

Experiential Counterparts of Test-Indicated Disillusionment During Freshman Adjustment to College

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Earlier research has shown that matriculating freshmen—on average—expect more from themselves in capacity for adjusting to college than they subsequently realize. Individual differences in occurrence of this disillusionment have been demonstrated to have important behavioral correlates. The present study extends that research through exploration of experiential counterparts of differences in occurrence of the disillusionment. Implications of the findings for testing, intervention, and research are discussed.

Over the past 15 years considerable research concerning adjustment to college has employed the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker, 1992; Baker & Siryk, 1989). One of the first articles reporting research with the SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1984) cited two prospective uses for it: (a) as a source of dependent variables in studies of determinants of adjustment to college and (b) as a means of identifying for remedial intervention students experiencing difficulty adapting to college. The bulk of relevant research to date, in addition to establishing the SACQ's psychometric properties, has concerned the role of personal and environmental factors in determining effectiveness of adjustment. But there have also been studies pertinent to more practical issues, such as individual assessment and intervention (Baker & Siryk, 1986; Mendelowitz, 1990; 1991). The present article spans both uses of the SACQ, with emphasis on the latter because this research involves interviews focusing on adjustment.

The Anticipated Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (ASACQ) (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz, 1992) is an adaptation of the SACQ. The ASACQ provides a means of measuring students' expectations regarding their adjustive capacity for the transition to college. The ASACQ, like the SACQ, has been used fruitfully in research concerning determinants of adjustment to college and in studies having implications for individual assessment and intervention. The present study employs the ASACQ as well as the SACQ and uses the two together in a way that both promotes un-

derstanding of adjustment to college and has clear practical implications.

This, then, is the broad context for the present study—including attempts to better understand adjustment to college and attempts to facilitate the adjustment, with both attempts employing questionnaires developed for the purpose. But there is also a narrower and more immediate context.

An earlier study showed that matriculating freshmen at two colleges expected more from themselves in capacity for adjustment to college (as measured prematriculation by the ASACQ) than they subsequently realized (as measured postmatriculation by the SACQ), at least in certain aspects of the adjustment (Baker et al., 1985). This disillusionment was seen in academic and social adjustment and on an index of overall adjustment but not in personal-emotional adjustment. ("Personal-emotional adjustment" is defined here as sense of psychological and physical well-being). In institutional attachment/goal commitment the disillusionment occurred at only one of the two colleges employed in the study.

These findings have been repeated with considerable consistency at three other institutions (Cooper & Robinson, 1988; Gerdes, 1986; Plaud, Baker, & Groccia, 1986). Table 1 presents percent changes from ASACQ to SACQ scores for the five institutions involved. At all five institutions there are statistically significant declines in academic, social, and overall adjustment scores and at three of the five institutions in institutional attachment scores. The direction of change in personal-emotional adjustment is more typically toward a postmatriculation increase, though statistically significant only in one instance. But there is also a statistically significant decline in another instance.

These data imply that "average" freshmen experience a fairly general disillusionment with their adjustive capacity. But, as reported by Baker et al. (1985), not all students manifest the disillusionment. For some the postmatriculation adjustment level is approximately what they had predicted prematriculation, and for others it is even higher.

TABLE 1
Percent Change From Prematriculation Expectations Regarding Adjustive Capacity to Postmatriculation Actual Adjustment to College¹

Adjustment Area	Clark University ² (N = 185)	Holy Cross College ² (N = 123)	Worcester Polytechnic Institute ³ (N = 262)	University of Missouri at Rolla ⁴ (N = 247)	University of Oregon ⁵ (N = 112)
Academic	-7.5**	-7.9**	-7.3**	-14.0**	- 8.0**
Social	-8.6**	-3.4**	-8.8**	- 8.1**	- 3.3**
Personal-Emotional	+1.8	+1.8	+0.2	- 3.1**	+11.4**
Attachment	-5.7**	0.0	-3.8**	- 6.9**	- 1.7
Overall	-5.4**	-3.4**	-8.1**	- 8.6**	- 2.1*

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

¹Percent change in scores from the Anticipated Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire to the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

²Baker et al., 1985; ³Plaud et al., 1986; ⁴Cooper & Robinson, 1988; ⁵Gerdes, 1986.

Baker et al. (1985) went a step further and examined the relation between individual differences in this disillusionment and **adjustment-relevant** behaviors. They found that disillusioned students (a) performed less well academically, (b) were **more** likely to be known to a campus psychological services center, (c) had a higher rate of withdrawal from college, and (d) were less likely to graduate on time than **nondisillusioned** students. Six years postmatriculation the graduation rate was 55% for disillusioned students and **86%** for nondisillusioned students (Baker, 1992).

Similarly, Gerdes (1986) found that disillusioned freshmen had a lower level of academic performance and a higher rate of withdrawal than nondisillusioned **students**. As a new finding, Gerdes reported that disillusioned students described themselves as having less overall satisfaction with the college experience.

Thus, it was clear that variations in self-reported degree of realization of expectations regarding one's adjustive capacities had important behavioral consequences. But neither Baker et al. (1985) nor any subsequent investigators have systematically explored the experiential counterparts (e.g., thoughts and feelings) of the differences in disillusionment. An earlier-mentioned finding by Baker et al., that disillusioned students are more likely to be known to a campus psychological services center, implies awareness of distress, as does Gerdes' (1986) finding that such students are less satisfied with the college

experience. The present study was designed to gather data to address the issue more directly.

More specifically, we wanted to know whether the thoughts and feelings of freshmen—as they anticipate and then negotiate the transition to college—are consistent with scores from questionnaires designed to measure such variables. We were especially interested in experiential counterparts of score patterns indicating differences in degree of realization of **prematriculation** expectations regarding adjustive capacities. Affirmative data (a) would provide further evidence that the questionnaires are indeed measuring what they are intended to measure and (b) could have implications for use of the questionnaires in interventions with students. For example, persons who work with students could be assured that test-indicated differences in degree of realization of prematriculation expectations (a) are meaningful to the students, (b) have important implications not only for students' behavior but also for their experiential world, and (c) might be a basis for remedial discussion and planning with students.

Method

Subjects

The participants in this study were 40 first-time freshmen (11 men and 29 women) attending Clark University, a small liberal arts institution in central New England. Our selection

process began the summer prior to matriculation when the entire entering class was sent the ASACQ. It was completed and returned by 291 of the 451 members of the class. Eight weeks postmatriculation those who had returned the ASACQ were sent the SACQ. The 190 freshmen who returned both the ASACQ and SACQ formed a pool of potential participants for the present study.

Two groups were identified. One comprised students who showed substantial decline from their ASACQ-measured prematriculation expectations to their SACQ-measured postmatriculation adjustment (i.e., "disillusioned," $n = 21$). The other comprised students who either showed no substantial decline or had adjusted better than they expected (i.e., "non-disillusioned," $n = 21$). The particular criteria for inclusion in these two groups will be presented in the Materials section below.

Of the 21 members of each group, 20 accepted invitations for interviews and were the subjects for this study. The disillusioned group included 4 men and 16 women; the nondisillusioned group included 5 men and 15 women.

Materials

The SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1989) is a Likert-type self-report scale consisting of 67 statements that address aspects of the college experience and its demands. Respondents are asked to indicate on a 9-point scale the degree each statement applies to them, in effect providing a self-evaluation of how well the student is adjusting to college.

The SACQ yields an overall adjustment score (i.e., Full Scale) and scores for four subscales pertaining to different aspects of adjustment to college. An Academic Adjustment subscale contains 24 items referring to educational demands (e.g., "I am finding academic work at college difficult"). A Social Adjustment subscale has 20 items relevant to interpersonal-societal demands (e.g., "I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I would like at college"). Physical and psychological feeling states are addressed by 15 items that constitute a Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale (e.g., "I have been feeling tense and nervous lately"). And an Institutional Attachment/Goal Commitment subscale consists of 15 items relating to feelings about being in college in general (e.g., "I am pleased now about my decision to go to college")

and being at the college of attendance in particular (e.g., "I wish I were at another college or university"). No overlap of items occurs on the Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscales, but the Attachment subscale contains 8 items from the Social Adjustment subscale and 1 from the Academic Adjustment subscale. Higher scores indicate better adjustment.

Each of the four subscales has clusters of related items, each cluster concerned with a different facet of the area addressed by the subscale as a whole. These clusters formed the basis for interview topics in the present study and are listed here to facilitate later description of the interview schedule:

Academic Adjustment subscale:

- (a) motivation for being in college and doing college work
- (b) translation of that motivation into actual academic effort
- (c) the effectiveness of the effort expended
- (d) satisfaction with the academic environment

Social Adjustment subscale:

- (a) extent and success of social activities and functioning in general
- (b) involvement and relationships with other persons on campus
- (c) dealing with being away from home, family, and friends
- (d) satisfaction with the social environment

Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale:

- (a) sense of psychological well-being
- (b) sense of physical well-being

Attachment subscale:

- (a) satisfaction with being in college in general
- (b) satisfaction with being at the college presently enrolled in

Considerable information concerning the reliability and validity of the SACQ has been presented elsewhere (Baker, 1992; Baker & Siryk, 1989).

As stated earlier, the ASACQ is a modification of the SACQ. The ASACQ items are the roots or stems of the SACQ items with the added prefix "I expect" and some changes in tense and deletions of words that in the SACQ serve to orient the student toward responses relevant to the present or the immediate past. For example, the SACQ item "Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study" becomes on the ASACQ "I expect to have trouble concentrating when I try to study." Subjects are

asked to project themselves halfway into the first semester and respond to the items as they expect they will at that time, based on their knowledge of themselves in similar situations and of the university they are entering.

Internal consistency reliability for the ASACQ is consonant with that for the SACQ. In five administrations of the ASACQ at different institutions, coefficient alphas ranged from .77 to .88 on the Academic Adjustment subscale, .84 to .92 on the Social Adjustment subscale, .73 to .81 on the Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale, .79 to .88 on the Attachment subscale, and .90 to .94 on the Full Scale (Baker et al., 1985; Cooper & Robinson, 1988; Gerdes, 1986; Plaud et al., 1986).

Procedure

Subjects were assigned to disillusioned and nondisillusioned groups in the following manner. To be eligible for either group, individuals

could not have any ASACQ score (i.e., subscale or Full Scale) of -1.00 standard deviation or lower. To be assigned to the disillusioned group, a student had to have a 10% or greater drop from ASACQ to SACQ on the Full Scale and a 15% or greater drop on at least one subscale. Furthermore, these students could not have an increase of more than 5% on any subscale. To be assigned to the nondisillusioned group, students could have a drop no larger than 5% or no change or a score increase.

As seen in Table 2, the disillusioned and nondisillusioned groups showed no statistically significant differences in ASACQ scores, indicating approximately the same prematriculation expectation levels. As seen in Table 3, however, and as would be expected because of the way the groups were selected, there are statistically significant differences between the groups on all SACQ variables.

Interviews with members of both groups began soon after the start of the second se-

TABLE 2
Scores With *t* Tests for Disillusioned (*n* = 20) and Nondisillusioned (*n* = 20) Groups on the Anticipated Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Group	Academic Adjustment Subscale		Social Adjustment Subscale		Personal-Emotional Adjustment Subscale		Institutional Attachment Subscale		Full Scale	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disillusioned	167.0	18.2	150.9	15.5	95.1	12.1	119.4	8.5	477.0	43.1
Nondisillusioned	161.9	15.1	149.2	12.4	97.4	12.7	115.6	11.2	470.5	33.0
<i>t</i>	0.97		0.39		0.60		1.19		0.53	
<i>p</i>	ns		ns		ns		ns		ns	

TABLE 3
Scores With *t* Tests for Disillusioned (*n* = 20) and Nondisillusioned (*n* = 20) Groups on the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Group	Academic Adjustment Subscale		Social Adjustment Subscale		Personal-Emotional Adjustment Subscale		Institutional Attachment Subscale		Full Scale	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disillusioned	133.2	23.0	114.1	23.3	76.7	14.3	96.4	14.5	378.4	44.0
Nondisillusioned	179.4	17.9	159.4	9.4	108.2	13.6	125.6	6.9	515.4	34.2
<i>t</i>	7.09**		8.07**		7.19**		8.15**		10.99**	

***p* < .01

mester. At the time of the interview the interviewer was unaware of the student's disillusioned/nondisillusioned status.

At the beginning of the interview students were asked to think back to the preceding summer when they had filled out the ASACQ and to recall the thoughts, feelings, and expectations they had at that time concerning the impending transition to college. While students were in this mind-set, the interviewer asked for ratings on a 9-point scale for a series of 12 questions concerning prematriculation thoughts, feelings, and expectations, with higher ratings indicating more favorable expectations. The content of the 12 questions corresponded to the ASACQ/SACQ subscale item clusters described above. Thus, in relation to academic adjustment, students were asked to give a rating for how motivated they had expected to be for college and for doing college work, and then to give a rating for how well they had expected to translate that motivation into academic effort, and so on for the remaining 10 item clusters from the four subscales. This constituted an oral retrospective administration of an abbreviated ASACQ.

After the retrospective prematriculation ratings had been elicited, students were asked to remember the middle of the first semester when they had filled out the SACQ and to try to recapture their thoughts and feelings at that time. They were asked to rate retrospectively their actual adjustment for that time in relation to the same item-cluster-based questions described above. This constituted an oral retrospective administration of an abbreviated SACQ.

We used these means in an attempt to determine whether students were aware of their pre- and postmatriculation statuses, especially in instances where disillusionment had occurred. The scores employed in statistical analyses of these interview data were the sums of ratings for the item-cluster-based questions within each subscale for the pre- and postmatriculation "administrations" separately.

Results and Discussion

Reliability

The reliability of the ASACQ and SACQ in the present study was assessed by means of coefficient alpha computed for the original Samples ($N = 291$ for the ASACQ and $N = 190$ for the SACQ). The values for the two questionnaires, respectively, were .86 and .88 for the Academic Adjustment subscale, .90 and .90 for the

Social Adjustment subscale, .80 and .83 for the Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale, .84 and .88 for the Attachment subscale, and .94 and .94 for the Full Scale. These values are consistent with those obtained in earlier studies (cf. ASACQ alpha ranges in the Materials section of this paper and SACQ alphas in Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Data from the present study also provide further evidence of consistency in ASACQ/SACQ score patterns as group effects discussed above and summarized in Table 1. The percent changes from the ASACQ to the SACQ in the new data are remarkably similar in both magnitude and pattern to the changes cited for a Sample ten years earlier at the same institution. The percent changes for the present study are (a) Academic Adjustment -7.1% , (b) Social Adjustment -10.0% , (c) Personal-Emotional Adjustment $+1.5\%$, (d) Attachment -5.4% , and Full Scale -5.6% (all changes $p < .01$ except for personal-emotional adjustment).

Retrospective Pre- and Postmatriculation Ratings Made During Interview

A basic purpose of this study is to examine the relation between (a) the thoughts and feelings of students regarding their anticipated and actual adjustment to college and (b) measures of those two adjustment variables. One way to do this is simply to correlate the retrospective ratings taken during interview with the ASACQ and SACQ scores.

Keep in mind that the interview ratings are based on recall of states of mind that existed months earlier. For ratings regarding prematriculation status, the elapsed time from point of interest to the interview could be as much as eight months. For ratings regarding postmatriculation status, it could be three or four months. With such time spans there may be several kinds of memory impairment that reduce correlations below what would be expected if the elapsed time were less.

It should also be kept in mind that the manner of administration and specific contents of the ASACQ and of the abbreviated oral form differ, which also would reduce correlational values.

Nevertheless, some correspondence is expected between what the student recalls and ASACQ/SACQ scores. More specifically, there should be positive correlations (a) between the interview retrospective ratings for prematricula-

tion status and the relevant ASACQ subscales and (b) between the ratings for postmatriculation status and the SACQ subscales.

Correlations between the ASACQ Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, **Personal-Emotional** Adjustment, and Attachment subscales and the corresponding interview ratings for premattribution status were, respectively, .37, .49, .43, and .33 ($n = 40$, all $p < .05$, one-tailed test). Correlations between the SACQ subscales and interview ratings for postmatriculation status, in the same order as above, were .72, .74, .28, and .68 ($n = 40$, all $p < .05$, one-tailed test).

These correlations provide evidence of expected experiential counterparts of ASACQ and SACQ scores. The considerably more robust values for postmatriculation adjustment status than for premattribution expectations in three of the four comparisons are likely due to the shorter time between the SACQ administration and the interview than between the ASACQ administration and the interview.

Another correlational analysis concerning the relation between interview ratings and questionnaire data employed change scores expressed in percentages (premattribution score minus postmatriculation score divided by the former, with a constant added to eliminate negative numbers). Correlations were run between change from ASACQ to SACQ scores and change from interview premattribution ratings to interview postmatriculation ratings, with the expectation that there would be correspondence between the two sets of scores. The correlations for academic and social adjustment and for institutional attachment were, respectively, .55, .47, and .67 ($n = 40$, all $p < .01$, one-tailed test). The correlation for personal-emotional adjustment was not significant.

The foregoing analyses indicate that there is indeed correspondence between students' experiential worlds and ASACQ/SACQ scores. A more basic question for the study, however, is whether there are differential score patterns in the interview retrospective ratings of pre- and postmatriculation status for students identified as disillusioned and nondisillusioned on the basis of ASACQ/SACQ score patterns. There should be, if it is to be concluded that there are experiential counterparts of the questionnaire-indicated disillusionment.

The appropriate analysis for this question is two-way analysis of variance for repeated measures, where expected differences should be re-

flected in the interaction term. That is, if there is correspondence between interview ratings and questionnaire data, there should be (a) a downward shift in ratings from pre- to postmatriculation status for disillusioned students and (b) a lesser downward shift, no shift, or an upward shift for nondisillusioned students.

As seen in Table 4, the interaction term is significant at the .05 level of confidence or better for each of the adjustment areas except personal-emotional. For the adjustment areas indicated, the experiential worlds of questionnaire-indicated disillusioned and nondisillusioned students do differ in expected ways.

Post hoc analyses of the data in Table 4, using paired t tests, offer additional relevant information. Remember that the disillusioned and nondisillusioned groups showed no statistically significant differences on any of the ASACQ variables, indicating equivalent levels of expectations regarding adjustive capacity for the impending transition to college (see Table 2). We should expect, therefore, no difference between the disillusioned and nondisillusioned groups on the retrospective premattribution ratings made during interview. As seen in Table 4, there are no statistically significant differences between the groups on any of the interview premattribution status indices.

Recall, too, that the actual postmatriculation adjustment levels of nondisillusioned students as measured by the SACQ were significantly higher than those of disillusioned students (see Table 3). There should, therefore, be corresponding differences in the retrospective postmatriculation ratings made during interview. As can be seen in Table 4, such differences are indeed found on all four comparisons.

Finally, with regard to post hoc analyses, disillusioned students should have retrospective postmatriculation ratings on each subscale that are significantly lower than their premattribution ratings, and nondisillusioned students should have postmatriculation ratings that are equivalent to or higher. As seen in Table 4, disillusioned students showed significant differences in the expected direction in academic adjustment and attachment only. For nondisillusioned students there were no significant differences in academic and personal-emotional adjustment, and in social adjustment and attachment the retrospective postmatriculation ratings were significantly higher than the premattribution ratings.

TABLE 4
Analysis of Variance With Post Hoc *t* Tests on Interview Retrospective Ratings
of Pre- and Postmatriculation Status for Disillusioned (*n* = 20)
and Nondisillusioned (*n* = 20) Students

Adjustment Area	Prematriculation Status		Postmatriculation Status			
	M	SD	M	SD		<i>F</i> (1, 38)
Academic						
Disillusioned	28.13	3.73	24.00	4.94	<i>t</i> (19) = 5.58**	9.18**
Nondisillusioned	30.10	3.08	29.53	4.88	<i>t</i> (19) = 0.53	
	<i>t</i> (38) = 1.83		<i>t</i> (38) = 3.56**			
Social						
Disillusioned	27.35	4.67	25.55	6.83	<i>t</i> (19) = 1.31	4.93*
Nondisillusioned	29.63	3.34	31.35	3.38	<i>t</i> (19) = 2.16*	
	<i>t</i> (38) = 1.77		<i>t</i> (38) = 3.41**			
Personal-Emotional						
Disillusioned	15.13	2.10	14.50	2.76	<i>t</i> (19) = 1.10	1.44
Nondisillusioned	15.95	1.88	16.10	1.89	<i>t</i> (19) = 0.63	
	<i>t</i> (38) = 1.31		<i>t</i> (38) = 2.14*			
Institutional Attachment						
Disillusioned	15.65	2.05	14.30	2.81	<i>t</i> (19) = 2.98**	13.86**
Nondisillusioned	16.50	0.95	17.05	1.36	<i>t</i> (19) = 2.34*	
	<i>t</i> (38) = 1.68		<i>t</i> (38) = 3.94**			

Higher ratings indicate higher expectations or better adjustment. *F* values cited are for the interaction terms; *t* tests of differences between disillusioned and nondisillusioned students are for independent groups; *t* tests of differences from pre- to postmatriculation status within a group are for repeated measures.

**p* < .05

***p* < .01

Although these findings overall are largely supportive of the expected relation between the questionnaire and interview data, there are some inconsistencies worth noting. Table 5 shows the percent changes for both groups (a) from ASACQ to SACQ means and (b) from pre- to postmatriculation status average ratings in interview. If students' memories were reasonably accurate, one would expect the values for questionnaire and interview data to be roughly the same within the two groups, and the differences between the two groups should be roughly equal for questionnaire and interview data.

However, it can be seen in Table 5 that for all adjustment areas the differences between the two groups are less marked in interview ratings than in questionnaire scores. For example, the spread in percent change for Attachment subscale scores from the ASACQ to the SACQ is from a drop of 19.3% for disillusioned students to an increase of 8.7% for nondisillusioned stu-

dents, or 28 percentage points. By comparison the spread in percent change from pre- to postmatriculation status ratings in interview is from a drop of 8.6% for disillusioned students to an increase of 3.3% for nondisillusioned students, or almost 12 percentage points. For the other three adjustment areas this spread is regularly a little above 30 percentage points for the questionnaire data, whereas it ranges from 5.1 to 12.8 for the interview data.

Thus, there is a muting effect in the interview data, with disillusioned students reporting themselves to be less disillusioned than their questionnaire scores indicated and nondisillusioned students reporting less improvement in adjustment than their questionnaire scores indicated. The muting, furthermore, tends to be more pronounced for disillusioned students, except in the academic area.

The muting effect may be due to differences in the degree to which socially desirable re-

TABLE 5
Percent Change in Questionnaire Scores¹ and Interview Pre- and Postmatriculation Status Ratings for Disillusioned (n = 20) and Nondisillusioned (n = 20) Students

Adjustment Area	Scores	Interview Ratings
Academic		
Disillusioned	-20.2	-14.7
Nondisillusioned	+10.8	-1.9
Social		
Disillusioned	-24.4	-6.6
Nondisillusioned	+6.8	+5.8
Personal-Emotional		
Disillusioned	-19.3	-4.2
Nondisillusioned	+11.1	+0.9
Attachment		
Disillusioned	-19.3	-8.6
Nondisillusioned	+8.7	+3.3

¹Percent change in scores from the Anticipated Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire to the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

sponses were evoked by the two methods of data collection involved. The ASACQ and SACQ are likely completed in privacy, where it may be easier for respondents to be honest in their answers to questionnaire items. On the other hand, the interview ratings were given in the presence of and in conversation with another person. Under such circumstances there may be a tendency for disillusioned students to be more face-saving and for nondisillusioned students to be more modest in evaluating how well they have handled their adjustment.

Another inconsistency worth comment is that expected relations, or strength of relations, are less often found for personal-emotional adjustment than for the other adjustment areas. The somewhat lower reliability coefficients for that subscale on the ASACQ and SACQ probably would play a role here, as may the relatively small number of participants in the study. Probably the most important factor, however, is the likelihood that the personal-emotional adjustment variable is the most *volatile*—the most subject to rapid change—of the four adjustment variables and therefore less easy to recall accurately.

If one wished to use this study's methodology for further research, it would be desirable to conduct interviews closer to the time that students fill out questionnaires to reduce errors of memory. Furthermore, it would be desirable to fashion the interview to provide more oppor-

tunity for open-ended responses, but with enough structure to justify statistical analysis of the qualitative data, in an attempt to obtain a fuller, richer view of the experiential world of the adjusting student than was possible with our highly structured format.

We could not address a question of considerable interest in the present study because of the relatively small size of our samples. That is, are there individual differences among students in awareness of adjustment status, particularly in relation to occurrence of disillusionment? Such differences could, in and of themselves, have important consequences for adjustment to college and important implications for its measurement and for the design of interventions. Conceivably, for example, a student might be experiencing serious difficulties adjusting to college that, for reasons of self-unawareness or social desirability or whatever, would not be reflected in questionnaire data.

Another important question that might be addressed in subsequent research is whether it is possible to identify students who are going to experience serious disillusionment regarding their adjustive capacity in the transition to college. This would require systematic investigation of the role of characteristics of persons or of the environment that determine whether students adapt to college at a level commensurate with their expectations or whether they experience debilitating disillusionment. What is it, in other

words, that causes some students to experience serious disillusionment and others not to? Knowing this could greatly enhance interventions that might preclude or alleviate the disillusionment and its consequences.

Summary and Implications for Intervention

Our study evolved from a research program concerning the measurement, prediction, and facilitation of student adjustment in college. An important feature of the program has been the development of two questionnaires, one to measure expectations regarding adjustive capacity for the transition to college and the other to measure the actual adjustment. Prior research with the **questionnaires** has clarified their behavioral correlates, and the focus in the present study has been to explore their experiential correlates in the thoughts and feelings of students.

Using interview methodology we determined that second semester freshmen's recall of their prematriculation expectations regarding their impending adjustment to college and of their actual adjustment in the first semester was consonant with questionnaire data obtained at those earlier times. Furthermore, two groups of students, one identified on the basis of questionnaire data as having experienced disillusionment regarding adjustive capacity and the other as not having experienced such disillusionment, showed differential patterns of recall that paralleled the questionnaire data. The findings were interpreted as indicating that disillusionment shows up in the thoughts and feelings of students, albeit somewhat less when reported in an interview than on a questionnaire.

We discuss practical uses of the ASACQ and SACQ in some detail in our other article in this issue. Relevant research on using the questionnaires in intervention has been described elsewhere by Baker and Siryk (1986) and Mendelowitz (1990/1991). Suffice it to say here that the ASACQ is a good source of information about thoughts and feelings concerning impending adjustment to college that may be a basis for subsequent problems in that adjustment. Interventions while the student is still in high school or during the summer prior to matriculation at college or even in the first few weeks after matriculation can present opportunities to discuss and attempt to resolve concerns. The SACQ, used after matriculation, is a source of information about problems actually

being experienced in adjusting to college. As implied by the contents of this paper, the use of the ASACQ and SACQ together for identification of students experiencing disillusionment may be particularly worthwhile.

Our findings concerning experiential counterparts of ASACQ/SACQ data underscore the appropriateness of using the questionnaire information as a basis for interview discussion of adjustment with a student. The questionnaire data may fruitfully be used to help the student clarify and articulate problems for remedial attention. The fact that a student has thoughts and feelings about adjustment does not necessarily mean that these thoughts and feelings are well understood or organized. The structure of the ASACQ and SACQ—in terms of (a) subscales representing different adjustment areas, (b) item clusters within subscales representing different aspects of the larger adjustment areas, and (c) individual items representing particular instances of adjustment—may be employed to help promote a student's understanding and decision-making regarding adjustment.

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