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THE LEARNING
ASSISTANCE REVIEW

*Journal of the National College
Learning Center Association*

NATIONAL
COLLEGE LEARNING CENTER
ASSOCIATION

N C L C A

About *The Learning Assistance Review*

The Learning Assistance Review is an official publication of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA). NCLCA serves faculty, staff, and students in the field of learning assistance at two- and four-year colleges, vocational and technical schools, and universities. All material published by The Learning Assistance Review is copyrighted by NCLCA and can be used only upon expressed written permission.

NCLCA's Definition of a Learning Center
The National College Learning Center Association defines a learning center at institutions of higher education as interactive academic spaces which exist to reinforce and extend student learning in physical and/or virtual environments. A variety of comprehensive support services and programs are offered in these environments to enhance student academic success, retention, and completion rates by applying best practices, student learning theory, and addressing student-learning needs from multiple pedagogical perspectives. Staffed by professionals, paraprofessionals, faculty, and/or trained student educators, learning centers are designed to reinforce the holistic academic growth of students by fostering critical thinking, metacognitive development, and academic and personal success.

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Letter from the Editor

   I'm standing next to a three-time Spur Award winner and two *New York Times* bestselling authors as we watch exuberant fans, wannabe writers, and smiling publishers mill the hallway of the Marriott located in the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City. I'm a fish out of water. Half-a-dozen people wait in line to speak to the Spur Award winner as his wife, her smile genuine, accepts a check for a small stack of paperbacks. The books feature covers adorned with beautiful women and rugged men astride horses or holding hands near a crude wooden fence. There's always a setting sun that colors the characters with deep orange hues. I'm wearing a suit and tie, so I feel like I'm choking, and my new dress shoes are hot and pinching my pinky toes. One of the bestselling authors, the delightful Linda Broday, writer of historical western romances, whispers into my ear, "Why are we here?" She's grinning as she pushes her large-framed glasses up the bridge of her nose. "I never really thought of myself as a writer of westerns."

   Broday's comment makes me laugh and I'm not sure why. She's intelligent and insightful with just a touch of eccentricity. She had to be a writer. Behind me, a banner my brother, artist David Frizell, created at a local Kinko's, proudly displays our book, *Bender: The Graphic Novel – Volume One* in blood red letters. I had forgotten to ask David how to erect the banner, so I was forced to lean it and the rickety tripod against the wall for fear it would fall on someone – probably me. The skull of a desiccated corpse grins at the attendees walking by my display, enticing an elderly gentleman wearing a ten-gallon hat, boots, Wranglers, a plaid western shirt with pearl buttons, and a neatly trimmed beard, to stop and stare.

   "What's all this then?" Ten-Gallon Hat is comfortable with his southern drawl, turning "all this" into "awl-iss." Is he wearing spurs?

   I clear my throat. "It's the first graphic novel published by Oghma Creative Media about the bloody Bender family of southeast

Kansas. They murdered dozens of people travelling west along the Osage Trail and were never caught." I remind myself that I need to perfect my elevator pitch.

"What's that? A 'graphic novel'?"

"Sequential art paired with words designed to give the reader a cinematic experience."

Ten-Gallon Hat rubs the whiskers on his chin with a rugged hand kissed and leathered by the sun. In the distance, I swear I hear the music from a Sergio Leone film. "It's a comic book?"

"Yes." I try not to sigh. Comic books are considered as something less than literary in many circles, including the university where I serve as an administrator and sometimes professor. A colleague (I use the term loosely) from the English Department at Missouri State University once stopped me and said, "Oh, I've been meaning to congratulate you on your little comic books." I'd published about a dozen with TidalWave Comics at that point in my career. The books featured true stories of famous actors, politicians, and musicians, and had afforded me a cult following online while building a professional vitae. "Rather pedestrian, though. Aren't they?" She stared at me a moment before turning back to whatever she was reading, dismissing me. I was so shocked I just walked away.

"Well, why didn't you just say comic book?" He grins and proffers a ten dollar bill, my only sale of the morning. "My grandkids like comic books." I don't have time to tell him that the book, at best, is rated PG-13 and is lousy with villains and saturated with blood before he's greeted by a similarly dressed group of men who whisk him into a meeting room. That left Broday, the other *New York Times* bestseller, the effervescent Jodi Thomas, the Spur Award winner, Dusty Richards, his wife, and I alone in the hallway.

"Surreal, isn't it?" Broday pats me on the shoulder. "You'll get used to it."

I wasn't sure.

When Casey Cowan suggested I join him and Vanessa McDaniel Cerasale, Oghma's powerhouse publishing duo, in Kansas City for the Western Writers of America (WWA) 2017 Convention, I was skeptical. I never considered myself a western writer. My wife, Julia, loves a good western (even her cell phone ring is the familiar "woo-hooo-woo-ooo" from *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*), so I've watched them with her on lazy Saturday afternoons. My penchant for

science fiction and horror, my work as an editor for this esteemed journal, and my Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Nonfiction didn't lend itself to the genre. As a writer for TidalWave Comics, I only dabbled with western themes once, creating a 132 page script for a science fiction/time travelling James Dean battling shape-shifting lizard people in the old west (it's better than it sounds – I told you I need to perfect my elevator pitches).

"*Bender* is a western, Michael." We're sitting in a restaurant in Bentonville, home to Oghma Creative Media and its myriad imprints. Before I could protest, Cowan continued, his large hand on my shoulder. "You've got the themes, the setting, the characters, even a gunfight." He's right, of course, but David and I always thought of the book as being rooted in old-school horror. I had just asked Cowan, "Why *Bender* with a publisher known for producing award-winning western fiction?" But that's a story for another time.

The Western Writers of America's 2017 Convention provided both seasoned and amateur authors the venue to talk about writing, learn more about our fickle craft, and to mingle in a relaxed atmosphere. Though the crowd was small compared to gatherings hosted by Harlequin or the big New York publishers, it was the intimate atmosphere that afforded me the ability to personally engage with other attendees. I found my fellow scribes to be enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and interested in preserving the tradition of writing in a genre that celebrates the wildness of new frontiers and the characters that provide the stories their color. I've attended dozens of higher education conferences in my eighteen years as a teacher and administrator at a public university. Most tend to be dry, offering little in the way of enhancing the way I work. WWA's convention was a bonding experience, forging solidarity among us proud enough to call ourselves western writers.

That's how I see *Bender* now. It's a western graphic novel that dabbles with horror themes. Is western horror a thing? I imagine it is. Jodi Thomas, the prolific author honored for her *Ransom Canyon* series among others, echoed Broday's words to me over dinner. "I'm not anymore a western writer than a romance writer – but I've been called both." After discussing the conventions of western writing, Thomas, who is as eloquent as she is gracious, invited me to present at the West Texas Writers' Academy held at West Texas Texas A & M University in Canyon next June. "I wasn't sure why I showed up

this weekend, Michael. I think maybe that one dinner with you, your wife, and Casey was the reason I was meant to be in Kansas City." We parted with the promise that I'd provide a course outline to her in the coming weeks. Conventions are about networking, too.

If you're reading this, know that all of us who write face down the monster known as imposter syndrome. We don't know if we have the ability to translate what we do as learning center professionals into words anyone would want to read. Perhaps I'll have the honor of reading your work and to consider it for inclusion in future issues of this journal. You'll join Ren VanderLind, Joshua Weirick, Tracy Davis, Daniel Lawson, Skyler Mendes, Jacquelyn H. Fede, Megan B. Wilks, Laurel Whisler, Rachel Anderson, and Jenai Brown in taking a chance and sharing your precious words with a community of those eager to read them. Network with your colleagues at the National College Learning Center Association's annual conference. Attend the conferences hosted by other members of CLADEA. You'll find the like-minded individuals you need to put your writing into perspective. You'll be glad you did.

Michael Frizell
August 22, 2017

Writer L1/L2 Status and Asynchronous Online Writing Center Feedback: Consultant Response Patterns

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Abstract

This case study examines the differences in comments offered by asynchronous online writing center consultants to L1 and L2 speakers and examines the potential disconnects in consultant perceptions of their practice. The researchers collected and coded sample papers and interviewed participants to contextualize data from the quantitative portion of the study. The researchers found that in addition to differences between comments to L1 and L2 writers in each category of comment, there was a significant difference in the number of comments offered. Participants accounted for some—but not all—of these differences, indicating some implications for training and assessment.

Introduction

As universities develop online programs, online writing centers are becoming more common: in 2014, 420 writing centers in a sample of 610 (nearly 70%) indicated that their writing center offered a form of online tutoring (National Census of Writing, 2014). And like their face-to-face counterparts, online writing centers often maintain an ethos guided by North's (1984) foundational writing center mantra of helping "to produce better writers, not better writing" (p. 37). That is, philosophically, online writing centers are also tasked with "look[ing] beyond or through that particular project, that particular text, and see[ing] it as an occasion for addressing our primary concern, the process by which it is produced" (North, 1984, p. 38). However, this task can often be less straightforward in online (and particularly asynchronous online) milieus. As McKinney (2009) has observed, many of the traditional techniques used in

writing center sessions to facilitate this work—such as talking about the paper and reading through it with the writer, hands-off policies, read-aloud methods, etc.—are often problematic for new media and digital texts (pp. 37-39). These texts, we would assert, include the Microsoft Word documents common in asynchronous online writing centers. To account for the problematic nature of "looking beyond a project," many tutor training manuals and practicums offer methods to counter what could be considered editing or directive methods in these environments. For example, Ryan and Zimmereli (2009) encouraged consultants to "resist the urge to simply edit" and to "use editing tools cautiously and sparingly" while at the same time avoiding evaluative language (pp. 80-81). In short, the medium itself often complicates and influences how collaborative work is facilitated. Consultants working with second language (L2) writers in asynchronous online environments face another layer of complications regarding collaboration and process-orientation. As Babcock and Thonus (2012) have asserted, "Indirectness is highly prized in a Socratic tutoring approach. For L2 writers, however, tutor indirectness often succeeds only in generating frustration" (p. 103). Read together, there can often thus be moments of contradiction wherein consultants attempt to foster collaboration in a medium that complicates it when working with writers who may find those methods doubly frustrating.

How, then, do asynchronous online writing center consultants, as Bell (2006) describes it, "preserve the rhetorical nature of tutoring when going online" (p. 351) and avoid merely editing or telling the writer what to do? Though many tutor training texts (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2006; Hewett, 2015) address how consultants might approach these situations, and despite recent empirical research on writing feedback in the online classroom (e.g. Samburskiy & Quah, 2014), with computer-mediated asynchronous corrective feedback (e.g. Shintani 2015), and in online learning in general (e.g. Burns, Cunningham, & Foran-Mulcahy, 2014), there has not been a similar examination of feedback in the online writing center. Severino and Prim's (2015) study of Chinese students' word choice errors in English has provided some insight into how consultants respond to L2 writers on surface-level issues online, but little has been done to

extend this sort of examination to L2 writers more generally and to extend it beyond surface-level concerns.

In this article, we share the results of a study that begins to address this gap. We examined asynchronous online writing center consultant comments to determine how they commented in these sessions. In particular, we focused on potential differences in consultant responses to L1 (native English speaking) and L2 writers. And though we built our database accordingly, we attempted to remain sensitive to other differences and patterns that emerged in the data. We also sought to learn how consultants perceive the sorts of feedback they offer and the potential disconnects between their feedback and their perceptions about that feedback, particularly regarding their response to L2 writers. In short, we found that participants did in fact offer different patterns of feedback to L2 writers than they offered to L1 writers, and were only sometimes cognizant of this difference. We share the results of the study, offer an analysis of those results, and suggest implications for both writing center practice and research.

This empirical, qualitative study answers Babcock and Thonus's (2012) and Driscoll and Perdue's (2012) calls to extend RAD research into writing center contexts. Though we do not claim that our findings are generalizable, we assert that the representativeness of the research site, the quantitative analysis of consultant comments, and the thick description provided via the consultant interviews provide a rich site in which to build, extend, and complicate practice and theory on asynchronous online writing center work. We have offered, in the appendices, the codes and interview scripts developed over the course of this study in the hope that other researchers will attempt to replicate and extend our work.

Literature Review

Relayed below is a brief overview of scholarship done on forms of response in asynchronous online writing center sessions and on differences in response between that offered to L1 writers versus that offered to L2 writers (both in face-to-face and in online sessions). Such an examination is important for writing centers given the increasing profile of online programs as well as increasing L2

enrollments in higher education. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the number of people seeking nonimmigrant student visas (F1) has increased significantly over the past decade, from just 613,221 in 2004 to 1,577,509 in 2013 (DHS, 2014). While these numbers do not delineate nationality or L1, it can be reasonably assumed that the number of L2 English speakers increased as well. Consequently, writing center researchers must more carefully study how consultants perceive and respond to the needs of both L1 and L2 writers in online environments.

Although there has been work done on responding to writers in online writing center sessions, little of it has been empirical, and much of it has been done in normative terms for training purposes. One of the most comprehensive pieces on the topic, for instance, is Hewett's (2015) *The Online Writing Conference*, a tutor training manual. Accordingly, most of the discussions in writing center literature on online sessions revolve around perceived best practices and thus of a normative rather than descriptive approach. These discussions tend to focus on the dichotomy of directive versus non-directive practices. For example, Honeycutt (2001) claimed "asynchronous media tend to produce more directive comments" while synchronous sessions produce "a greater amount of personal and collaborative involvement between participants" (p. 54). Similarly, Ryan and Zimmerelli (2006) warned tutors that written comments can often be interpreted as more authoritative and directive than intended, and Golden (2005) examined how reflective tools could help consultants be less directive when working online.

Rafoth (2004) found an association between directiveness and an over-focus on surface level issues in asynchronous consulting when he examined the feedback his consultants gave to L2 writers. He described this feedback as "a mix of questions, comments, suggestions, and corrections" (p. 96) and foci, including content, thesis statements, punctuation, and grammar. However, when consultants tried to comment on a high number of individual issues in the same session, many of them ended up focusing almost exclusively on surface level issues; as a result, the session took on more of an editorial tone (Rafoth, 2004). Consequently, Rafoth (2004) asserted that consultants should use a narrow scope when

providing feedback in order to maintain a focus on global concerns, avoid directiveness, and not try to make their tutees' writing native-like.

Thonus (2004) provided what might be the most comprehensive description of interactional differences between L1 tutors and their L2 writers. She examined tutor/tutee interaction in 12 sessions—6 with L1 writers and 6 with L2 writers—and found that there were several differences in the way tutors communicated with L2 writers, including tutors' domination of conversation, longer turn lengths in favor of the tutor, less acknowledgment of the feedback areas the writer requested, more directive tutoring, and less involvement on the part of L2 writers. In short, sessions with L2 writers were more directive, more tutor-centered, and less conversational than sessions with L1 writers. While Thonus (2004) concluded that "significant differences exist" (p. 239) between sessions with L1 and L2 writers, it is unclear if, or to what extent, these differences also exist in an online environment.

Severino, Swenson, and Zhu's (2009) work compared the feedback requests by L1 and L2 writers on submissions to an online writing center service. In a sample of 85 L1 and 85 L2 feedback requests, they found that L2 writers requested grammar help more often than L1 writers, but did not find any other significant differences. And although Severino, Swenson, and Zhu (2009) observed differences in the feedback requested by L1 and L2 writers, differences between comments given by tutors to L1 and L2 writers online have not been analyzed as systematically.

Methods

The university where the study was conducted has roughly 27,000 students enrolled in on campus and Global campus programs which include online courses. The Writing Center has three locations on campus and generally employs 30 to 45 undergraduate and graduate consultants as well as eight to ten graduate assistants. The Center conducts approximately 12,000 to 13,000 total sessions each year. Of those sessions, over a third are conducted via its online service. Off campus students, who are the largest population served by the online Writing Center, number approximately 9,000 students

annually. Those students seeking online writing center support are primarily graduate students of a variety of backgrounds, including English language learners and non-traditional students.

The Writing Center's Online Service

When a document is submitted, students also submit an accompanying form that records basic demographic information. This form provides the consultant working on the submission with information about the student such as level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student), the designator for the course they are submitting for (e.g MSA 600), where they believe the paper is in the writing process (e.g. "early draft") and the feedback areas they would like the consultant to focus on (e.g. clarity, grammar, and organization). The writer also has the opportunity to indicate whether or not English is his or her first language. The submission and the submission form are stored in an inbox that all consultants have access to, allowing them flexibility in when and where they conduct online sessions. Submissions are commented on and returned to students within two days, at which time they are expected to revise their paper using the comments left on the portion their consultant responded to. After feedback has been applied, students are encouraged to resubmit their papers to the Writing Center's online service for further review.

Consultants begin an online session by choosing an online submission from the inbox, opening the attached document and viewing the submission form. Consultants then begin reading and commenting on the online submission. Consultants begin with an opening comment introducing themselves and what they expect to comment on. Consultants are then instructed to respond to the online submission until they either: a) spend 50 minutes in the online session (for graduate level submissions; 30 minutes for undergraduate level submissions) b) make 50 comments or c) respond to ten pages of the submission. After one of these benchmarks has been reached, consultants give a closing comment summarizing what types of feedback areas they commented on and encouraging the student to resubmit once changes have been made. Consultants then save the document, attach it to the original submission in the Writing Center inbox, and send it back to the writer. Finally, consultants record

information such as the writer's student ID number and name on an Excel template in order to track which writers consultants work with.

Consultant Training

Consultants at this Writing Center complete a 3 credit, 15 week practicum course during first semester of employment. Consultants learn about working with different types of writing and different types of writers, as well as writing center pedagogy and best practices. Consultants are also given a brief introduction to online consulting and giving feedback in an online environment. Once consultants complete their practicum course and have been working with students in face-to-face sessions for almost a semester, they are given the option to begin full training for work on online submissions (commonly referred to as "onlines").

During training for online consulting, consultants are taught the ideals and best practices for online consulting as outlined by the Writing Center. For example, students are instructed to leave comments that are not overly critical, and include examples, detailed explanation, links to relevant resources, and corrections where appropriate. Consultants are instructed to comment on a mix of global and surface level issues in each submission. The ratio of global to surface comments is determined by the stage of the submission and by the consultant's assessment of the paper's immediate needs. However, consultants are instructed not to edit or use Track Changes; instead, consultants give feedback using Microsoft Word's comment feature. The feedback may point out issues, ask questions, and make suggestions. Consultants are encouraged to only make wholesale corrections when absolutely necessary in an effort to mirror face-to-face sessions and avoid infringing on the writer's autonomy.

Consultants train in a number of stages. They first begin with commenting on several sample online submissions, which are reviewed by the Writing Center Director and Graduate Assistant Online Coordinator. Consultants receive feedback on their comments, specifically on what they commented on (and sometimes what they did not comment on) and how their comment presented feedback. When consultants have demonstrated that they can leave comments that adhere to the best practices of online consulting, they move on to working on undergraduate online submissions. These

submissions are "live" online papers ("onlines") that have been submitted by students, but are still reviewed by the online coordinator before they are returned to the writers. Once students complete this stage, they can begin choosing, responding to, and returning undergraduate submissions on their own. Consultants then begin training to respond to graduate level submissions (while working freely on undergraduate submissions during their scheduled work hours). In this phase of training, consultants begin with live onlines that are typically Master's theses (though other types of graduate writing are also common). Once students complete this stage of the training, they are "fully approved" for onlines and can respond to any of the types of submissions the Writing Center receives.

Participant Selection

Three writing center consultants were selected to participate in this study. Participants were chosen based on their experience with working with L2 writers and conducting online sessions. In essence, the selection was the consequence of convenience sampling. Each of the participants was female which, while an accident of the sampling, was a) fairly representative of the overall demographics of the center and b) enabled researchers to control for gender as a variable in the responses. Participants consented to have their online comments collected and analyzed. Each was given a pseudonym included in the materials below: Ann, Monica, and Olivia.

Paper Selection

To control for variables among the responses, we selected submissions that were similar in writing process stage, student level, length, and type of feedback requested. As a result, only papers that were submitted as completed texts in the final stages of the writing process from graduate students were used. Because consultants may comment on up to ten pages of text, papers needed to be around ten pages long. Among the papers that met these requirements, only a few types of requested feedback presented themselves: clarity, grammar, and APA formatting. Four papers from each consultant were collected, two written by self-reported L1 writers of English and two written by self-reported L2 writers of English, for a total of twelve papers.

Coding Asynchronous Online Consultant Comments

The comments from each submission were converted to plain text, and all identifying markers were removed. Comments were coded based on three categories:

- **Type** (i.e. global, surface, or metatextual)
- **Focus** (what area the comment provided feedback on; e.g. clarity, organization, content etc.)
- **Mode** (how the comment presented feedback; e.g. command, advice, question, recast etc.).

For example, a comment such as, "I like this introduction. It prepares the reader for the rest of the paper" would be coded as g-org-prs for *global-organization-praise*. It addresses the overall concerns of the paper, focuses on the organization and the introduction's role in facilitating the organization, and praises the writing. For a full description of each code, see Appendix A. For the sake of clarity, we have in this article **bolded** category titles and *italicized* the individual codes.

These codes were originally derived from exercises in the training practicum for consultants in the program. For this study, they were applied to an initial data set to test interrater reliability and then further refined and revised in response to the data. Several of the categories were either collapsed, removed, split into more distinct categories, or further refined as the data also defined the code. In short, although our codes were initially prescribed so as to help us observe phenomena in the data, we remained sensitive to that data so that our codes were grounded in and arose from it.

The text of a comment was often given more than one set of codes, as comments frequently had multiple foci or addressed a single point of focus through multiple modes. In these cases, comments were not coded as whole pieces of text, but by smaller units, such as sentences or even clauses. However, because these pieces of feedback could vary in length from a single sentence or clause to multiple sentences, they could not accurately be called 'clauses' or 'sentences.' As a result, these strings of language will be referred to as 'utterances'. Consider the following comments:

[comment]: Again, citations should come at the end of the sentence. If there are multiple sources being used in

one sentence, this format can be used:

(Fredrick, 2008; Sashital, Jassawalla, & Markulis, 1997).
[comment]: Typically in academic writing I try to be as objective as possible. As a reader, this word struck me as somewhat subjective. Is there a word or phrase that could be used here instead?

The first comment contains two sentences but addresses one issue—in this case that the in text citations would fit better at the end of the sentence. Both sentences use the same mode: explanation. Even though this comment consists of multiple sentences, it would receive one set of codes (*surface/format-style/explanation*) and would consist of one coded utterance. The second comment also contains multiple sentences and addresses a single issue (a convention of academic writing, or 'genre-style'), but does so through multiple modes: It begins with advice ("Typically in academic writing I try to be as objective as possible"), then indicates an issue using qualified criticism ("As a reader, this word struck me as somewhat subjective") and finally indicates that a change should be made by asking a question ("Is there a word or phrase that could be used here instead?"). Because this comment is clearly using multiple modes to address the issue, it would receive three sets of codes (*surface/advice/genre-style*, *surface/qualified criticism/style-genre*, and *surface/closed question/style-genre*) and would thus contain three coded utterances.

Codes were cross-tabulated to determine the distribution of codes across type, focus, and mode for L1 and L2. A chi-square test was used to determine if statistically significant differences existed between how frequently codes were expected versus how frequently they actually occurred. Each consultant's set of comments were compared to the comments of the other consultants, and comments given to L1 and L2 English writers were compared within each participant's set of comments and across participants. Although we cannot generalize the results of the study due to the small sample size, we felt that the quantitative component enabled us to move away from impressionistic interpretations to demonstrable differences in response.

Case Study Interviews

In addition to the quantitative component of the study,

researchers also interviewed consultant participants. These interviews also provided an opportunity to member check; that is, researchers shared the results of the quantitative analysis of the consultant comments and gave the respondents an opportunity to intervene in researcher interpretations. This process not only added an opportunity for respondent agency and reflexive research practice but also enabled researchers to contextualize and triangulate data from the quantitative portion of the study. Interviews were 30 minutes to one hour in length, and addressed the following areas:

1. Participant's academic background
2. Experience and preferences with online submissions
3. Online writing center pedagogy
4. Issues commonly addressed in papers
5. Strategies for writing comments on various issues
6. Differences between sessions with L1 and L2 English writers

For full interview transcripts, please see Appendix B. After coding was completed, participants were informed via email of both the overall trends in the quantitative data and the trends in their comments. Participants were then asked a series of follow up questions addressing the following:

1. Which trends surprised them
2. How the trends compared to their perceptions of their comments
3. Possible explanations for trends observed in the data
4. The perceived accuracy of the coding

Results

There were statistically significant differences in the patterns of consultant response to L1 and L2 writers. According to the consultant interviews, participants were aware of some, but not all, of these differences. In particular, there were differences in the number of comments offered, in the **type** of comments, in the **focus** of the comments, and most especially in the **mode** of the comments. Despite some of these difference, however, there were patterns that were consistent among responses to L1 and L2 writers, and there was no discernible difference in terms of what might be considered directive or nondirective feedback.

Differences in Number of Comments

First, despite an equal number of papers for L1 and L2 writers and the same parameters for commenting on these papers, consultants wrote far more comments for L1 writers (286 comments, resulting in 347 coded utterances) than for L2 writers (210 comments, resulting in 250 coded utterances). The average length of these comments were similar (L1 = 19.5 words, L2 = 20.1), thus consultants were generally writing more for L1 writers than L2 writers.

In the follow up interviews, participants generally expressed surprise at the trend. For example, according to Monica: "I think the main thing that surprised me here was the fact that native speakers did receive more comments, as I would think that it would be other the way around." In short, the difference in the number of comments offered was unintentional.

Differences in Type of Comments

Overall, consultants preferred *surface* comments (333) to *global* comments (236), but not significantly so. The three consultants not only varied widely in their attention to global and surface comments, but also their intuitions about them. For instance, Olivia admitted that she focuses "probably more [on] surface issues because so many people need help with things like grammar and APA." Her numbers indicate the accuracy of her statement as only 29% of her total comments focus on global issues. Conversely, Monica tries, in her words, "to focus more on global, just because I feel it will help the students more in the future." Accordingly, 55% of her comments focus on global issues. Ann, on the other hand, when asked if she tended to focus more on global or surface issues, replied, "Definitely more on global issues, 'cause I feel like that's more, um, where my strong suit is." Yet, only 31% of her total comments were on global issues. In short, the participants seemed to favor surface-level comments, but not enough to suggest significance.

When comparing responses to L1 and L2 writers, however, significant differences emerged. Global comments were used significantly more ($p \leq .05$) with L1 writers than with L2 writers. While *global* comments were used across every **focus** except *correctness* and almost every **mode** except *miscellaneous* (which may be expected,

given the category), only *explanation* and *qualified criticism* saw statistically significant variation between the groups. *Global explanation* comments were used more than expected with L2 writers, whereas *global qualified criticism* comments were used more with L1 writers (p ≤ .05). These results mirror what consultants intuitively felt about their comments. Olivia, for example, noted, "with ESL papers I find it kind of harder to talk about the global issues because I don't know the English proficiency of the student."

To summarize, though there were some disconnects between the **types** of response the participants thought they offered and what they offered, that difference was not necessarily significant. There was some difference, however, between the sorts of *global* comments offered to L1 versus L2 writers, and these seem to be the product of deliberate rhetorical decisions on the part of the consultants. In interviews, consultants indicated that they tended to feel more obligated to offer *explanation* to L2 writers (regardless of **type**) and felt more comfortable offering *qualified criticism* regarding global issues.

Differences in Focus of Comments

Given that the students submitting these papers requested assistance with some combination of grammar, clarity, and APA, an analysis of **focus** elicited some interesting results and demonstrated some deviation between the writers' requests and the consultants' responses. For example, *content* (L1 = 125, L2 = 58) and *format-style* (L1 = 75, L2 = 28) were addressed significantly (p ≤ .05) more with L1 writers than with L2 writers, while *correctness* (L1 = 57, L2 = 83) was addressed significantly more with L2 writers (p ≤ .01).

Although the prevalence of *correctness* and *style-format* comments correspond with requests for assistance with grammar and APA, *style-clarity* was addressed to a much lesser degree and evenly between the two groups of writers (L1 = 40, L2 = 35). *Style-genre* (L1 = 23, L2 = 20) and *organization* (L1 = 15, L2 = 11) showed a similar pattern of equal attention between L1 and L2 writers. While the prevalence of *correctness* and *style-format* is to be expected per the writer requests, *content* was the most frequently appearing **focus**. Similarly, *clarity-style* was clearly addressed far less frequently than might be expected given that it was a request of the writers.

However, in the interviews, participants acknowledged—and justified—occasional deviations from the requests. One consultant, Monica, noted in her interview that she tries to prioritize writer requests "unless there is … a more glaring issue that needs to be addressed." Another consultant, Olivia, goes into more detail:

> Olivia: I guess I comment on what I feel the student needs the most help with. So, I will still look for the things. Like if they wanted help with APA, I will still give them comments on the APA. I'm not just going to ignore[it] and be like "no you don't really need to worry about APA right now." But I'm still going to give them comments about those [other] things.

Later in the interview she argues for providing feedback beyond the requests made by the writer:

> Olivia: Because if I was that student and I just got help on APA but someone just skimmed it […] and I [thought I] had perfect APA, and then I turned it in and the professor found this like [other] huge thing wrong with it… or like my grammar was really messed up… or like my organization was totally off… and I turned it into the writing center and no one said anything to me, I'd be like "well, what the hell did I send it to the writing center for?"

In brief, consultants tended to **focus** on different areas than requested by the writer if they felt like the particular circumstances of the submission warranted it, and for the most part, these deviations were deliberate. However, there were significant differences in the **focus** of the feedback offered to L1 and L2 (*content* and *style-clarity* versus *correctness*, respectively) that were unaccounted for in the interviews.

Differences in Mode of Comments

Overall, each of the **modes** was used with both L1 and L2 writers, although they were not used in every paper or in the same ways. *Explanation* was by far the most common **mode**, accounting for almost 30% (174 of 597) of the total coded utterances. *Explanation's* frequency was followed by, in order of overall frequency, *questions* (157 total coded utterances, consisting of 93 *closed questions* and 64

open questions), *advice* (139 coded utterances), *qualified criticism* (41 coded utterances), and *recasts* (31 coded instances). The least frequently appearing **modes** included *criticism* (12 coded utterances, L1 = 8, L2 = 4), *commands* (13 coded utterances, L1 = 6, L2 = 7), and *praise* (20 coded utterances, L1 = 11, L2 = 9), none of which were used significantly differently between L1 and L2 writers.

A comparison of how these **modes** were used with L1 and L2 writers reveals that *recasts* were used significantly (p ≤ .05) more with L1 writers than with L2 writers, and used almost exclusively for addressing the **focus** of *correctness* (22 of 31 coded utterances). The other 9 utterances were used once or twice in each of the other **foci** with the exception of *content*, where *recasts* were never used. While the use of *recasts* with *correction* is expected, that they are used more with L1 writers than L2 writers is worth noting.

Qualified criticism was also used significantly (p ≤ .01) more with L1 writers than with L2 writers. However, how *qualified criticism* in regard to **focus** was used is almost as significant. L1 writers received *qualified criticism* significantly more (p ≤ .05) in comments related to *content*, whereas L2 writers received it significantly more (p ≤ .05) in comments related to *style-clarity*.

Questions in general (and both *closed* and *open questions*), were also used significantly (p ≤ .01) more with L1 writers than L2 writers. Indeed, *questions* were the most frequent **mode** for comments to L1 writers (L1 = 103 or 30% of total utterances, L2 = 54). Despite that disparity, *questions* were generally used in similar ways with both groups. Most *questions* (101 of 156) focused on content and the only significant (p ≤ .05) difference in use of *questions* with respect to **focus** was with *correctness*, when L2 writers were more likely to be asked a *question*.

Interviews with the consultants revealed that, at least with respect to questions, some of the choices were conscious ones. Both Ann and Monica directly stated that they commonly asked a lot of *questions* in online sessions, and Ann asserted that good online comments needed to have a balance of *open* and *closed questions*. Monica explained that asking *questions* was a way to work with papers on unfamiliar topics, or with papers that she had difficulty understanding. Consultants also appeared to agree on how they used

questions. Monica indicated that she tended to ask *questions* about *content* (e.g. "I don't really understand this as a reader. Could you explain this more?"), matching the pattern in the quantitative data. When asked what a comment about *content* would look like, Ann immediately went to *questions*: "I might ask a question. Start off with something like 'Oh this is an interesting idea… I wonder if it might be better suited for the first paragraph of the paper...'"

While *organization* was the **focus** that received the fewest number of comments (26) in the sessions overall, in the interviews participants indicated that it was something they emphasized and claimed that they used *questions* to facilitate those comments. For instance, Olivia noted that next to *content*, she was most likely to ask *questions* about *organization*. According to the quantitative data, however, this was not the case; the only *focus* to be addressed with *questions* fewer times than *organization* (6) was *style-genre* (5). That said, it is possible that a wider set of samples would provide different results.

With respect to using questions differently with L1 and L2 writers, Monica said she purposefully avoided asking L2 writers too many questions, fearing those questions might be unclear. She reported instead that she would make suggestions. In a follow-up interview she added that with L1 writers, a consultant can assume the writer will understand what she is asking; the same might not be the case with L2 writers. She also indicated that sometimes L2 writers specifically requested not to be asked questions.

> Monica: …we try to refrain from asking questions that might confuse non-native speakers. Sometimes we get suggestions from **non-native speakers that ask us to not ask them questions, as they're not sure what to do with them**… When I'm doing onlines for non-native speakers, I try to be more aware that they may not know the conventions of the English language like we do.

Explanation the most frequently used **mode** overall and the most frequent for L2 writers (L1 = 88 or 25% of total coded utterances, L2 = 86, or 35% of total coded utterances). While the difference in use between the groups was only marginally significant ($p \leq .05$) , the **foci** of the explanatory comments offer a more interesting picture. *Explanations* were primarily used to address *correctness* in L2 papers, accounting for 57% of the total explanatory

comments and just 23% in L1 papers; in L1 papers, *explanation* was primarily used to address *style-format*, accounting for 55% of total explanatory comments (as opposed to only 26% in L2 papers). The difference in **focus** is significant (p ≤ .01) for both cases.

Explanation was also the most frequent **mode** discussed in the interviews. Olivia stated that a "lack of explanation is something that would qualify [as] bad online comments," while Monica tied explanation more overtly to tutor training, saying that "one of the things we try to focus on… is to make sure that whenever we provide any suggestions… we try to give reasoning as to why that change should be made." Statements like these seem to indicate that consultants feel including *explanatio*n is important because it is emphasized in consultant training, but also because they feel it is an element of effective online commentary. Ann even went as far as to say that it is "her fault" if a student does not understand why she is commenting on an issue, resulting in her attempting to explain things multiple times and in different ways.

Each of the consultants also distinguished between how they use *explanation* differently for L1 and L2 writers, but only if they are certain of the writer's language status. Ann, for instance, pointed out that she might repeat a comment throughout the paper, but vary her own language or **modes**. Indeed, the consultants were clear that the writer's language status was a factor in their comments:

> Olivia: (after being asked why L2 writer's papers take longer) … I think that **explaining the grammar rules** using the language that's more appropriate for ESL, like, sometimes, things like introductory elements or whatever … With native speakers you can say, like, 'You need a comma here because what comes after it is a complete sentence' … Where, I feel like **I have to explain an introductory clause more to a non-native speaker.**

> Monica: (after being asked how to address working with an L2 writer who happens to struggle with grammar) … I try to think "well if I didn't know anything about English grammar, how would I want this explained to me" so it's kind of how I try to approach [it]… **more so than I would with a native English speaker.**

To summarize, *explanation* was the most frequently occurring mode. *Recast*, though used sparingly, was offered only to L1 writers. Questions and qualified criticism were used significantly more with L1 writers, and qualified criticism tended to focus more on content with L1 writers as opposed to style-clarity with L2 writers. Interviews indicated that participants were aware of the differences and that the differences occurred because of conscious rhetorical decisions.

Discussion

Overall, our findings confirm and extend those of Rafoth (2004) and Thonus (2004). The quantitative results show that consultants focused on many of the same areas observed by Rafoth (2004): grammar and punctuation (*correctness*), *content*, and *organization*. Other frequently addressed areas included *style-format*, *style-genre*, and *style-clarity*. Many of the same **modes** observed by Rafoth were also observed here, including *questions*, comments (*explanation*), suggestions (*advice*), and *corrections* (*recasts*), in addition to *qualified criticism*.

Of the **foci**, *content* and *correctness* were the most frequently addressed. This might be expected, since these two **foci** match up well with the division between surface issues and global issues that we found. *Correctness* was also a more common focus in L2 papers, whereas *content* was more common in L1 papers. However, as our results demonstrate, while *correctness* was addressed in both L1 and L2 papers, *explanation* was more frequently used as a **mode** to address *correctness* in L2 papers than L1 papers. *Recasts* were rarely used to address correctness in L2 papers, but were common in L1 papers. Regarding *content*, *qualified criticism* was used in comments to L1 but rarely used in comments to L2. Other combinations of mode/focus proved to be different between L1 and L2 papers, as described above.

These results echo the interactional differences between L1 and L2 sessions observed by Thonus (2004) in face-to-face sessions. Consultants used a different set of response strategies when working with L2 writers. Many of these seem to be conscious, rhetorical choices. For instance, the consultants in our study indicated that they clearly felt *explanation* was vital as a mode in working with L2 writers. Conversely, they felt that L1 writers do not need as much *explanation* about grammar mistakes, possibly explaining why *recast* appeared

only in responses to L1. However, many of the differences may not have been deliberate. To return to the example regarding *recasts*, none of the consultants endorsed recast, or indicated consciously using it with L1 writers exclusively as a strategy. Other differences emerging in the data were not ascribed to an articulated pedagogical approach. These unaccounted for differences include practices such as favoring *content* and *style-clarity* with L1 speakers as opposed to *correctness* with L2 speakers, and—perhaps more troubling—simply offering fewer comments to L2 writers. It may be the case that because the papers from L2 writers required more time, the consultants were unable to offer a fuller range of comments before the hour elapsed. That said, although Olivia hypothesized that that might be the reason why, the participants were surprised by the difference. Whatever the case may be, these results indicate that consultants are using one pattern of response when working with L2 writers and another when working with L1 writers, even if they are commenting on the same issues—sometimes purposively, and sometimes not.

It is possible that, given the small sample size of papers and consultants studied, that the differences in the sorts of feedback offered are due merely to the contingencies and needs of those particular papers. That said, the papers were a representative sample of online submissions chosen as randomly as our selection process would allow given our attempts to control for variation. Moreover, the sample of comments was large enough to yield statistically significant results when looking at expected outcomes. Thus, if the differences are not the result of particularities of a given paper, other explanations are needed.

Another potential explanation for the discrepancy between purposive strategies and unreflexive differences could be that the participants lacked clearly articulated approaches to working with L2 writers specifically online. These participants had received thorough training in each area, but these areas were not synthesized in training. The consultants' chief frame of reference for their online sessions was therefore either their face-to-face experiences with L2 writers or their more general online experiences. Accordingly, they then adapted approaches to each for this milieu. In instances where these are at odds, practice may be similarly confused. For example,

most of the literature for online tutoring stresses the importance employing nondirective strategies, but much of the recent literature on working with L2 writers indicates that such strategies may actually impede L2 writers' efficacy. As Thonus (2004) noted, the indirect methods of soliciting information preferred by writing center tutors (and generally used effectively in L1 sessions) were often confusing for L2 writers. Tutors in Thonus' (2004) study reported having to resort to more direct methods of feedback to ensure that they were understood, resulting in feelings of guilt stemming from an inability to use the indirect, Socratic methods prized by writing center pedagogy. This observation led Thonus (2004) to conclude that writing center tutors may require more fluid frames and a more flexible approach to giving feedback in L2 sessions. Accordingly, these frames need to be extended further—but made specific to—the needs of L2 writers in online milieus.

As asynchronous online writing center comments constitute a written genre, a genre-based approach may assist these consultants. That is, as a genre, online writing center comments are "centered not on the substance or form of discourse but on the action it is intended to accomplish" (Miller, 1984, p. 51). Overall, the consultant's purpose in working with L1 and L2 writers—both face-to-face and online—may be the same: to meaningfully intervene in the writer's process to alert them to potential audience reactions and ways to anticipate them. That said, the particular rhetorical exigencies of the L1 and L2 demographics (and, indeed, the individual writers within those demographics) may require different social action on the part of the consultants, and the different medium of delivery in online sessions requires a different approach than in face-to-face sessions. Unfortunately, as Devitt (2007) demonstrated, "writers use the genres they know when faced with a genre they do not know. These genres are not, in fact, transferable; they do not meet the needs of the situation fully" (p. 222). Accordingly, the discrepancy between practice and assumptions may be the result of drawing on genre repertoires that were insufficient to consistently address the social action required of the online sessions with L2 writers. As we will discuss in the conclusion, the study thus raises several implications for tutor training and approaches.

Although the data revealed significant differences between responses to L1 and L2 writers, those differences did not necessarily demonstrate a difference in terms of directiveness. In fact, although utterances were not specifically coded as directive or nondirective, **modes** that could be considered overtly directive such as *recasts* (31 total utterances, 22 on L1 papers, 9 on L2 papers) and *commands* (13 total utterances, 6 on L1 papers, 7 on L2 papers) were used infrequently compared to other **modes**. Only *criticism* (12 total utterances) and *praise* (20 total utterances) appeared with comparable frequency. Of these, only *recasts* were used demonstrably differently, with far more used with L1 speakers. In short, our study seems to refute Honeycutt's (2001) claim that "asynchronous media tend to produce more directive comments" while synchronous sessions produce "a greater amount of personal and collaborative involvement between participants" (p. 54). In the interviews, participants expressed concern with fostering collaboration in the sessions and pointed to specific practices for facilitating it, despite the chronal limitations of the asynchronous medium. Granted, some of Honeycutt's (2001) claim is likely bound up in the limitations of the technology of the time as well as the then-novelty of the subject. Though practitioners may intuit the back-and-forth real-time affordances of face-to-face sessions as lending themselves more naturally to global concerns, asynchronous sessions are not necessarily limited to directive comments or surface issues—nor are these sessions defined by these concerns or approaches.

Conclusion

These data raise several questions about training for asynchronous online consulting at this writing center. For instance, if consultants use different patterns of response for sessions with L2 writers, should this be accounted for in online training? A better-defined set of strategies and expectations for working with L2 writers online may help consultants to feel less pressure to provide frequent explanations. However, as Thonus (2004) suggests, better-defined strategies for working with L2 writers online could turn into "another orthodox set of frames" (p. 240) to which consultants feel they must adhere.

Alternatively, Thonus (2004) stated that she used information about the interactional differences she observed to show consultants "what is"—that is, what happens in sessions with L2 and L1 writers and what the differences are. After being informed of the results of this study, Monica reported that what surprised her about her comments prompted her to reflect on why she commented the way she did:

> Monica: I think the main thing that surprised me here was the fact that native speakers did receive more comments, as I would think that it would be other the way around. However, thinking about it, it might be because we try to refrain from asking questions that might confuse the non-native speakers.

Perhaps these data can also be used in online training to show consultants "what is" with the hope that doing so will help them to become more reflective practitioners. In this case, knowing what patterns of response have been observed may help them adapt their response strategies more effectively. Such an approach mirrors Devitt's (2014) description of genre awareness pedagogy, which "treats genres as meaningful social actions, with formal features as the visible traces of shared perceptions. Analyzing the contexts and features of a new genre provides an inroad to understanding all genres" (p. 152). In other words, rather than prescribing the sorts of generic features that often appear in a given online session with L2 writers, online training programs should encourage consultants to consider the contexts and perceptions that lead to those features, noting patterns and theorizing on what those patterns indicate about the situations. Such an approach, as Devitt asserts, "teaches metacognitive reflection and explicitly discourages formulaic writing." (2014, p. 153). In short, a genre awareness approach to tutor training emphasizing the social action accomplished in online sessions in general, with L2 writers in face-to-face sessions, and in sessions online with L2 writers may help consultants to see "what is."

Finally, although this study has some implications for online training, we acknowledge that different patterns of response may be observed at writing centers that use a different approach to asynchronous online consulting or subscribe to different pedagogical

values in their training program. We also concede that this study was exploratory: while statistical differences appeared in the sheer number of discrete comments and utterances, there was not a large enough sample to produce generalizable results. A larger study using these methods might produce generalizations with a broader scope. Still, we assert that this study has considerable implications for both tutor training and future research.

Future research in this area could seek to further investigate some of the complexities in online commentary described here. Discussion on indirective and directive modes in online sessions will undoubtedly continue, but it may be more useful for researchers and practitioners to focus more on the actual patterns of response than on perceptions or normative definitions of directiveness. If general patterns of response for L1 writers and L2 writers are different, as suggested here, encouraging consultants to avoid being direct in all online sessions may not be completely beneficial for either the consultants or for the L2 writers in these sessions. As shown above, consultants in this study had a tendency to use the most directive modes (recasts) with L1 writers, who may—compared to L2 writers—have an easier time applying indirect comments. It may be constructive, then, to further consider what differences in response may exist in L2 and L1 online sessions, and systematically investigate how L2 writers apply online feedback to see if non-directive modes such as explanation produce effective, helpful comments.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Online comment codes
TYPE of comment

Global (g): Is the comment addressing major issues with "content, focus, organization, point of view [or] tone?" (Ryan & Zimmerelli 2010 p. 9)

> *"I might include a bit more information here."*
> *"I feel that this paragraph addresses several subjects. Could this be made into separate paragraphs?"*
> *"I add a bit more to this thesis so it reflects what the rest of the paper is about."*

Surface (s): Is this comment addressing issues in an individual sentence? Does it cover things such as clarity, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, or citation?

> *"I'm not sure if this word would be needed here."*
> *"When connecting two complete sentences with a coordinating conjunction, a comma must be used."*

Meta-textual (met-txt): Is the comment referring to a non-rhetorical aspect of the session or text, or offering a description of what a consultant will do during the session (e.g. opening and closing comments)?

> *"This document seems like it isn't appearing correctly on my computer. Is this a formatting issue?"*
> *"I'll comment on things like organization, clarity, and APA style."*

FOCUS: What is the comment about?

Correctness (cor): Is the comment correcting an <u>error</u>, such as those that could be found in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or writing mechanics?

> *"Since this is a proper noun, it should be capitalized."*
> *"The period should come after the parentheses in this in text citation."*
> *"This should be 'their' instead of 'there.'"*

Organization (org): Is the comment making a suggestion that results in changing the organization of the paper?

"I think this sentence could be moved to the beginning of the paragraph."
"This information might fit better in the previous section."
"I like this introduction. It prepares the reader for the rest of the paper."

Content (cnt): Does the comment suggest adding content, point out a lack of content, or interact with the content?

"Could a bit more explanation be given here?"
"I might also add a bit more about this subject, so readers understand what it is."
"This is so true, isn't it? :)"

Style: Does the comment fit one of these uses of "style?"

- **style-clarity:** Is the comment on an issue with clarity, such as sentence structure or word choice?
  "I feel like the word 'issue' doesn't really accurately capture the meaning. What about 'altercation?'"
- **style-format:** Is the comment on an issue that is a matter of formatting style, such as APA or MLA?
  "In APA, page numbers are also required after direct quotations."
- **style-genre:** Does the comment address an issue related to the conventions of the written genre, such as informal speech or contractions?
  "Generally 'you' is not used in academic writing as it can be seen as informal."

MODE: *How* does the comment communicate the focus?

Advice (ad): Is the comment phrased as advice from the perspective of the consultant?

"I might add a bit about this subject."
"I would probably move this sentence to the start of the paragraph."
"I don't think this would need to be capitalized."

Questions: Is the comment addressing the focus by asking a question?

- **Closed Question (qst-clsd):** Can the question be answered with "yes" or "no"?
  "Is this the right word here?"

"Could more detail be added to this section?"

- **Open Question (qst-op):** Does the question ask for a more detailed response?

   "Is there anything else readers need to know about sociocultural theory?"

   "I might change this wording a bit to make this more clear. How else could this be worded?"

Explanation (exp): Does the comment explain why something should be included, but does not make a direct suggestion to include it?

   "Usually the year is also included in APA in text citations."

   "Contractions are not used in academic writing."

   "Usually a comma would be used after the third item in a list."

Praise (prs): Does the comment praise the student or the content of the paper?

   "I like that this transition refers back to the content in the last paragraph."

   "This is a convincing statistic."

Command (cmnd): Does the comment make a specific suggestion, but phrases it as an imperative?

   "Put a comma here."

   "Add more detail."

Criticism (crit): Does the comment point out an issue, but offers no specific suggestion?

   "Awkward."

   "This is a comma splice."

Qualified Criticism (q-crit): Does the comment point out an issue without offering a specific suggestion, but uses qualifiers (i.e. 'softens the blow' of the criticism)?

   "As a reader, I'm not following this point."

   "This paragraph seems a bit out of place."

Recast (rcst): Does the comment offer no explanation, suggestion, or acknowledgment of the specific issue, but simply offers a corrected version of the text?

   [From "these is an important point to consider"] "this is'"

   [From "I had know about this issue"] "I had known"

Miscellaneous (misc): Does the comment contain a feature that is not covered by any of the above codes? If the miscellaneous code is used, the comment feature classified as miscellaneous must be analyzed separately to determine its role in the comment and why it does not fit with any of the other codes.

Appendix B: Interview Script

- How often would you say you work on online submissions? Do you enjoy doing online submissions? Why or why not? What types of onlines (graduate level vs. undergraduate level) do you typically work with? What type is your favorite? Why do you enjoy this type?

- In your opinion, what distinguishes 'good' online commentary from 'bad' online commentary? What would you say are the most common issues that you address in online submissions? What are your common strategies for correcting these issues or offering suggestions? Can you describe an example?

- On the submission form that is attached to every online submission, what is the most important information you use in an online session and why? Can you describe in detail how you used this information?

- In your opinion, do you focus more on global issues, or surface issues? Are there any cases where your focus is different? What types of things do you usually say to address these issues? Do you address the other type of issue differently? How so? Can you describe an example of an instance when you did not use this approach? How did you decide which approach to use?

- When working on a submission, can you tell if you're working with a non-native English speaker? How? Do you comment differently while working with non-native English speakers? Why? If so, can you describe a time when you did this? What are the differences?

- If writers request several areas for feedback, how do you decide which to comment on? Do you comment differently on the different areas writers request? For example, are comments for grammar vs. content different? What would you say the differences are? How do you decide how to comment?

Effects of Mental Health on Student Learning

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Abstract

Learning can be hindered by students' mental health. Given the increased reports of mental health concerns among college students, it is imperative that we understand how best to provide supports to this population to help them learn and succeed. This is particularly significant given the body of research that demonstrates how mental illness may negatively affect student success and degree persistence. In order to best serve this growing population, there are possible supports that can be provided in the classroom embedded into current practices and learning opportunities for all students across the board. This article addresses the connections between learning and mental health, practical takeaways for practitioners, and directions for future research.

Effects of Mental Health on Student Learning

Mental health, although not a new concern, has become increasingly acceptable to discuss in recent years. A growing body of research about college students' mental health concerns underlines the need for educators to consider how mental health might affect students and what courses of action are available. This is imperative given how mental illness may hinder student success (Breslau, Lane, Sampson, & Kessler, 2008; Cranford, Eisenberg, & Serras, 2009; Elion, Wang, Slaney, & French, 2012; Keyes, Eisenberg, Perry, Dube, Kroenke, & Dhingra, 2012; Thompson, Connely, Thomas-Jones, & Eggert, 2013). Even though mental health supports exist on many campuses, research shows that these are often insufficient to meet the demands of the student population (Reetz, Barr, & Krylowicz, 2013; Novotney, 2014).

No research exists on the connection between students in developmental education and mental health; this is problematic given the rising numbers of college students reporting mental health concerns, something that may hinder the success of students placed into developmental education. Nonetheless, there exist links between learning and mental health that should be explored in detail to better understand how instruction can benefit students with mental illness.

There are learning-related supports, such as metacognition, that can be taught in classrooms. This large construct encompasses skills, processes, and awareness related to how one thinks (Dinsmore, Alexander, & Loughlin, 2008; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). By learning how to understand how one's mind works, it is possible that students experiencing issues of mental health could benefit from learning strategies and theories that integrate metacognition (Miller & Markman, 2007; Park, Edmondson, & Lee, 2012; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Van Nguyen, Laohasiriwong, Saengsuwan, Thinkhamrop, & Wright, 2015; Walker, Wingate, Obasi, & Joiner, 2008). For instance, building metacognitive awareness could be part of learning about one's learner characteristics, one's learning orientation, and self-regulation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Dinsmore et al., 2008; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). Each of these presents a possible way for students who struggle with mental health to build better coping strategies.

Before examining how learning theory can be implemented to benefit college students with mental health concerns, it is important to understand the impetus behind this area of research. To build such a foundation, the present condition of mental health in postsecondary institutions will be explicated. Then, phenomena related to the interaction between mental health and college demands will be explored, potential solutions for educators will be discussed, and suggestions for future research will be presented.

The State of Mental Health in Colleges

Postsecondary students are reporting a variety of mental health concerns (American College Health Association, 2014; Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2013; Novotney, 2014). As shown in Table 1, anywhere from 1.3% to 92% of a random sample of college

students reported some kind of mental health concern during the spring semester of 2014 (American College Health Association, 2014). Of most concern might be the percentage of students who report feeling hopeless, overwhelmed (with or without anxiety), and so depressed they struggle to function; these numbers represent the most commonly studied mental illnesses in college students: depression and anxiety (Breslau et al., 2008; Castro & Rice, 2003; Cranford, Eisenberg, Serra, 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Gnilka et al., 2013; Hamdi & Iacono, 2014; Schrick, et al., 2012; Serras et al., 2010).

Table 1
College Students' Self-reported Mental Health Symptoms

Variable[a]	Male (%)	Female (%)
Hopelessness	40.1	51.5
Feeling overwhelmed	77.7	92.0
Very lonely	52.2	64.7
Very sad	52.8	68.4
Difficulty functioning due to depression	28.0	35.6
Overwhelming anxiety	42.4	60.9
Considered suicide	7.9	8.8
Attempted suicide	1.3	1.4
Engaged in SIB[b]	4.6	8.0

Note. Data represent a random sample of undergraduates from 140 schools. $N = 66,887$. Adapted from "Undergraduate Reference Group Executive Summary: Spring 2014," by American College Health Association, 2014. [a]Self-reported as present within the past 12 months. [b]Self-injurious behavior.

According to reports by the American College Health Association (ACHA), Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH), and the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD), statistics such as these have been steadily increasing (Novotney, 2014). As more postsecondary students grapple with mental health concerns, greater demands are placed on campus services, particularly counseling services; in 2013, AUCCCD reported that approximately one third of surveyed counseling centers needed waiting lists due to the volume of students seeking services

(Reetz, Bar, & Krylowicz, 2014). According to the CCMH 2013 report, college students receiving on-campus counseling attended an average of five appointments. Across the 132 institutions of higher education surveyed, this added up to approximately 350,000 total individual counseling appointments (CCMH, 2013), something that doesn't indicate a necessarily overwhelming number of appointments per counseling center, but the impetus behind the need for wait lists still remains. Data from AUCCCD and CCMH emphasize the need for campus mental health services to address the increasing needs of students.

Table 2

College Students' Self-reported Mental Health Diagnoses

Variable[a]	Male (%)	Female (%)
Anxiety	7.8	17.4
Bipolar Disorder	1.3	1.5
Depression	7.5	14.2
Insomnia	3.0	4.3
Panic Attacks	3.2	8.7
Schizophrenia	0.4	0.1
Depression and Anxiety	4.7	10.4

Note. Data represent a random sample of undergraduates from 140 schools. $N = 66,887$. Adapted from "Undergraduate Reference Group Executive Summary: Spring 2014," by American College Health Association, 2014.
[a]Self-reported as present within the past 12 months.

As seen in Table 2, ACHA's spring 2014 report of students' self-reported mental health diagnoses demonstrates the prevalence of anxiety and depression: 4.7% of males and 10.4% of females reported a diagnosis of both anxiety and depression (ACHA, 2014). This equates almost 10,100 college students diagnosed within the calendar year prior to spring semester 2014 (ACHA, 2014), a number that is staggering when considering the N of 66,887 students does not even begin to represent how many college students might be diagnosed in a given year across the nation. In addition, the CCMH 2013 report showed increasing numbers of college students reporting having attended counseling, taken medication, or been hospitalized

for mental health concerns between the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 academic years. They also found an increase across reported self-injurious behavior, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts (CCMH, 2013). Most notably, there was an 6.5% increase in suicide ideation (CCMH, 2013). Data from CCMH (2013) also indicates a smaller increase in suicide attempt (from 7.9% to 8.8%) and self-injurious behavior (21.8% to 23.2%). Although these increases are marginal, they still demonstrate a steady rise in suicide attempts and self-injurious behavior in college students, something that should be mediated as these are serious issues. The full complement of data is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
College Students' Self-reported Mental Health Concerns

	2010-2011 (%)	2012-2013 (%)	% increase
Attended counseling[a]	45.2	48.7	3.5
Taken medication[a]	31.0	32.9	1.9
Hospitalized[a]	7.0	10.3	3.3
SIB[b] without suicidal intent	21.8	23.2	1.4
Suicide ideation	23.8	30.3	6.5
Suicide attempt	7.9	8.8	0.8

Note. Data for the 2010-2011 academic year represent a sample of 97 institutions with 82,611 counseling clients; 2012-2013 data represent a sample of 132 institutions with 95,109 counseling clients. Adapted from "Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2013 Annual Report," by Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2013.
[a]These items are specifically for mental health concerns. [b]Self-injurious behavior.

Mental Health and Academic Success

Mental illness has been found to relate to decreased academic success and degree completion (Breslau et al., 2008; Cranford et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Keyes et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013). The most frequently studied mental illnesses studied in connection to academic success are depression and anxiety, often as mediated by perfectionism, meaning there is an interaction between types of

perfectionism, depression, and anxiety. The following section will address these issues in females; it is worth noting that the extant literature has not explored this issue in males.

Depression, anxiety, and perfectionism in women

Perfectionism, defined in a multitude of ways, may lead to both depression and anxiety in women of all ethnic/racial groups who attend college (Castro & Rice, 2003; Elion et al., 2012; Gnilka, Ashby, & Noble, 2013; Schrick, Sharp, Zvonkovic, & Reifman, 2012; Walker, Wingate, Obasi, & Joiner, 2008). Although women across ethnicities and races may feel pressure—either internal or external—to present perfectionism, the co-occurrence of perfectionism and depression or anxiety varies among these groups (Castro & Rice, 2003; Elion et al., 2012; Gnilka et al., 2013; Schrick et al., 2012; Stoeber et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2008). In particular, African-American and Asian-American women tend towards maladaptive perfectionism at greater rates than European-American women (Castro & Rice, 2003; Elion et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2008).

Maladaptive perfectionism, the reluctance or inability to accept that one cannot always achieve perfection, relates to depression and suicide ideation in African-American women in connection with acculturative stress, something facing racial/ethnic minorities who have to balance home culture with academic (i.e., more White) culture (Elion et al, 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2013; Walker et al., 2008). For both African-American and Asian-American women, maladaptive perfectionism relates to depression and suicide ideation in connection with desire to please others such as family members (Castro & Rice, 2003). These findings have additionally been linked to lower engagement and academic performance as measured by GPA (Castro & Rice, 2003; Elion et al., 2012; Gnilka et al., 2013; Renshaw & Cohen, 2014; Schrick et al., 2012; Stoeber et al., 2014).

Although these measures do not capture the nuance of the participants' educational experiences, they are indicative of the potential issues a subpopulation of female students could encounter. Concerning maladaptive perfectionism in particular, links can be drawn to learning theory via learner characteristics and attribution theory, here referring to what variables students attribute their success or lack thereof to. A student's learner characteristics include

variables such as intelligence, learning ability, interest, and stress and time management (Bransford, as cited by Holschuh, n.d.; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014); it can be posited that maladaptive perfectionists may exhibit low interest in the face of academic adversity, as this is a common symptom of mental illnesses like depression, as well as poor stress and time management skills (Miller & Markham, 2007; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015).

Another component that could function to benefit or be detrimental to student learning and success is attribution theory, which includes part of learner characteristics (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Holschuh, Nist, & Olejnik, 2001; Zimmerman, 2012). Attribution theory explains the steps involved in students' attributions for their relative academic success; those who attribute their success or failure to external, uncontrollable forces, such as teachers or luck instead of individual effort and ability, are less likely to strive either to master material or perform well (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Holschuh et al., 2001). Maladaptive perfectionists, through their pursuit of an appearance of complete control and success (Castro & Rice, 2003; Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Gnilka, Ashby, & Noble, 2013; Schrick et al., 2012; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Stoeber et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2008), seem unlikely to have a mastery learning orientation, as this requires a student to wish to improve regardless of grade (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Zimmerman, 2012). The learning orientation perhaps seen most predominantly in these students is performance approach (i.e., learning to perform well on assignments, not learning to master a subject), although this has not been investigated. Performance approach could apply because students with this orientation strive to prove themselves academically to others (i.e., in order to impress); adding to the outward appearance of perfection could explain this approach to learning (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Zimmerman, 2012).

Self-regulation as part of the college transition

Self-regulatory skills, processes one can use to work towards a goal (e.g., behavioral, cognitive, metacognitive), can be applied inside and outside of the classroom, much like metacognitive awareness of learner characteristics and learning orientations (Dinsmore et al., 2008; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). In theory, if students

build self-regulatory skills and use them strategically, they will learn more optimally and experience greater success than if they did not self-regulate; researchers have investigated how self-regulation relates to college student mental health and college adjustment (Belch, 2011; Crocker et al., 2009; Miller & Markman, 2007; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Zimmerman, 2012). Although results haven't been identical across studies given the varying research questions and designs, there is an indication that the use of self-regulatory skills assists in both areas (Belch, 2011; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015).

For example, Van Nguyen, Laohasiriwong, Saengsuwan, Thinkhamrop, and Wright (2015) found a statistically significant negative correlation between depression and student self-efficacy, help-seeking, and metacognitive awareness regarding optimal study times and areas. It is possible, though not definitive, to draw the conclusion that self-regulatory skills are beneficial to student mental health when implemented (Crocker et al., 2009; Miller & Markman, 2007; Park et al, 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015). A similar conclusion regarding successful transition to college can be drawn from Park, Edmondson, and Lee's (2012) study, as they found a statistically significant correlation between use of self-regulatory processes and adjustment to college, here defined as positive mental health (e.g., low levels of stress or anxiety, high self-esteem, no issues with academic performance) maintained over the first year of college.

Given that self-regulation comprises using forethought (e.g., setting goals), self-observation, and self-reflection (Dinsmore et al., 2008; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012), it is not surprising that these skills are important to a successful transition to college. All students, not limited to those with mental health concerns, can benefit from application of these self-regulatory skills, particularly as it relates to their stress, time management, and ability to be flexible to meet the demands of varying situations (Bransford, as cited by Holschuh, n.d.; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Park et al., 2012; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Zimmerman, 2012). These skills can be used to succeed in academics as a way of making the learning process active, effective, and continual (Bransford, as cited by Holschuh, n.d.; Nist &

Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). If applied outside of the classroom—to situations like those students with mental illness might face, such as building a positive self-image—self-regulatory processes could prove fruitful in managing everyday concerns that could interfere with learning (Belch, 2011; Crocker et al., 2009; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015).

Uniting Learning Theory and Mental Health: Suggestions for Practice

In and of itself, mental health issues cannot be eradicated; college students will likely continue to encounter some kind of mental illness, diagnosed, undiagnosed, long-term, or temporary (ACHA, 2014; Belch, 2011; Breslau et al., 2008; CCMH, 2013; Novotney, 2014; Reetz et al., 2014). Given its prevalence in college student populations, student mental illness is a problem educators may need to be prepared to face, and strategically integrating learning strategies and theories into the classroom may provide students with some tools they can use (Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Miller & Markman, 2007; Park et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2013; Van Nguyen, 2015; Walker et al., 2008). This learning process will require will and effort on the part of the student as well as the educator (Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012). If students can learn these strategies, transfer them from academic to nonacademic (i.e., mental illness-related) settings, and adapt them to specific situations, they have the ability to apply learning theory to learning about and understanding themselves as well as flexible tools for students to use in the classroom (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, 2000; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012).

The overarching theme within the myriad theories and strategies students can use to ameliorate the effects of mental illness on academic performance is metacognition (Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Renshaw & Cohen, 2014; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Park et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2008). Coming to understand one's learner characteristics and orientation alongside how to self-regulate learning all involve a requisite amount of self-awareness: all three necessitate

attention to the self, particularly how one functions and thinks (Dinsmore et al., 2008; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Muis & Franco, 2009a, 2009b; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). This forms a starting point for teaching transferrable (i.e., academic to the academic/mental health interaction), flexible skills to students. Metacognitive awareness, however, seems most promising as a way to improve how students experience mental illness across various settings when metacognition becomes one part of a larger picture of learning and self-management strategies (Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2008). Regardless of the approach, it is imperative that instructors are explicit in their explanations of how self-regulatory and metacognitive skills can transfer from academic to nonacademic contexts.

The Role of Metacognitive Awareness in Learning and Mental Health

Metacognitive awareness, thinking about one's thinking, undergirds all of these learning strategies (Committee, 2000; Dinsmore et al., 2008; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Flavell, as cited by Dinsmore et al., 2008; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). Because it encompasses awareness of oneself, how one's mind works, and what strategies work best for that individual (Muis & Franco, 2009a, 2009b; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012), metacognition is a prime example of a potential strategy applicable to the issue of college students experiencing mental illness and their learning processes. If the information is delivered in a not-heavily-contextualized manner, students can be shown the possibility of how it can apply to their everyday lives and potentially make that cognitive transfer (Committee, 2000; Zimmerman, 2012).

If students with mental health concerns are able to transfer metacognitive skills to their everyday lives, they have tools to both assist them in academics and their personal lives (Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Park et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman et al., 2013; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2008). This depends upon two conditions: (a) effective instruction about

metacognition and (b) students' likelihood of applying it outside of academic contexts (Committee, 2000; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012).

Effective instruction in learning theories or strategies such as metacognitive skills requires that both the instructor and student take an active approach towards the material (Pintrich, 2012). Such instruction should be explicit—explicating what metacognition is and how students can use it in different situations (Committee, 2000; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). It should also be conducive to students' development of transferability of knowledge to other contexts like the everyday (Committee, 2000). In order to accomplish this, instructors likely need to demonstrate how metacognition applies across situations because students might not make the cognitive leap themselves as novice learners (Committee, 2000; Muis & Franco, 2009a, 2009b; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). This practice should further assist students in the transfer process because of its lack of precise context; when information is too highly contextualized, students are less likely to be able to transfer it to or modify it for different situations (Committee, 2000; Muis & Franco, 2009a, 2009b; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012).

Part of this explicit instruction in transferring the strategy could be how it applies to common issues like stress. Given the stigma attached to and the sensitive nature of mental illness, it would be desirable to couch its applicability in terms of a symptom all students experience: stress. Again, to keep the idea of flexibility open, this application would need to be presented as one use, not the definitive use (Committee, 2000).

If applied in mental health contexts, students' metacognitive awareness could assist them in seeing their learner characteristics, their learning orientations, and their self-regulatory skills (Belch, 2011; Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Park et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2013; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Walker et al., 2008; Van Nguyen, 2015). This could be the first step towards effecting change in one's approach to learning and functioning optimally in the context of experiencing mental illness. Students could come to define their learner characteristics through careful

observation and reflection, particularly time and stress management, perhaps leading them to consider whether these characteristics are changeable as well as how they could be changed (Belch, 2011; Crocker et al., 2009; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Holschuh, Nist, & Olejnik, 2001; Miller & Markman, 2007; Moore, 2007; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). If students are able to apply these theories to their mental health concerns, it seems possible they could discover the importance of help-seeking in this situation, perhaps leading them to utilize campus resources (Belch, 2011; Crocker et al., 2009; Miller & Markman, 2007; Park et al., 2012; Van Nguyen et al., 2015; Zimmerman, 2012). Use of metacognitive awareness could also provoke student thought about how college students with mental illness view themselves. By considering one's personal characteristics and autonomy or agency in creating change in them, perhaps a belief in agency could be sparked (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Moore, 2007; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012).

Furthermore, when viewed in both academic and nonacademic contexts, examining one's learner characteristics could form a bridge to discussing and evaluating one's learning orientation. In the case of perceived need for perfectionism among women (Elion et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2013; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Walker et al., 2008), the learning orientations present are likely performance approach in maladaptive perfectionists and mastery approach in adaptive perfectionists (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Zimmerman, 2012). Maladaptive perfectionists seem less apt to modify their behaviors in response to adversity, thus they may strive to succeed because they want validation (Crocker et al., 2009; Elion et al., 2012; Polanco-Roman & Miranda, 2013; Walker et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2012). This means students who are maladaptive perfectionists are more likely to take a performance approach in the classroom, seeking only to impress and perform well, whereas adaptive perfectionists are more apt to adapt their learning strategies with a goal of mastery learning. The key here is that adaptive perfectionists, as opposed to maladaptive perfectionists, are more likely to engage in deeper learning.

As with learner characteristics, learning orientations should be

discussed in detail to foster internalizing the concept (Committee, 2000; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). Individual orientations could be defined and accompanied by general characteristics and/or a scenario to provide a general basis for talking about learning orientations. It would be desirable to ask students to spend time reflecting, perhaps with guided questions, on their learning orientations (Committee, 2000; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Pintrich, 2004, 2012; Zimmerman, 2012). A potentially effective tool to deepen students' required thinking and application could be asking students to consider if/where their learning orientations differ. This could demonstrate how context informs learning approaches. If internalized and transferred from a classroom to everyday situation, being aware of how one approaches learning could influence maladaptive perfectionists to consider their learning orientations and perhaps how and when they are beneficial or detrimental (Committee, 2000; Crocker et al., 2009; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Elion et al., 2012; Holschuh et al., 2001; Moore, 2007; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Sironic & Reeve, 2012; Walker et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2012).

A larger system encompassing the two previous constructs is self-regulation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2012). Both learner characteristics and learning orientations fall under the forethought phase of self-regulated learning as defined by Zimmerman (2012). Zimmerman's forethought phase includes the construct "learning goal orientation" (p. 221), another way of phrasing how one approaches learning (e.g., as a performance-approach or mastery-approach student). It also includes students' beliefs about their self-efficacy, what their performance outcome will be, and their interest level for the task at hand, which are components of learner characteristics (Bransford, as cited by Holschuh, n.d.; Nist & Holschuh, 2012; Nist-Olejnik & Holschuh, 2014; Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2012).

Recommendations for Research

Although literature exists where researchers have explored the link between mental health and college performance, more investigation is needed because this is not a curable issue that will disappear. College student mental health will likely remain part of the conversation about the challenges that students face. Some

researchers actively seek approaches to ameliorate the problems posed by mental illness from an institutional or cultural approach but not from a learning-centered approach. Educators and students alike could benefit from additional research in terms of how to present solutions inside the classroom.

Because of the chance that mental illness will extend beyond one semester, assuming the individual has successfully internalized and integrated what they learned about learning outside of the classroom, it would benefit all parties if longitudinal research was conducted. This could explore how well the strategies taught are retained and used by students in nonacademic settings. Conducting such research would serve two purposes: to evaluate the efficacy of teaching how these metacognitive skills apply outside of class and to investigate how long the strategies are retained and whether they're successfully applied.

Before recommending that instructors across the board implement learning theory instruction aimed at transferring knowledge to outside-of-school situations, it would be necessary to test the hypothesis that such knowledge is being transferred and applied. If the tools presented to students experiencing mental illness are not being used, then instruction would need to be recalibrated and its effects researched again.

Then, if the reliability and validity of the instruction was established, it would be desirable to examine its effects over multiple semesters, perhaps starting with the first year of college. During the first year, students may need to make substantial adjustments to succeed (Belch, 2011; Park et al., 2012). Teaching and researching the efficacy of metacognitive awareness as applied to mental health could provide insight into how learning theory can be used to help students function and develop in the nonacademic realm as well as in the classroom.

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Planning for Program Design and Assessment Using Value Creation Frameworks

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As learning centers consider the design and assessment of their programs, they develop learning outcomes for the students who use their services and develop assessment plans that articulate how they will measure student learning and program effectiveness. This often means that assessment data and program outcomes are the primary concern.

A more encompassing approach to the program design process begins with considering the student experience and what students gain after utilizing learning center services. For example, increased student confidence may be named as a desired outcome. This outcome can be achieved as a result of guiding student development of effective skills for succeeding in challenging learning environments. So while program staff may assess for the outcome of increased confidence, the planning process should design learning and training experiences for potential impact. Articulating the purpose of the program before recognizing the desired outcomes ensures that all aspects of the program are connected and work together to bring value to students and to the institution as a whole.

This article explains a program design and planning process using the Value Creation Framework (VCF) developed by Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011). The framework involves identifying types of value or benefit for those involved in the program, conditions and activities that support creation of that value, data that measure whether the value was created, as well as strategic effect of that value for individuals and the institution. This article explains how we used the VCF to re-design and plan assessment for our learning center area. Our goal in articulating our process is to provide a tool that others can use in their contexts while showcasing a new

perspective on how to approach program design and assessment.

Institutional Context

We in the Course Support Programs unit of the Westmoreland Academic Success Center (ASC) at Clemson University recently found ourselves at a juncture in the history of our programs. Since the ASC's inception in 2001, the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program and the tutoring program operated as separate units, with the coordinators holding parallel and equal positions on the organizational chart. In March 2016, as part of the ASC's reorganization, SI and tutoring became their own Course Support Programs unit, with a new position of assistant director established to coordinate these services. Over the following year, the new assistant director hired assistant coordinators for tutoring and for the reshaped and renamed SI program, now known as Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL). The desire to increase collaboration between the two areas and train the peer leaders together where the content of their practices overlap motivated the combination of these services.

With this new approach to services and new staff in place, the unit needed a tool to help us think about the services, how they interrelate, and how aspects of each service shape the impact on student learning, both for peer leaders and participants.

The PAL program organizes its 130 peer leaders into 10 communities of practice, each with a peer mentor. Communities of practice are "learning partnership[s] among people who find it useful to learn from and with each other about a particular domain" (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011, p. 9). We organized into communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) to support the ongoing training and leadership development of peer leaders. In their communities, peer leaders identify and engage in projects or inquiry to become better facilitators of collaborative study sessions. Additionally, the tutoring program is moving towards a community of practice approach as well, and will organize its 65 peer tutors into clusters, each facilitated by a peer mentor. Tutors and PAL leaders participate in 8-10 hours of initial training before the semester begins. The peer leaders also enroll in a one-credit course (pass/no pass) in which they integrate into their practice what they

learn in training. The Entangled Learning model guides their learning process (Whisler & Treuer, 2017; Whisler, Makos, & Anderson, 2017). The tutoring program has level three certification from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), and level three training will also be available for experienced PAL leaders who want to advance their conceptual understanding and improve their skills. Integrating the PAL and tutoring programs in this way creates a complex system that introduces multiple considerations as we move toward a cohesive mission and vision for our unit. We knew that re-designing and planning the execution and delivery of our services would require a blueprint that would help us lay out our vision and construct our implementation.

CLADEA Literature on Program Planning and Assessment

The literature on program planning for academic support is sparse. Searches of the journals published by member organizations of the Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations (CLADEA) uncovered one article that addresses program planning (Elifson, Pounds, & Stone, 1995). Assessment received more attention. One article discussed the value of conducting needs assessment (Payne, Hodges, & Hernandez, 2017). Two articles addressed overall assessment of a learning center (Trammell, 2005; Berkopes, & Abshire, 2016). Numerous articles in these journals described approaches to assessing a particular service area or of the effect of that area on aspects of student learning (Hendriksen & Yang, 2005; Frost & Braun, 2006; Cooper, 2010; Bell & Frost, 2012; Bruch & Reynolds, 2012; Fullmer, 2012; Price, Lumpkin, Seemann, & Bell, 2012; Ticknor, Shaw, & Howard, 2014; Riodi, 2016). Assessment of SI and PAL programs predominantly appeared elsewhere in the professional literature besides in CLADEA member organizations' publications, such as in the *Journal of Peer Learning.* Articles also discussed assessment of student learning or of the effectiveness of learning strategies courses (Boysen & McGuire, 2005; Norton, 2006; Bail, Zhang, & Tachiyama, 2008; Burchard, & Swerdzewski, 2009). However, this literature did not consider purpose-driven program design in its approach to planning and assessment.

The Value Creation Framework

We discovered the Value Creation Framework while participating in a workshop on communities of practice led by Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner. Their VCF was originally developed as a way to conceptualize and assess the value that communities of practice and social networks generate (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011). Working through the VCF process enables users to identify sources of quantitative and qualitative data, and it suggests what stories to collect which will validate the effectiveness of the community (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011). These data sources attribute outcomes to the influence of the community rather than to external factors (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011). For example, if a certain outcome is achieved, the stories will show whether the outcome was a result of direct action by the community or a correlational result of changing environmental factors. For instance, if a participant in a tutoring program reports higher confidence at the end of the semester, a story gathered from that participant can clarify the reason for the increased confidence. Communities and organizations have used the framework as both a planning tool and as an assessment tool (Guldberg, Mackness, Makriyannis, & Tait, 2013; Collins, Wiebe, & Van Dyk, 2014; Cowan, & Menchaca, 2014; McKellar, Pitzul, Yi, & Cole, 2014; Menchaca, & Cowan, 2014; Booth, & Kellogg, 2015). As we participated in the communities of practice workshop, we were inspired to utilize the VCF as a resource for program design to achieve our new vision for integrating our PAL and tutoring programs.

Originally, there were five types of value identified in the framework, but the framework was recently expanded to include two additional types of value that relate to the other five (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2017). The VCF's seven levels of value prompt planners to consider what makes a community of practice effective, meaningful, or valuable at different stages of engagement from a variety of perspectives. The framework includes the following five original types of value:

- Immediate Value: what the members experience or feel through participating
- Potential Value: how these experiences enrich the members
- Applied Value: how the members use what they have learned

- Realized Value: what results from the members using what they learned
- Transformative Value: how the members are or the community is changed through the members' experiences and use of what they learned

Two additional types of value intersect each of these five:

- Enabling Value: the necessary conditions that support each level of value creation
- Strategic Value: the benefit that results for the organization or broader context

Each level of value articulates a particular stage of engagement that a member experiences with the community: from the member's initial experience to changes the member brings to the community as he or she applies what was learned. Initially, value is considered for the community members, but as higher levels of value are considered, other stakeholders beyond the community are included, such as external constituents. Each level of value is defined by aspirations and conditions necessary for achieving those goals, risks and mitigating factors, and activities and indicators (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2017). When we applied the VCF in a programmatic context, we were able to link the aspirations to the outcomes that we wanted to see from the services we offer. Identifying supportive conditions and factors to mitigate risks helped us imagine the environment that would be necessary to achieve the aspirational outcomes and identify actions that might avoid potential obstacles. Outlining activities, such as elements to include in sessions or characteristics to note during observations, charted avenues to achieve with intention our aspirational outcomes. These aspects of program design laid the foundation for determining indicators to evaluate the success of our services in reaching the defined outcomes, thereby providing a feedback loop for informed program development in the future. The VCF provided a scaffold for us to consider the value added for individual student users of our services and ultimately carried through to the broader institutional context.

We want to share our experience with the VCF as we mapped out our vision for our program and found clarity and focus as we prepared to implement our plan in the upcoming academic year. We

hope our experience will resonate beyond our learning center context and be useful for others as they embark on their journey of program design.

How We Used the Value Creation Framework

We came together during our first staff retreat to lay out our aspirations for integrating the previously separate PAL and tutoring areas within our unit. We recognized that in order to blend our roles, we needed to consider our reasons for implementing increased collaboration into our programs and their connection to our aspirations for PAL and tutoring. The VCF became a blueprint for us to consider the "why" of our programs and articulate a process that initiated a new phase in the history and development of our unit.

We started our program design process by identifying the two populations that we would consider: 1) PAL leaders and tutors, and 2) participants who utilize our services. By distinguishing between these two groups, we concentrated our efforts on what values and outcomes we hoped each of those groups would gain from their experience with Course Support Programs. We used tables to outline each level of value in the VCF. For example, one table outlined aspects (aspirations, conditions, mitigating factors, activities, and indicators) of immediate value for PAL and tutoring participants. We created a similar table for each of the other four main values in the framework as illustrated in Appendix A. (A complete set of tables is available to view at http://tinyurl.com/yd5fff97.) Because activities and enabling value overlap in some circumstances, we combined these aspects into a single column in our tables. Strategic value is an overarching aspect that we considered for all levels of value, so we placed it as a separate column in all of our value tables. This enabled us to clearly articulate the importance of our services to other stakeholders in the broader institutional context.

Based on our individual experiences with PAL and tutoring, the feedback that peer leaders have given us, and what we know are beneficial factors in productive learning, we each began contributing to aspirations we thought were instrumental to the program. We made a list of aspirations for immediate value - for what session participants would feel as a result of attending a PAL or tutoring session - and then developed each aspiration sequentially through

the other value levels one aspiration at a time. For example, one aspirational theme articulates developing learning capacity among session participants:

- Immediate value (Experience): Session participants will feel confident that they can study effectively because they leave the session equipped with learning strategies and improved understanding of the material.
- Potential value (Enrichment): Session participants develop problem-solving strategies, learning strategies, understanding of the concepts, and knowledge of specific activities and when to use them, based on an awareness of how they think and learn.
- Applied value (Application): Session participants use metacognitive awareness in the course for which they sought PAL/tutoring support and in other courses as well.
- Realized value (Result): Session participants have greater academic achievement in the form of higher grades, higher GPA, increased academic self-efficacy, higher retention rate, higher course completion rate, increased self-awareness of their learning strengths, and smaller achievement gap for underserved populations.
- Transformative value (Impact): Well-educated alumni add value to places of employment or graduate programs.

Once we articulated how we envisioned each aspiration carrying through each level of value, we worked through the other columns on our table (shown in Appendix A and in the full example available at http://tinyurl.com/yd5fff97). Articulating the conditions that would need to exist for the aspiration to occur was relatively straightforward. Following our example above, a condition for participants to feel confident and well-equipped (immediate value) is that the PAL leaders and tutors use the learning strategies they are taught during training. Imagining potential risks or obstacles was sometimes challenging, but we discovered that the mitigating factors revealed aspects of messaging or important components of peer leader training that we might otherwise have missed. Indicators that the aspiration was met were usually easy to articulate, as were

quantitative and qualitative data points we could collect. Data showing whether participants feel confident and well-equipped comes from documentation we already collect such as observation reports, session plans, and surveys. Activities and enabling value point actions that must happen in order to meet the prescribed condition, such as effectively training peer leaders and supporting skill development. Articulating the strategic value challenged us to connect what happens within a PAL or tutoring session or within peer leader training to broader departmental and institutional values and outcomes. For our example, this meant considering the sense of identity and belonging of our participants within the broader institutional community.

With our Value Creation tables complete, we reconfigured these tables into assessment tables based on our defined aspirations. As illustrated in Appendix B, we changed the "Indicators and Data" column from the value table to separate "Assessment Categories" and "Assessment Items" columns in the assessment table. The "Assessment Categories" column links each aspiration to a type of assessment, making it easier to gather information together for each aspiration. Creating the "Assessment Items" column indicates what information is to be collected or what questions to ask on surveys. For example, one plan is to require PAL leaders and tutors to use a specific wrap-up activity to permit assessment of problem-solving skills that participants may have learned during the session. The assessment table also included an "Implementation/Timeline" column, which facilitates planning for the year. We used information from this table to develop our unit's overall assessment plan, which also will include standard quantitative metrics derived from course grades, freshman to sophomore retention, satisfaction surveys, and other typical success indicators. We look forward to using the VCF and assessment tables to guide our planning, training, and assessment during the 2017-2018 academic year. Using the VCF as a reference ensures that as we revise the peer leader manual during the summer, we include messaging and training content to help us attain certain aspirations for the peer leaders. It has informed a concurrent revision to tutoring and PAL observation forms to ensure that assessment information is collected that relates to particular aspirations.

Results of Using the Value Creation Framework
for Program Design

Although it was intended for use with communities of practice, we applied the VCF as a tool to understand how the tutoring and PAL programs work from the perspectives of the peer leaders and what the programs offer the student participants. The positive, energizing process we experienced as we used the VCF to reconceive our unit prompted us to share this discovery so that other learning support staff could benefit from our experience.

The framework became a scaffold that led us through a process of thinking about why our unit impacts student learning, and it caused us to consider explicitly the meaning and purpose of all that we do. It challenged us to articulate these values as aspirations for our peer leaders and student participants as they engage in our support areas and as they move into their careers after graduation. It also challenged us to connect our vision and aspirations with the strategic domain of the university. We are now able to articulate more clearly why it is important to the university that our unit has undergraduate peer leadership, for example. Most importantly for us, using the VCF enabled us to think through the life cycle of peer leaders and participants in our program in a fine-grained analysis that required intentional focus and discipline to imagine how experiences at each level informed (or hindered) the next. For example, the Immediate Value aspiration that participants will feel a connection with the PAL leader or tutor (aspiration #4 on the tables available at http://tinyurl.com/yd5fff97) suggests the potential value, realized when they leave the session, that participants trust the peer leader as a mentor or guide. Connecting these two levels of value prompted us to think carefully about what conditions would create trust: the peer leader has to communicate well, relate well, and feel confident in their role. Considering how to achieve this informed the content of training so that the value would be achieved.

As a result, we now have a much better shared understanding of every aspect of our areas and their potential effect on our students, from initial recruiting contact through graduates' potential contributions in their future employment. We understand what we want the PAL leaders and tutors to gain from working in these roles

and what competencies and dispositions we hope the participants will gain. These aspirations helped us identify specific activities and think about what we are doing (or could do) to build in value that will shape student experiences with our programs. That is, we were able to more clearly envision the connections between peer leader training and intended outcomes for our student participants. For example, to achieve the aspiration that participants will develop problem-solving strategies (Potential Value #2 in the example at http://tinyurl.com/yd5fff97), a necessary condition is that the PAL leaders and tutors will understand how to facilitate these skills and strategies. This condition identified a necessary component for our tutors and PAL leader training, which was represented as an aspiration for them on a separate set of VCF tables. As a result, we achieved a major shift in perspective for formative program assessment away from evaluating behaviors (i.e. a list of actions we want to see when conducting observations) to evaluating skillful practices (i.e. addressing why behaviors are important in the context of the program values).

Reflection and Conclusions

Using the VCF for our program design and assessment planning generated benefits for our team beyond the actual work that we accomplished. The process was a vehicle for team development, both for interpersonal relationships and for understanding the coordinator's collaborative leadership style. A key to our success was that each of us worked as equals. Although the coordinator had a general vision for our unit, she did not impose a specific list of expectations that constrained the Value Creation process. This allowed us to develop the details of the vision together. The process ensured that, as a newly created team, we developed shared understanding, goals, and processes for our work together.

Our program design process focused on what we wanted our students to gain from our services. Our vision and purpose, therefore, inspired aspirations, which guided the rest of the design and informed how our program creates value for others. Free from the "we've always done it this way" thinking and able to express our vision, we let go of what was done in the past and identified new approaches for elevating the areas within our unit. This process

aligned staff vision with other stakeholders' goals and values to create buy-in and acceptance as well as transparency through documentation. Moving forward, we can show how our unit supports institutional goals, such as retention, by identifying our corresponding aspirations to illustrate how our services influence retention efforts. In this way, we can tell the story of how the student experiences we cultivate contribute to the goals and values of the institution.

While we used the VCF to redesign our Course Support Programs unit, we believe the process is transferable to other contexts as well. The Value Creation process fosters a more encompassing approach to program design by first considering stakeholders' experiences and what they gain from those experiences. By focusing on the overall purpose of the program, the intended outcomes are inevitably achieved. Articulating the purpose of the program before recognizing the desired outcomes ensures that all aspects of the program are connected and work together to bring value to all stakeholders. The VCF creates a foundation for program design in a clear, accessible format that can be revised or expanded as visions grow or environments change. By re-working and simplifying the value tables, a clear vision can be communicated to any interested party. The detail captured during the initial Value Creation process can cultivate the development of a systematic assessment plan that takes all aspects of the program design into account. We hope the details of our experience will inform others as they journey through the design and assessment process for their programs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Value Creation Framework Template

Immediate Value: How they feel as they develop their toolkit (or when they leave a session)					
Aspirations	Conditions	Risks and Mitigating Factors	Indicators and Data	Activities and Enabling Value	Strategic Value

Potential Value: What is in their toolkit when they leave a session					
Aspirations	Conditions	Risks and Mitigating Factors	Indicators and Data	Activities and Enabling Value	Strategic Value

Applied Value: How they use the items in their toolkit outside of their community (a change in practice, expressed as a verb)					
Aspirations	Conditions	Risks and Mitigating Factors	Indicators and Data	Activities and Enabling Value	Strategic Value

Realized Value: The result of using the items in their toolkit					
Aspirations	Conditions	Risks and Mitigating Factors	Indicators and Data	Activities and Enabling Value	Strategic Value

Transformative Value: Impact beyond the community					
Aspirations	Conditions	Risks and Mitigating Factors	Indicators and Data	Activities and Enabling Value	Strategic Value

Adapted from Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011 and Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2017.

Appendix B: Sample Aspiration for Immediate Value in the Assessment Table

Immediate Value: How they feel as you develop your toolkit (or when you leave a meeting)				
Aspirations	Assessment Categories	Assessment Items	Implementation/ Timeline	Notes
2) Feel confident that they can study effectively because they leave equipped with study strategies and better understanding of the material	Targeted survey/ focus group Post-visit survey Closing activities	Set up closing activity: • 3:2:1 Google Form • Clear point/ muddy point • Write a question for each Bloom's level • "need to develop closing activity" for tutoring • Need to set up documentation plan for both of these	August: have documentation plan for recording closing reflections from students November: end of semster survey administered	
	End of semester survey	End of semester survey: Name strategies and describe how you have applied them		

Data-Based Program Reform: A Shift from Supplemental Instruction to Weekly Tutoring Groups

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Abstract

The aim of this analysis was to determine from a pilot project whether a new style of course-connected learning support for students in gateway STEM courses could be more successful on the University of Rhode Island's campus than the traditional Supplemental Instruction (SI) model. The new model, Weekly Tutoring Groups (WTG), addressed several of the challenges (attendance, timing, group size) students and staff reported with the SI model. In the pilot semester, 212 students enrolled in courses previously supported by SI participated in WTG. Compared to SI, the new program saw an increase in students attending regularly, a significant difference in proficient grades between participants and nonparticipants, and a significant difference in the actual grades received by the participants compared to the grades they reported they would have received without participation in the WTG program. The success of the pilot semester has led learning center staff to continue with the WTG program rather than return to SI.

Keywords: learning support, peer-learning, STEM, Weekly Tutoring Groups (WTG), Supplemental Instruction (SI), tutoring program assessment

Supplemental Instruction at the University of Rhode Island

The University of Rhode Island's learning center, the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), provides tutoring support for "high-risk" gateway courses in STEM disciplines. As is often the case at similar institutions, these courses have many seats per section, which makes them particularly challenging for the many first- and

second-year students that enroll. The proficient grade (ABC) versus unproficient grade (DWFI) rates in these courses helped center staff to identify a handful of courses needing additional attention. For those courses, in addition to its existing tutoring services (walk-in centers and appointments), the AEC began running a Supplemental Instruction (SI) program in 2005.

The AEC's SI model was set up so that students had a leader assigned to work with a specific instructor for a specific course. The SI leader planned and offered two 90-minute review sessions per week. Since students were never required to attend SI, attendance followed predictable patterns: students would tend to show up in large numbers only for the session right before an exam. Students who did attend regularly (defined as 7+ times in a semester), however, usually averaged one grade increment higher (e.g., B+ over a B) than their peers in the course who did not attend SI. This data suggested that SI can work, but that it is more likely to work effectively when students attend regularly. Unfortunately, of the 800-900 students who chose to try using SI (i.e., attended at least one session) in any given semester, only approximately 10% were "regular" attendees. This meant the AEC's sizeable SI budget seemingly served only approximately 80-90 students effectively per semester. Despite efforts by staff to market the information that students who attend SI regularly tended to do better in their courses, poor attendance patterns persisted and canceled sessions were not uncommon due to lack of attendance.

After outreach and marketing efforts failed to make a difference in student attendance, staff surveyed students to determine the reasons they tended not to go to SI. For students who were familiar with SI being offered for their course, a primary reason for not attending involved timing/scheduling conflicts. The timing issue was challenging to address. SI leaders set the time for their sessions, and they were typically offered late afternoon into evening, for these times offered the least amount of conflict for both SI leaders and students. The survey also showed reports of negative experiences, primarily of students not finding the sessions helpful because the sessions were crowded and not tailored to what the individual student wanted. For students who reported this, it is

plausible that they had exclusively attended sessions held directly before an exam. Although students desired to have the sessions be smaller and more tailored, this was not something controlled for within the existing structure of SI where no sign up was required.

Since it was clear that the AEC's SI model was not flexible enough to cater to reported student needs, staff set out to create a new intervention. SI, as it existed, was not working for URI's students; it was not conducive to regular attendance, it had no cap size on sessions, and session timing did not facilitate regular attendance. The AEC wanted to leave those pieces behind and replace them with a new program that would capitalize on the benefits of a program like SI and address the shortcomings. Based on the data collected about the circumstances under which SI had been successful, feedback collected from students, and knowledge of best practices and learning theory as presented in the literature review, AEC staff designed and implemented a new program: Weekly Tutoring Groups. The present study assesses its effectiveness during its pilot.

Literature Review

The literature that addressed some of the weaknesses of Supplemental Instruction at URI's campus and informed the Weekly Tutoring Groups design falls into three main categories: learning theory in group-based learning, the psychology of groups, and general retention theories.

The decision to have the new program be oriented to small groups was based on the long-established understanding of peers serving as valuable learning resources to one another, as well as common pragmatic concerns that make other modes of support, such as 1:1 tutoring, logistically and fiscally challenging (Mackenzie, et al., 1970; Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2014). AEC staff hoped, with the new program, to create a comfortable environment in which, by having the group facilitated by a near-peer, students could learn within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Due to the inconsistent nature of attendance at the existing Supplemental Instruction sessions, such social dynamics of learning had been difficult to capitalize upon.

With regular attendance in smaller groups, tutors would also be better able to incorporate metacognitive learning strategies and general study skills into their sessions. This is something that AEC student staff in both the SI program and the walk-in tutoring centers reported having difficulty doing since they did not have an opportunity to regularly see the same students. Metacognitive skills were of interest to the center, not only because of their effectiveness for students in STEM disciplines in general (Cook, Kennedy, McGuire, 2012), but also because of their impact in shrinking the achievement gap for traditionally underrepresented students in STEM fields (Wilson, Holmes, deGravelles, Sylvain, Johnston, et al., 2012). Improvement in these skills has been previously demonstrated as a possible byproduct of tutoring (DeBacker, Van Keer, & Valcke, 2012).

AEC staff also investigated social psychological principles and behavioral patterns of students that would help achieve the goal of consistent group attendance. Staff found that asking individuals to create a plan of action increased their rate of follow-through (Rogers, Milkman, John, & Norton, 2015). It was also believed that students would be more likely to attend regularly, and have less resistance to group work, when they could choose their own groups, which would often include friends in their existing social network (Morosanu, Handley, O'Donovan, 2010). These findings led the AEC staff to establish a required a sign-up process as part of the new program.

The social support and small cohort design of the groups was also inspired by organizations such as The Posse Foundation, which has consistently shown success in improving academic integration, persistence, and degree completion for non-traditional college students. The foundation is based on Tinto's model of retention (Tinto, 1975 & 1993), and explicitly includes participation in tutoring services and study groups as essential components of academic integration (Jones & Were, 2008).

The literature also pointed out that learning center support which is sign-up-based often suffers from student "no-shows" (those who commit to showing up, but do not follow through) (Molfenter, 2013). This can result in a waste of fiscal resources (paying a tutor to work when students do not show up). The Weekly Tutoring Groups

program therefore implemented three additional layers of no-show prevention effort as described in the methods.

The literature, combined with URI's own survey data, helped AEC staff define an action plan for creating the new program, and informed the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. Would students' regular attendance rates be higher in the Weekly Tutoring Groups program as compared to the Supplemental Instruction Program?
2. Would there be a difference in grades for students who used the program versus those who did not? And who attended the program regularly? Would students retrospectively report that the grade they expected to receive in the class would be significantly higher than the grade they felt they would have received without participating in the weekly group?
3. Would this new program address some of the other reported shortcomings of SI (e.g., having a small enough group to get to know each other, would the group study together outside of the sessions, would they strengthen study skills, and would they use it for a future class)?

Methods
Weekly Tutoring Groups Design

The new program, Weekly Tutoring Groups (WTG), was designed in Fall 2016 (the final semester SI was running) and piloted in Spring 2017. To address the session-timing issues raised by students in their survey responses, tutoring staff's availability was used to set openings for sessions to be 50-minute blocks, with availability throughout the day (9:00am-8:00pm). Start times were typically set on the hour, similar to the University course schedules, for ease of scheduling sessions between classes. Sessions were capped at six students maximum and two students minimum (to ensure a group learning environment as opposed to one-to-one tutoring). Groups were capped at six due to a combination of space availability, literature support for groups at or smaller than that size, and social psychological principles to increase each member's individual

accountability to the group and decrease the possibility of social loafing.

Utilizing scheduling software (Redrock Software's Tutortrac), AEC staff set course competencies for tutors and linked them to availabilities. Unlike for SI, in which each student staff member worked exclusively with one course, tutors offered sessions for any course in which they were proficient. This meant a student in a course like Introductory Chemistry had many time slots to choose from. Upper division tutors typically specialized by setting their course competencies to those upper-level courses, such as Organic Chemistry. This setup allowed an increase the variety of courses for which the AEC offered support, because the capital invested in hiring and training a tutor who could work with multiple courses meant that fiscal resources stretched further.

Rather than having the times chosen for them, students were then able to choose their own times. The impetus was on students to sign up for groups, using a fillable PDF sign up form, inspired with permission by the sign-up used by staff at the UNC-Wilmington's University Learning Center. Students were asked to find at least one classmate in the course and list their mutual top choice times for a session. Although it was more work for students to need to sign up rather than just being able to show up with no sign-up needed (like for SI), AEC staff were interested in the possibility that this would make students more likely to attend on a regular basis.

Though students were encouraged to do as much of their own group-arranging work as possible, AEC staff allowed students to submit their name as a "free agent" who did not have someone else in the class to sign up with but who wanted to be arranged by center staff into an existing group, or paired with another "free agent," contingent upon availability. Of students who requested as "free agents," 69% of them were matched into groups. To ensure that "free agents" who were not matched did not miss out on support, center staff reached out several times by e-mail to share the existing group times in case the student found one that could work with his or her schedule, a list of walk-in center hours, and directions for making appointments at the center. All students' sign-up forms were then matched on a rolling basis through Tutortrac by an

administrative team comprised of one professional staff member, two graduate students, and two undergraduate program assistants.

Importantly, students were told that joining a group was a commitment to attend that group on a weekly basis. The informal contractual agreement was that if a student missed more than two sessions, he or she would be subject to losing the spot in the group. When marketing the new program through classroom visits and online, AEC staff reinforced the message that students do better when they engage with the course material on a regular basis, including attending AEC services regularly (per past experience with Supplemental Instruction). Staff also advertised that this new format allowed for a more tailored session than a "one-size-fits-all" Supplemental Instruction session.

This attendance policy was a point of concern for some faculty who expressed doubt over whether it was feasible to ask students who already did not attend SI regularly to regularly attend a new, seemingly less convenient, program. They also expressed concern about services being taken away from students who violated the attendance policy. Staff explicated for both faculty and students that any students not interested in the weekly commitment could still participate in one of the AEC's other STEM-related services, including one-time appointments and walk-in tutoring centers.

In addition, three mechanisms for retention, not used in SI, were implemented to encourage regular attendance. First, when students were matched with a tutor, they received a letter e-mailed directly from a learning center staff member, congratulating them on their positive decision to join a group, reminding them of the program's policies, then sharing the date, time, and location of the group's meeting. Second, the center used Tutortrac to send reminder e-mail messages to students. The first went out shortly following the initial group letter, and then a reminder was automatically sent at 8:00 pm the night before the dates a student had a session scheduled. Third, the learning center staff ran bi-weekly reports to see which students had missed a total of two sessions. When this happened, the staff member sent an e-mail to the student encouraging him or her to attend the next session and reminding the student about the attendance policy. For students who persisted in absences, they would be dropped from the group.

Participants

The current study included 3,883 student records obtained for students who were enrolled in at least one of the 11 core courses for which WTGs were offered during the spring semester of 2017 and for whom the center had complete data. Though 451 students participated in a group, across 30 courses, for the most fair and direct comparison, the present study only compared students who were enrolled in at least one of the same 11 core courses that were also served consistently by SI in past semesters, resulting in 212 participants.

All courses were in the subject areas of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math. Specifically, the courses included the following: Biology 101 (Principles of Biology I), Biology 121 (Human Anatomy), Biology 242 (Introductory Human Physiology), Chemistry 101 (General Chemistry I), Chemistry 103 (Introductory Chemistry), Chemistry 112 (General Chemistry II), Chemistry 124 (Introduction to Organic Chemistry), Chemistry 227 (Organic Chemistry I), Chemistry 228 (Organic Chemistry II), Physics 203 (Elementary Physics I), and Mathematics 142 (Calculus II).

Of the 3,883 students enrolled in at least one of these specific courses, 212 attended at least one WTG and 3,621 did not use the WTG service. Of students who attended at least one WTG, 56.1% were first-year students and 26.4% were sophomores. In addition, 71.7% of students using WTGs were White, 12.7% were Hispanic/Latino/a and 6.1% were Black. Demographics were nearly identical for those students who did not use WTGs and were consistent with demographics of the student population on this campus.

Measures

All data were obtained from surveys administered by the center with the purpose of evaluating WTGs, appointment data recorded by the university learning center, and records kept by the university and uploaded to a campus server. Paper intake surveys were administered to students during their first visit to a WTG, individual visit evaluation cards were collected by the tutors after each visit, and paper exit assessments were given during the final two weeks of WTG sessions. All surveys were given confidentially with private drop-boxes for students to submit replies, but not anonymously

(names and/or ID numbers were used). Students were told that their ratings and comments may be used by professional staff from the center and reported in aggregate. Visit data was recorded in Tutortrac, and student records were accessed via eCampus/ PeopleSoft. Data was validated by cross-referencing between these data sources and matching enrollments, attendance, and surveys by student ID number.

Participation in WTGs and Number of Visits. Student attendance to WTGs was recorded each week by group leaders and entered into a database maintained by the learning center. Therefore, at the end of the semester, the student's Tutortrac record includes the total number of times each student visited their WTG(s) for each course. All students who were registered for courses for which WTGs were available, but did not attend a WTG, were recorded as having zero visits and coded as being part of the non-WTG group.

Expected and Actual Grades. Students who used WTGs were asked at the end of the semester to report the grade they expected to receive in the course associated with their WTG, and the grade they believe they would have received if they had not used the WTG. In addition, final course grades were obtained from official university uploads. All grades were entered as letter grades (A, A-, B+, …, F) and converted into numeric GPA scores (e.g., A = 4.00).

Proficient vs. Unproficient Grades. Using the actual course grades uploaded by the university, grades were coded as either proficient (i.e., A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-) or unproficient (D+, D, D-, F).

Student Perspectives of WTGs. Students who participated in WTGs were encouraged to complete a survey at the conclusion of their last group session. The response rate was approximately 36%, which provided data for 77 of 212 participants. They were asked to report whether they felt they got to know the members of their group (0=definitely not - 10 =absolutely, yes), whether their group met outside of scheduled visits to study together (0=no; 1=yes), and whether they felt they had strengthened their skills as a product of attending WTGs (0=definitely not - 10=absolutely, yes). Students who participated were also asked to give an overall rating of their tutor (0=terrible - 10=fantastic), and to report the likelihood that they would return to WTGs the next semester (0=definitely not -

10=absolutely, yes). Finally, students could opt to provide additional concerns or comments about their experience using WTGs.

Student Confidence with Course Material. Students who participated in WTGs were asked to report the degree to which they felt confident with the course material before and after each WTG meeting on a scale from one (not at all confident) to 10 (completely confident).

Demographics. Student demographic information (i.e., race/ ethnicity and year in school) were obtained from university records.

Analyses

In order to examine attendance patterns for WTGs (RQ1), descriptive statistics were conducted and compared to patterns observed in the past for SI. For the purposes of exploring the effects of WTG attendance, a binary logistic regression was run with proficient versus unproficient grades as the outcome variable and number of visits as the predictor.

To assess whether WTG attendance significantly influenced course grades and confidence with the course material (RQ2), dependent samples t-tests were conducted comparing students' self-reported grade they would have expected to receive had they not attended WTGs and the grade they expected to receive in the course having attended WTGs. The grade expected without WTG attendance was also compared to the actual grade the student received in the course. Additionally, a dependent samples t-test was conducted to assess students' self-reported level of confidence with the course material before and after their WTG sessions. To compare WTG attendees and non-attendees, a chi-square analysis was used to examine proficient grade rates.

Finally, to explore whether the WTG design addressed some of the concerns students had raised about SI (RQ3), descriptive statistics were conducted on the degree to which students got to know other members of their group, whether the group met outside of scheduled WTG time, whether students felt they strengthened their skills as a result of attending WTGs, the effectiveness of the WTG tutor and the likelihood that students would use WTGs for other courses in the future. Open-ended responses provided by students were also evaluated.

Findings

Research Question 1

Would students' attendance rates be higher in the Weekly Tutoring Groups program as compared to the Supplemental Instruction Program?

Of the 3,883 students enrolled in courses for which WTGs were offered, 212 (5.5%) attended at least one WTG session. On average, students visited 7.11 times (SD = 4.86). Notably, 53.5% of WTG participants attended seven times or more and just 10.8% attended only once. In comparison, for students who interacted with SI, 43% of the students only attended one SI session during the semester and only 12% of students attended it regularly (7+ times).

Research Question 2

Would students retrospectively report that their command of the material and the grade they expected to receive in the class would be significantly higher than what they expect they would have received without participating in the weekly group? Would there be a difference in grades for students who used the program? And who attended the program regularly?

Dependent samples t-tests were conducted to examine difference between the grades students reported they expected to earn having attended a WTG, the grades students reported they would have expected without attending a WTG, and the actual grade received in the course. It was found that students' expected grades having attended a WTG (M = 2.74, SD = 0.80) were significantly higher than the grades students reported they would have received without attending WTGs (M = 1.82, SD = 1.04), t (79) = -10.68, p <.001. In letter-grade terms, these expectations equated to students anticipating receiving an average of one full letter grade higher as a result of their participation in the program (specifically, a B- rather than a C-). In addition, their actual course grades (M = 2.69, SD = 0.92) were significantly higher than the grade they reported they would have received without WTG attendance, t (79) = -7.57, p<.001 and were generally the letter grade they expected (B-). Students also consistently reported a significantly higher level of confidence with the material after each of their WTG sessions (M = 8.07, SD = 1.46) than before each of their WTG sessions (M = 5.17, SD = 0.03), t(1,844) = -66.09, p < .001.

Additionally, a Chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of proficient grades in WTG attendees and non-attendees. A significant interaction was found ($X^2(1) =$ 14.12, p < .001), where WTG attendees were more likely to receive a proficient grade (89.60%) than non-attendees (78.90%) (see Table 1.) The unproficient grade rate was more than double for non-attendees than it was for students who participated in WTGs.

Table 1

Proficient Grade Rates Among Attendees and Non-Attendees

		Proficient Grade		
		Yes	No	Total
WTG	**Yes**	190 (89.6%)	22 (10.4%)	212
Attendance	**No**	2857 (78.9%)	764 (21.1%)	3621
	Total	3047 (79.5%)	786 (20.5%)	3883

Furthermore, for the 114 WTG participants who were regular attendees (with seven or more visits) to their groups, their proficient grade rate was 93.90% as compared to a 84.8% proficient grade rate for those who participated but did not reach seven visits. Those who went seven times or more were significantly more likely to earn a proficient grade ($X^2(1) = 4.65$, p<.05) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Proficient Grade Rates Among Regular and Non-Regular Attendees

		Proficient Grade		
		Yes	No	Total
WTG	**1-6 times**	84 (84.8%)	15 (15.2%)	33
Attendance	**7+ times**	107 (93.9%)	7 (6.1%)	114
	Total	191 (89.7%)	22 (10.3%)	213

A binary logistic regression was conducted to assess the influence of number of visits on the likelihood of receiving a proficient grade. It was found that number of visits did not significantly associate with the likelihood of receiving a proficient

grade, although this test approached significance (β = 0.10, SE = 0.06, p = .08).

Research Question 3

Would this new program address some of the other reported shortcomings of SI (e.g., having a small enough group to get to know each other, would the group study together outside of the sessions, would they strengthen study skills, and would they use it for a future class)?

Descriptive statistics were conducted to explore whether the WTG model addressed some of the concerns that had been raised by students about the SI design. In general, students who participated and responded to survey items felt very positive about their WTG experience (see Table 3).

Table 3

Student Perspectives of the WTG Experience

	N	M	SD
To what degree did you get to know the other members of your group? (1-10)	75	7.95	2.74
To what degree did you feel you strengthened your study skills as a result of attending your WTG? (1 - 10)	80	8.94	1.80
How effective was your tutor? (1 - 10)	81	9.34	1.36
What is the likelihood that you will use WTGs for a future course? (1 - 10)	79	9.57	1.39
	N	Yes	No
Did your group meet to study outside of scheduled WTG time? (Yes/No)	77	42	34

Student Comments:

Intake Comments in response to "Why did you decide to join a Weekly Tutoring Group?"

to do better than last semester

Would like to reinforce what I am learning in a group setting

help to structrue [sic] my stuyding [sic] better understand main points

didn't pass the class in fall '16

not confident in skills

This is my second time in orgo and I want to pass as well as help my gpa.

so i can maintain 3.0 to get into nursing program

to stay on top of this because I don't love chem

I'm slacking a lot

It's a new program and thought I'd give it a try

i realized that with CHM 103 last semester, i should have done something like this. I definitely need extra help
it would force me to work on it every week- help w/my schedule

I want to make sure I stay on track with this course
took it last semester and failed

I was lost last semester

took the class last semester, didn't pass. need this class to move on in my major

Already got a D lost [sic] semester, needed a c- so I need to understand the material better.

This is my second grade option and want to do well to bring up my gpa

I failed last semester and figured this would help
failing last semester

I am re-taking the course

I did not pass Chem last semester so I wish to do much
better this semester.

General feedback.

This tutoring group was a lifesaver. Thank you.

LOVED my tutoring session. The group size was perfect
and it let me ask questions I couldn't in lecture. Also
great time to work with more practice problems step by
step.

Loved it! Super helpful. Having other students in the
group ask questions helps me with questions that i didn't
even know I had.

[My tutor] got to know us and exactly what we learned
and liked to be taught. Even got us extra unexpected but
very appreciated resources

This tutoring was great. It helped me understand what
was going on continuously throughout the semester. [My
tutor] was great and extremely helpful.

I am so glad I signed up for this group; [my tutor] has
greatly contributed to my success in this course!

[My tutor] is great. Asks you questions on the process to
keep you involved in learning the material

The atmosphere is super helpful itself, and the tutors are
all very nice and helpful!

The weekly group is very helpful to stay on top of material, and [my tutor] offers great explanations and advice given that she has taken the class!

Very good small tutoring. Imperative to have groupmates that are individually motivated in order to get work done.

The group setting is less intimidating for students and allows them to form connections with students. I really enjoyed going over the material weekly and believe these groups are a great resource to students! [My tutor] was so knowledgable [sic] and excellent at explanations.

Keep smaller more intimate groups they are much more affective and keep [my tutor] because she's great!

I handed in an application to join a group and it took weeks to find a spot for me, but it all worked out eventually and will definitely be using this as a future resource.

Put tutors in touch with instructors for course they are helping with.

I absolutely loved it and I think it's helpful to have the commitment so you actually go. Also I think it might be nice to have the tutors provide some examples for us so we could work through it together.

Comments regarding session length/frequency.
I really like these groups. I think it would be helpful if it was twice a week rather than once. If more were made up questions already in place for us to do.

50 minutes is a short time to study and ask questions to the tutor. Maybe longer sessions if possible.

It was very helpful, if you were to change anything maybe just make the sessions longer.

In the future it would be a great help if the tutoring groups met twice a week instead of once.

Two 1 hour sessions twice a week or 1 two hour session.

I know this could go both way but the amount of time should be flexible. Some days I wish we had more time, and other times it wasnt [sic] so long, like after an exam. Also, maybe offer it more than once/ week.

Comments with direct comparison to Supplemental Instruction.
This was a great option, better than SI! More personal!

I liked SI better because there were worksheets

With my tutor, she was also an SI [previously] and therefore had prepared practice problems and worksheets for us with answer keys.

Much more helpful than SI sessions ever were! SI sessions were not helpful and met at awful times. This new tutoring is great and the tutors can be more personal :)

Discussion
Limitations
The assessment of the shift from Supplemental Instruction to Weekly Tutoring Groups was limited in several ways. The most significant impediment to analysis is that neither program has been done in a true experimental format; there is no random assignment into control and experimental groups. Students self-select to participate, which sometimes means students who already have a third-factor of achievement-ambition are the ones who participate,

or the students may be the ones who tend to struggle in their courses and that is the reason they self-select to participate. Evaluation is also limited in the way that analysis of most learning center services is limited: when students achieve a certain grade, there is no sure way to prove a causal link between that grade and their participation in a tutoring program. This analysis also examines only the first semester of data for a pilot project that began in a spring semester (mid-way through the traditional academic year).

As this was a pilot semester, there were also limitations with the cleanliness of data; tutors were responsible for entering the attendance for members of their groups and sometimes the attendance data is missing for students (e.g., rather than showing as "attended" or "missed" the student shows as "status pending"). While AEC staff made efforts to reduce this occurrence, it is also likely that this type of error does not harm the analyses, as assessments were based on the number of sessions affirmatively attended (i.e., definitively marked as attended) rather than sessions missed. Thus it is conceivable that attendance data for Weekly Tutoring Groups may in fact be underreported.

Discussion of RQ1

Would students' regular attendance rates be higher in the Weekly Tutoring Groups program as compared to the Supplemental Instruction Program? The data showed, as anticipated with a pilot, that the overall number of students involved in the Weekly Tutoring Groups program was lower than the overall number of students involved with Supplemental Instruction. However, the WTG participants attended the program more consistently, hitting the benchmark of seven visits during a semester at a higher rate than SI participants had in the past. Though the overall participation was lower in the new program, it appears to have the potential to be more effective in serving students since it helps them engage more regularly with the material.

Discussion of RQ2

Would there be a difference in grades for students who used the program versus those who did not? And who attended the program regularly? The analyses showed a significant difference in the rates of earning a proficient grade between participants and nonparticipants in the Weekly Tutoring Groups program. The binary logistic regression

suggested there might be a relationship between number of visits and grades; the higher rate of proficient grades for WTG "regulars" versus "non-regulars" also supports this hypothesis. AEC staff look forward to continuing to collect data on this and test with a larger sample size in future semesters.

Would students retrospectively report that the grade they expected to receive in the class would be significantly higher than what they expect they would have received without participating in the weekly group? Participants did report that they grade they expected to get in the class (approximately a B-) was significantly higher than the grade they expect they would have received without participating in the program (C-). The students' estimates of their grades were corroborated when final grades were entered into the student data system, and the average grade was indeed a B-.

Discussion of RQ3

Would this new program address some of the other reported shortcomings of SI (e.g., having a small enough group to get to know each other, would the group study together outside of the sessions, would they strengthen study skills, and would they use it for a future class)? Descriptive statistics from the final group meeting survey data suggested that the students in the group did get to know each other, though this was the survey item they gave the lowest rating to and with the highest degree of variability. AEC staff intend to adjust the tutor training program to include more group dynamics training to strengthen this piece of the WTG experience. Though it was not an explicit goal of the program, many groups did study together outside of their scheduled sessions and AEC staff will use this information when describing the benefits of the program to students in the future. Students responded with high ratings when asked about their academic skills development from the program, which suggests the tutors were indeed effective in scaffolding skills alongside course content. Staff were also pleased to find the highest rating was given to the likelihood that the student would use a group in a future course. This is not only auspicious for the next semester of running the program, but suggests the center may want to consider expanding offerings for more upper-level courses as WTG participants move forward in their curriculum.

Moving forward

Center staff are actively working to address student feedback that touched on a limitation of the WTG program which was a strength of the SI program: course-connectedness. Students' comments about wishing there were planned worksheets (as there often were in SI, since student staff focused only on one course and had planning time) have prompted center staff to collaborate with the University's office for faculty development to partner in reaching out to faculty to acquire problem sets and other course materials that can assist the tutors. The AEC will also be archiving resources (worksheets, practice books, etc.) for the use of WTG tutors.

Another common piece of student feedback was the request for more time with their groups. Given the scheduling issues (similar to those of SI) that would come with extending session time beyond 50 minutes, center staff anticipate allowing students to belong to two groups for the same course. This was not allowed as an option during the pilot, but for students interested in meeting more than once per week, the option will be available in the fall semester and attendance and success patterns will be monitored for those students.

Despite some limitations to the evaluation of the AEC's shift from Supplemental Instruction to Weekly Tutoring Groups, center staff are pleased with the preliminary results. The AEC at URI looks forward to getting more students involved in the WTG program and having them attend regularly with hopes that, like their regularly-attending peers, they can pass these challenging courses at a higher rate than the general student population in those courses.

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Book Review: *College Success: A Concise Practical Guide, 7th ed.*

Strickland, David L and /Varol J Strickland. (2017). *College Success: A Concise Practical Guide, 7th ed.* Redding, CA: BVT.

Reviewed by James Hamby

College Success: A Concise Practical Guide offers a thorough, engaging, and sympathetic view of college life to students who may be intimidated at the beginnings of their experiences in higher education. This textbook, intended for classes designed to prepare students for college during or before their first semester, takes a holistic look at all the challenges that students face, from setting academic goals to planning study time to maintaining physical and mental health. The authors maintain a positive, encouraging tone throughout the book without seeming insincere, saccharine, or condescending. Both students and instructors will enjoy the many pages dedicated to notes and reflection. These will stimulate class discussion and help students retain what they have learned. This text challenges students to be introspective, to think about what the true goals of education are, and to consider how their educations will enhance their lives.

The authors organize the chapters of *College Success* by starting with the most immediate concerns students may have during their first week, and then gradually moving into more global concepts. The first two chapters, "Adjusting to College: We're Not in High School Anymore!" and "Connecting to Resources: People, Places, and Things," introduce students to college culture and to the physical space of their new surroundings, respectively. The next part, Chapter Three "Learning and Grades: Why Am I Really in College?" and Chapter Four "Learning Preferences: How Do I Learn Best?" challenges students to take a growth mindset towards their education and to view their coursework as an opportunity for

intellectual growth rather than a checklist of things to be done in order to reach graduation. Chapters Five through Eight, "Getting Organized: Plan Your Work and Then Work Your Plan," "Listening and Taking Notes: Do You Hear What I Hear?" "Reading Textbooks: What They Never Taught You in Kindergarten!" and "Writing College Papers: I Have a Paper Due!" give students great nuts-and-bolts advice on how to engage in their classes, organize their time, and successfully complete their assignments. Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven, "Psychological Balance: Walking the Tightrope, "Physical Balance: An Apple a Day," and "Managing Your Money: Cashing in on the College Experience" focus on how students can maintain their personal lives while in college, and these chapters are especially engaging and thoughtful. Chapter 12 "Planning Your Future: What Courses Should I Take" concludes the book by giving advice on how students can choose courses and majors. This progression of chapters from students getting acquainted with college to meeting their life goals helps students conceptualize how all the many pieces of the college experience, perhaps trivial by themselves, function together to help students realize their dreams.

The authors, David L. Strickland and Carol J. Strickland, draw upon years of experience in writing this book. They both have taught in higher education for over twenty years, including extensive involvement in first-year experience programs. They have both seen many kinds of students over the years, and they are familiar with the diverse struggles that students face both inside and outside of the classroom. They combine their first-hand experiences with compelling research. The book is replete with charts and graphs that demonstrate to students, for example, the percentages of study and learning inside and outside of class in college and high school or the correlation between different levels of education and weekly take-home pay. Everything in the book is designed to help students define for themselves what the true meaning of "success" is. The authors claim that "[i]f you focus on learning rather than grades, you will become qualified. If you focus on grades to the exclusion of learning, you may become certified, but you won't be qualified. You will be a fraud" and that "a liberal arts education should change you. It should make you a better person. That is success" (10).

Furthermore, they suggest that "[l]osing out is what happens when a student graduates without having been challenged, without having changed for the better, and without being prepared for what lies ahead" (11). As anyone who has been an educator at any level will know, it can often be difficult to convince students that learning is more important than grades. However, Strickland and Strickland make a compelling argument for the value of learning, and they make the daunting challenge of a college curriculum manageable.

Each chapter contains critical thinking activities, spaces for notes, review questions, and quick reading comprehension quizzes to help students process and retain the material. These activities will also help instructors facilitate class discussion. Furthermore, they reinforce the idea the authors assert throughout the text that learning is the personal responsibility of the student.

College Success encourages students to take a thoughtful, deliberate approach to their studies. Many students may be unfamiliar with college-level expectations for reading and writing, and this book gives those students helpful strategies for how to handle their new academic workload. In addition to the chapters on planning work time and taking notes, the chapters on reading and writing are particularly helpful. Chapter Seven begins by asking students to think deeply about what reading truly is, and by dispelling the rumor some students hear that buying the textbook is not necessary in college. The chapter progresses from these basic concepts to helpful tips on reading comprehension and learning new vocabulary. The chapter on writing is likewise very helpful in giving advice on following the professor's instructions, avoiding plagiarism, and revising papers. Instructors of first-year composition may also find these chapters useful in their classes.

All of the chapters on academic success are solid in their approach, but perhaps what makes this book stand out the most are the chapters on students' personal lives. Strickland and Strickland approach difficult topics such as sexuality and drug use with frankness and honesty. In high school, students probably grow accustomed to didactic messages on issues such as casual sex and drug/alcohol/nicotine usage, and the message may simply be "don't do it." The authors do note the risks in these behaviors, but, in

keeping with the message of personal responsibility in this text, they approach these issues with the attitude that students must make their own decisions about their lives. These decisions, however, should be informed, and they include resources for students who wish to quit smoking, avoid alcohol abuse, or learn more about sex and health. Furthermore, the section on sexual identity is encouraging and sensitive and notes that struggling with sexual identity in college "is a topic that is not always discussed freely in our society" (304). College students who are experiencing freedom from their parents for the first time will no doubt appreciate being addressed as adults and afforded the respect of making their own decisions.

The other facets of college life this text addresses may be more mundane, but they may also be things that college freshman have either never thought about or never had the freedom to decide for themselves. Subjects such as maintaining a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and managing finances are all aspects of college life that students will have to make decisions about.

In all, this book is successful in giving students a broad overview of the college experience. Its step-by-step instructions for succeeding in class will help students achieve academic success, and its advice on college life will help students make informed decisions. This book should help students better understand the true value of a college education, and that their success in college depends upon themselves.

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The Learning Assistance Review (TLAR), the national peer reviewed official publication of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA), publishes scholarly articles and reviews that address issues of interest to learning center professionals (including administrators, teaching staff, faculty, and tutors) who are interested in improving the learning skills of postsecondary students. Primary consideration will be given to articles about program design and evaluation, classroom-based research, the application of theory and research to practice, innovative teaching and tutoring strategies, student assessment, and other topics that bridge gaps within our diverse profession.

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