

# Expanding Research in Academic Advising: Methodological Strategies to Engage Advisors in Research

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*Research in academic advising has traditionally been conducted and disseminated by faculty researchers, graduate students, and higher education administrators (including advising directors). While significant in developing a body of literature to guide academic advising, the sources of the contribution also suggest that the frontline advisor does not actively participate in the inquiry process. The advising practitioner is an underutilized source of understanding that would offer breadth and depth to advising research. We offer a rationale for expanding the scholarship of advising and provide three research strategies (action inquiry, grounded theory, and program evaluation) that are each suited for addressing the various numbers and types of inquiry in higher education.*

**KEY WORDS:** action inquiry, advising profession, evaluation of advising, grounded theory, researcher-practitioner, scholarship of advising, translational research

## Introduction

A tremendous amount of research in academic advising is conducted and disseminated by faculty researchers, graduate students, and higher education (including advising directors) administrators. The voice and lived experience of the frontline advisor as an active participant within research are far less common. A number of anecdotal reasons account for the imbalance: a lack of time, interest, administrative support, and the technical ability of academic advisors to conduct a research study. Despite the reasons, the absence of the advisor in research impacts topic selection, daily practice, and the professional development of individual academic advisors.

Academic advisors are uniquely positioned to both affect, and be affected by, important aspects of educational research. First, the advisor is often the primary point of contact with students in both positive and challenging aspects of the academic and social experiences in college. Through these interactions, questions emerge that offer breadth

and depth to higher education research. Second, by being involved in research, the advisor is inclined to incorporate published scholarship into the development of his or her daily practice as well as program development. Third, the advisor identity continues to develop and flourish as she or he apprehends a layer of knowledge on top of the one acquired about a single student or institution. Through this involvement in research, the advisor engages in the higher education mission of knowledge creation as well as gains a deeper understanding of student development and success. The academic advisor is a vital element for inquiry that addresses issues within higher education.

All professionals in higher education, including academic advisors, should revisit the definitions and uses of research to inform their practice. Recent research shows that institutional support, in the form of time, finances, or recognition for advisors to conduct or consume research, varies across campuses (Aiken-Wisniewski, Schulenberg, Black, & Naylor, 2008). We present a case for expanding advisor involvement in research and explore a variety of research strategies or methodologies applicable to academic advising. We encourage more research on academic advising topics through inclusion and engagement of academic advisors.

Generally discipline-specific, educational research, especially in postsecondary settings, rarely features academic and student affairs staff as researchers (Clark, 1997). Traditionally, university faculty members, who bring their research agenda filtered through the discipline to a topic or phenomenon of interest within the campus, conducts research. The campus, and by extension the students and university staff, became the setting and subjects, respectively, in the research process. However, the present research environment offers alternative avenues for those traveling into the research community. *Translational research* is a paradigm inclusive of all higher-education partners.

Translational research offers alternatives to the traditional research model and features inquiry based on collaboration and partnership (Petronio,

1999). Translational research in higher education creates a space for collaborative, co-constructed inquiry that uses the expertise of all stakeholders involved. Translational researchers design meaningful projects that directly benefit student experiences, including advising, and by extension their academic success in college. From the perspective of advisors, this paradigm suggests expanding notions of expertise beyond university faculty to include those closest to the advising process: academic advisors. One could interpret the call for translational research in advising to mean that advisors should partner with faculty members or that advising practice should only employ scientifically based research approaches to advising. Advisors should neither presume that this presumption on translational research is completely true, nor eschew meaningful partnerships or effective practice. Still in its infancy, academic advising research offers a unique opportunity for the members of the academic advising community to define the scholarship of advising and set a research agenda for the foreseeable future.

### Current State of Affairs

Prominent scholars have identified a shortage of practitioners serving as principal investigators or collaborating partners on higher-education research projects. For example, Sanders (1981, p. 10) discussed the outcome of research activities that excluded the practitioner voice by stating:

Research tends to be an activity conducted by an elite class of professionals; practitioners are generally expected to depend on the results of research “disseminated” to them. The consequence is that scientific studies tend to be reported to the specialized subgroup with which the investigator identifies. Researchers identify with, and publish for, communities that do not include practitioners and vice versa.

He expressed concern that the absence of the practitioner limits the utilization of research for impacting the higher education community in general and students specifically.

A more recent study finds a similar pattern in terms of practitioner participation in research. According to Kezar (2000), the higher education community has made little progress in moving from a purely discovery research paradigm toward valuing applied research. In a study with faculty members and student affairs professionals conducted at major higher-education conferences over

a 2-year period, Kezar identified three relevant points concerning practitioners and research. First, practitioners indicated that the research and theory presented in the higher education literature was not particularly useful to them. Second, practitioners and researchers easily identified areas within higher education that need additional exploration. Third, she verified the researcher-practitioner gap stemming from different cultures and roles. Kezar’s study suggests that practitioners, such as advisors, are most interested in research that is relevant to their practice. To resolve the gap in a productive manner, researcher-practitioners need to be involved in various elements of inquiry.

The situations described by Sanders (1981) and Kezar (2000) challenge academic advising. Unless researcher-practitioners make a concerted effort to reverse the historical trend, the lack of scholarship in advising, particularly scholarship produced and consumed by professional and faculty advisors, will persist.

Two interrelated issues warrant the previous statements. First, advising professionals represent less than 10% of the first authors of articles published in the *NACADA Journal*, the flagship outlet for dissemination of scholarship on academic advising (Kuhn & Padak, 2005). Other outlets such as *Advising Today* and the *Mentor* provide opportunities for writing and discussion about advising issues, representing important reviews and reports on practice; however, contributions often lack a discussion of underlying theory, related literature, and systematic inquiry substantiating the impact of a particular practice.

Second, the culture of the advising field encouraged a tradition of advisors sharing best practices and advising theory without empirical support. Regional and annual conferences typically feature practice at a specific unit or college, but the presenters rarely link their programs to research found in the literature and few present research papers.

Professionals in advising must expand the concept of research to reflect appreciation of multiple research perspectives and approaches. Shulman (2000) challenged faculty members in higher education to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning. He pointed to three important reasons including professionalism, pragmatism, and policy, which are applicable to academic advising. For example, *professionalism* refers to advisor and advisor administrator obligations to study students and programs and to share their findings in public and professional organizations. *Pragmatism* represents the need to constantly reflect on one’s practice

and modify poorly working models. Looking critically at practice and sharing it publicly informs the field and encourages other practitioners to engage in scholarship within their professional context. Finally, Shulman noted the policy implications associated with the scholarship of teaching and learning. To make decisions regarding efficacy, investment, and evidence to external stakeholders (e.g., provosts, student and academic affairs, deans), who hold considerable influence on the direction and types of support, researcher-practitioners need to focus on student development and advising practice.

The approach to expand the scope of research aligns with Boyer's (1990) challenge to academia. To make scholarship useful, Boyer encouraged researchers to accept and value the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The traction around service learning, civic engagement, and participatory action research suggests that some institutions and fields are committed to expanding their views of research to include engagement as a potential fifth type of scholarship (Helfenbein, Murtadha, & Wineburg, 2007).

We explore three research strategies or methodologies that showcase the products of inquiry from the practitioner perspective in academic advising. Program evaluation, action research, and grounded theory represent research strategies and opportunities that embrace the input of advising professionals as producers and consumers of research. We begin each section with an introduction of the methodological decisions inherent in the respective strategy, provide an example, and conclude with a short section on limitations.

### **Program Evaluation**

In its purest form, program evaluation is educational research. It contains all the elements critical to systematic inquiry: an identified educational problem or issue, predictions about the impact of chosen instructional and curricular strategies, evidence, documented results, analysis, and recommended action. If program evaluation is research, when well conducted, it reveals gaps and trends about the educational process, which should lead to substantive changes toward improvement (McGillin, 2003).

Unfortunately, too often assumptions are mistaken for knowledge. Advisors in particular operate in a world, every day, where they "know students." They interact with hundreds of them a week, and they recognize emerging trends in skills, behaviors, and dispositions. This ongoing familiarity with real

educational issues based on real students provides the advisor a unique and important vantage point. Individual students benefit from advisors' caring expertise. However, advisors and advising administrators often base decisions regarding programs on hunches rather than evidence. To avoid such dangerous assumptions, they can apply a mirror on the assumptions and see insightful research questions. Kezar (2000) purported that practitioners tend to generate the most appropriate research questions for study that points to action.

Program evaluation in academic advising places an emphasis on data-informed decision making. However, many advisors and their units implement programs and advising strategies without articulating program objectives and intended outcomes. Neither do they implement mechanisms to study the implementation fidelity or impact of the program on those outcomes. The fundamental questions for any comprehensive educational endeavor include, "Did it work?" and perhaps more important, "How did it work?" Higher education professionals have an ethical obligation to determine, through the systematic gathering and analysis of evidence, whether interventions improved student learning and development in the ways the program intended (Huba & Freed, 2000). The increased pressure to prove impact has heightened educator awareness of the challenges of assessing outcomes of student learning and development both for internal improvement purposes and external accountability mandates.

Program evaluation provides the means to improve outcomes at all levels, subject to proper development, refinement, and use. The faculty and staff turn data into information that expresses implications toward the goals and intended outcomes of the program. The data allow them to make distinctions between educationally based outcomes (student learning and development) and residual outcomes (retention and graduation rates) as indicators of student success.

### **Program Evaluation Example**

Each unit or department on a campus must determine the indicators to track throughout the program. Advisors who work within the academic major find themselves particularly well positioned to gather and review data on students at entry into the institution and throughout the program of study. For highly selective majors, predictor variables (such as high school grade-point average [GPA], standardized test scores, and class rank) are often used to evaluate incoming students for matricu-

lation into the major. They select those students likely to succeed in the program of study to be a member of the new cohort. Ideally the departmental academic advisors track the students as they move through the program while faculty and staff also monitor learning outcomes at the classroom level. An ongoing, systematic process of program evaluation allows advisors to understand trends and patterns in the academic progress of students. When the data reveal results outside of typical trends, practitioners may want to explore further and engage in deeper inquiry.

The results of a program evaluation activity at one midwestern university revealed a number of students who had struggled to successfully complete their first year at the institution. Based solely on their review of entry characteristics (high school GPA and standardized test scores), university personnel had predicted that these students would be successful and expected them to experience little difficulty with their academic course work. The academic advisor embarked upon a research project to uncover the factors that could help explain the nature of their difficulties.

The researcher-practitioner chose those elements of the first-year experience that the students related to academic success and selected participants based on their pre-college variables (i.e., those used to determine the admissions decision) and their cumulative GPA at the end of their first year of study. In essence, the practitioner-researcher sought out students who returned to the institution for their second year, but who had not been as successful as expected from their academic-entry characteristics (Woollen, 2005).

The practitioner-researcher conducted interviews with volunteer student participants. Questions focused not only on the gap between the students' expectations of college and experiences in the first year, but also on personal reflections about themselves as learners and the extent to which both the institution (faculty members, advisors, and characteristics of campus environment) and the student (decisions and behaviors) had impacted their academic success. Interesting and relevant themes emerged from the interviews that have helped the academic advisors and faculty members in the department to develop a "model for first-year student success" that is grounded in theory (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Branch-Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994; Tinto, 1993), scholarly (resulting in this case in a masters' thesis for the advisor), and most important, relevant to the local context. To improve practice and impact on teaching and

learning, academic advisors can use findings of program evaluation to launch deeper exploration of critical issues under their purview. For example, based on the findings, the academic advisors at the cited midwestern university used the evaluation results to facilitate learning and development of current and future first-year students.

The limitations associated with program evaluation activities are similar to those found in traditional research paradigms, but may include additional challenges. Evidence gathered for one purpose is not always useful or relevant for a secondary purpose. Therefore, to validate appropriate methods of analysis, practitioner-researchers must take care to document the conditions under which different types of data are generated (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1998). Projects that involve data generated for the purpose of the study require researchers who take the time and have some expertise in methods and strategies. The skills and abilities used for systematic, useful program evaluation and assessment are the same as those used to conduct scholarly educational research. Academic advisors have a responsibility to contribute to the profession as well as to base their continuing work with students on "up-to-date knowledge gained from the research in their fields" (Vogt, 2007, p. xi).

### Action Research in Advising

Based on the powerful ideas of practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006) and scholarship of teaching frameworks in higher education (Shulman, 2000), action research in advising presents a new direction for the field. It involves systematic investigation of phenomena within academic advising or the study of a particular advisor or advising practice on student or advisor outcomes. The process is not bound by the false dichotomy of research versus teaching in higher education (Clark, 1997; Kezar, 2000) or quantitative versus qualitative methods. On the former, action research exemplifies a *culture of inquiry* where all forms of scholarship are valued (Boyer, 1990). Furthermore, advising professionals as well as higher-education faculty members contribute to the theoretical and empirical bodies of knowledge around student success generally and academic advising specifically.

Researchers derive questions from the practitioner or group of practitioners who identify a problem, concern, or area needing further understanding. The inquiry becomes more participatory in nature depending on the extent to which

participants are involved in the development of issues and analysis of the phenomenon of interest (Yorks, 2005).

Effective action research adheres to similar conventions of traditional research with a few important distinctions. First, those conducting action research appreciate an expanded view of expertise in understanding the phenomenon or constructs of interest. In addition to formal literature reviews to explore previous research methodologies and findings that can inform the study, they seek out other professionals and explore their own expertise and perceptions of effective practice. Next, they tend to select samples purposefully and follow the qualitative tradition of criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). They select students based on their knowledge and experience related to the rationale of the study. That does not mean that they never choose a random selection method when the research question at hand attempts to generalize to a wider sphere, such as with regard to academic major or the institution as a whole.

Perhaps most important, the *action* in action research implies that the practitioner will execute a plan based on the findings of the study. Similar to program evaluation, individuals conducting action research employ data to inform decision making. The practitioner uses the findings to help guide practice in the future, taking further revisions in the framework of the research process to examine if the changes made were associated with expected results.

### Action Research Example

An action research project within a larger study of community college students at a 2-year college in the northeast proves a good example of action research. In this case, the researcher (Smith, 2007) worked with members of a faculty affairs committee to create a collaborative research project to a) better understand needs of students as they entered and b) intervene with a selected group of students whose academic record and self-reported motivation indicated a potential risk for attrition. Ten faculty advisors agreed to intervene by calling students for early advising appointments and connecting students with specific services such as tutoring or the writing center. Faculty members recorded their attempts to intervene and reflected on their interactions with the students over the year to address the impact of their individual approach to intrusive advising (see Molina & Abelman, 2000). At the end of the year, a few of the faculty members examined student data and their advising

notes to see if their efforts made an impact with the students. Findings from the action research process helped individual faculty members design ways to intentionally intervene with students identified as at risk based on entering characteristics (Smith, 2007).

In Smith's (2007) study, the advisors proved central in the development of the inquiry question, data collection process, and interpretation. Based on the findings of the study, they took immediate action within the same college where the study had been conducted.

Like all approaches to research, the practice of action research is not without limitations. Advisors need to adhere to the systematic components of research and make a commitment to the ethical requirements associated with the protection of human participants, even if the inquiry does not require institutional review board approval. Additionally, the action researcher should note that generalized conclusions for advisors outside of the individual advisor or unit are rarely appropriate with this type of methodology. However, advisors should consult with other professional advisors and faculty members to review study procedures, instruments, and interpretations to get multiple perspectives on action research possibilities in advising.

### Grounded Theory

By approaching research in advising from a grounded theory perspective, one can study phenomenon previously underexamined without boundaries established due to existing theories. While established theories in higher education are often developed from data drawn from majority populations, grounded theory offers a tool for expanding knowledge through the lived experiences of diverse populations (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, higher education experience, and age) within the campus community. Researchers using a grounded theory approach initiate the study with a research question that focuses on understanding. Even though a firm hypothesis for testing does not initiate the study, hypotheses are developed based on data from participants during the study and are continually tested as the study progresses and the theory emerges. Through these hypotheses, the researcher attempts to exhaust and uncover stakeholder knowledge that is focused on describing an issue, concept, or process. The result of this inquiry strategy helps those in the discipline generate new theories (e.g., developing critical thinking skills, interacting with probation students,

or advising Latino students) that demonstrate inclusion for all higher education stakeholders instead of the majority population.

Pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is an inductive research strategy. To begin this form of inquiry, the researcher identifies a phenomenon that requires explanation. He or she then gathers data from various stakeholders, analyzes them to develop draft hypotheses, and then tests them through future data collection. The participant sample emerges to accommodate hypotheses testing through the process of theoretical sampling. A key component of grounded theory is the constant comparative process that builds the hypothesis through comparing and contrasting these data based on sample characteristics. Saturation, the point where additional data collection does not identify new information, concludes the data collection stage. The researcher continues analysis through open, axial, and selective coding to produce a substantive theory that explains and describes aspects of the phenomenon under examination (Creswell, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Charmaz (2006) extended the grounded theory methodology into a constructivist paradigm. In contrast with the positivist realm of objectivity in research in which the researcher is bracketed outside the research, under constructivist grounded theory the researcher and the participants actively share their lived experiences, which are significant in understanding the phenomenon in question. Lived experience also foregrounds the perspective of the researcher. This collective space of experience and honesty develops trust between researcher and stakeholder as well as increases the credibility of the findings.

Also, this subjective stance positively impacts theory production. The constructivist paradigm results in revisiting and refining emerging theories due to a belief in multiple realities that are jointly constructed and constantly evolving. A constructivist epistemology within grounded theory invites the researcher and participants to co-construct knowledge that results in theory development based on multiple realities instead of one specific truth (Charmaz, 2003, 2006). This research perspective allows one to identify theory production as robust and dynamic.

### Grounded Theory Example

Research conducted by Aiken-Wisniewski (2008) provides an example of the grounded theory strategy used for research in academic advising.

Serving as an advising administrator, Aiken-Wisniewski and her staff noticed a gender discrepancy in applications to medical school that impacted a large geographic area. A literature review did not offer answers, so she designed a research project to understand this phenomenon in more detail. Women enrolled at a local medical school volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews that explored their individual journeys of deciding to apply to medical school. Aiken-Wisniewski conducted the interviews after communicating her multiple roles of researcher, administrator, and advisor clearly to participants. In addition to participating in interviews, women were invited to be part of theory building through follow-up sessions and focus groups that checked the analysis of the researcher. Aiken-Wisniewski coded data to develop a theory and conducted a member-checking process to confirm concepts that formed the theory. The results of this study produced a substantive theory that describes to advisors key concepts in the process of women deciding to apply to medical school (Aiken-Wisniewski, 2008).

Research studies in advising that employ a grounded theory strategy have limitations that must be recognized to maintain the credibility of this methodology. Ethical and prescribed practice must be followed, especially when human subjects are involved in data collection. Also, the researcher must identify her or his research stance within the positivist or constructivist realm to guarantee that the results reflect participant data and not researcher bias. Finally, the results are not generalizable across all stakeholders involved with the phenomenon unless additional research confirms that the theory is applicable across a broad audience. Regardless of these limitations, grounded theory is a robust research strategy that produces rich descriptions of a phenomenon based on the lived experiences of stakeholders, and it also offers enhanced understanding of issues that advisors encounter within their profession.

### Discussion

We simultaneously provide an observation of current research in higher education and academic advising while encouraging advising practitioners to engage in the scholarship of academic advising. The three research strategies are applicable to research questions and phenomena of interest that professional advisors consistently encounter and ponder, but rarely study systematically. Numerous methodological strategies, beyond the three presented in this paper, can inform advising, but

we chose these three because they share several commonalities.

First, evaluation, action research, and grounded theory are well established and suited for increasing the engagement of advisors in research activity. The intrinsic value and external pressures to understand the impact of advising approaches and programming require that, through program evaluation, advisors become comfortable with interrogating interventions designed to improve student outcomes. Because of its relative infancy as a discipline and because advisors are experiencing and naming new phenomena prior to in-depth exploration (e.g., helicopter parents), grounded theory offers a venue for providing rich and in-depth understanding of the evolving contexts. Finally, action research by its very nature assumes that professionals are empowered by the desire to better understand their surroundings and to use data to inform decision making. To increase advisor engagement in research, whether through these three approaches or others, we recommend that administrators and higher-education professional organizations explore advisor professional development and scholarship within the field.

#### *Advisor Professional Development*

An eclectic field, advising brings together scholars from any number of academic disciplines. While individuals with a background in college student-personnel programs represent a significant percentage of professional advising staffs, advisors are just as likely to have come from anywhere in the entire spectrum of disciplinary study. In addition, while representing all the degree majors, faculty members receive little or no training in advising (or teaching). The advent of centers for teaching and learning speak volumes about the need for professional development for faculty members in their teaching responsibilities, which includes academic advising. Therefore, simply increasing the visibility of research in college student-personnel degree programs will unlikely make a big impact on the overall amount and quality of research in the field. Beyond encouraging a master's thesis and inquiry courses in college student-personnel degrees, advising units can sponsor professional development experience around research, for example, by a) implementing a common reading program that focuses on advising research, b) identifying incentives for advisors to conduct research (e.g., reduced case load, travel funds, financial bonus), and c) incorporating research and evaluation experience as a preferred skill in position descriptions.

#### *Position on the Scholarship of Academic Advising*

Advising is blessed with several outlets for disseminating scholarship in the field. *Advising Today*, the *Mentor*, and the *NACADA Journal* provide advisors with a range of options to publish their scholarship. Kuhn and Padak (2005), the former editors of the *NACADA Journal*, pointed to Boyer's perspective on scholarship as a model. Everyone involved in advising needs to be part of an ongoing dialog about the elements that constitute research in advising as well as a shared understanding of the extent to which research is consumed, produced, and valued by professional advisors within the Boyer's four forms of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, and teaching). The field of academic advising and its impact on student learning and development will benefit through increased engagement in the research process by practitioners. The Appendix to this article describes recent NACADA initiatives to empower advising professionals as they engage in the process of inquiry.

#### **Conclusion**

The field of academic advising within higher education possesses two key elements for productive inquiry. First, this area has a bounty of questions that are ripe for investigation. Due to the centrality of academic advising within the undergraduate experience, practitioner-researchers need insight as well as accountability. They need to present evidence of the benefits of advising. Second, the academic advisor, aware of critical questions and capable of collaborating in scholarly activities, should be included in the research process to increase the development of theories and literature that offer practitioners a stronger foundation for student engagement. Through our lived experiences in scholarly inquiry as well as academic advising, we are encouraging colleagues to include their voice and intellect as the next generation of scholarship in academic advising is generated and dispersed for practitioners as well as other members of the higher education community.

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## Appendix

### Infusing Research Throughout NACADA Taskforce Action Plans

Infusing Research Throughout Advising Taskforce has developed the following definitions of research in academic advising for review by the NACADA Board of Directors,

NACADA views research as scholarly inquiry into all aspects of the advising interaction, the role of advising in higher education, and the effects that advising can have on students. It regards consuming and producing research as the collective responsibility of all members of the higher education advising community, including advisors, faculty, administrators, and students. The approach builds upon and extends the Ernest L. Boyer scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The extension is toward praxis where research, theory and practice in academic advising represent inter-related processes for understanding and advancing student development and success.

In addition to the definition a series of four action plans were developed. They include a common reading initiative, a research symposium at regional/annual conferences, adding a research session to all NACADA Institutes, and the development and dissemination of the *Scholarly Inquiry in Academic Advising*. The Research Committee of NACADA, which is comprised of advisors, administrators, and faculty, will monitor and report progress to the NACADA Board of Directors.

The first action plan is the development and publication of the *Scholarly Inquiry of Academic Advising Monograph*. The editor, Peter Hagen, is working with Marsha Miller and others in the Executive Office to facilitate the publication. All authors have signed the copyright contracts and the due date for Abstracts and Outlines is September 30. Chapters are due in late January and it is expected that the monograph will be published and available in the Spring of 2010. The book will serve as an excellent resource for the membership in a variety of arenas.

The NACADA *Common Reading program* is designed to engage the NACADA membership in reading and discussing scholarly literature related to academic advising. This program encourages advising practitioners to become regular consumers of scholarly literature by reinforcing the importance of scholarly engagement through reading and discussing. This program is one way NACADA can institutionalize the expectation that advising practitioners continuously build their knowledge and cultivate scholarly habits. By engaging with literature, advising practitioners can begin to recognize their own theoretical perspectives, apply concepts from research to their own practice, and recognize gaps in their knowledge and the existing literature. As a result of active engagement with scholarly literature (a part of scholarly habit), advising practitioners will be better equipped to develop and conduct their own inquiry projects. There will be a Common Reading event in Chicago and quarterly reading forums via the web forum.

The *Inclusion of Research Within NACADA Institutes* establishes a plan to add an inquiry component to all Administrators', Assessment, and Summer Institutes. These annual activities are attended by

approximately 400 individuals each year and offer an extended opportunity to explore a topic established by the particular institutes or identified by the participant. Due to the scope and length of each institute, the inclusion of discussions on research will make a lasting impact as participants bring back what they learned at the Institute to their staff and colleagues. By addressing research in various ways at these Institutes, the value of research within the NACADA culture would be communicated to members. The action team will contact the Advisory Board Chair of each institute to discuss why research should be included within institute curriculum and to generate activities to achieve this NACADA value. This discussion will occur prior to the October 2008 NACADA Conference so Advisory Board Chairs can include a discussion item regarding this on their respective advisory board meeting agendas. This action team will work closely with the boards and institute faculty to ensure that the inclusion of research into the institute fits seamlessly within the framework and goals of each respective event. It is expected that by 2010 there will be a research component infused into each institute.

The final action plan is the development of a two-day *Research Symposium*. The goal is to bring together emerging advising scholars for an intensive discussion of methodology and creation of time-lines for completing inquiry. Participants will bring clearly articulated inquiry questions and concrete ideas for methodological approaches that will be fleshed out during the two days. Participants leave with a clear plan for conducting the study and disseminating the findings. Support from the *community of scholars* developed at the institute will be supplemented by the *Cultivating Scholars* team from the Research Committee. The Symposium will be piloted prior to the Region 4 Conference in March 2009.

*Note.* From The National Academic Advising Association. (2009). *Final Report from the Taskforce on Infusing Research Throughout NACADA*. Unpublished report. Manhattan, KS: Author.