

## Psychosocial Gains as a Result of Freshman Seminar

### Design

This study compared the psychosocial development of students enrolled in Freshman Seminar with those who were not enrolled. Students completed the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999) at the beginning of their first semester in the Fall of 2002 and at the beginning of their second semester in the Spring of 2003. Fifty-two percent of the 1465 students who completed the instrument at pre- and post-test were enrolled in freshman seminar during the fall semester. A MANCOVA was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in subtask and subscale scores on the SDTLA due to enrollment in Freshmen Seminar. Gender, minority status, and SDTLA pre-test scores were control variables in the analysis.

### Results

Students who enrolled in Freshman Seminar reported significantly higher gains between the pre- and post-tests on the career planning, lifestyle planning, and instrumental autonomy subscales. An explanation of these subscales is below. Table 2 depicts the results of this analysis. No significant differences were found on the other nine scales.

Table 2

Adjusted SDTLA Mean Scores for Students Enrolled and Not Enrolled in Freshman Seminar

SDTLA Subtask/Subscale	Not Enrolled	Freshman Seminar
Career Planning**	2.55	2.62
Lifestyle Planning**	3.15	3.22
Instrumental Autonomy**	3.39	3.48

\*\* Indicates a significant difference in scores between those enrolled and not enrolled in Freshman Seminar at the  $p < .05$  level.

*The Career Planning Subtask* represents students' knowledge about themselves and the world of work that enables them to make a commitment to a chosen field and formulate vocational plans. It involves taking the initial steps to prepare for employment and for beginning a job search or enrollment in graduate school.

*The Lifestyle Planning Subtask* measures personal direction and orientation in one's life and takes into account personal, ethical, and religious values, future relationship/family plans, and vocational and educational objectives.

*The instrumental Autonomy Subtask* represents students' ability to structure their lives and to manipulate their environment in ways that allow them to satisfy daily needs and meet responsibilities without extensive direction or support from others. Students who have completed this subtask are able to manage their time and other aspects of their lives; to establish and follow through on realistic plans; and to solve most problems as they arise. They are independent, goal-directed, resourceful, and self-sufficient persons.

For more information on the SDTLA, please visit <http://www.sdtla.appstate.edu/>

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