Determining the Usefulness of an Advising Video for an Animal Science Department

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Abstract

The usefulness of an advising video for students in an animal science academic department was evaluated through short interviews with undergraduate students and their academic advisors. Advisors' advising styles were determined, along with students' preferences for advising styles. Student and advisor perceptions regarding the usefulness of the advising video for both the prescriptive and developmental aspects of advising were characterized. Perceptions of the most important and useful characteristics of the advising video were also described, and potential areas for improvement were identified. The video was found to be most useful as an aid in the prescriptive aspects of advising, leaving more time for advisors to spend on the developmental aspects of advising. Students liked the video because it answered fundamental advising questions and directed them toward questions they should be asking in their advising sessions. They also perceived that watching the video would make their college experience easier. Students and advisors suggested that the video should be viewed by students in a first-semester introductory course to prepare them for their upcoming advising sessions. Comments from students and advisors indicated that the 17-minute video should be shortened or divided into smaller segments, and the content should be edited carefully to ensure accuracy of information.

Introduction

The educational community has a renewed commitment to valuable instruction and enhanced student learning. As a part of that community, college-level agricultural educators are reexamining past practices in an effort to determine the effectiveness and validity of techniques which for years have been performed and broadcast with almost religious dedication (Dyer, 1995). A necessary component of many instructors' responsibilities is academic advising, and it has become imperative to re-evaluate strategies in order to offer the greatest possibility for accomplishing the goals of the advisee, advisor, academic unit, and institution (Yarbrough, 2002). In particular, research on undergraduate advising and retention has demonstrated that students who are most satisfied with their advising are most likely to stay in school (Hale, Graham, and Johnson, 2009). "*Students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that provide clear and consistent information about institutional requirements and effective advising about choices students have to make regarding their programs of study and future career goals,*" according to noted advising and retention theorist Vincent Tinto (2006).

While positive personal relationships have been shown to have an impact on advising success, alone they do not produce an extraordinary advising experience. Advisors must also provide students with information about their program requirements (such as pre-requisites and co-requisites). The information advisors receive in preparation for advising undergraduate students is generally limited to what is in the course catalog, and most faculty lack formal training in academic advising. Due to the limited amount of information they have about how to advise students, advisors sometimes struggle with completing the advising process in the most beneficial way (Gerdes and Crews, 2010).

Uhlik (2005) described the frustration many students have when attempting to decipher concepts like degree requirements and course restrictions to plan their college curriculum through graduation. In response to this problem, Rawlins and Rawlins (2005) demonstrated how advisors could more effectively traverse the advising relationship. They noted that advising relationships must be dynamic and customized because they are subject to numerous contingencies and limitations of time and energy on the parts of both participants.

Many colleges have decentralized their advising systems, which means that faculty members, not professional advisors, handle advising. Filling this advising

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role may be intimidating and sometimes inconvenient for faculty members; however, students prefer to discuss academic matters with faculty (Belchier, 2000). Faculty duties typically include serving as student advisors and providing advice about course information (Templeton, Skaggs, & Johnson, 2002). It appears there is a large gap between advisors' self-perceptions of their advising performance and students' perceptions of their advisors' performance. Upcraft and Gardner (1989) found that "*Faculty perceive that they provide much more beneficial advisement than students feel they receive. Students perceive a vast difference between what faculty advising should be and what it is.*" Gardiner (1994) found that 79 percent of college presidents who responded to a survey specified poor academic advising as being a problem on their campus. Crookston (1972) differentiated between prescriptive and developmental advising and laid out the numerous differences between the two styles. He explained prescriptive advising as authoritarian and formal; it looks for limitations and is based on low trust. The advisor teaches, and the student learns; it views students as lazy, immature, and in need of urging. Developmental advising involves responsibility and learning on both sides; it looks for possibilities and is based on high trust. Students participating in developmental advising are active participants and capable of self-direction; it is a shared collaborative effort.

O'Banion (1994) wrote a highly influential article about academic advising models, and what he wrote still holds true today. Contrary to arrangements where advisors make decisions for their students, O'Banion noted that students should be responsible for making decisions during the course of advising. Students should explore the available materials in order to be well-versed about choices to be made as well as the necessary procedures.

Harder et al. (2009) found that the college of agriculture and life sciences faculty rated undergraduate advising among the three competencies with the lowest relevance. O'Banion (1994) observed that few instructors/advisors have or are given the time necessary for in-service education designed to make them more effective advisors. They often teach full loads, serve on committees, conduct research, and sponsor clubs and organizations, leaving little time for in-service education.

Context and Purpose of the Study

In the 2011-12 academic year, the Animal Science Department at the University of Arkansas housed 249 undergraduate students. Following a national trend, 180 (72.3%) were females and 69 (27.7%) were males. Approximately one-third of the 249 were transfer students, and the rest came to the department as freshmen (H. Twilley, personal communication, August 30, 2013). Animal Science Department faculty and administrators alike had observed that advising effectiveness was limited by advisors' lack of time and by the fact that some faculty rank advising as a low priority. According to faculty opinion, students in the Animal Science Department at the University of Arkansas do not typically take an active role in their advising, are not being efficient in their course selection, and do not understand the reasons for course selection and the connection between curriculum and future careers. These observations were a result of personal communications between the researcher and faculty members prior to the development of this study. At the time of this study, this statement did reflect the opinion of the majority of faculty members, with each member being able to name only a few advisees who were the exception to these observations. To address these issues, a video was created to fill gaps in advising that had been identified in academic advising literature and that exist in the Animal Science Department. The video, created prior to this study and placed on the departmental website, was designed to allow students to learn to customize their curricula and to take responsibility for their own academic plans. The video was generally recognized as an imperfect product that had potential to address some of the department's advising issues, and it needed to be evaluated and improved upon.

The purposes of this study were to (1) determine the usefulness of an advising video in the Animal Science Department to students and faculty, (2) describe student and advisor opinions about the video and its effectiveness, and (3) make recommendations for improvements and for the production of similar videos in other college of agriculture departments.

Research Objectives

1. Characterize the advising styles of the faculty advisors as well as the advising styles their advisees prefer.
2. Describe the perceptions of students and advisors regarding the usefulness of the advising video for both the prescriptive and developmental aspects of advising.
3. Describe potential areas for improvement in the video according to student and advisor perceptions.

Methods

We selected a qualitative approach to determine advisors' and advisees' feelings about the advising video. Qualitative research is designed to allow for the examination of a phenomenon and to help describe it at a depth that would not be possible through quantitative research methods (Merriam, 1998).

Faculty and administrators in the Animal Science Department created the advising video to prepare students to take responsibility for knowing their academic requirements. This, in theory, would facilitate more productive student advising sessions. The video (http://animalscience.uark.edu/7056.php) was made available to students on the departmental web site in November 2011. Subsequently, in the spring and summer of 2012, incoming and returning students were advised via e-mail to view the video before their advising or orientation

sessions. The video focused on (1) teaching students how to custom-tailor their coursework to match their own career interests and (2) informing students about internships, research opportunities, club and team activities, and the scholarship application process.

Ten of the eleven undergraduate advisors in the Animal Science Department agreed to participate in this study and were interviewed after having viewed the department's new advising video. Also, using the qualitative subject selection method of "snowballing" or "networking," each advisor recommended two undergraduate advisees to be interviewed (Merriam, 1998). Most students were selected through advisor recommendations; however, not every recommended student chose to participate. Following Merriam's networking technique, the remaining students were recruited by the students who already participated. The primary criterion for the selection of undergraduate subjects was their "stock" in the advising process as described by their advisor. The networking process, which is intended to lead to a purposeful selection of subjects rather than a representative sample, allowed us to interview students who were identified as having a vested interest in the advising process and in how students in the department are advised. The result of this process was a purposively selected cohort of 17 undergraduate students who were described by their advisors as students who truly cared about the advising they received and the advising styles of their mentors. These students, 16 females and one male, represented a unique group of academically engaged students who would provide thoughtful responses to the interview questions. The group included eight seniors, six juniors, two sophomores, and one freshman. We surmised that these subjects were recommended because of the rapport they had built with their advisors; hence, the group contained more upperclassmen, who had known their advisors for a longer period of time. We asked the undergraduate students to review the advising video before they were interviewed. The University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board approved the interview protocol, and all participants provided oral confirmation of consent prior to participation in the study.

We collected data through focused, semi-structured interviews (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002) conducted with both advisors and advisees in the University of Arkansas Animal Science Department. Advisors and advisees were prompted with questions from similar questioning routes, but some questions were tailored specifically for advisors or students. Advisor interviews lasted 10-15 minutes. Student interviews typically took 5-10 minutes. (The questioning routes included a collection of three initial questions to elicit opinions and feelings regarding the usefulness of the video and three deeper, probing questions related to advising styles and preferred advising styles.) Both questioning routes were developed to specifically address the objectives of this study. Questions elicited the advisors' self-perceived advising styles, students' preferred advising styles, and both groups' perceptions of the usefulness of the advising video and their suggestions for improvement.

After presenting participants with Crookston's (1972) definitions of each advising style, we asked advisors which style of advising they felt they adhered to and how they thought their advising style helped their advisees. We asked students which style they felt their advisor followed, as well as which style of advising they preferred to receive. Field notes were also kept to supplement the interview responses and to help provide context for the interview responses during our data analysis. The following functional definitions were used in the interview questioning route:

Prescriptive advising: Delivering advising information related to course selection and scheduling accurately and efficiently, with the goal of enabling students to earn their diplomas and graduate "on time."

Developmental advising: Creating a mentoring relationship to develop the student academically, professionally, and personally with the ultimate goal being to enable students to clarify their future goals and plan strategies to accomplish these goals.

We transcribed audio recordings of each interview and loaded the transcripts into the qualitative visual analysis software NVIVO 9, which allowed us to take a systematic approach to the thematic analysis. This provided us with the opportunity to highlight excerpts from the transcripts and link the excerpts to emergent themes, resulting in a list of themes with multiple examples of data that supported the presence of each theme. We examined the transcripts carefully for responses that related to the project objectives, and, following the constant comparative approach (Glaser, 1965), we began to develop open codes (top-level categories) for emergent themes. As coding progressed, a hierarchy of themes and subthemes developed, and the open codes were organized into axial codes (top-level categories with descriptive sub-categories) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), which ultimately represented the findings related to each of the research objectives.

Credibility, Believability, and Transferability of Findings

Merriam (1998) advised that the quality of qualitative research and the credibility of the conclusions are tied closely to methodology. The researchers in the present study followed several basic guidelines to ensure the credibility of the findings.

A clearly defined protocol of data collection and analysis was written and followed. Field notes (Emerson, et al, 1995) helped document the context of the interviews. We digitally audio-recorded all 27 interviews and transcribed them verbatim, providing the beginnings of an audit trail for the project (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Additionally, NVIVO 9 nodes and sub nodes (resulting from open and axial coding) were developed during the analysis leading to the findings, conclusions,

and recommendations of this study. Findings were verified through standard qualitative methods. Member checks—verification of findings with the actual subjects of the research—were conducted with two participating advisors and two advisees. After reviewing the data, findings, and conclusions, they verified that the results were generally representative of their feelings about the video. Also, three faculty research colleagues with experience in both qualitative research methods and student advising provided peer reviews and found the findings to be reasonable and supported by the data.

In qualitative case study research, transferability, or the ability for the findings to be generalized to larger populations outside the cohort of subjects studied, is not always possible or practical. Often, case study findings allow researchers to develop hypotheses about certain phenomena that can lead to further investigation (Merriam, 1998). This is the intention we had when we undertook this study. Still, consumers of qualitative research are free to apply the findings to any situations they may deem similar to this case, considering the context and the characteristics of the subjects observed, both of which are described above.

Findings

Advising Styles

Table 1 displays the differences between the self-perceived advising styles of the ten participating advisors and the perceptions of their advising styles by their advisees. Participants categorized the advisor as either developmental or prescriptive. The total number of participating students per advisor is listed down the right hand side of the table.

Table 1 shows a disconnect between some advisors' self-perceived advising styles and their advisees perception of their advising style. Advisors 1, 6, 7, 8, and 10 all show this disconnect between how they think they advise and how their students perceive their advising. Only half (2, 3, 4, 5, and 9) show a clear connection in perceptions, with all of their advisees agreeing with the advisor's self-perceived style.

Table 2 shows the differences between what styles of advising students feel their advisor uses and what style they prefer. Table 4 shows demographic data for the students: whether they were male or female, their year in college, and which advisor they belonged to. Of the 17 participating students, 12 (70.6%) said they received the advising style they preferred from their advisor. That left five of the 17 students preferring a different style of advising than the one they received. Students who preferred prescriptive advising appeared to be direct and specific in their needs and described themselves as being focused on career goals.

Table 1. Advisors' self-perceived advising style and their students' perceptions of the advisors' styles

Advisor Number	Self-perceived Style	Student Perceptions			Total Students
		Prescriptive	Developmental	Both	
1	Both [z]	0	1	1	2
2	Developmental	0	2	0	2
3	Developmental	0	2	0	2
4	Developmental	0	1	0	1
5	Developmental	0	1	0	1
6	Developmental	1	0	0	1
7	Prescriptive	1	1	0	2
8	Developmental	0	1	1	2
9	Developmental	0	2	0	2
10	Developmental	1	1	0	2

[z] Advisor felt he/she belonged evenly in both categories

Table 2. Student advising style preference and their perceived advisor's style

Students' Perceptions of Advisor's Style	Students' Preferred Advising Style			
	Prescriptive	Developmental	Both [y]	Total
Prescriptive	2	1	0	3
Developmental	1	10	1	12
Both [y]	2	0	0	2
Total	5	11	1	17

[y] It was felt that both advising styles were evenly represented

Student 14: "*I like to keep my business to myself. I would rather just come in and say 'I don't know what I need to do for this class, can you please help me out.' I just like to focus on my career.*"

The majority of students who preferred developmental advising communicated a need for guidance from time to time, and wanted their advisor available to discuss future possibilities.

Student 6: "*When I think about an advisor, it is supposed to be someone you come to when you have questions and regarding things that you don't have the answer for. You can come to them not only on academic things, but also on other things that affect academic choices.*"

Content

Importance of Understanding the Degree Check Sheet

The most common recurring theme throughout the study was the importance of students' understanding of their own degree check sheet, which contains a list of required and elective courses that students must take to complete their degree. Professors and students alike agreed that they viewed the explanation of the degree check sheet, requirements to graduate, and course information as being the most helpful information within the video.

Advisor 5: "*The area [of the video] that details the requirements for the major and minors, and what classes are available under each of the core units that we have. I think [students] would find that very helpful.*"

As the advisors and students discussed the portion of the video that addressed the degree check sheet, they mentioned several times that an explanation of the university's four-digit course numbering system was particularly appreciated.

Student 9: "*When I came I did not really understand where you start, and I did not understand the first number [of the course numbering system] was what class level it was and all that. So my first year I took a lot of junior level classes, and it was really hard but I did it.*"

Student Responsibilities Related to Advising

Students' responsibilities regarding understanding their degree plan, coming to advising sessions prepared, and keeping track of their academic progress were common themes with both advisors and students. Advisors stressed that ultimately students' academic progress is their own responsibility and that students should not go into advising blindly, expecting their advisor to essentially complete their degree plans for them.

Advisor 4: "*Student responsibility [is the most important message in the video]; that students need to take control of their own career path, career decisions, keeping track of scholarships, because they are all independent and they are only known to the student and the grantor of the scholarship. So that is probably the biggest take home message for students—active involvement.*"

Upperclassmen stressed the importance of having a plan and tailoring their college experience to fit their own needs. To do that, they first need to understand their degree plan; otherwise, students could end up wasting valuable time and money.

Student 7: "*[The video explained] when to take classes, and it had the schedule on there too, how Monday/Wednesday/Friday you can take this class, and it told you to take that your first semester when you got there, and not everybody knows that. You look at those intro classes, and there are seniors in them because they did not know that.*"

Prescriptive Advising Aspect of the Video

Advisors and students felt the video provides primarily prescriptive advising information. Several students and advisors observed that if the students were to view the video prior to advising sessions, less time would need to be spent on those prescriptive advising issues, and there would be more time available to devote to developmental advising, such as students' career choices and professional goals.

Student 2: "*Sometimes I found certain things in the video that were almost more useful than [what] your advisors have given you. Maybe [they were] assuming that you already knew stuff like that. So I would probably assume [that students should] watch it before going to your first advising, and then you can build questions off of that.*"

Advisor 4: "*I like the video because I agree wholeheartedly that students should look at their program before they come see their advisor… And then the advisor can focus on the content and that the sequencing of courses is correct and then to also spend more time focusing on their career objective and areas of coursework that they might consider to enhance their career path after they graduate.*"

Positive Feelings Toward Content of Advising Video

Most participants pointed out elements of the video they felt were helpful and well done. Upperclassmen who expressed an active involvement in their advising were surprised by some of the elements in the video they did not already know.

Student 13: "*I honestly think [the content] was great. This was the second time I have seen it and I feel like I have learned a little piece of something each time that just kind of slipped past me.*"

Advisors appeared to appreciate the explanations of frequently asked questions.

Several liked having these common questions answered in a format they felt all students could easily understand.

Advisor 7: "*[The students] are coming in first semester and get to see that video; it gives them all the background that they need to be successful as long as they follow the steps that are recommended in that video.*"

Positive Feelings About the Quality of the Video Production and Messaging

Advisors in particular made mention of the professional level of production they felt the video portrayed. They liked how the video visually separated the degree check sheet into smaller sections, highlighted key areas, and gave the viewer more to look at than a piece of paper. Overall, they felt it was well done.

Advisor 1: "*I think [the video] looked pretty slick. I liked the highlight in spots, how it moved through, I liked the highlighting of some of the texts that she did, and she did not read everything off the slide. It was very easy to understand. It was at a good pace… It seemed like a pretty professional job.*"

The Video's Ability to Provide New Information to Advisees

Advisors were nearly unanimous in agreeing that there were concepts in the video that students would not know prior to watching the video. The responses from students came in two different forms. Students either responded with an emphatic yes, or they explained that while their answer was no it was because they were upperclassman and had gone through advising so many times and had heard the material repeatedly.

Student 3: "*I cannot say anything particularly [stuck out to me as being a concept I did not already know], because [the information] has been reiterated to me so many times by [my advisor] and by the faculty, so no.*"

Even while some students did not learn any new information, they said they recognized that the video would be helpful.

Application of the Video

Video Is Best for Freshmen

Most participants specifically mentioned freshmen as being the group of students who would most benefit from watching the video. It was further explained by several participants that after two or three advising sessions, the content of the video should become common

knowledge to most students, but they also noted that having this knowledge as a freshman would have made their start at the University much easier.

Student 1: "*[The video] would be very very helpful. I wish 200% that I had watched this video when I first got here because I was really, really lost for my first year and a half.*"

Advisor 7: "*I think several parts of the video are going to be useful to students; especially freshman just now coming in may not have a feel for their course plan.*"

Advisors expressed a desire to show this video to freshman because they felt it did a good job of explaining the most basic questions incoming freshmen have, which advisors sometimes forget students do not know.

Show Video Before First Fall Advising Session

When asked where they thought the video would be most useful, the most common response was specifically after university freshman orientation but before their first full advising session that fall when they select their spring classes.

Advisor 6: "*[Students should] watch [the video] before they get into their first pre-enrollment for the spring semester their freshman year…The idea of the video was to try to get them prepared to come to their advisor with an idea of what they are going to take, and so I think if you start that the first year we won't have this problem.*"

Show Video in an Introductory Level Animal Science Course

Many participants specifically discussed making viewing the video mandatory in an introductory or freshman level course as the most effective way to reach all the lower classman and utilize the benefits of the video. The freshman-level course called Introduction to Animal Science lecture and lab were suggested. This particular course is offered in the fall, and the Animal Science department recommends that all incoming students enroll in the course in their first semester.

Student 6: "*Everyone has to take the Intro to Animal Science class, so I feel like that would really be a good place to have [the video] embedded in there.*"

Make Video Available Online

A few advisors and students thought that in addition to showing the video in a freshman level introductory course, the video should be made available online, and students should be made aware of its location. This is important because the video is already on the Animal Science Department's website, and yet most of the students interviewed were not aware of its location or its function. Advisors and students stressed that everyone should be made aware of its location so that they could refer back to the video as needed. Participants who made this comment felt strongly that the video would be a useful tool for refreshing students on the details of their degree plan before advising.

Suggested Improvements and Concerns

Video Length

The most common concern was that the video was too long. At almost 17 minutes, many participants found it hard to stay focused, keep from being interrupted, or even carve that much time out of their schedule to sit and watch it. Almost everyone who commented on the length of the video suggested breaking the contents up into shorter segments.

Student 10: "*The delivery [in the video] was a little long, a little boring. Maybe put it together in a series and then have a frequently asked questions or something like that at the end of each one so that everyone understands what is going on.*"

Advisor 10: "*The only concern I have with that video at all is that it runs almost 17 minutes. Even sitting here trying to watch it, I was disturbed twice with people coming in the office to do something. It is kind of difficult to watch something that long. I think it would be much better if it was broke up into segments.*"

Updating Video

The next most common concern was the importance of keeping the video content current. Participants reflected on how quickly information and images in the video would become dated, and that keeping the video current could become a large undertaking.

Advisor 3: "*[The video was created] only last year, but the pictures are already dated. And it is only good if it remains fresh. It is not one of these things you build in 2012 and say, 'check, done with that until 2030.'*"

Student 16: "*I know the requirements change all the time. I'm a junior and so if I talk to a sophomore their requirements could be completely different than mine even though we are going after the same degree. So I feel like you would have to update [the video] so much.*"

Appropriateness

While not a widely recurring theme, there was some significant concern for appropriateness of the content and tone of the video. Both students and advisors found elements of the video to cause confusion and unease. Many noted one particular comment by an advisor in the video in which the advisor states "I am bad at math." Though the purpose of the statement may have been to relate better to students and help them understand that it is possible to overcome academic deficiencies, the comment drew several negative comments from faculty.

Advisor 1: "*You [the narrator] are the faculty that the kids' parents are sending their kids up to. You've got to be perfect, and you can't say those things in that video.*"

Advisor 3: "*I try to be funny, but the editorial comments [in the video] are not funny to me. I just don't think the editorial comments add value.*"

The other theme related to appropriateness was the video segment on "how to survive chemistry classes."

Advisor 8: "*The point [in the video] about chemistry professors curving grades at the end… that bothers me a lot because I know some do curve grades at the end…, [but] to me that is a double-edged sword pointing that out, and I don't feel comfortable with that.*"

One student's observations about some of the jokes in the video exemplified the sentiments of several other students and advisors.

Student: "*There are a couple jokes [in the video] I guess I didn't understand, and it kind of seemed out of place because it was very professional and then there would be a kind of joke and it just seemed kind of really awkward. But I know [the narrator] so I understood, but incoming freshman don't…*"

Table 3. Emergent themes related to student and advisor perceptions of the video

	Objectives		
	Video Content	Application of Video	Suggested Improvements
Emergent Themes	1. Helped students understand their degree check sheet	1. Best for freshmen	1. Should be divided into shorter segments
	2. Encouraged students to take responsibility for their own degree progress	2. Should be shown to freshmen and transfer students before first fall advising session	2. Images and content must be updated frequently
	3. Provided prescriptive advising information, creating time for developmental advising in advising sessions	3. Should be shown in an introductory level animal science course	3. Should maintain an appropriate tone (avoid negativity and misplaced humor)
	4. Elicited a positive reaction from students vested in their own advising process	4. Should be made available online for students	4. Should contain advice that strictly adheres to campus policies
	5. Elicited positive reactions in relations to video quality		
	6. Effectively provided new information to advisees		

Adherence Rules and Policies

Some advisors and students recognized details within the video that may have violated university and department policies.

Advisor 1: "*I don't like that you used an unofficial check sheet [in the video], and I know why you did, [because] the course names are on there. I am concerned because… Y'all have made the video with a sheet that may not be available online for [students] to print out and use.*"

Conclusions and Discussion

Overall perceptions of the video by both advisors and students were positive. Advisors and their students were hopeful that the video would be used in advising as a step toward resolving issues related to poor academic advising such as those identified by Gardiner (1994). They found the content to be helpful to both advisors and students, regardless of the advisors' advising styles or the students' preferred advising styles. All participants felt it could be a useful tool to aid students in making the most of their college careers.

Objective 1: Advising Styles

In collecting demographic data, we realized that advisors' perceptions of their own advising styles and students' perceptions of their advisors' styles were not totally congruent. Most advisors viewed themselves as developmental or at least a combination of developmental and prescriptive, yet some of their students viewed them as strictly prescriptive. Incongruence similar to this was documented by Upcraft and Gardner (1989), who found that faculty think they provide more beneficial advisement than students think they receive.

Still, the majority of students thought they received developmental advising, which is the style most of them preferred, and others who viewed their advisors as prescriptive still desired to be advised developmentally. Student satisfaction with advising is closely tied to the congruence between students' preferred advising styles and the advising styles of their advisors (Hale et al., 2009). Developmental advising, preferred by most students, promotes a constructivist approach in which learning is a social activity and active experiences allow students to construct meaning (Hale et al., 2009; Williams, 2006). The average student may feel differently than those opinions collected using the snowballing networking method.

Table 4. Demographic data for students

Student Demographics	
Male	1
Female	16
Total	17
Freshman	1
Sophomore	2
Junior	6
Senior	8
Total	17

Objective 2: Advisors' and Students' Perceptions of the Video

Table 3 summarizes the themes that emerged from the advisors' and students' comments about their perceptions of the video. All participants in the study found the video useful. Advisors and students alike recognized the video's usefulness in regard to the prescriptive aspect of advising. Rawlins (2005) noted that advising relationships are not static; they are subject to the concrete limitations of time and energy of both participants. The video has the potential to maximize the efficiency of the advising meeting.

Advisors felt the video explained some of the more mundane advising topics, leaving added time for them to engage in their preferred developmental style of advising. They felt the video would answer questions for students before they ever came in for advising, allowing for a more productive advising session because the advisor would not have to answer the same questions for every advisee he or she saw. This would leave more time for discussion of deeper academic matters, which students prefer to discuss with their advisors (Belchier, 2000).

Students also liked the video because it answered some fundamental advising questions—in some cases,

questions they did not even know they should be asking in their advising sessions. Students also perceived that the video would make their college experience easier. They felt they would not make as many mistakes in scheduling and planning their courses if they better understood the degree check sheet and had the details of their degree plan explained to them the way the video explains them. This observation is important because Hale et al.'s (2009) research demonstrated that students who are most satisfied with their advising are most likely to stay in school. This also relates to Tinto's (2006) findings that students are more likely to graduate when provided clear information about their institution's requirements, allowing them to make better choices regarding their programs of study and future goals.

Advisors and students had several thematic perceptions about where and how the video should be used. They perceived the video as a useful tool for students—especially first-semester freshmen and transfer students—and suggested that these students should view it during their first semester prior to their first advising session. Also, all participants suggested that the video should be used in a required first-semester introductory course. O'Banion (1994) recommended that students should be responsible for making decisions during the course of advising. Advisors and students alike agreed with this recommendation, noting that the video would be especially helpful for first-semester students as they prepared themselves for upcoming advising sessions.

Objective 3: Areas for Improvement

Yarbrough (2002) emphasized the importance of re-evaluating current advising strategies in order to offer the greatest possibility for accomplishing the goals of the advisee, advisor, academic unit, and institution. The student and advisor interviews revealed several characteristics of the advising video that should be improved.

A frequently mentioned suggestion was that the video be broken down into shorter segments. Advisors and students alike agreed that the 17-minute video was too long. At this length, it was difficult for participants to find that much time to devote to watching the video without being interrupted. The participants also found it difficult to stay focused and interested in the video for that length of time. Another justification for breaking the contents of the video into shorter segments came from the concern about keeping the content up-to-date. Participants thought it would be easier to change, update, and if necessary re-record the audio for videos that are shorter rather than for one video that is 17 minutes long.

Additionally, concern about the appropriateness of certain portions of the content was expressed by advisors and students. The two sections brought up most often included jokes about the narrator being bad at math, as well as comments on "how to survive chemistry classes." These concerns can be remedied by either cutting out the segments, or re-recording the audio with those sections left out.

A few participants also thought the content should be reviewed for accuracy regarding university policies. They suggested the content be examined to ensure university policies were being followed prior to this video's implementation as a regular advising tool.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research needs to be conducted once the video is implemented to determine (1) whether the video has improved instructors' and students' perceptions of the quality of advising sessions; (2) if the video has increased understanding of the degree plan and check sheet by students; (3) what additional improvements should be made to the video; and (4) how this video model could be adapted and utilized by other departments within the college and across the university. The success of this advising tool and similar tools that might be developed depends on this type of practical evaluation.

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