

Single System Design Assignment

Dani Howell

12/12/2024

Dr Laura Racovita & Dr Nina Nelson

SOCW 498: Research Methods II

Single System Design Assignment

The Agency Setting

The First Year Experience program at Southern Adventist University is a dedicated academic support service designed to help first-year students successfully transition into college life. This program focuses on assisting students with essential skills such as academic success, effective study habits, time management, and adjusting to the demands of higher education. By using proven coaching techniques and providing personalized support, the program helps students build strong study strategies, create manageable schedules, and develop detailed academic plans. These services are available to all first-year students at the university, with special attention given to those who may encounter academic challenges during their first semester. The goal is to ensure that every student has the tools and guidance needed to thrive in their new academic environment.

The Client

Sarah Thompson is an 18-year-old female first-year student at Southern Adventist University. She enters college with a strong academic background, having achieved a 4.5 high school GPA and extensive involvement in extracurricular activities. Currently residing in campus housing, she works part-time (10 hours/week) in the university cafeteria. She is single, enrolled as a full-time student taking a normal first-semester course load of 16 credits, and comes from a middle-class background. As a traditional college student, Sarah is experiencing the typical challenges associated with transitioning from a structured high school environment to a more autonomous college setting.

The Client's Problem

Sarah is experiencing significant difficulties with time management and academic organization, which have resulted in consistently late assignment submissions and declining academic performance. Her struggles show up in several key areas: her inability to effectively prioritize academic tasks, poor study habits carried over from high school, difficulty managing unstructured time, procrastination leading to missed deadlines, and increasing anxiety about her academic standing. These challenges have particularly impacted her core freshman courses, where her grades have fallen below passing standards in two classes. According to Macan et al.'s (1990) research, these challenges commonly emerge during the transition to college, when previously successful academic strategies prove inadequate for university-level demands.

Measurement

The intervention will utilize the Time Management Behavior Scale (TMBS) developed by Macan et al. (1990) as the primary measurement tool. This 46-item scale assesses four key dimensions: setting goals and priorities, mechanics of time management, perceived control of time, and preference for organization. Scores range from 0 to 184, with higher scores indicating more frequent use of effective time management behaviors. Sarah will complete this assessment bi-weekly in the First Year Experience office. Additionally, we will track assignment submission rates and grades through the university's learning management system. Two weeks of baseline data will be collected before implementing interventions to establish benchmarks for measuring progress.

Intervention

The intervention will employ a comprehensive approach based on Robinson & Gahagan's (2010) academic coaching framework. Primary interventions include weekly 45-minute individual coaching sessions focusing on self-assessment, reflection, goal setting, and academic planning. These sessions will be supplemented by bi-weekly academic progress monitoring. The intervention period will span 16 weeks (one academic semester), incorporating structured study schedules, time management tools, and regular progress assessments. This approach is supported by research showing significant improvement among struggling students, with 92% of coached students demonstrating improved GPAs over one academic year.

Single System Design Type

This case utilizes an explanatory AB design, consisting of a two-week baseline phase (A) followed by a sixteen-week intervention phase (B). This design allows for clear assessment of the intervention's impact on Sarah's academic performance and time management skills. The baseline phase will establish initial measurements across all tracked variables, while the intervention phase will implement the full coaching and monitoring program.

Follow Up

If the initial interventions do not achieve desired outcomes, some modifications will be implemented. First we would increase coaching sessions to twice weekly, adding peer mentoring. Second, daily check-ins using structured time management tools, using additional assessment measures like the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), and lastly establishing direct communication with course instructors. These modifications are based on successful adaptations documented in academic coaching literature, including Robinson & Gahagan's (2010) research showing reduced academic probation rates through similar interventions.

References

Macan, T. H., Shahani, C., Dipboye, R. L., & Phillips, A. P. (1990). College students' time management: Correlations with academic performance and stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(4), 760-768.

Robinson, C., & Gahagan, J. (2010). In practice: Coaching students to academic success and engagement on campus. *About Campus*, 15(4), 26-29.