want to remind you that this group is part of a research project. You will be asked to fill out weekly evaluation forms to allow us to see how things are going in the individual groups. We will be telling you about our overall findings after the groups end. You might also be interested to know that four senior students and one graduate student will be doing their theses on the transition to university, using your evaluation and other information as part of their projects. So we hope these groups help you, and also, they will help some students in their thesis research. Any questions about this?...
Okay, now back to the guidelines.

Appendix K

Guidelines for the Group
Facilitator's Copy

Respect
You will have many opportunities to give your opinion on different topics. Others may have viewpoints different than your own. Sharing these will help all of us see each topic more broadly, and will allow different perspectives to come up. To this end, we ask that you respect everyone's opinion, and support anyone who wishes to speak.

Equal time
As this is a small group, everyone should be given a chance to speak out on any given topic. It is therefore important that each person be given equal time to offer their thoughts. Try to keep this in mind whenever you speak.

Punctuality
We understand that the next few weeks will be filled with many tasks and activities. We hope not to take too much time from your schedules; only 90 minutes a session. However, each session will cover many topics, and we hope to get a lot done each week. It is important, then, that everyone arrive on time for each session, so that we can get under way, be done 90 minutes later, and let you get back to your schedules. If, for any reason, you think you will be late at a session, please contact your facilitator and let him or her know. {*Discuss how they can contact you.*} If you are unable to reach your facilitator, please call the project's office at 884-1970, x 3520. This also applies if you cannot make it to a session; we would much rather you call, than spend the first few minutes waiting for a no-show.

Confidentiality
We hope that you can feel comfortable enough to speak out openly and honestly, and say whatever is on your mind. To ensure this, we must all agree that whatever is said during the discussions stays within the group, and that nothing personal leaves this room.

Audio-Taping
Having said this, we now turn to the taping equipment. In the letters and consent forms you received, we told you that these sessions would be audio-taped. This is to give us a detailed idea of what topics were discussed. In keeping with our commitment to confidentiality, only members of the research group will listen to these tapes. The tapes will be kept in a secure place, and will be destroyed after we have finished with them.
Any questions? Have participants sign & collect.

Appendix L
Transition to University Discussion Group Study
Participants Copy

Rationale of the Study

Thank you all again for participating in our study. As you might already be aware, the transition from high school to university isn't always an easy one; you're leaving behind family and friends, and entering a completely different setting. As we've seen, some of you have moved to come here. You'll be meeting new people, studying new subjects, and experiencing higher levels of independence and responsibility, all in a matter of weeks. That's a lot to take in, in so short a time.

Most universities offer seminars to help incoming students adjust better to university life. However, those sessions involve a large number of students, and focus mostly on initial orientation. We wanted to put together sessions that involved a smaller group of students, and whose focus would be on social support; that is, the people you turn to when dealing with issues. Why this focus? Because getting feedback from others is one way of dealing with certain types of issues, like the hassles from starting university. During this time, however, your social ties are also under transition; you're in the middle between old friends and new friends, and this affects the social support you might be getting. We're hoping that discussion groups that focus on social support will help strengthen your social ties, and in the process give you feedback as you adjust to university life.

We're also hoping that a small group setting will make this easier than would a large group of students. However, to make this work, certain guidelines should be followed. We want each of you to feel as relaxed and comfortable as possible, and we want the discussions to go as smoothly as possible. On the next page are some guidelines that will help make this happen.

Appendix M

Guidelines for the Group
Participants Copy

Respect

You will have many opportunities to give your opinion on different topics. Others may have viewpoints different than your own. Sharing these will help all of us see each topic more broadly, and will allow different perspectives to come up. To this end, we ask that you respect everyone's opinion, and support anyone who wishes to speak.

Equal time

As this is a small group, everyone should be given a chance to speak out on any given topic. It is therefore important that each person be given equal time to offer their thoughts. Try to keep this in mind whenever you speak.

Punctuality

We understand that the next few weeks will be filled with many tasks and activities. We hope not to take too much time from your schedules; only 90 minutes a session. However, each session will cover many topics, and we hope to get a lot done each week. It is important, then, that everyone arrive on time for each session, so that we can get under way, be done 90 minutes later, and let you get back to your schedules. If, for any reason, you think you will be late at a session, please contact your facilitator and let him or her know. If you are unable to reach your facilitator, please call the project's office at 884-1970, x 3520. This also applies if you cannot make it to a session; we would much rather you call, than spend the first few minutes waiting for a no-show.

Confidentiality

We hope that you can feel comfortable enough to speak out openly and honestly, and say whatever is on your mind. To ensure this, we must all agree that whatever is said during the discussions stays within the group, and that nothing personal leaves this room.

Audio-Taping

Having said this, we now turn to the taping equipment. In the letters and consent forms you received, we told you that these sessions would be audio-taped. This is to give us a detailed idea of what topics were discussed. In keeping with our commitment to confidentiality, only members of the research group will listen to these tapes. The tapes will be kept in a secure place, and will be destroyed after we have finished with them.

_____   _____

Signature   *Please print name*

Date: _____

Appendix N

Participant Perceptions - Week One

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Warm-up Activities How comfortable were you with this activity?		
How much did you enjoy this activity?		
Guideline & Outline Review How comfortable were you with this task?		
How much did you enjoy this task?		
Discussion How comfortable were you with this discussion?		
How much did you enjoy this discussion?		
Overall How worthwhile was this meeting for you?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix O

Facilitator Evaluation - Week One

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Icebreakers How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
Guidelines How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
Outline How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		

Appendix P

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Anecdotes - female facilitator	
- male facilitator	
Open-Ended Questions:	
What has your first week at university been like?	
What are your impressions of university so far?	
Have there been any problems finding your way around the university?	
What do you expect university life will be like?	
What do you think classes and school work will be like?	
What do you expect social life to be like?	
What are you apprehensive about concerning university life?	
What are you looking forward to about university life?	
What do you expect from this discussion group?	

Any specific problems today?

Additional Comments/ Observations?

Appendix Q

- Week Two: New Social Ties -

Materials

Paper & Pencil for all participants

White Board Markers

List of campus clubs

Evaluation sheet for each participant and facilitator

Check-in (15 min.)

Go around group everyone responds to the question:

How has your week been?

*Only use if this doesn't elicit many comments (note check in is
supposed to be relatively short, so don't use these if you don't need to):*

How was your first week of classes & how did it differ from what you
expected?

Which social events were best and worst so far?

Any comments about the discussion session last week?

Exercise & Response (20 min.)

Hand out paper and pencils

Group members list up to five people they have met in their first two weeks at
university ... but they must have met each of these people in different places,
and indicate how and where they met each person

Group members choose one person from their list, and briefly talk about what
happened when they met.

Facilitators comment on the variety of the methods of meeting people as well
as the different meeting places.

Strategies & Places (20 min.)

Brainstorm methods & places for meeting people

Facilitators record strategies & places; discussion

Strategies could include:

Information from Mutual Acquaintance

The dry approach ("Hi, my name is")

Attending a social event   Becoming a member of a group or club

Waiting for someone to approach you

Places could include:

Study groups   Volunteer work

Classes   This discussion group

Campus clubs

Distribute list of Campus clubs (if available). Talk about ways they can get involved in clubs. Talk about diversity of groups & clubs (ethnic, religious)

Discussion (30 min.)

Note: These questions are only suggestions to help keep things moving. It is not necessary to use all of them.

Preface discussion with issue of diversity: quality, not quantity, of social contacts is important

People differ in the types of social life that they personally enjoy. Think about your friends or roommates. Chances are that you will have noticed that some of them always want to be going out or doing something, while others prefer to have more time to themselves. People also enjoy different types of social activities. What would be your ideal social life?

How do you handle it if your ideal social life differs from that of your close friends or roommates?

What kind of strategies have worked best for you personally for meeting people in the past?

Some people find it difficult to feel close to people that they have just met, or have a difficulty meeting new people. Others may find themselves missing the comfort of old friends. How have you been dealing with this?

Have you ever met someone you didn't get along with or didn't really like, how do you deal with that?

Many people find when they come to university their personal space changes. Many people have been used to having their own room and have only ever lived with family. How have you found this change?

What sort of issues have come up?

How have you dealt with these issues?

How have you worked out possible conflicts (or things that could be conflicts) in this area?

Evaluation (5-10 min.)

Facilitators and Group members fill out evaluation forms

Wrap up (5 min.)

Facilitators briefly summarize main points that were discussed

Thank group members for coming

Next week - Balancing work & Social life

Appendix R
Group: _____

Participant Perceptions - Week Two

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Exercise - Listing new people you've met How comfortable were you with this activity?		
How much did you enjoy this activity?		
Response - Sharing one experience with group How comfortable were you with this task?		
How much did you enjoy this task?		
Brainstorming Strategies & Places for meeting others How comfortable were you with this discussion?		
How much did you enjoy this discussion?		
Discussion How comfortable were you with this discussion?		
How much did you enjoy this discussion?		
Overall How worthwhile was this meeting for you?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix S

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Two

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Exercise How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Response How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Strategies & Places How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		

Appendix T

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Check-in: How was your first week of classes & how did it differ from what you expected?	
Which social events were best and worst so far?	
Strategies & Venues for Meeting people:	
Information from mutual acquaintance	
The dry approach ("Hi, my name is ...")	
Attending a social event	
Becoming a member of a group or club	
Waiting for someone to approach you	
Campus clubs	
Volunteer work	
Study groups	
Classes	
This discussion group	
General Discussion Topics:	
What would be your ideal social life?	
How do you handle it if your ideal social life differs from that of your close friends or your roommates?	
What kind of strategies have worked best for you personally for meeting people in the past?	
How have you dealt with feeling isolated or missing friends?	
How do you deal with it when you meet someone you don't really like?	
Personal space issues	

Appendix U
- Week Three: Balancing Work & Social Life -
Materials
>
> Pencil for all participants
> White board marker
> Material on Study Skills Workshops
> Pages to record Personal Value Situation
> Evaluation sheet for each participant and facilitator

Check-in (15 min.)
> Go around the group, everyone responds to the question:
> How has your week been?
> *Only use if this doesn't elicit many comments (note, check in is supposed to be relatively short, so don't use these if you don't need to).*
>> What mid-terms, assignments & essays have you got coming up?
>> How are you finding the reading and workload so far?
> Any comments about the discussion session last week?

Note: This week's meeting has the structure of a general discussion throughout (therefore, times are flexible.)

Balance (10 min)
> Leaders preface discussion of balance with personal anecdotes.
> Brief discussion of balancing academic & social life
>> topics can include:
>>> - procrastination
>>> - too much work, too much socializing & what happens as a result

Strategies (10 min.)
> How do you deal with the problems of keeping a balance?
> Participants brainstorm different strategies for keeping academic & social life balanced, and for effective academic skills
> *(Facilitators record on board)*
> Facilitators discuss Study Skills, hand out material from Counseling Services
> Brief discussion as strategies are brought up
>> topics can include:

- time management & daily schedule   - class attendance (pros & cons?)
- studying   - note-taking   - Getting Help

Getting Help (10 min.)

Continuing discussion on "Strategies", the focus is on getting academic help

Discussion on the role of T.A.s

- group members mention any experience they've had with T.A.s
- facilitators talk about their own T.A. experience

Peer tutoring - getting help from each other

Writing Centre - provides assistance with writing skills

- need to book appointment 1 to 2 weeks ahead. Bring in a paper you've written, they will read it and offer you feedback regarding the generic aspects of your writing (purpose statement, structure of paper, sentence level, punctuation).

Office hours - help from professors on a one-to-one basis

Discussion (30 min.)

General discussion on academic issues

Topics can include:

-What kinds of things do you do when you're feeling stressed & overwhelmed with work? *(Note: Opportunity here to discuss individual differences - some buckle down, others escape)*

-What kinds of things do you do to plan ahead when it comes to writing papers and essays?

-How do you handle it when you've got a paper due or a test coming up and your friends insist you go out with them?

-Because of the wide variety of intro courses they may take, first year students can be exposed to a number of different departments. What kind of differences have you noticed in the expectations between departments?

-How do you prepare for exams in university? Would that be different for different types of exams? (e.g., multiple choice versus essay)

-What do you think about studying with other people?

-How do you deal with distractions?

-How do you know how much time to put into an assignment? How do you know you've done a good job before you hand in a project?

-How do you avoid everything coming due at the same time? What kinds of strategies do you use?

-What have your classes and professors been like so far?

-What kinds of pressures have your family put on you with respect to workload or grades?

Evaluation, Wrap-up & Exercise for next week (15 min.)

Summary of meeting

Thanks for coming

Next week: Peer Pressure & Personal Values (Sex, Drugs & Alcohol)

We're going to be talking about times that people may have felt some conflict around their personal values. That is, there are times when people may feel that they are being forced to think about their values and how they relate to the values of their friends and peers. In order that we can focus the discussion on issues that are relevant for the members of our groups, we'd like it if you would share with us a time when you have felt some conflict about a personal value or belief system. Please take a few minutes to try to think of a time when you were in such a situation and write it down. Don't sign your name. We will be using this information to create some stories to discuss next week. We will not be identifying anyone personally, but instead will be using the themes that people have shared with us.

Some possible areas might include your values around honesty, drinking, religion, being hard-working, equality, being loyal or being responsible.

Note: If anyone is having a hard time coming up with something, that's okay, it's not mandatory that everyone come up with something, we just hope that a number of people would have something they could share so we can make the discussion more relevant to the group members.

Participants record their personal situation on paper provided and put it in evaluations box.

Facilitators and Group members fill out evaluation forms

Appendix V

<div align="center">

Transitions '98
Personal Value Situation

</div>

There are times when people find themselves thinking about their values and how they relate to the values of their friends and peers. For our meeting next week, we'd like it if you would share with us a time when you have felt some conflict about a personal value or belief system.

Please take a few minutes to try to think of a time when you were in such a situation and write it down. Don't sign your name. We will be using this information to create some stories to discuss next week. We will not be identifying anyone personally, but instead will be using the themes that people have shared with us.

Appendix W   Group: ___

Participant Perceptions - Week Three

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| not at all | | | | very |

	Rating	Comments
Discussion on Balance How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Brainstorming Strategies for Balance How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Discussion on Getting Help How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
General Discussion How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix X   Group: ___

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Three
Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Discussion on Balance How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Brainstorming Strategies for Balance How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Getting Help How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
General Discussion How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		

Appendix Y

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Strategies: time management & daily schedule	
class attendance	
studying	
note-taking	
Getting Help: T.A.s	
Peer tutoring	
Writing Centre	
Counseling Services - Study Skills Resources	
Office Hours (Professors)	
General Discussion:	
Responses to stress & feeling overwhelmed	
Planning ahead for papers & essays	
Conflict between a deadline & friends that want to go out	
Differences between departments	
Preparing for exams	
Studying with others	
Dealing with distractions	
Planning how much time to put into an assignment	
How to avoid everything coming due at the same time	
Classes & profs	
Family pressures	

Appendix Z

- Week Four: Just Say What? Peer Pressure, Values & University Life -

Materials

Pencil for all participants

White board marker

Evaluation sheet for each participant and facilitator

Check-in (15 - 20 min.)

Go around the group, everyone responds to the question:

How has your week been?

Comments about previous week (classes & discussion meeting)

Any thoughts people want to bring up now?

Note: This week's meeting has the structure of a general discussion throughout (therefore, times are flexible.)

This week, we're going to be talking about some situations in which people may have been thinking about their personal values. Some of the material may be sensitive or personal, so it is very important that we keep things that are discussed here confidential. That is, no one should discuss things which are said here with anyone outside of the group.

We will also be discussing things today that people have a wide variety of attitudes and opinions about, so please keep in mind during the discussion that we should respect one another. That means that you must be considerate and accepting when someone is sharing an opinion that differs from your own.

Exercise & Strategies Discussion (30-40 min.)

Hand out & read through 2 or 3 vignettes (created from materials gathered last week)

Discuss.

Brainstorm questions to ask yourself in a "pressure" situation .. *"What kinds of things would you think about in such a situation?"*:

Questions may include:

Are these my own thoughts and opinions, or am I merely repeating my friends' ideas?

Have I taken enough time to reflect on what my friends want me to do, or should I think about the consequences more before acting?

What would my parents, teachers, religion or other respected sources and models say or think about this?

Is what my peers are advocating truly consistent with my own values about right and wrong?

Brainstorm strategies for dealing with these situations:

Give an excuse. Say "no".   Avoid the situation.   Change the subject.
Explain your own personal views, etc.   *Others?*

Discussion (30 min.)

General discussion on peer pressure & personal values

Topics can include:

What kinds of value differences with others have you experienced since coming to university? How has that differed from high school (or not)?

Do you have friends with different values than you? How do you handle it when you disagree about things?

Do your family's values differ from yours? How? How have you handled it when you and your parents or family disagree about things?

Can you think of an incident when you experienced peer pressures? How did this incident make you feel? What were the toughest parts of it for you?

Can you think of a situation when you were involved in pressuring others? How did this make you feel?

What makes it easier to talk about value differences or disagreements? In what ways can discussions like this be a good thing?

How about discussions like this in the group? What makes differences of opinion more or less comfortable for you here? Are there things we can do to make this work better?

Where do you think your values came from? How did you come to have the values that you do?

Evaluation (5-10 min.)

Facilitators and Group members fill out evaluation forms

Wrap up (5 min.)

Summary of meeting

Thanks for coming

Next week - Thanksgiving, no meeting

Next meeting week of Oct 19th Ties with Home

Appendix AA

Group: _____

Participant Perceptions - Week Four

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in - Discussing how the week's been going		
How comfortable were you with this activity?		
How much did you enjoy this activity?		
Discussing Conflict, Vignettes & Strategies		
How comfortable were you with this task?		
How much did you enjoy this task?		
How comfortable were you with sharing an example from your own life? (This was the written example we asked for last week.)		
Discussion		
How comfortable were you with this discussion?		
How much did you enjoy this discussion?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix AB   Group: _____

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Four

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Discussion of Vignettes & Strategies How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		

Appendix AC

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Questions to ask self in Pressure Situation	
Strategies for dealing with Pressure Situations	
Discussion:	
Value differences experienced since coming to university	
Friends with different values & how to handle	
Different values from family	
Personal experience of Peer Pressure	
Personal experience of pressuring others	
Discussing value differences	
This group discussion & differences of opinion	
Other topics Discussed	

Appendix AD
- Week Five: Old Social Ties -
Materials
    Pencil & Paper for all participants
    Evaluation sheet for each participant and facilitator

Check-in (20-25 min.)
    People mention their experiences during Thanksgiving weekend
    Comments about previous weeks (classes & discussion meeting)
    Any thoughts people want to bring up now?

Note: This week's meeting has the structure of a general discussion throughout
(therefore, times are flexible.)

Exercise (10 min.)
    Paper & Pencil are distributed
    Facilitators define social support network
            - Anyone turned to for help regarding a problem. This can include
            friends, family, teachers, coaches, pets, religious leaders
    Group members list members of their social support network from before they
    started university.

Maintaining Old Social Ties (15 min.)
    Group members mention whether their previous support network (i.e., the list
            they made) has changed since the start of university – additions,
            deletions?
    Brainstorm & discuss ways to maintain old social ties
    Facilitators discuss their own experiences with maintaining ties over the long
            term, talk about consequences (good and bad) of "losing touch"
    This serves as a normalizing exercise: participants realize they're not alone in
            their feelings and fears.
    Note: In this discussion don't focus only on family .. Try to spend a good bit of
    time talking about peers, and possibly even romantic interests.
Discussion (30 min.)
    General discussion on previous social ties:
    How has your relationship with your family changed as a result of your
            experiences at university? How do you think this relationship
            should change?
    What are some ways your parents can be supportive at this time?

What are some of the challenges involved with living at home in relation to
developing and maintaining social ties?

How do you manage to balance your old & new friendships?

Have you found yourself growing apart from your old friends? What kinds of
things could you do to try to stop this from happening? How do
you handle it when it does happen?

Being at a distance sometimes puts strain on relationships with friends &
boyfriends or girlfriends. Is anyone finding this?

What are some of the good things about having some distance from your old
friends & family?

What kinds of things have people done that weren't so helpful?

What do you do when you find yourself really missing the closeness that you
had with your old friends or your family?

How are your parents dealing with you being away from home?

Evaluation (5-10 min.)

Facilitators and Group members fill out evaluation forms

Wrap up (5 min.)

Summary of meeting

Thanks for coming

Next week - Differences between Expectations about university life and Reality

Appendix AE   Group: _____

Participant Perceptions - Week Five

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Previous Social Support Exercise How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Maintaining Previous Social Ties How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Discussion How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix AF

Group: _____

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Five

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly task?		
Previous Social Support Network Exercise How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly task?		
Maintaining Previous Social Supports How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly task?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly task?		

Appendix AG

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Maintaining old social ties	
Changes in relationship with family	
Ways parents can be supportive	
Challenges with living at home	
Growing apart from old friends	
Good things about having distance from old friends	
What to do when missing old friends & family	
How parents are dealing with their children being away	
Things people have done that weren't helpful	
Balancing old & new friendships	
Distance causing strain on relationships	

Appendix AH
   - Week Six: Expectations and Reality (Small Frog in Big Pond) -
Materials
   Pencil for all participants
   Copies of "Expectations & Reality" vignette
   Evaluation sheet for each participant and facilitator

Check-in (15 - 20 min.)
   Go around the group, everyone responds to the question:
   How has your week been?
   Comments about previous week (classes & discussion meeting)
   Any thoughts people want to bring up now?
Note: This week's meeting has the structure of a general discussion throughout
(therefore, times are flexible.)

Exercise: Expectations and reality (20-25 minutes)
   Vignette - read & discuss
Discussion (30 min.)
-In what ways is university life better than you expected?
-First year university students sometimes feel like they have gone from being a
"big frog in a small pond" to a "small frog in a big pond". What kinds of things
could someone do to cope with this feeling?
-How has your level of involvement in university & community activities change
since high school?
-Does your family have any expectations about your university experience? How
do their expectations compare with the way things really are? How do you deal
with their expectations?
-How do you cope when your grades are lower than those you were expecting?
-How do you handle feeling like just a number in large introductory classes?
-How have you changed as a person since coming to university? How have your
family & friends reacted to these changes?
-An important thing for many students is the change in their personal
independence at university. What are your feelings about that?
-Along with an increase in independence, many students also find there are
increased responsibilities. How are you dealing with that in the area of your
personal finances?
-What about having to be responsible for doing your own laundry?
-How about taking care of your own meals?

Evaluation (5-10 min.)

 Facilitators and Group members fill out evaluation forms

Wrap up (5 min.)

 Summary of meeting

 Thanks for coming

 In two weeks (week of November 16th) - 1st term wrap up - Questionnaires & Pizza

    There will also be time for discussion of any important issues

Appendix AI

Expectations and Reality Scenario

I was really looking forward to starting university. Not that I was having a bad time at home with my family, but I was getting tired of having to tell someone where I was going all the time, and what I was doing. I was looking forward to being more independent, and just doing what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it. Also, I was really looking forward to meeting some new people. I like my friends from high school, but I'd been hanging out with the same people for years, and I felt that I needed to meet some people who had different ideas about things. And I also thought it would be interesting going to lectures, taking courses, and just getting into a whole new life.

The first week of university was really good - a constant party, with lots of cool, new people to meet and lots of things going on. Through the first week or two of classes, I was still pretty high from frosh week. But then things kind of changed. The work started piling up - lots of reading, and then the papers and tests and assignments started coming. I just found out I failed a midterm. People still kept wanting to party, and it was hard to say no, I've got work to do. And my classes aren't all I expected them to be. I really only like one of the courses I'm taking - most of the rest are OK, although one of them is totally boring and the prof is useless - really confusing, and she talks in a monotone.

Residence is cool, but it's not always easy sharing a place with someone who has different ideas about studying and keeping the place neat and things like that. And I'm finding that being on my own, there's just a lot more things I have to get organized - the money situation, doing laundry, and things like that. Also, I've had some bad experiences with some of the people I've met. It takes a while to make good friends, and some of the people I've met, well, they're just not my kind of people.

So, all in all, it's been a pretty good experience, but it's just really different from what I expected.

Questions to Consider:
1. Is this a "typical" first year experience? Why or why not?
2. What kind of advice could you give to this person?
3. What kinds of expectations did you have about university before you started? (What kinds of expectations did you have in general? The people you'd meet? Life in residence? Classes and professors? The social life? School work?)
4. How do you think you came to have these expectations?
5. How realistic were your expectations? Were you right?
6. How did your experiences at university differ from what you expected to happen? (With regard to university life in general, the people you'd meet, residence life, classes and professors, social life, school work).
7. How do you think people could prepare themselves for university, so things don't come as such a shock when they get into their studies and to university life?

Appendix AJ

Participant Perceptions - Week Six

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
Expectations & Reality Story Discussion How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		
General Discussion How comfortable were you with this?		
How much did you enjoy this?		

Do you have any observations or comments?

Appendix AK

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Six

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Expectations & Reality Vignette Discussion How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this?		
How much did group members enjoy this?		
How effective was this?		
Was this presented smoothly?		

Appendix AL

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
Vignette Questions: Is this "typical" experience?	
Advice for this student	
Expectations about university life	
Where these expectations came from	
How realistic were expectations?	
Did experiences differ from expectations?	
How to prepare for university	
General Discussion How university life is better than expected	
Coping with feeling like a "small frog"	
Level of involvement in school & community activities	
Family expectations for university experience	
How to cope with lower grades	
How to handle feeling like a number	
Change as a person since coming to university	
Increase in independence	
Increase in responsibility	

Appendix AM

Second Term Catching Up- Week Eight -

Check-in (40 min.)

It's been 7 weeks since we last met. How have things been going?

How was everyone's Exams? Break?

What does it feel like, coming back for second term?

Any thoughts people want to bring up now

Discussion about Living Situations & roommates (40 min.)

How have this year's living arrangements affected your plans for next year?

Where will you live & why?

What other thoughts do you have about next year? Your future? How have

these plans changed since coming to university?

Have you developed a network of supportive people here at WLU? How has

this network of friends supported you here?

How have your parents helped/hindered your adjustment to university?

How have you dealt with the increase in responsibility & independence that

comes with being a university student?

How have your parents' expectations changed over your time in university?

What are some ways you have learned to work out conflicts around different

personal habits or values?

When students come to university, many of them find their needs for personal

space or privacy have changed (within a family situation) or may

conflict with their new living situation. How do you deal with issues

around working out your personal space?

Evaluation (5-10 min.)

Distribute evaluation forms to group members and allow them to complete
them

Wrap up (5 min.)

Summary of meeting

Thanks for coming

Next meeting - **Week of March 1ˢᵗ** -Pizza (& survey completion)

Appendix AN

Participant Perceptions - Week Eight

Your thoughts are important to us. Because this program is being developed in hopes of helping future students, your input is especially important. Please take a few minutes to share your experience of today's meeting with us. Do not record your name on this page.

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were you with this activity?		
How much did you enjoy this activity?		
Discussion How comfortable were you with this task?		
How much did you enjoy this task?		
Overall How comfortable were you with this meeting?		
How much did you enjoy this meeting?		

Appendix AO

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Eight

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
How easily did this discussion flow?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
How easily did this discussion flow?		

Appendix AP

Discussion Checklist

	Check if Discussed
living arrangements for next year	
thoughts about next year & the future	
social support at university	
parents role in adjustment to university	
increase in independence & responsibility	
changes in parents' expectations	
working out interpersonal conflicts	
personal space issues	

Appendix AQ

- Week Nine -

Survey Completion

As we indicated on the phone, this is a very important session for Transitions '98, so thanks for coming in today. And since this is our last session, it is nice to see everyone one final time in this group setting.

Today, you will complete the third survey. Now we are interested in how things are going for you right now - nearing the end of your first year. Like the last survey, this one will ask questions about how you are feeling about various aspects of your life, as well as how you're managing things at university.

It should take around 30 minutes to complete the survey, then we will be having refreshments. Your participation in our research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time or omit any question, although it is most helpful to us if you complete the entire survey.

Your responses will be kept completely confidential and your name will never appear on your completed survey. We will identify you by a code number so that we can match this information with that we gathered from you in the past.

While you are completing your survey, we will be passing around an attendance sheet. Please sign next to your name when it comes to you. Also, please write the code number next to your name on the front page of your questionnaire. Just copy the code number beside your name on the attendance sheet onto the front of your survey booklet where it says "code #" in the upper right corner. For those of you in introductory psychology, this information will be used to keep track of the bonus credits that you will earn by participating in this research project. Are there any questions before we begin?

Arrival of Refreshments & Information about Project

- faculty will be arriving with pizza & will go over an information page with students describing some findings to date

Check-in (5-10 minutes)

How are things now?

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

This is the last time we'll be meeting together as a group. How does that feel?

How useful has the group been for you?

Do you think such groups could be useful to all first year students, or should it be voluntary as it was for you?

Any recommendations for future?

What kind of an effect does group composition make?

Wrap up (5 min.)

Thanks for coming.

Thanks for involvement in project. We hope that you've enjoyed it and have found it beneficial in your transition to university.

Appendix AR

Facilitator Evaluation - Week Nine

Use the following scale to respond to all questions:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very

	Rating	Comments
Check-in How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
How easily did this discussion flow?		
Discussion How comfortable were group members with this task?		
How much did group members enjoy this task?		
How effective was this task?		
Was this presented smoothly?		
Approximately how long did this task take?		
How easily did this discussion flow?		

Other comments:

How did people seem to be feeling about the end of their sessions?

What kind of suggestions did participants have regarding the group sessions?

Other reflections?

Appendix AS

March Feedback
Transitions '98
The transition to university is an important one for most students. You are exposed to many new experiences at university as well as a new level of independence and freedom. Along with this comes more responsibility.

Our Transitions '98 research project grew out of a desire to learn more about this process and how it affects the lives of students. We spent several years gathering survey and interview information from first-year students about how they were experiencing the transition to university. This information suggested that it might be helpful for first-year students to get together to talk about this transition. Several years ago we experimented with three such discussion groups. In that pilot project, students met six times during first term. Results indicated that the discussions may have been beneficial for group members, but there were many questions left unanswered. Our participants suggested that we add more meetings and spread them out a bit so they could discuss things in second term as well.

The Transitions '98 research project was intended to clarify some of the questions that arose out of the earlier pilot project. This year, we doubled the number of students involved and added more discussion sessions. This project will allow us to expand on our earlier research and answer more questions about the value of group discussions in the transition to university.

Some group leaders who are involved in this research project are using the information gathered in the surveys to look at other aspects of the first-year experience. The theses which will be produced as a result of this research are quite diverse and include topics such as alcohol consumption, group processes, expectations about the university experience, loneliness and personal adjustment.

We cannot describe our findings in any detail, partly because it would take hours to do so. Also, we would like to contact some people in a year or so to add to our data, and it would be inappropriate to tell you details of findings to be followed up later because that might influence how you respond then. However, here are some of the questions we are attempting to answer in our study:

(1) Does involvement in a weekly discussion group assist people in making the transition to university?

(2) Is alcohol consumption related to adjustment at university?

(3) Can feelings of loneliness be decreased through group involvement like that in our study?

(4) Is religiosity related to alcohol consumption and adjustment at university?

(5) Are expectations related to university adjustment?

Also, here is a bit of information about some things we have found, things that we do not intend to follow up later:

(1) In general, religiosity is not related to adjustment among our students, either positively or negatively. This is consistent with some previous studies at WLU.

(2) Some of you kept weekly diaries of your alcohol consumption. These provided a sort of "window" into the drinking habits of WLU students. It will probably not surprise you that we found that drinking is heaviest Thursday through Saturday (Thursday really is "pub night" at WLU, though Friday and Saturday are not far behind). Drinking was also heaviest around Octoberfest week, and thereafter tapered off moderately as the term progressed into November. And, on average, men drank more than women.

(3) It is important that our findings suggested that, on average, our participants were quite well adjusted, and did not have serious problems. There are always exceptions to the rule, of course, but in general we were dealing with a (psychologically) "healthy" group of students. Overall, it seemed that people in both the discussion groups and the survey group were settling in at WLU quite well when we assessed this in November.

(4) Many of our group participants reported that the group experience was a very positive one. They looked forward to group meetings, and were reassured that others were having the same hassles and thoughts as they were. Of course, in order to make this a scientifically solid study, we needed a "control group" of people who did not participate in discussions. So only about half of the volunteers for our research were assigned to discussion groups, and the other half were assigned to a group that completed questionnaires, but did not actually meet regularly to discuss the transition to university. This week these control participants will have a chance to talk about their experiences, if they wish.

Overall, this project has been a huge success because of the many people like yourself who volunteered to participate. We expect that about half a dozen student theses will be based on this study, in addition to our own faculty research which will be presented at conferences, and, we hope, eventually published. Thank you again for your participation. If you want more information about the study, see me after this session, or you could call Susan Alisat at ext.3520.

Appendix AT

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)
Experiences at University

The 67 items included in this survey are statements that describe university experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the last few days). For each item, record the appropriate number in the space next to that item.

```
        1       2       3       4       5       6       7   8   9
  <----------                                            ---------->
  Doesn't apply to me at all                        Applies very closely to me
```

1. _____ I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.
2. _____ I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.
3. _____ I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.
4. _____ I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university.
5. _____ I know why I'm in university and what I want out of it.
6. _____ I am finding academic work at university difficult.
7. _____ Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.
8. _____ I am very involved with social activities in university.
9. _____ I am adjusting well to university.
10. _____ I have not been functioning well during examinations.
11. _____ I have felt tired much of the time lately.
12. _____ Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.
13. _____ I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.
14. _____ I have had informal, personal contacts with university professors.
15. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to go to university.
16. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular.
17. _____ I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.
18. _____ I have several close social ties at university.
19. _____ My academic goals and purposes are well defined.
20. _____ I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.
21. _____ I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.
22. _____ Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now.
23. _____ Getting a university degree is very important to me.
24. _____ My appetite has been good lately.
25. _____ I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.
26. _____ I enjoy living in a university residence. (Please omit if you do not live in a residence; any university housing should be regarded as a residence.)
27. _____ I enjoy writing papers for courses.
28. _____ I have been having a lot of headaches lately.
29. _____ I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.
30. _____ I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university.
31. _____ I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counselling Services Centre or from a counsellor outside of university.

32. _____ Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a university education.

33. _____ I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at university. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)

34. _____ I wish I were at another university.

35. _____ I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.

36. _____ I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university.

37. _____ I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting.

38. _____ I have been getting angry too easily lately.

39. _____ Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.

40. _____ I haven't been sleeping very well.

41. _____ I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.

42. _____ I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.

43. _____ I am satisfied with the quality or calibre of courses available at university.

44. _____ I am attending classes regularly.

45. _____ Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.

46. _____ I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at university.

47. _____ I expect to stay at this university for a bachelor's degree.

48. _____ I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.

49. _____ I worry a lot about my university expenses.

50. _____ I am enjoying my academic work at university.

51. _____ I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately.

52. _____ I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.

53. _____ I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.

54. _____ I am satisfied with my program of courses for this term.

55. _____ I have been feeling in good health lately.

56. _____ I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.

57. _____ On balance, I would rather be home than here.

58. _____ Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.

59. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university.

60. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of university altogether and for good.

61. _____ I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.

62. _____ I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.

63. _____ I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.

64. _____ I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed on me in university.

65. _____ I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.

66. _____ I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.

67. _____ I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university.

Appendix AU

<div align="center">

Transition to University
Autumn, 1998
Background Information

</div>

1. Sex: ☐ male   ☐ female
2. Age: _____
3. Languages spoken at home: _____
4. What is the highest level of education that your parents completed?

mother	father	
☐	☐	less than high school
☐	☐	some high school
☐	☐	completed high school
☐	☐	some college or university
☐	☐	completed college program
☐	☐	completed undergraduate university degree
☐	☐	some post graduate training

5. Where will you be living while you attend WLU in September?
   ☐ residence
   ☐ off campus (but not at home)
   ☐ at home
   ☐ other: _____

6. OAC average (best 6 credits): _____%
7. Have you been offered a scholarship by WLU?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
8. Use the following scale to respond to parts I and II below:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

I.) How often have you *thought about* the following issues:
   a. _____ what university life will be like
   b. _____ what classes will be like
   c. _____ what social life at university life will be like
   d. _____ how your living arrangements will work out
   e. _____ how you are going to finance your education and living expenses

II.) How often have you *discussed* these issues with:

	Parents	Friends	Teachers/ Counsellor	Others
a. University life				
b. Classes				
c. Social life at university				
d. How your living arrangements will work out				
e. Finances				

Thoughts about University Life

In this section, you will be asked to describe some thoughts about university life. It is important that you respond to the written questions as fully as you can, i.e., complete sentences. Take your time and reflect on each question. Answer each question as thoroughly as possible *before* completing the rest of the survey.

1. In general, what do you expect university life to be like? (In this response you could discuss things such as what you're looking forward to about university life, what you are feeling apprehensive about, what you think the social life or academics will be like, or anything else you are thinking about in anticipation of university life.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How do you think you will change as a person as a result of your experiences at university?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree	+4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree	+3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree	+2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree	+1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.
2. _____ I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.
4. _____ There are people who depend on me for help.
5. _____ There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do.
6. _____ Other people do not view me as competent.
7. _____ I feel personally responsible for the well-being of another person.
8. _____ I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs.
9. _____ I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities.
10. _____ If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance.
11. _____ I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.
12. _____ There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life.
13. _____ I have relationships where my competence and skill are recognized.
14. _____ There is no one who shares my interests and concerns.
15. _____ There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being.
16. _____ There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems.
17. _____ I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person.
18. _____ There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it.
19. _____ There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with.
20. _____ There are people who admire my talents and abilities.
21. _____ I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.
22. _____ There is no one who likes to do the things I do.
23. _____ There are people I can count on in an emergency.
24. _____ No one needs me to care for them any more.
25. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
26. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
27. _____ All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
28. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.
29. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
30. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.
31. _____ On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
32. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
33. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.
34. _____ At times I think I am no good at all.

Feelings and Behaviours

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved recently. Please indicate how often you have felt this way *during the past week*. Use the scale provided for your responses.

0	1	2	3
rarely or none all	some or a little	occasionally or a	most or
of the time (less time	of the time	moderate amount of	of the
than 1 day) days)	(1-2 days)	time (3-4 days)	(5-7

During the past week:

1. _____ I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.

2. _____ I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.

3. _____ I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.

4. _____ I felt that I was just as good as other people.

5. _____ I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.

6. _____ I felt depressed.

7. _____ I felt that everything I did was an effort.

8. _____ I felt hopeful about the future.

9. _____ I thought my life had been a failure.

10. _____ I felt fearful.

11. _____ My sleep was restless.

12. _____ I was happy.

13. _____ I talked less than usual.

14. _____ I felt lonely.

15. _____ People were unfriendly.

16. _____ I enjoyed life.

17. _____ I had crying spells.

18. _____ I felt sad.

19. _____ I felt that people dislike me.

20. _____ I could not get "going".

Alcohol Consumption

1. Please indicate the average number of alcoholic drinks you *currently* consume per week. Assume that 1 drink = 1 beer = 1 glass of wine = 1 shot of liquor.

_____ drinks

2. Please indicate the average number of alcohol drinks you *expect* to consume per week after you enter university.

_____ drinks

3. How many times would you say that you *currently* get drunk in the average month? (Circle the appropriate number.)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more times

4. How many times would you say that you *expect* to get drunk in the average month after you enter university? (Circle the appropriate number.)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more times

Personal Feelings and Relationships

Below are a number of statements describing your feelings about yourself and relationship with others. Please use the following scale to indicate how often you have felt a certain way. Indicate **one score** for each statement.

0	1	2	3
never	rarely	sometimes	often

1. _____ I feel in tune with the people around me.
2. _____ I lack companionship.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to.
4. _____ I do not feel alone.
5. _____ I feel part of a group of friends.
6. _____ I have a lot in common with the people around me.
7. _____ I am no longer close to anyone.
8. _____ My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.
9. _____ I am an outgoing person.

10. _____ There are people I feel close to.
11. _____ I feel left out.
12. _____ My social relationships are superficial.
13. _____ No one really knows me well.
14. _____ I feel isolated from others.
15. _____ I can find companionship when I want to.
16. _____ There are people who really understand me.
17. _____ I am unhappy being so withdrawn.
18. _____ People are around me but not with me.
19. _____ There are people I can talk to.
20. _____ There are people I can turn to.

Religious Beliefs and Activities

1. Right now, how religious a person would you say you are?

not religious extremely at all		moderately			religious	religious
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. To what extent would you say you still hold the religious beliefs taught you when you were growing up? (if you were raised in no religion, check "0").

6 _____ I completely agree with the beliefs taught
5 _____ I nearly completely agree with the beliefs taught
4 _____ I substantially agree with the beliefs taught
3 _____ I moderately agree with the beliefs taught
2 _____ I mildly agree with the beliefs taught
1 _____ I very slightly agree with the beliefs taught
0 _____ I do not agree at all with the beliefs taught

3. How many times would you say you ordinarily attend religious services in a month (circle the appropriate number)?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9 or more

4. In which religious group were you raised (be as specific as possible)?

_____

5. With which religious group do you presently identify yourself or think of yourself as being (be as specific as possible)?

_____

Reactions To Situations

The following are ways of reacting to various different, stressful, or upsetting situations. Please indicate how much you engage in each type of activity when you encounter a difficult, stressful, or upsetting situation.

1	2	3	4	5
< ————————				———————— >
not at all				very much

1. _____ Schedule my time better.
2. _____ Focus on the problem and see how I can solve it.
3. _____ Blame myself for procrastinating.
4. _____ Do what I think is best.
5. _____ Take a vacation.
6. _____ Think how I might use the situation to my advantage.
7. _____ Talk to others and find out how they react to the situation.
8. _____ Outline my priorities.
9. _____ Treat myself to a favorite food or snack.
10. _____ Think about the positive aspects of the situation.
11. _____ Become very tense.
12. _____ Think about how I have solved similar problems.
13. _____ Take a warm bath.
14. _____ Blame myself for being too emotional about the situation.
15. _____ Daydream about a better time or place.
16. _____ Determine a course of action and follow it.
17. _____ Go to a party.
18. _____ Work to understand the situation.
19. _____ Take corrective action immediately.
20. _____ Think about the event and learn from my mistakes.
21. _____ Wish that I could change what had happened or how I felt.

22. _____ Visit a friend.
23. _____ Shout or yell.
24. _____ Spend time with a special person.
25. _____ Go for a walk.
26 _____ Tell myself that it will never happen again
27. _____ Talk to someone whose advice I value.
28. _____ Analyze the problem before reacting.
29. _____ Phone a friend.
30. _____ Get angry.
31. _____ Adjust my priorities.
32. _____ Cry.
33. _____ See a movie.
34. _____ Get control of the situation.
35. _____ Make an extra effort to get things done.
36. _____ Come up with several different solutions to the problem.
37. _____ Take time off and get away from the situation.
38. _____ Fantasize about how things might turn out.
39. _____ Go over in my mind what I need to say or do.
40. _____ Take it out on other people.
41. _____ Use the situation to prove that I can do it.
42. _____ Try and be organized so I can be on top of the situation.
43. _____ Watch T.V.
44. _____ Make plans to uses my time more wisely.

Thoughts and Feelings

The questions in this scale ask how often you felt or thought certain things *during the last month*. Answer each question fairly quickly with the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate, using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

In the last month, how often have you:

1. _____ Felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?
2. _____ Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
3. _____ Felt that things were going your way?
4. _____ Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Expectations About University and Personal Feelings

Below you will find a number of statements about your expectations about university and your personal feelings. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ University is going to be a wonderful experience.
2. _____ I'm very excited about beginning my first classes at university.
3. _____ I'm concerned that the pressures to "party" at university will affect my school work.
4. _____ I've thought about what I can do to meet new people at university.
5. _____ I cannot wait to begin university.
6. _____ It will be fun taking courses in new subjects at university.
7. _____ I don't have any image in my mind about what it will be like at university.
8. _____ I am prepared to deal with the stresses of university life.
9. _____ I haven't talked to anybody very much about what university will be like.
10. _____ There may be a lot of things in my courses that I have trouble understanding.
11. _____ At university, you get to study all the things that interest you the most.
12. _____ There are a lot of social pressures at university that may be hard to deal with.
13. _____ I haven't really thought too much about what life will be like when I attend university.
14. _____ I have some ideas about what kinds of things I would like to be involved with at university.
15. _____ I am a little scared about university exams.
16. _____ I worry about finding a group of friends that I can hang out with.
17. _____ Courses at university are going to be a lot more difficult than they were in high school.
18. _____ I worry about getting along with the people I'm living with when I attend university.
19. _____ I think that my time at university is going to be the best time of my life.
20. _____ I have spoken to several people who have gone to university to find out what university is like.
21. _____ University courses are going to be much more interesting than high school courses.
22. _____ I will make new friends in no time when I start university.
23. _____ In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
24. _____ If something can go wrong for me, it usually will.
25. _____ I always look on the bright side of things.
26. _____ I am always optimistic about my future.
27. _____ I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
28. _____ Things never work out the way I want them to.
29. _____ I'm a believer in the idea that every cloud has a silver lining.
30. _____ I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Expectations About University and Personal Feelings

Below you will find a number of statements about your expectations about university and your personal feelings. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
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0 = neither agree nor disagree

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10. _____ There may be a lot of things in my courses that I have trouble understanding.
11. _____ At university, you get to study all the things that interest you the most.
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14. _____ I have some ideas about what kinds of things I would like to be involved with at university.
15. _____ I am a little scared about university exams.
16. _____ I worry about finding a group of friends that I can hang out with.
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26. _____ I am always optimistic about my future.
27. _____ I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
28. _____ Things never work out the way I want them to.
29. _____ I'm a believer in the idea that every cloud has a silver lining.
30. _____ I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Values Task

Below is a list of qualities that people might think are important for them in terms of the kinds of persons that they want to become. For each quality, we've listed a short explanation of what we mean by it. Rate each quality according to how important *you* think it *should be* in your life, how important your *parents* think it *should be* in your life and how important your *friends* think it *should be* in your life.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

<------------
unimportant

------------>
important

Qualities	How important do *you* think the quality should be for you?	How important do *your parents* think the quality should be for you?	How important do *your friends* think the quality should be for you
Polite and Courteous (Remember my manners wherever I am)			
Wisdom (A mature understanding of life)			
Protecting the Environment (Preserving nature)			
Honest (Genuine, sincere)			
A Spiritual Life (Emphasis on spiritual not material matters)			
Social Justice (Correcting injustice, caring for the weak)			
Careful / Cautious (Don't put myself in danger, so I don't get hurt)			
Independent (Stand on my own two feet: have my own opinions even if others disagree)			
Meaning in Life (A purpose in life)			
Equality (Equal opportunity for all)			
Inner harmony (At peace with myself)			
Mature Love (Deep emotional and spiritual intimacy)			
Be Open and Communicate (Talk to others about how I feel: discuss problems openly and ask for advice when needed)			
A World at Peace (Free of war and conflict)			
Ambitious / Hard-working (Try to do my best in the things I do)			
Loyal (faithful to my friends, group)			
True Friendship (Close, supportive friends)			
Unity with Nature (fitting into nature)			
Helpful (working for the welfare of others)			
A World of Beauty (Beauty of nature and the arts)			
Responsible (Dependable, reliable)			
Broad-Minded (Tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)			
Forgiving (Willing to pardon others)			

Appendix AV   Transitions '98   Code: _____
                                     November, 1998
                                   Background Information

1. Where are you living while you attend WLU?   2. How have you been doing academically so far?
   □ residence   □ much better than expected
   □ off campus (but not at home)   □ slightly better than expected
   □ at home   □ about as well as expected
   □ other: _____   □ slightly worse than expected
                                                          □ much worse than expected

3. Use the following scale to complete the table below:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

Since coming to university, how often have you *discussed* these issues with:

	Parents	Friends	Teachers/ Counsellors	Others
a. University life				
b. Classes				
c. Social life at university				
d. How your living arrangements are working out				
e. Finances				

Alcohol Consumption

4. Please indicate the average number of alcoholic drinks you *currently* consume per week.
Assume that 1 drink = 1 beer = 1 glass of wine = 1 shot of liquor.

_____ drinks

5. How many times would you say that you *currently* get drunk in the average month? (Circle the appropriate number.)

   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 or more times

Answer the next two questions *only if* you were involved in the Alcohol Consumption Diary study.

6. I am confident that my responses in the Alcohol Consumption Diary were *accurate* indicators of the amount of alcohol I have consumed since I started university.

   -4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
   very strongly   neither agree   very strongly
   disagree   nor disagree   agree

If you feel you were *not* 100% accurate, please explain why:

7. In the questionnaire you completed for us last summer (before coming to WLU) you estimated how much alcohol you would consume each week (on average) at university. Below, please indicate how much alcohol you have consumed *compared to* your expectations. I have consumed:

   -4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
   much *less*   about as much   much *more*
   than I expected   as expected   than I expected

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.
2. _____ I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.
4. _____ There are people who depend on me for help.
5. _____ There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do.
6. _____ Other people do not view me as competent.
7. _____ I feel personally responsible for the well-being of another person.
8. _____ I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs.
9. _____ I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities.
10. _____ If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance.
11. _____ I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.
12. _____ There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life.
13. _____ I have relationships where my competence and skill are recognized.
14. _____ There is no one who shares my interests and concerns.
15. _____ There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being.
16. _____ There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems.
17. _____ I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person.
18. _____ There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it.
19. _____ There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with.
20. _____ There are people who admire my talents and abilities.
21. _____ I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.
22. _____ There is no one who likes to do the things I do.
23. _____ There are people I can count on in an emergency.
24. _____ No one needs me to care for them any more.
25. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
26. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
27. _____ All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
28. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.
29. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
30. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.
31. _____ On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
32. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
33. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.
34. _____ At times I think I am no good at all.

Feelings and Behaviours

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved recently. Please indicate how often you have felt this way *during the past week*. Use the scale provided for your responses.

0	1	2	3
rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)	most or all of the time (5-7 days)

During the past week:

1. _____ I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.
2. _____ I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.
3. _____ I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.
4. _____ I felt that I was just as good as other people.
5. _____ I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.
6. _____ I felt depressed.
7. _____ I felt that everything I did was an effort.
8. _____ I felt hopeful about the future.

9. _____ I thought my life had been a failure.
10. _____ I felt fearful.
11. _____ My sleep was restless.
12. _____ I was happy.
13. _____ I talked less than usual.
14. _____ I felt lonely.
15. _____ People were unfriendly.
16. _____ I enjoyed life.
17. _____ I had crying spells.
18. _____ I felt sad.
19. _____ I felt that people dislike me.
20. _____ I could not get "going".

Time Management at University

Below you will find a number of statements about approaches people take with regard to managing their time at university. Please indicate how often you do each of the following using the scale below:

0	1	2	3	4
almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often	

1. _____ I set goals for myself to keep up with my due dates.
2. _____ I study someplace where it is quiet and distractions are limited.
3. _____ I avoid my assignments until they are almost due.
4. _____ I make keeping up with course work my first priority.
5. _____ I try to manage my "school-work time" as well as my "play time" to make the best out of both.
6. _____ I follow a regular study program.
7. _____ I don't worry much about school work; I'll get around to it when I can.
8. _____ I get down to serious studying early in the year so that I do not fall behind.
9. _____ I try to estimate how much time I will need to complete an assignment or essay and then give myself plenty of time to complete it.
10. _____ I put off studying for courses I don't like or that are difficult.
11. _____ I plan when I will study and when I will go out with my friends.
12. _____ If I have an assignment due, I leave it until the last day and work on it until I finish it.
13. _____ I like to plan when and for how long I will work on an assignment.
14. _____ I schedule my due dates on a calendar to guide my time for studying/doing assignments.
15. _____ I need a certain amount of stress/pressure to start working on an assignment/study for a test.
16. _____ It's important for me to stick to my planned schedule of studying.
17. _____ If I have an assignment coming up, I start it way before it is due.
18. _____ I will go out with my friends anytime they ask, no matter how much work I have to do.
19. _____ I attend all my lectures and tutorials.
20. _____ When it comes to school work, I don't worry about planning when I will do it, I just do it when I can.
21. _____ I outline a study plan and commit to it.
22. _____ I start studying for tests early so that I have lots of time to review the material.

Personal Feelings and Relationships

Below are a number of statements describing your feelings about yourself and relationship with others. Please use the following scale to indicate how often you have felt a certain way. Indicate one score for each statement.

0	1	2	3
never	rarely	sometimes	often

1. _____ I feel in tune with the people around me.
2. _____ I lack companionship.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to.
4. _____ I do not feel alone.
5. _____ I feel part of a group of friends.
6. _____ I have a lot in common with the people around me.
7. _____ I am no longer close to anyone.
8. _____ My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.
9. _____ I am an outgoing person.

10. _____ There are people I feel close to.
11. _____ I feel left out.
12. _____ My social relationships are superficial.
13. _____ No one really knows me well.
14. _____ I feel isolated from others.
15. _____ I can find companionship when I want to.
16. _____ There are people who really understand me.
17. _____ I am unhappy being so withdrawn.
18. _____ People are around me but not with me.
19. _____ There are people I can talk to.
20. _____ There are people I can turn to.

Religious Beliefs and Activities

1. Right now, how religious a person would you say you are?

not religious at all			moderately religious			extremely religious
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. To what extent would you say you still hold the religious beliefs taught you when you were growing up? (if you were raised in no religion, check "0").

6 _____ I completely agree with the beliefs taught
5 _____ I nearly completely agree with the beliefs taught
4 _____ I substantially agree with the beliefs taught
3 _____ I moderately agree with the beliefs taught
2 _____ I mildly agree with the beliefs taught
1 _____ I very slightly agree with the beliefs taught
0 _____ I do not agree at all with the beliefs taught

3. How many times would you say you ordinarily attend religious services in a month (circle the appropriate number)?

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 or more |

4. With which religious group do you presently identify yourself or think of yourself as being (be as specific as possible)?

_____

5. To what extent has your religiousness changed since coming to university? I have become:

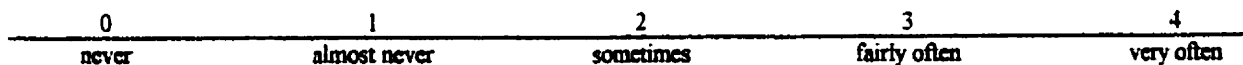| -4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
much *less* religious				no change				much *more* religious

Reactions To Situations

The following are ways of reacting to various different, stressful, or upsetting situations. Please indicate how much you engage in each type of activity when you encounter a difficult, stressful, or upsetting situation.

1	2	3	4	5
<-----------				---------->
not at all				very much

1. ____ Schedule my time better.
2. ____ Focus on the problem and see how I can solve it.
3. ____ Blame myself for procrastinating.
4. ____ Do what I think is best.
5. ____ Take a vacation.
6. ____ Think how I might use the situation to my advantage.
7. ____ Talk to others and find out how they react to the situation.
8. ____ Outline my priorities.
9. ____ Treat myself to a favorite food or snack.
10. ____ Think about the positive aspects of the situation.
11. ____ Become very tense.
12. ____ Think about how I have solved similar problems.
13. ____ Take a warm bath.
14. ____ Blame myself for being too emotional about the situation.
15. ____ Daydream about a better time or place.
16. ____ Determine a course of action and follow it.
17. ____ Go to a party.
18. ____ Work to understand the situation.
19. ____ Take corrective action immediately.
20. ____ Think about the event and learn from my mistakes.
21. ____ Wish that I could change what had happened or how I felt.

22. ____ Visit a friend.
23. ____ Shout or yell.
24. ____ Spend time with a special person.
25. ____ Go for a walk.
26. ____ Tell myself that it will never happen again.
27. ____ Talk to someone whose advice I value.
28. ____ Analyze the problem before reacting.
29. ____ Phone a friend.
30. ____ Get angry.
31. ____ Adjust my priorities.
32. ____ Cry.
33. ____ See a movie.
34. ____ Get control of the situation.
35. ____ Make an extra effort to get things done.
36. ____ Come up with several different solutions to the problem.
37. ____ Take time off and get away from the situation.
38. ____ Fantasize about how things might turn out.
39. ____ Go over in my mind what I need to say or do.
40. ____ Take it out on other people.
41. ____ Use the situation to prove that I can do it.
42. ____ Try and be organized so I can be on top of the situation.
43. ____ Watch T.V.
44. ____ Make plans to uses my time more wisely.

Thoughts and Feelings

The questions in this scale ask how often you felt or thought certain things *during the last month.* Answer each question fairly quickly with the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate, using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

In the last month, how often have you:

1. ____ Felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?
2. ____ Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
3. ____ Felt that things were going your way?
4. ____ Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Family Life

When you were in high school, who did you live with?

- □ both your mom and dad
- □ only one parent
- □ someone else (e.g., grandmother, aunt)
- □ alone
- □ other: _____

Please answer the following questions with reference to the time period when you were in high school living at home. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements as applied to your parents (or the authority figure you were living with)?

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. ____ I could count on them to help me out, if I had some kind of problem.
2. ____ They kept pushing me to do my best in whatever I did.
3. ____ They kept pushing me to think independently.
4. ____ They helped me with my school work if there was something I didn't understand.
5. ____ When they wanted me to do something, they explained why.
6. ____ When I got a poor grade in school, my parents encouraged me to try harder.
7. ____ When I got a good grade in school, my parents praised me.
8. ____ My parents really knew who my friends were.
9. ____ My parents spent time just talking with me.
10. ____ My family did fun active things together.
11. ____ My parents TRIED to know where I went at night.
12. ____ My parents REALLY knew where I went at night.
13. ____ My parents TRIED to know what I did with my free time.
14. ____ My parents REALLY knew what I did with my free time.
15. ____ My parents TRIED to know where I was most afternoons after school.
16. ____ My parents REALLY knew where I was most afternoons after school.

Please check the appropriate answer for the two questions below, with the reference point being the time period when you were in high school and living at home.

In a typical week, the latest my parents let me stay out

On school nights (Monday-Thursday) was:
- ____ Not allowed out
- ____ Before 8:00 p.m.
- ____ 8:00 to 8:59 p.m.
- ____ 9:00 to 9:59 p.m.
- ____ 10:00 to 10.59 p.m.
- ____ 11:00 to 11:59 p.m.
- ____ As late as I wanted

On Friday or Saturday nights was:
- ____ Not allowed out
- ____ Before 9:00 p.m.
- ____ 9:00 to 9:59 p.m.
- ____ 10:00 to 10.59 p.m.
- ____ 11:00 to 11:59 p.m.
- ____ 12:00 to 12:59 a.m.
- ____ 1:00 to 1:59 a.m.
- ____ As late as I wanted

Experiences at University

The 67 items included in this survey are statements that describe university experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the last few days). For each item, record the appropriate number in the space next to that item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Doesn't apply to me at all   Applies very closely to me

1. _____ I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.
2. _____ I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.
3. _____ I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.
4. _____ I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university.
5. _____ I know why I'm in university and what I want out of it.
6. _____ I am finding academic work at university difficult.
7. _____ Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.
8. _____ I am very involved with social activities in university.
9. _____ I am adjusting well to university.
10. _____ I have not been functioning well during examinations.
11. _____ I have felt tired much of the time lately.
12. _____ Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.
13. _____ I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.
14. _____ I have had informal, personal contacts with university professors.
15. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to go to university.
16. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular.
17. _____ I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.
18. _____ I have several close social ties at university.
19. _____ My academic goals and purposes are well defined.
20. _____ I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.
21. _____ I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.
22. _____ Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now.
23. _____ Getting a university degree is very important to me.
24. _____ My appetite has been good lately.
25. _____ I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.
26. _____ I enjoy living in a university residence. (Please omit if you do not live in a residence; any university housing should be regarded as a residence.)
27. _____ I enjoy writing papers for courses.
28. _____ I have been having a lot of headaches lately.
29. _____ I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.
30. _____ I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university.
31. _____ I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counselling Services Centre or from a counsellor outside of university.
32. _____ Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a university education.
33. _____ I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at university. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)
34. _____ I wish I were at another university.
35. _____ I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.
36. _____ I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

←——————   ——————→

Doesn't apply to me at all   Applies very closely to me

37. _____ I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting.

38. _____ I have been getting angry too easily lately.

39. _____ Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.

40. _____ I haven't been sleeping very well.

41. _____ I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.

42. _____ I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.

43. _____ I am satisfied with the quality or calibre of courses available at university.

44. _____ I am attending classes regularly.

45. _____ Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.

46. _____ I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at university.

47. _____ I expect to stay at this university for a bachelor's degree.

48. _____ I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.

49. _____ I worry a lot about my university expenses.

50. _____ I am enjoying my academic work at university.

51. _____ I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately.

52. _____ I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.

53. _____ I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.

54. _____ I am satisfied with my program of courses for this term.

55. _____ I have been feeling in good health lately.

56. _____ I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.

57. _____ On balance, I would rather be home than here.

58. _____ Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.

59. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university.

60. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of university altogether and for good.

61. _____ I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.

62. _____ I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.

63. _____ I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.

64. _____ I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed on me in university.

65. _____ I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.

66. _____ I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.

67. _____ I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university.

Transitions '98 Group Information   Code: _____

Now that you have participated in a number of sessions of the Transitions '98 program, we'd like to get some sense of how you felt about various aspects of the group in which you participated. Your reflections on the group experience are important to us, because we want to make our next group sessions even better. Help us do this by giving us your honest impressions.

Feelings about the Group

The following statements have to do with your feelings about the Transitions '98 group in which you participated. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree	+4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree	+3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree	+2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree	+1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ Listening to others made me feel that I wasn't the only one who was having the kinds of feelings and experiences I was having.
2. _____ I got a lot of good ideas from listening to people in the group.
3. _____ I didn't really feel a sense of belonging to my group.
4. _____ The group felt like a safe place to talk about personal feelings and experiences.
5. _____ The group members seemed to respect me as a person.
6. _____ I really liked the members of my group.
7. _____ The group leaders did a good job facilitating the group discussion each week.
8. _____ I made some good friends from the group.
9. _____ I would advise anyone coming into first year to participate in a group like this.
10. _____ I felt supported and accepted by the members of my group.
11. _____ I didn't really look forward to coming to my group each week.
12. _____ I felt that the group gave me a chance to help and support others who were going through the same kinds of things that I was going through.
13. _____ If I was experiencing some problems, there are members of my group that I could go to for help.
14. _____ I felt isolated and separate from the other members of my group.
15. _____ Participating in the group gave me a better understanding of what it's like to go through a transition like this.
16. _____ A lot of the people in the group seemed to share my values and priorities.
17. _____ I learned a lot by participating in the group.

Interactions with Group Members Outside of Group Sessions

1. How many of the members of your group have you seen socially (i.e., had a coffee or meal with, gone to a pub or movie together) outside of the group sessions?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

2. How many people in your group did you become friends with as a result of participating in the group?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

3. How often did you do each of the following with one or more of the people you met through the group?

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

a. _____ Greeted them when you saw them outside of the group sessions?
b. _____ Stopped to chat with them when you saw them outside of the group sessions?
c. _____ Made arrangements to meet for lunch, dinner or a coffee?
d. _____ Did something socially with them (e.g., went to a pub, movie, etc.)?

Impressions About the Group Sessions

Each of the group sessions was divided into three parts:
- "check-in" - the discussion of what had happened to people over the previous week
- exercise - an activity relating to the week's focus
- general discussion - about the week's focus & other issues

Please indicate how you felt, in general, about each aspect as well as the different sessions using the following scale. If you were absent for a particular session, simply mark an "A" in the space provided.

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
very negative			neutral			very positive

1. _____ the weekly check-in at the beginning of each session
2. _____ the "exercise" or activity part of each session
3. _____ the discussion part of the session
4. _____ the way the groups were led by the facilitators
5. _____ the first (introductory) session
6. _____ the session on new social ties
7. _____ the session on balancing work & social life
8. _____ the session on peer pressure & personal values
9. _____ the session on previous social ties
10. _____ the session on expectations & reality

Overall Impressions

What are your thoughts about the Transitions '98 groups, now that you have attended a number of group sessions?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did you like about the group and the group sessions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What didn't you like about the group and the group sessions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you think the groups could be improved in the future?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix AW

1. Where are you living while you attend WLU?
   - ☐ residence
   - ☐ off campus (but not at home)
   - ☐ at home
   - ☐ other: _____

2. How have you been doing academically so far?
   - ☐ much better than expected
   - ☐ slightly better than expected
   - ☐ about as well as expected
   - ☐ slightly worse than expected
   - ☐ much worse than expected

3. Use the following scale to complete the table below:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

Since *the beginning of the winter term* in January, how often have you *discussed* these issues with:

	Parents	Friends	Teachers/ Counsellors	Others
a. University life				
b. Classes				
c. Social life at university				
d. How your living arrangements are working out				
e. Finances				

Thoughts about University Life

This section asks about your thoughts about university life. It is important that you respond to the written questions as fully as you can, i.e., complete sentences. Take your time and reflect on each question. Answer each question as thoroughly as possible.

1. In general, what has university life been like? (In this response you could discuss things such as what you enjoy about university life, what you find less enjoyable, what the social life or academics are like, or anything else you are thinking about in relation to university life.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How have you changed as a person as a result of your experiences at university?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thoughts about Self & Others

Below you will find a number of statements about your relationships with other people, your ways of coping with day to day events, and your personal attitudes. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

-4 = very strongly disagree   +4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree   +3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree   +2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree   +1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

45. _____ There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.

46. _____ I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people.

47. _____ There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.

48. _____ There are people who depend on me for help.

49. _____ There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do.

50. _____ Other people do not view me as competent.

51. _____ I feel personally responsible for the well-being of another person.

52. _____ I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs.

53. _____ I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities.

54. _____ If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance.

55. _____ I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.

56. _____ There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life.

57. _____ I have relationships where my competence and skill are recognized.

58. _____ There is no one who shares my interests and concerns.

59. _____ There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being.

60. _____ There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems.

61. _____ I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person.

62. _____ There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it.

63. _____ There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with.

64. _____ There are people who admire my talents and abilities.

65. _____ I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.

66. _____ There is no one who likes to do the things I do.

67. _____ There are people I can count on in an emergency.

68. _____ No one needs me to care for them any more.

69. _____ I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

70. _____ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

71. _____ All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

72. _____ I am able to do things as well as most other people.

73. _____ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

74. _____ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

75. _____ On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

76. _____ I wish I could have more respect for myself.

77. _____ I certainly feel useless at times.

78. _____ At times I think I am no good at all.

Feelings and Behaviours

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved recently. Please indicate how often you have felt this way *during the past week*. Use the scale provided for your responses.

0	1	2	3
rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)	most or all of the time (5-7 days)

During the past week:

1. _____ I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.
2. _____ I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.
3. _____ I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.
4. _____ I felt that I was just as good as other people.
5. _____ I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.
6. _____ I felt depressed.
7. _____ I felt that everything I did was an effort.
8. _____ I felt hopeful about the future.

9. _____ I thought my life had been a failure.
10. _____ I felt fearful.
11. _____ My sleep was restless.
12. _____ I was happy.
13. _____ I talked less than usual.
14. _____ I felt lonely.
15. _____ People were unfriendly.
16. _____ I enjoyed life.
17. _____ I had crying spells.
18. _____ I felt sad.
19. _____ I felt that people dislike me.
20. _____ I could not get "going".

Time Management at University

Below you will find a number of statements about approaches people take with regard to managing their time at university. Please indicate how often you do each of the following, using the scale below:

0	1	2	3	4
almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often	

1. _____ I set goals for myself to keep up with my due dates.
2. _____ I study someplace where it is quiet and distractions are limited.
3. _____ I avoid my assignments until they are almost due.
4. _____ I make keeping up with course work my first priority.
5. _____ I try to manage my "school-work time" as well as my "play time" to make the best out of both.
6. _____ I follow a regular study program.
7. _____ I don't worry much about school work; I'll get around to it when I can.
8. _____ I get down to serious studying early in the year so that I do not fall behind.
9. _____ I try to estimate how much time I will need to complete an assignment or essay and then give myself plenty of time to complete it.
10. _____ I put off studying for courses I don't like or that are difficult.
11. _____ I plan when I will study and when I will go out with my friends.
12. _____ If I have an assignment due, I leave it until the last day and work on it until I finish it.
13. _____ I like to plan when and for how long I will work on an assignment.
14. _____ I schedule my due dates on a calendar to guide my time for studying/doing assignments.
15. _____ I need a certain amount of stress/pressure to start working on an assignment/study for a test.
16. _____ It's important for me to stick to my planned schedule of studying.
17. _____ If I have an assignment coming up, I start it way before it is due.
18. _____ I will go out with my friends anytime they ask, no matter how much work I have to do.
19. _____ I attend all my lectures and tutorials.
20. _____ When it comes to school work, I don't worry about planning when I will do it, I just do it when I can.
21. _____ I outline a study plan and commit to it.
22. _____ I start studying for tests early so that I have lots of time to review the material.

Personal Feelings and Relationships

Below are a number of statements describing your feelings about yourself and relationship with others. Please use the following scale to indicate how often you have felt a certain way. Indicate **one score** for each statement.

0	1	2	3
never	rarely	sometimes	often

1. _____ I feel in tune with the people around me.
2. _____ I lack companionship.
3. _____ There is no one I can turn to.
4. _____ I do not feel alone.
5. _____ I feel part of a group of friends.
6. _____ I have a lot in common with the people around me.
7. _____ I am no longer close to anyone.
8. _____ My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.
9. _____ I am an outgoing person.

10. _____ There are people I feel close to.
11. _____ I feel left out.
12. _____ My social relationships are superficial.
13. _____ No one really knows me well.
14. _____ I feel isolated from others.
15. _____ I can find companionship when I want to.
16. _____ There are people who really understand me.
17. _____ I am unhappy being so withdrawn.
18. _____ People are around me but not with me.
19. _____ There are people I can talk to.
20. _____ There are people I can turn to.

Religious Beliefs and Activities

1. Right now, how religious a person would you say you are?

not religious at all			*moderately religious*			*extremely religious*
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. To what extent would you say you still hold the religious beliefs taught you when you were growing up?

6 _____ I completely agree with the beliefs taught
5 _____ I nearly completely agree with the beliefs taught
4 _____ I substantially agree with the beliefs taught
3 _____ I moderately agree with the beliefs taught   _____ I was not taught any religious beliefs.
2 _____ I mildly agree with the beliefs taught
1 _____ I very slightly agree with the beliefs taught
0 _____ I do not agree at all with the beliefs taught

3. How many times would you say you ordinarily attend religious services in a month (circle the appropriate number)?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9 or more

4. With which religious group do you presently identify yourself or think of yourself as being (be as specific as possible)?

_____

5. To what extent has your religiousness changed since coming to university? I have become:

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
much *less* religious				no change				much *more* religious

Reactions To Situations

The following are ways of reacting to various different, stressful, or upsetting situations. Please indicate how much you engage in each type of activity when you encounter a difficult, stressful, or upsetting situation.

1	2	3	4	5
<-----------				----------->
not at all				very much

1. ____ Schedule my time better.
2. ____ Focus on the problem and see how I can solve it.
3. ____ Blame myself for procrastinating.
4. ____ Do what I think is best.
5. ____ Take a vacation.
6. ____ Think how I might use the situation to my advantage.
7. ____ Talk to others and find out how they react to the situation.
8. ____ Outline my priorities.
9. ____ Treat myself to a favorite food or snack.
10. ____ Think about the positive aspects of the situation.
11. ____ Become very tense.
12. ____ Think about how I have solved similar problems.
13. ____ Take a warm bath.
14. ____ Blame myself for being too emotional about the situation.
15. ____ Daydream about a better time or place.
16. ____ Determine a course of action and follow it.
17. ____ Go to a party.
18. ____ Work to understand the situation.
19. ____ Take corrective action immediately.
20. ____ Think about the event and learn from my mistakes.
21. ____ Wish that I could change what had happened or how I felt.

22. ____ Visit a friend.
23. ____ Shout or yell.
24. ____ Spend time with a special person.
25. ____ Go for a walk.
26. ____ Tell myself that it will never happen again.
27. ____ Talk to someone whose advice I value.
28. ____ Analyze the problem before reacting.
29. ____ Phone a friend.
30. ____ Get angry.
31. ____ Adjust my priorities.
32. ____ Cry.
33. ____ See a movie.
34. ____ Get control of the situation.
35. ____ Make an extra effort to get things done.
36. ____ Come up with several different solutions to the problem.
37. ____ Take time off and get away from the situation.
38. ____ Fantasize about how things might turn out.
39. ____ Go over in my mind what I need to say or do.
40. ____ Take it out on other people.
41. ____ Use the situation to prove that I can do it.
42. ____ Try and be organized so I can be on top of the situation.
43. ____ Watch T.V.
44. ____ Make plans to uses my time more wisely.

Thoughts and Feelings

The questions in this scale ask how often you felt or thought certain things *during the last month*. Answer each question fairly quickly with the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate, using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

In the last month, how often have you:

1. ____ Felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?
2. ____ Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
3. ____ Felt that things were going your way?
4. ____ Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Experiences at University

The 67 items included in this survey are statements that describe university experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the last few days). For each item, record the appropriate number in the space next to that item.

```
     1        2        3        4        5        6        7        8        9
<————————                                                          ————————>
  Doesn't apply to me at all                                   Applies very closely to me
```

1. _____ I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.
2. _____ I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.
3. _____ I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.
4. _____ I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university.
5. _____ I know why I'm in university and what I want out of it.
6. _____ I am finding academic work at university difficult.
7. _____ Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.
8. _____ I am very involved with social activities in university.
9. _____ I am adjusting well to university.
10. _____ I have not been functioning well during examinations.
11. _____ I have felt tired much of the time lately.
12. _____ Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.
13. _____ I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.
14. _____ I have had informal, personal contacts with university professors.
15. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to go to university.
16. _____ I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular.
17. _____ I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.
18. _____ I have several close social ties at university.
19. _____ My academic goals and purposes are well defined.
20. _____ I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.
21. _____ I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.
22. _____ Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now.
23. _____ Getting a university degree is very important to me.
24. _____ My appetite has been good lately.
25. _____ I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.
26. _____ I enjoy living in a university residence. (Please omit if you do not live in a residence; any university housing should be regarded as a residence.)
27. _____ I enjoy writing papers for courses.
28. _____ I have been having a lot of headaches lately.
29. _____ I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.
30. _____ I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university.
31. _____ I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counselling Services Centre or from a counsellor outside of university.
32. _____ Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a university education.
33. _____ I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at university. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)
34. _____ I wish I were at another university.
35. _____ I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

<———————   ———————>

Doesn't apply to me at all   Applies very closely to me

36. _____ I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university.

37. _____ I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting.

38. _____ I have been getting angry too easily lately.

39. _____ Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.

40. _____ I haven't been sleeping very well.

41. _____ I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.

42. _____ I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.

43. _____ I am satisfied with the quality or caliber of courses available at university.

44. _____ I am attending classes regularly.

45. _____ Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.

46. _____ I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at university.

47. _____ I expect to stay at this university for a bachelor's degree.

48. _____ I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.

49. _____ I worry a lot about my university expenses.

50. _____ I am enjoying my academic work at university.

51. _____ I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately.

52. _____ I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.

53. _____ I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.

54. _____ I am satisfied with my program of courses for this term.

55. _____ I have been feeling in good health lately.

56. _____ I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.

57. _____ On balance, I would rather be home than here.

58. _____ Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.

59. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university.

60. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of university altogether and for good.

61. _____ I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.

62. _____ I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.

63. _____ I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.

64. _____ I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed on me in university.

65. _____ I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.

66. _____ I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.

67. _____ I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university.

How often have you missed classes this term? (check one)

_____ never
_____ once or twice
_____ once or twice a month
_____ about once a week
_____ 2-5 times per week
_____ about once a day or more

University Involvement

Below is a list of different university groups or organizations that students sometimes get involved in while they are at university. Please indicate how often you've participated in each of the following groups' or organizations' activities **at any time** since you have been at university by writing the appropriate number beside the group/organization's name, according to the following code:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
never	**rarely**	**sometimes**	**fairly often**	**very often**

_____ fraternity/sorority
_____ university religious group
_____ university-associated service or charity
_____ governance (e.g., student government)
_____ intramural or inter-university sports team
_____ academic club, society or team
_____ cultural or social club or society
_____ student political group
_____ student publication (e.g., newspaper, yearbook)
_____ university performing group (e.g., choir, drama production)
_____ other: _____

Over the past month, approximately how many hours, in total,
have you been involved with these groups or organizations?   _____ hours in total

Alcohol & Drug Consumption

5. Please indicate the average number of alcoholic drinks you _currently_ consume per week.
Assume that 1 drink = 1 beer = 1 glass of wine = 1 shot of liquor.

_____ drinks

6. How many times would you say that you _currently_ get drunk in the average month? (Circle the appropriate number.)

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 or more times

7. Do you smoke cigarettes or other tobacco products?   ____ not at all
                                                          ____ occasionally
                                                          ____ regularly

8. Use the scale below to indicate how much you've used each of the following in the _last three months_.

    0   never
    1   once or twice
    2   once or twice a month
    3   about once a week
    4   2-5 times per week
    5   about once a day or more

_____ marijuana
_____ stimulants (e.g., amphetamines)
_____ other recreational drugs (e.g., LSD, cocaine)

Transitions '98 Group Information   Code: _____

Now that you have participated in the Transitions '98 program, we'd like to get some sense of how you felt about various aspects of the group in which you participated. Your reflections on the group experience are important to us, because we want to make our next group sessions even better. Help us do this by giving us your honest impressions. You might have seen some of these questions before but here we are interested in your impressions now that you have completed the program.

Feelings about the Group

Please use the following scale to indicate your feelings about your group.

-4 = very strongly disagree	+4 = very strongly agree
-3 = strongly disagree	+3 = strongly agree
-2 = moderately disagree	+2 = moderately agree
-1 = slightly disagree	+1 = slightly agree

0 = neither agree nor disagree

1. _____ Listening to others made me feel that I wasn't the only one who was having the kinds of feelings and experiences I was having.

2. _____ I got a lot of good ideas from listening to people in the group.

3. _____ I didn't really feel a sense of belonging to my group.

4. _____ The group felt like a safe place to talk about personal feelings and experiences.

5. _____ The group members seemed to respect me as a person.

6. _____ I really liked the members of my group.

7. _____ The group leaders did a good job facilitating the group discussion each week.

8. _____ I made some good friends from the group.

9. _____ I would advise anyone coming into first year to participate in a group like this.

10. _____ I felt supported and accepted by the members of my group.

11. _____ I didn't really look forward to coming to my group each week.

12. _____ I felt that the group gave me a chance to help and support others who were going through the same kinds of things that I was going through.

13. _____ If I was experiencing some problems, there are members of my group that I could go to for help.

14. _____ I felt isolated and separate from the other members of my group.

15. _____ Participating in the group gave me a better understanding of what it's like to go through a transition like this.

16. _____ A lot of the people in the group seemed to share my values and priorities.

17. _____ I learned a lot by participating in the group.

Interactions with Group Members Outside of Group Sessions

1. How many of the members of your group have you seen socially over the past two months (i.e., had a coffee or meal with, gone to a pub or movie together) outside of the group sessions?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

2. How many people in your group did you become friends with as a result of participating in the group?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

3. Over the last couple of months, how often did you do each of the following with one or more of the people you met through the group?

0	1	2	3	4
never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often

a. _____ Greeted them when you saw them outside of the group sessions?

b. _____ Stopped to chat with them when you saw them outside of the group sessions?

c. _____ Made arrangements to meet for lunch, dinner or a coffee?

d. _____ Did something socially with them (e.g., went to a pub, movie, etc.)?

Overall Impressions

What are your thoughts about the Transitions '98 groups, now that you have completed the program?

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What did you like about the group and the group sessions?

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What didn't you like about the group and the group sessions?

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How do you think the groups could be improved in the future?

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Please use the space below to record any additional comments about the groups or the Transitions '98 research project in general.

_____

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