

E-Source Welcomes New Editor

The staff of the National Resource Center is pleased to welcome Dr. Rebecca Campbell, Professor of Educational Psychology and President's Distinguished Teaching Fellow at Northern Arizona University, as the new editor of *E-Source for College Transitions*. She succeeds Dr. Christina Hardin who served in the role for four years.



Dr. Rebecca Campbell.

Campbell teaches courses on the theory of teaching and learning in the College of Education at Northern Arizona and has more than 25 years of experience designing and implementing first-year seminars and student success course interventions at both the community college and university level. Her scholarship and practice focuses on first-year seminar design, academic probation interventions, common reading programs, and gateway courses.

While new to the editor role, Campbell was in the inaugural class of reviewers for *E-Source* and served previously on the review board for the *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*. For Campbell, serving as editor offers the opportunity to shape the conversation and steer the direction of the larger student success movement. She also sees the editor role as a way to mentor early-career professionals by offering a nurturing environment for them to write about their professional practice and receive helpful feedback from colleagues in the field. During her tenure, she plans to increase the number of submissions to *E-Source*, generate interest in a wider range of topics, work with the board to re-structure the submission guidelines, and streamline the peer review process.

The primary purpose of *E-Source* is to provide practical strategies for supporting student learning and success. Submissions on a variety of topics are welcome, including those focusing on college transition issues; innovative and creative strategies to support student learning, development, and success; organizational structures and institutional resources for supporting college success; and reviews of books and other resources facilitating the work of student success practitioners. More information about the submission guidelines can be found [here](#).

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Everyone's Doing Better Than Me: Using Faculty Storytelling to Address Barriers to Success

According to Schreiner (2010), thriving students are engaged socially, emotionally, and intellectually in college and experience a psychological well-being that contributes to their persistence.

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Mercer University is an academically rigorous, private institution located in Macon, Georgia. Since 2014, Mercer's Office for Student Success has provided support for students navigating challenges that put them at risk of attrition. Over time, staff have observed a trend among students visiting the office for individual support: Students frequently believe they are unique in their struggles and failures. Despite presenting with common problems, such as a first-year student struggling with academic rigor or a sophomore questioning their major, Mercer students often feel that their challenges are unique to them. This perception frequently manifests in the students minimizing or hiding problems and missing valuable developmental opportunities to engage with help, support, and community.

These observations paint a picture of students who may be surviving—completing requirements and progressing toward their degrees—but who are not truly thriving (Schreiner, 2010). According to Schreiner (2010), thriving students are engaged socially, emotionally, and intellectually in college and experience a psychological well-being that contributes to their persistence. Research highlights the role of institutional acculturation in preparing students to engage deeply in their college experience (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2010). In other words, by teaching students what it means to be successful within the culture of the university, the institution may be able to positively impact learning and persistence.

Instead of students assuming everyone else is doing college better, university staff want students to recognize hardships as normal experiences in a successful college journey. Two offices

set out to reframe our students' perspectives on challenge and failure so that the university could better foster a culture that helps students thrive.

INVOLVING STUDENT VOICES IN DEFINING A PROGRAMMATIC SOLUTION

In Summer 2017, the Office for Student Success partnered with Mercer's Research That Reaches Out office to develop a program to normalize common challenges students experience. An informal focus group of undergraduate students provided initial guidance on the topics students were interested in. The group identified a wide range of issues, including romantic relationships, identity crises, and academic setbacks. The underlying theme in students' feedback was a fascination with their professors and a desire to know that their professors could relate to the challenges students face today. Discussions led to the development and launch of Real Talk.

Real Talk is a speaker series in which undergraduate faculty share personal stories of challenges, failure, and growth from their own college journeys. The program takes place monthly in an informal space on campus. Events are marketed to all undergraduates through flyers, social media, and emails, with specific emphasis on reaching first-year students by appealing to instructors of required University 101 courses. Each Real Talk event features an instructor sharing pivotal life experiences and answering questions about successes and challenges that brought the speaker to where they are today. Through their stories, speakers debunk the idea that a successful



Students gather at a Real Talk event to hear a faculty member share personal stories of their own ups and downs in college. Photo courtesy of Di'Nasia Berry, Mercer University.

Instead of students assuming everyone else is doing college better, university staff want students to recognize hardships as normal experiences in a successful college journey.

student does not struggle or need help. Speakers encourage help-seeking behaviors and promote using campus resources for support.

The program employs faculty as speakers in order to address the intimidation or discomfort students may feel when approaching their professors. This strategy also addresses a key concern identified during the early focus group, that students view professors as role models and arbiters of success. By providing a forum through which faculty can connect on a personal level with their students, program coordinators intended to foster opportunities for students and faculty to have meaningful interactions that would improve student development and success.

In the first year of Real Talk 2017-18, speakers told personal stories that included topics such as following nontraditional career pathways; managing changing relationships in the journey to adulthood; negotiating personal goals with family expectations; overcoming academic setbacks; and navigating

the challenges of being a first-generation, low-income student of color. Six events were held in the first year, with attendance averaging around 28 students per event. Future speaker topics are requested by students in an online survey after each event.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF REAL TALK

After each event, staff distribute an online survey to student attendees. The survey asks students to use a 5-point Likert scale to self-assess the impact of the event on their attitudes and perceptions (1 = *significant negative impact*, 5 = *significant positive impact*). Survey questions and the average score for each item are listed in Table 1. Between September 2017 and March 2019, 107 responses were collected (return rate of 39%).

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses by class status. Students report positive impacts on their feelings of connection to faculty, and they also report a high likelihood of applying speakers' advice to their own lives. The biggest difference that emerged was between students' responses about their

Table 1
Perceived Impact of Real Talk on Student Attitudes (N = 107)

Survey question	Average score
Please indicate your overall satisfaction with Real Talk.	4.8
Please indicate the degree to which Real Talk impacted, if at all, the level of connection you feel with Mercer faculty.	4.5
Please indicate the degree to which Real Talk impacted, if at all, your comfort in having discussions with peers about challenges that you face.	4.1
Please indicate the degree to which Real Talk impacted, if at all, your confidence in your ability to navigate challenges that you are currently facing.	4.4
Please indicate the degree to which Real Talk impacted, if at all, your confidence in your ability to navigate challenges that you anticipate facing in the future.	4.4
Please indicate the likelihood that you will use at least one piece of advice, or an approach to a challenge, that you learned from the Real Talk speaker.	4.6

Note. Responses on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = *Significant Negative Impact* and 5 = *Significant Positive Impact*.

Table 2
Average Perceived Impact of Real Talk by Class Year (N = 107)

Student status	Overall satisfaction	Connection with faculty	Discussion with peers	Navigating current challenges	Navigating future challenges	Likelihood of applying advice
First year (<i>n</i> = 47)	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.8
Second year (<i>n</i> = 28)	4.7	4.4	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.5
Third year (<i>n</i> = 22)	4.8	4.6	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.5
Fourth/Fifth year (<i>n</i> = 10)	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.7

Note. Responses on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = *Significant Negative Impact* and 5 = *Significant Positive Impact*.

connection with faculty (relatively higher scores) and their confidence in discussing personal challenges with peers (relatively lower scores). Scores for second- and third-year students, in particular, show the biggest differences between those two data points. It is noteworthy that second-year students consistently rate the impact of Real Talk lower than other students. Additional investigation is needed to explore possible connections between the attitudinal scores for these events and the broader impact of the sophomore slump.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Although the sample size is too limited to identify trends, the data provide key insights into how program design may impact effectiveness. The primary goal of Real Talk is to enhance student engagement and success by normalizing peer-to-peer conversations about challenges in college, yet the data show that the program makes the least impact in the area of peer-to-peer discussion. In reflecting on the data and original goals, staff realized that the program design does not model peer dialogue. Rather, the ability to engage in discussion that requires vulnerability and support is a *learned* skill that should be explicitly addressed. To date, program coordinators have relied on implicit connections.

In light of the insights gained from data analysis, staff are exploring program designs that can support the peer-to-peer dialogue skill development. One opportunity exists in a spinoff program that began in 2018, Real Talk: Student Edition, which provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to speak about personal challenges they face in college. This event takes place annually and features approximately five undergraduate speakers. Students apply to give a five-minute talk about a relevant topic that has affected their growth and experience in college, and a panel of staff and students select the speakers in a competitive application process.

Program coordinators plan to evaluate the impact of Real Talk: Student Edition and compare outcomes from the student- and faculty-focused events. The popularity of Real Talk: Student Edition may also provide a platform for integrating peer communication skill development. Future iterations of the program will also include increasing student engagement in planning, broadening outreach, and exploring strategies to prepare faculty for meaningful talks.

Staff envision Real Talk as a springboard for fostering a cultural shift on Mercer's campus of high-achieving students, moving toward a culture in which failure is embraced as a normal part of growth, help-seeking behaviors are viewed as signs of strength rather than weakness, and no student is alone in the challenges they face. By opening a dialogue that challenges preconceived notions of success, Real Talk seeks to help students engage and thrive.

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<https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20016>

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Using Expressive Writing Activities in a First-Year Seminar to Explore Alcohol and Drug Use

...expressive writing interventions have been shown to be effective at reducing negative health behaviors (Lepore & Smyth, 2002).

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Young adults enter college prepared to learn, explore, and master new skills. However, one aspect many college students lack preparation for is circumnavigating alcohol and drug use. How do I decide what is healthy for me? How do I say no? How might these different substances affect me? These are questions that many students ask themselves but may not know where to find the answers.

At the University of Tennessee (UT), students grapple with these same questions. In 2019, UT was ranked 61 on Niche.com's list of Top Party Schools. Over the past three years, there were 2,339 alcohol- or drug-related arrests or violations involving UT students (University of Tennessee, 2018). According to the latest Annual Health and Wellness Survey (UT Wellness Coordinator, personal communication, August 8, 2019), 59% of all UT students (45% of first-year students) reported that they drink alcohol and 38% of students reported that they have used cannabis in the last year. While UT has numerous campuswide prevention efforts to tackle these issues, I was interested in exploring whether a first-year seminar focused on alcohol and drugs would engage students and help them make healthier decisions.

FYS 129: ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND THE COLLEGE STUDENT

The University of Tennessee (UT) offers a one-credit, pass/no-credit first-year seminar limited to 18 students per section. The goal of FYS 129: Special Topics Seminar is to increase students' sense of belonging at UT, enhance their relationships with other first-year students, and foster supportive relationships

to educate and engage students on the topic of alcohol and drug use. Summarized here are the activities used in the seminar, students' perceptions of these activities, and suggestions for other instructors on how they can incorporate these activities within similar courses.

TALKING ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS: USING EXPRESSIVE WRITING ACTIVITIES

Expressive writing is an activity where an individual is asked to write their deepest thoughts and feelings about a specific experience or topic (Pennebaker & Chung, 2011). Easy to implement (Smyth & Helm, 2003), expressive writing interventions have been shown to be effective at reducing negative health behaviors (Lepore & Smyth, 2002). They are also flexible and can be used in or outside class and in face-to-face and online learning environments.

Throughout the first half of the semester, students in the ADCS section are asked to write in a confidential online journal about alcohol and drug use at UT. They are given the following prompt each week:

Since arriving at the University of Tennessee what has your experience been like in regards to students' alcohol and drug use on campus? Were you surprised by anything? How did these experiences impact you/make you feel?

Students are given instructions that they can write about what they see around them, their perceptions about the topic, as well as their own experiences. They are reminded that while what they write is confidential, if they state that they plan to

"My behavior towards alcohol did change...I will actually take time to process exactly what I [am] doing." —University of Tennessee Student

with faculty (University of Tennessee, 2017-2018). Presently, there are no common learning outcomes for the FYS 129 seminars, nor a common syllabus. Faculty are free to design the course as they see fit and develop learning outcomes that fit a variety of topics, such as SEC football, American Sign Language, and Harry Potter and culture.

Over the past eight years, I have taught a section of FYS 129 titled Alcohol, Drugs, and the College Student (ADCS). The section has three learning objectives: (a) name and define the various types of legal/illegal drugs that college students report using, (b) discuss the negative consequences of overconsuming various legal/illegal drugs, and (c) distinguish myths from facts about various types of legal/illegal drugs. In the seminar, expressive writing activities are used as a way

harm themselves or others I will report it to our university help line. Everything else remains confidential. Each week, class time is devoted to discussing students' reflections, tying them into that week's topic (e.g., alcohol myths, negative consequences of drug use). Each student receives confidential, individual feedback through the school's learning management system (LMS).

At the end of the semester, students are asked to write a paper reflecting on their experiences in the seminar, what they learned, what they wished they had learned more about, and their suggestions for improving the seminar. Again, each student receives individualized feedback.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Currently, there has not been an assessment conducted comparing substance use among students who have completed the ADCS seminar to other students. However, over the course of the eight years, open-ended feedback from course evaluations has generally been positive. When asked if the class activities increased their knowledge about alcohol and drugs, most students reported that it had. For example, one student noted, "The information I learned was quite intriguing because I knew these kinds of drugs existed, but I did not know how drastically it could affect a person." Other students noted that in addition to raising their awareness about negative consequences, it also encouraged them to modify their behavior as evidenced by the following statements:

- "I definitely will take a lot from that lesson and be better in the future when it comes to drinking."
- "I am more informed about the effect. I will be more careful about what I consume."
- "My behavior towards alcohol did change...I will actually take time to process exactly what I [am] doing."

In the course evaluations, students were also asked to provide any additional feedback that they had about the course. Many students appreciated the active-learning approach used within the class as opposed to more lecture-focused courses. One student noted, "Working with the group on the debate made me closer to some of the class."

As evident from the course evaluation comments, I was able to successfully address the learning outcomes for the course by increasing students' knowledge regarding alcohol and drug use and their effects and by enhancing their relationships with other first-year students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Expressive writing activities are relatively easy to include and are adaptable to class size. Prompts might focus on adjusting to college, academic stress, and health and wellness in addition to a range of other topics. Research has shown that expressive writing activities can decrease stress and increase working memory, both of which are related to positive physical and health outcomes (Lepore & Smyth, 2011). Pairing expressing writing assignments with feedback and discussion may amplify their positive impact. Using the campus LMS streamlines the process of offering feedback in a secure environment. Moreover, giving students a safe space within the classroom to discuss challenging topics, ask questions, and hear how others experience those issues can be greatly beneficial.

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Leveraging Residence Hall Assignments to Increase Engagement in a First-Year Seminar

"I like that the students are all from the same floor. They speak more freely in class, and there is a sense of camaraderie." — Rose-Hulman Instructor

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At Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, all incoming first-year students are enrolled in a required, one-credit-hour seminar during their first term. The course is taught by staff who have been at Rose-Hulman for at least a year and have either completed or are enrolled in a graduate program, including three graduate assistants. Instructor training is conducted through a hybrid approach, with both a face-to-face workshop and supplemental materials online. In alignment with the mission to provide individual attention and support, Rose-Hulman leverages a small-group model, enrolling 12-15 students in each of 40 course sections. In theory, these small class sections should provide more opportunity for each student to be engaged, with a more relaxed setting and less ability to hide out in the crowd. However, there has not been any evidence to support this in the past.

Week after week, instructors stood in front of their classes desperately hoping that students would talk or show some form of engagement. As noted by Johnson (2013), evidence of student engagement includes paying attention, taking notes, listening, asking questions, responding to questions, following requests, and reacting. Few of these behaviors were observed in the seminar. In an attempt to prompt student engagement, instructors tried rewarding students with treats, as well as explaining why engagement was important to the learning process. These tactics were not successful. Cold calling was the most effective technique, as it forced students to talk; however, students' responses did not promote an ongoing dialogue.

Through various forms of evaluation, instructors asked for information on "how to handle unresponsive students" and "suggestions for getting students more engaged in the class when they are reluctant to talk." Instructors were not the only ones to notice this issue, as reflected by comments on the student course evaluation:

- "I think participation needs to improve."
- "For the small groups to actually work, the students must contribute more and be more active in the activities."

Aside from the awkward silence, students were missing out on the benefits of engagement, which research suggests may contribute to learning and have a positive impact on course grades and even persistence (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, & Kinzie, 2008). Further, this lack of engagement profoundly impacted course staffing. Several instructors declined to continue teaching the first-year seminar, internalizing the lack of student engagement as a reflection of their teaching ability. With fewer instructors, class sizes started increasing, thus moving away from our mission.

A NEW ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

While common, this lack of engagement was not evident in all first-year seminars. Observations of one section revealed students who easily conversed with each other and with the instructor. What accounted for the difference? One theory: out-of-class connections among the students. Enrollment in this section was limited to students in a living-learning community. Because the students were living together on the same residence hall floor, they were familiar and comfortable with each other prior to beginning the first-year seminar.

In Fall 2015, we conducted a pilot test to determine whether housing assignments could be leveraged to increase engagement in the first-year seminar. First-year students at Rose-Hulman are pre-registered for their fall quarter courses based on their declared major. Student Affairs provided housing assignments and the number of course sections needed; the Registrar's Office created a rule in the scheduling software to place students into a section of the first-year seminar with others living on the same residence hall floor. Academic advisors were made aware of the enrollment strategy and committed to maintaining the residence-based assignments when they met with their advisees during orientation.

Prior to the start of the course, students completed a week-long orientation process with the other residents on their floors. Throughout orientation, students participated in many common activities to familiarize themselves with each other and to promote the development of a cohesive floor identity.

THE RESULT: INCREASED ENGAGEMENT

During Fall 2015, approximately 85% of first-year students were enrolled in a section with others from their residence hall floor. If Fall 2018, residence-based seminar assignments increased to 96%. As part of a larger course evaluation, instructors were surveyed during midterm of the pilot year to identify what aspects of the course were going well. The question was intentionally broad in order to ascertain whether there was a big enough impact for instructors to notice. A number of instructors commented about the increased engagement:

- "The group talks pretty well without me having to really pull teeth."
- "I like that the students are all from the same floor. They speak more freely in class, and there is a sense of camaraderie."
- "Participation in discussions during class time is fruitful."

A focus group was also conducted with students. They reported that having a relationship with their classmates outside class led to more participation in class. With such noticeable success, this course enrollment model has been used for the past four years. Three years ago, a specific question was added to the student course evaluation to determine the helpfulness of being in class with students from their residence hall floor. The percentage of students reporting “extremely helpful” or “very helpful” has remained approximately 75%.

THE FUTURE: PROMOTING THE ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

At the time the new enrollment strategy was piloted, all residence hall floors at Rose-Hulman housed a single gender. As a result, the first-year seminar sections were also single gender. In Fall 2018, Rose-Hulman conducted a pilot with gender-inclusive residence hall floors resulting in two first-year seminar sections that were gender inclusive. Feedback from the instructors indicated that the level of engagement in these sections was similar to, or even higher, than the single-gender sections they have taught in the past. As the institute expands to offer more inclusive living environments, the first-year seminar will become less segregated.

We plan to continue the first-year seminar enrollment strategy moving forward, while emphasizing the potential benefits to

students and faculty. For students, the emphasis will be on leveraging each other as resources, given their close, physical proximity in the residence hall. For instructors, the arrangement can help them get to know the students better. For example, they can visit that floor during move-in day to welcome the students and parents or participate in residence hall events throughout the year.

While our enrollment strategy does not guarantee engagement, building on an already established connection has demonstrated effectiveness. If course assignments based on residence hall floor is not a feasible criteria, institutions might consider other ways to establish connections among students, such as groupings by major. New student orientation may also provide opportunities for helping students get to know one another before classes begin.

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...the arrangement can help [faculty] get to know the students better. For example, they can visit that floor during move-in day to welcome the students and parents or participate in residence hall events throughout the year.

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Building a Successful Partnership Between FYE Instructors and Peer Leaders

*"It was a great guide for our weekly meetings and a checklist for progress in the course."
— LC Faculty, Ohio University*

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First-year experience (FYE) programs such as learning communities (LC), often pair an instructor with an undergraduate peer leader to support student transitions and foster academic success. Interactions between new students and faculty and peer leaders are related to gains in first-year students' sense of belonging, building connections with the campus community, engagement, and persistence in the first year of college (Tinto, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek 2006). If this instructor-peer partnership is not purposefully developed, first-year students may not receive the quality of support and guidance that would be expected. Creating an LC program that includes both instructor and peer leader roles can be challenging and does not automatically result in an effective and successful partnership. Instructors may fail to understand how an undergraduate peer leader can be incorporated into the classroom as the peer's role differs significantly from that of a graduate teaching assistant. Conversely, the peer leader may not be comfortable initiating communication or sharing ideas with the instructor.

At Ohio University, the FYE program uses an LC model where a small cohort of students (20-25) take a common set of courses focused on academic theme or a shared interest. Students enroll in two to four linked courses, including an LC seminar during the fall semester. The courses, with the exception of the LC seminar course, count toward students' general education or major requirements. In each LC, an undergraduate peer leader participates in seminar class discussions and organizes out-of-class activities.

As our LCs expanded to more than 220 communities in the fall semester of 2018, the number of connected instructors and peer leaders also increased, making it challenging to predict or control for the success of any given instructor-peer partnership. As LC staff, we explored ways to build more effective partnerships between our instructors and peer leaders, resulting in the development of The Instructor-Peer Leader Partnership Guide.

In the past, instructors and peer leaders received a partnership worksheet to guide the initial meeting and facilitate the development of a reciprocal relationship benefitting not only the instructor and peer leader, but also the students in the LC. However, instructors seemed to struggle with how to meaningfully incorporate their peer leader into the seminar course, and peer leaders did not always understand their role in the course. It became clear that structured guidance would benefit the instructor-peer leader relationship and the overall success of each LC.

The Partnership Guide was created to help strengthen the relationship between LC instructors and peer leaders, serving



Learning community training, 2019. Photo courtesy of Kate Ryan, BSJ 2020, Ohio University.

as a framework that includes three components: (a) strategies for building a successful relationship, (b) weekly meeting topics with suggested questions and outcomes, and (c) a partnership worksheet. The recommended weekly discussion topics (e.g., preparing for the first class, creating a partnership in the classroom, goal setting, getting to know students, leadership opportunities, and planning out-of-class activities), example questions, and related website links strategically parallel the semester timeline.

Instructors and peer leaders receive a paper copy of the Partnership Guide during their respective trainings, where the creation and purpose of the document is discussed. An electronic copy of the guide is also made available throughout the semester on both the instructor and peer leader Blackboard sites. We added a question assessing the usage of the Partnership Guide to both the instructor and peer leader end-of-semester evaluations.

Despite having a well-established program, we were challenged to create and share the Partnership Guide in a meaningful way that encouraged adoption from faculty and peer leaders across campus.

About three quarters (74%, $n = 164$) of instructors completed the end-of-semester program evaluation. Of those, 56.7% ($n = 93$) indicated they had used the guide during the fall term. The initial response to this supplemental resource was encouraging, though newer instructors were slightly more likely to report using it than more seasoned instructors: 57% of instructors who had been teaching 1-3 years reported using the guide compared to 50% of those who had been teaching for 7 or more years.

Instructor comments highlighted how they used the Partnership Guide:

"It was a great guide for our weekly meetings and a checklist for progress in the course."

"Reminder to set expectations and to meet regularly; to discuss class adjustments and how to engage the group."

"I started to run out of things to talk with my peer leader about as the semester started to wind down, so I referred to the guide for talking points."

Peer leaders offered similar feedback, highlighting the impact of using the guide on their working relationship with the instructor:

"We planned out our preferred communication, what we expected from each other, and our meetings."

"We would use the guide to make sure we covered everything. It helped us get more comfortable working together."

"My instructor always asked for my opinion and delegated tasks to me. I felt needed and respected."

"We used it to work out things in our partnership and to learn how to best work together for our students."

Other responses reinforced the idea that there is still room for growth in the development and implementation of the Partnership Guide, as comments from two instructors make clear:

"I used it to prepare for the semester. I haven't looked at it since the semester started."

"I probably did not use the guide as much because I have been teaching for so long."

Similarly, one peer leader noted, "We used the Partnership Guide very little since I already knew my instructor."

The clearest indicator that additional work was needed to encourage use of the guide was the ever-popular "What partnership guide?" response.

Based on instructor and peer leader evaluations, we arrived at several takeaways. First, we learned that it takes time for new initiatives to become a part of a program's culture. Second, we discovered that the Partnership Guide seemed to help some instructors and peer leaders communicate expectations and co-create common goals, especially in the beginning of the semester. Third, the guide was perceived as being helpful for new instructor-peer leader pairings but less so for those who already knew each other. Lastly, we received fewer complaints from peers and instructors in the first year of implementation. We suspect use of the Partnership Guide resulted in instructors and peer leaders being happier with their relationships than in previous years.

We will continue to update and use the Partnership Guide as well as assess its effectiveness in fostering positive relationships between instructors and peer leaders. One aspect of our ongoing assessment will be to evaluate the visibility of the Partnership Guide on our multiple Blackboard sites and to enhance our promotion of this resource during various trainings. We have also discussed developing a strategic communication plan for highlighting the guide to both instructors and peer leaders throughout the semester.

Even though the Partnership Guide was tailored to our LC program and specific to our campus culture, the structure and weekly discussion prompts could easily be replicated in other programs. The Partnership Guide offers a weekly overview of a program created to assist first-semester students along with the opportunities and challenges that an instructor-peer leader collaboration may face. FYE models that pair instructors with peer leaders could adapt the guide's framework, topics, and resource links for use on any campus.

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"My instructor always asked for my opinion and delegated tasks to me. I felt needed and respected."
— Peer Leader, Ohio University

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E-Source for College Transitions (ISSN 1545-5742) is published three times a year by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. The National Resource Center has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

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Articles on a variety of topics related to student transitions are welcome, including those focusing on

- college transition issues;
- innovative and creative strategies to support student learning, development, and success;
- organizational structures and institutional resources for supporting college success; and
- reviews of books and other resources supporting the work of student success practitioners.

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