The A.R.K. Project:
A Grassroots, Student-Led, Multiple-Component Intervention to Increase
Driver Safety-Belt Use on a University Campus

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ABSTRACT

This study represents a collaborative effort among university academics and community stakeholders. This multiple-component intervention study specifically targeted students on the VT campus, in an attempt to increase driver safety-belt use. Observations on VT students’ safety-belt use and other safety-related behaviors (i.e., turn-signal use and cell-phone use) were made during pre-intervention, intervention, post-intervention, and follow-up study phases and compared with observations made on drivers in two non-equivalent control groups (VT faculty/staff and Radford University (RU) students).

Evaluation of the project revealed no meaningful changes in daily percentages of VT student safety-belt use, when compared to that of non-equivalent control groups. Percentages by phase did vary in the hypothesized direction for VT students. Percentages by phase varied in similar ways for VT faculty/staff, suggesting the student-targeted intervention, over-all, was not responsible for the observed changes. One inter-personal intervention component, the Buckle-Up Flashcards prompt was associated with success. Thirty percent of un-buckled drivers complied with this inter-personal prompt.

Epidemiological data on safety-belt use are presented. Buckled drivers were significantly more likely to indicate turns with a turn signal and were significantly less likely to use cell phones. Safety-belt use was significantly more likely among VT faculty/staff than VT students and safety-belt use was significantly more likely among
VT faculty/staff and VT student females than among VT faculty/staff and VT student males. Interpretations of these findings and directions for future research are discussed.