

Measuring the Impact of Professional Development
on Community College Faculty and Students

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of practice addressed in this mixed-methods research study is assessing whether participating in professional development workshops helped community college instructors improve their pedagogical practices, leading to improved student success and achievement rates. In this study, I explore the effects of an intervention I designed to help English 101 instructors teach a new, direct-placement composition class, which was created to comply with the mandates of AB-705, an educational reform bill in California. I used three guiding theories to undergird and evaluate the intervention: Darling-Hammond et al.'s Accountability Approach (2014), Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1970), and Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Effectiveness (2009). To address the research questions of this study, I analyzed pre- and post-surveys, faculty interviews, and student success and retention data. The results from the data were mixed. While the quantitative survey data did not support the claim that the College of the Canyons (COC) SkillShare Workshops affected instructors' attitudes about teaching and their teaching behaviors, the qualitative interview data showed that the workshops did improve instructors' professional capacities and were a valuable professional development resource. Additionally, the quantitative institutional data demonstrated that workshop participation significantly increased instructors' student success and retention rates.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the two most important people in my life: my husband, Aram, and my daughter, Olivia. I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Hagop and Mary Terzian, and my brother, Alan, for their unwavering support over the years.

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When I first embarked on this journey, I was in desperate need of something to reignite my passion for education. Having been at my job for 20 years, I was more exhausted than invigorated, more status quo than change maker.

Becoming Department Chair at the start of my EdD program gave me a much-needed boost of energy, and once I applied and was accepted to ASU, my classes and professors gave me the added motivation to improve my professional and personal capacities. I want to thank Dr. Eugene Judson, my dissertation chair, for his thoughtful and generous feedback; he dedicated a great deal of time and effort to my work, and while offering constructive feedback, he allowed my voice to shine. Also, to Dr. Lydia Ross, my dissertation committee member and professor, for helping me understand statistics in a way that I thought was impossible. Your kindness and compassion during a stressful pandemic year were much appreciated. I want to take a moment to especially thank the last member of my committee, Dr. Daylene Meuschke—a mentor, best friend, and visionary. You are one of the last remaining unicorns, and I am so fortunate to be on the receiving end of your bright light.

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The late bell hooks said, “What we cannot imagine cannot come into being.” I imagined myself in this moment, writing these last lines, and I could not be prouder to send this research study into the world.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Constantly improving and refining instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks is perhaps the single most important responsibility of the teaching profession and educational systems as a whole.

—Michael Fullan

Larger Context

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education began tracking the graduation rates of first-time, full-time community college cohorts. Analyzing graduation rates over a ten-year period, the data showed that the three-year completion rates for community college students nationwide was 24% for the 2000 cohort and 20% for the 2010 cohort (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). As a result of this comprehensive study, several key stakeholders, including then-President Barack Obama, began to challenge both educators and institutions to undertake significant reform efforts in order “to have the world’s largest percentage of degree holders by 2020” (Mangan, 2017, para. 7). Other interested parties, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Group, supported Obama’s Completion Agenda, which challenged postsecondary schools to double the number of low-income students earning degrees and to set a goal of having 60% of Americans earn a degree or certificate by 2025 (Mangan, 2017). The purpose of these comprehensive initiatives was to improve college completion rates nationwide, give students the best chance for success in the workforce, and to restore America’s global competitiveness (Mangan, 2017).

In 2019, it was estimated that 1.7 million American college students were placed into basic skills English and math courses, costing them and institutions hundreds of

millions of dollars (Complete College America, 2019). Rodriguez et al. (2017) explain that these basic skills classes, also referred to as developmental or remedial education, cover high school material and are populated by students who were deemed by a placement test to be underprepared. Further, they establish that these basic skills courses do not count toward a degree despite carrying the same tuition costs and are often students' first and last college experiences (Rodriguez et al. 2017, para 1). By placing students in non-transferable courses, colleges are essentially labeling them as *not college material*, resulting in students dropping out or running out of money before completing the college's multi-leveled English and math course sequences (Complete College America, 2019).

Further, many basic skills courses are populated with students of color and low-income students, resulting in disproportionate impact and equity gaps (Complete College America, 2019). To combat this phenomenon, Complete College America (2019) recommended an overhaul of all community colleges' standard remediation systems, using six guiding principles: (a) Purpose, Not Placement; (b) Treat All Students as College Students; (c) Deliver Academic Support as a Corequisite; (d) Allow All Students to Complete Gateway Courses in One Academic Year; (e) Develop Multiple Math Pathways into Programs of Study; (f) Offer Corequisite Support as a Bridge into Programs of Study (Complete College America, 2019). While Complete College America (2019) published these principles in 2019, they were based on recommendations, observations, and lessons learned from national remediation efforts dating back to 2007.

Radical community college remediation reform first began to take shape in New York, Maryland, Tennessee, and Indiana where institutions redesigned their curriculum

and pathways to move students through math and English courses that are transferable to a four-year university more quickly. In 2007, the City University of New York (CUNY) introduced the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and noticed that graduation rates for students in the program doubled when compared to those who did not enroll (Mangan, 2015). ASAP provides a range of support—financial, academic, and personal—to help students earn associate degrees within three years. Also, in Baltimore County, the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), allows students to be mainstreamed into English 101 courses while simultaneously being enrolled in a co-requisite ALP class. While this co-requisite class adds an additional two units of support instruction, it saves students from having to enroll in two separate classes taken over two separate semesters. (Jenkins et al., 2010).

As a result of their scaled-up math and English reforms, Tennessee saw a dramatic uptick in the number of students successfully completing transfer-level math and English courses: while only 31% of students passed their traditional basic skills courses in 2012, 59% passed the new co-requisite courses in 2015 (Smith, 2016, para. 8). These examples of comprehensive education reform and the subsequent favorable findings have paved the path for other states, like California, to begin implementing changes of their own.

In 2017, AB-705, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act was proposed by Assembly member Jacqui Irwin, and it mandated that all California community colleges maximize the probability that students complete transfer-level math and English classes within one year (AB-705, Irwin, 2017). As such, the bill stated that students cannot be placed into remedial courses unless colleges could prove that they will be highly unlikely

to succeed at the transfer-level. The intent of the bill was to ensure that colleges were not deterring or delaying student progress and that students were being treated equitably on their road to graduation.

Beginning in Fall 2019, all California colleges began implementing AB-705 with the understanding that noncompliance would lead to severe penalties, such as losing funding for programs like First Year Promise that pays for a student's first year of college and Pathways, which streamlines students' paths to graduation. To incentivize student-focused outcomes, the new student-centered funding formula awards a supplement for each student who successfully completes English and math transfer courses within one year (Bruno et al., 2019).

AB-705 began to take shape when The California Acceleration Project (CAP), using statewide data from the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP), found that standardized tests, such as Accuplacer, were notoriously under-placing students, thereby having a disproportionate impact on students of color and other historically excluded populations. This equity concern was what compelled the authors of AB-705 to require the use of multiple measures, such as high school grades, GPA, coursework, and SAT scores, among other materials, to determine placement in college English and math classes (California Acceleration, 2019). In fact, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) stated that the Board of Governors would not approve any type of standardized testing, beyond Fall 2019, to determine placement into either English or math, placing the onus on individual departments to develop their own placement rules to comply with AB-705 (California Community, 2018).

In September 2019, a report analyzing the implementation efforts by 47 out of the 115 community colleges in California was released by the Campaign for College Opportunity and the California Acceleration Project. The report examined colleges from three specific regions: the Inland Empire, the Central Valley, and the Greater Los Angeles area. While their findings did not speak to success rates since it was too early in the process, the report did note that the offerings of transfer-level introductory English classes increased from 45% to 88% (College Campaign, 2019). Further, while most colleges were allowing students to enroll directly into transferable, college-level courses, the report determined that there was uneven implementation across colleges, particularly in math departments.

Although AB-705 has allowed campuses to decide how to best implement the mandate to get students through transfer-level math and English courses within a year, the lack of consistency and standardization has both benefits and drawbacks. On one hand, giving schools the autonomy to choose what works best for their student population has multiple advantages: educators take ownership of their decisions and can engage more collaboratively in the reform process. On the other hand, not having consistency and uniformity across the state can lead to uneven implementation and compromised numbers in the collection, analysis, and reporting of data. Over the next five years, as more data are collected and as more campuses continue full-scale implementations, California should have a much clearer picture of how AB-705 has fared.

Local Context

As the English Department Chair at College of the Canyons (COC), a community college in Santa Clarita, California, I was tasked with ensuring that my department

complied with AB-705. To accomplish this, I had to establish a foundation of collaboration; therefore, in Spring 2017, I convened a Multiple Measures Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG), using the principles of Kotter's (2006) eight-step change model to create a community of practice. I hand-picked members based on their current roles in the department and began to pull together the guiding coalition, a group that was comprised of seven full-time faculty members and one adjunct. The primary goal of the Multiple Measures FIG was to determine whether using multiple measures would lead to improved student success and completion rates. From there, we started to develop a change and vision strategy, asked for buy-in from department members and administrative stakeholders, empowered instructors to act, and produced short-term wins, such as moving methodically through the steps to get our new English 101 class approved by both the Office of Instruction and the Curriculum Committee. As we built the new class, wrote the Course Outline of Record, and encouraged open dialogue, we were able to establish what Kotter (2006) calls, "a new culture of collaboration" (p. 3).

After thoughtful inquiry, the Multiple Measures FIG concluded that a change in placement was needed since roughly 16%-37% (depending on the year) of incoming students were being placed by Accuplacer, our former high-stakes placement test, directly into our transfer-level English 101 class. The remaining 63%-84% were directed into our developmental course sequence, at either one or two levels below transfer-level (Manzo et al., 2020). Based on Fall 2017 placement data from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (IRPIE), Latinx and Black students were half as likely to be placed into transfer-level English as their White counterparts. Also, from a sampling of 153 students placed two levels below transfer in 2016-2017,

only 7 succeeded (4.5%) by earning a C or better in the developmental class (Brezina et al., 2016). Taking this institutional data into account, the FIG recommended using multiple measures to place students into our course sequence.

In 2017, one year prior to the passing of AB-705, the English Department voted to use multiple measures to determine placement instead of relying on Accuplacer. During this time, word was spreading about a new assembly bill that would be a game-changer for basic skills instruction in California community colleges. My colleagues, both at COC and neighboring campuses, waved it off as another half-cocked political move to garner favor with voters. During those early rumblings, we never believed the bill would materialize, but as it continued to sail with unanimous votes through the legislation, we began to pay attention (A.B. 705, Irwin, 2017). Ultimately, when it became apparent that AB-705 would be signed into law, we moved through different stages of response at COC: pandemonium and panic, anger and denial, resignation, and finally, cautious optimism. Despite the divisive nature of the legislation, I made a few things clear to the English faculty: it is not up to us to agree with AB-705; it is up to us to create a sustainable system that supports our students to the fullest. I also emphasized that this collaborative process would teach us valuable lessons about pedagogy, the attitudes we harbor, and the ways we can institutionalize change by engaging in action research.

Once the work of the Multiple Measures FIG was completed, in the summer of 2018, I created the AB-705 FIG, which began the difficult task of investigating the parameters of AB-705. This group consisted of the English 101 and 103 coordinators, along with one junior (newly hired) and one senior (tenured for over 20 years) faculty member. The AB-705 FIG reviewed the bill, discussed possible and viable solutions, and

determined next steps. Based on the recommendations of the AB-705 FIG, the English Department voted in Fall 2018 to create a 4-unit English 101 class that all students would be placed into. We added an extra unit to our current 101 class, which included more reading instruction, 45 minutes of extra class time, and enhanced metacognitive and rhetorical analysis. We also incentivized using The Learning Center (TLC) services, offered noncredit support classes, and provided substantial professional development to support students and faculty through this change.

Specifically, to ensure our transfer-level English 101 class, would benefit all students, we proposed using three different services to offer supplemental support: a) TLC; b). noncredit courses; c) Canyons Connects. First, TLC is a hub of activity at COC; they offer tutoring support, Guided Learning Activities (GLAs), and embedded tutors in the classroom. Since one of the members of the AB-705 FIG splits her teaching load between English and TLC, we have always been able to utilize TLC's services to the fullest. Therefore, once again, we were counting on this cooperative relationship to make the transition into our new English 101 class seamless and efficient.

Also, we offered free noncredit courses that students could take for 1.5 hours per week to supplement their learning in English 101. The noncredit instructors worked closely with the AB-705 FIG and with the English 101 coordinators to ensure that the curriculum aligned both in rigor and timing with the major essay assignments. Lastly, we used a program called Canyons Connects, which allowed instructors to reach out to students who had missed classes and assignments; but even more importantly, Canyons Connects gave instructors the opportunity to send out "kudos" for a student's excellent work. After conferring with the system administrator, we were also able to program

Canyon Connects so that English 101 instructors could refer students to the noncredit classes with one click. We were hopeful that this wide range of supplemental services would give students the opportunity to enhance their learning and to succeed in the new transfer-level English course.

As the implementation deadline neared and the new English 101 Course Outline of Record was completed, the AB-705 FIG began considering how to best present the information to faculty members. At this time, we were primarily interested in taking a student-centered approach by strengthening our student support services, enhancing student learning, and making sure students were college-ready. However, our strategy changed after meeting with two of our athletic counselors.

At COC, since the high-touch outreach and support provided to student athletes is so enviable, I thought it would be advantageous to invite two of the athletic counselors to our meeting to help us determine how to best support students in English 101. At one of our strategy sessions, the athletic counselors asked whether the English 101 instructors really believed that students could succeed in our new class. They argued that while boosting student support services was important, students would not be able to succeed without changes in instructor attitudes, behaviors, and buy-in. From that moment on, we began looking at this problem very differently; yes, it was important for us to consider a student's role in the equation, but we realized that it might be even more important to first consider the faculty member's role in the classroom. Typically, most faculty members are so intent on teaching students how to have a growth mindset that they often forget to practice growth mindset themselves, and this premise soon became the foremost item on our English 101 workshop agendas. We reversed our strategy and began

encouraging a new narrative: put the instructors at the center of the reform effort because the athletic counselors made a valid point; without instructors believing in their students' abilities, our efforts, no matter how well-crafted and intentioned, would fail. We also realized that instead of focusing on whether students were college-ready, we needed to make our department ready to serve our incoming students.

As a result, to offer support to instructors in preparation for AB-705 implementation in Fall 2019, the AB-705 FIG created three interventions, including a) monthly Pop-Up Workshops; b) monthly Brown Bag Discussion Sessions; c) personal phone calls or face-to-face check-ins with English 101 instructors. However, in Spring 2020, due to COVID-19, we migrated our courses online and merged the monthly Pop-Up Workshops with the Brown Bag Discussions, creating our weekly COC SkillShare Workshops. At these workshops, two or three instructors shared important tips about relevant topics, including keeping students engaged online, improving grading strategies, creating essay prompts, and making Canvas, COC's online learning management system, shells more interactive.

In my 20 years at COC, I have never faced what Rittel and Webber (1973) refer to as a "wicked" problem, with so many variables and moving parts. As department chair, it is important for me to be a decisive leader—to attack the problem from multiple angles, knowing that the process is cyclical and will demand continuous redefinition. Over the next few years, as we review and interpret the data from this research project and from institutional data, the English Department will begin the process of answering our most pressing question, "Have we done the right thing?"

Problem of Practice and Research Questions

As the current department chair at COC, I am responsible for ensuring that the English Department has proposed an equitable and viable solution to AB-705. Therefore, when it became apparent that AB-705 would be signed into law, the English Department, based on the recommendations of an AB-705 Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG), voted to create a 4-unit English 101 class that all students would be placed into. My problem of practice was two-fold. First, I wanted to determine how faculty reacted to the COC SkillShare Workshops and whether their participation altered their teaching attitudes and behaviors. Second, I wanted to assess how faculty participation affected student success and retention in English 101. To investigate this problem, I constructed three research questions to guide this study:

RQ1. What were instructors' attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops?

RQ 2. How did the COC SkillShare Workshops affect English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes about teaching and (b) their teaching behaviors?

RQ3. How and to what extent did instructor participation in COC SkillShare Workshops affect students' success and retention rates (with a C or better) in English 101?

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

In the educational reform of the new millennium around the world, teachers are regarded as both the objects and subjects of change, thus making teachers' professional development an ever-growing and challenging area.

—Yong Zhao

Introduction

Fullan and Hargreaves (2009) state that change does not always come easily or peaceably, and that “Changing the world begins with a change in ourselves, and then with changes in one another” (p. 5). As COC continues to tackle AB-705, arguably the most comprehensive and controversial educational reform mandate in decades, it is important for educators to keep these sentiments in mind while focusing on the common denominator: student success. Practically, we must be committed to helping our students graduate and become productive members of the workforce, but ideally, we must show them how to leave an indelible mark on society. To accomplish this and to effect systemic change, professional training and accountability must be foregrounded. AB-705 has allowed us to reassess our ineffective assessment and placement systems and to enact actual change from the ground up.

While not enough time has passed for COC to have made any realistic determinations about our response to AB-705, especially considering the impacts of COVID-19, there is ample research demonstrating the importance of professional development in advancing education reform (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2015; Elmore, 2009; Fullan, 2016, Kirkpatrick, 1959; Kirkpatrick & Kayser-Kirkpatrick, 2009). In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual frameworks that

guided my research project: professional accountability, critical pedagogy, and evaluating training effectiveness. I have organized this chapter by first addressing the guiding principles of Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Accountability Approach, Freire's (1969) critical pedagogy, and Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Level Evaluation Model. The latter half of the chapter explains the relevance of these conceptual frameworks in the creation and implementation of the COC SkillShare Workshops.

Conceptual Frameworks

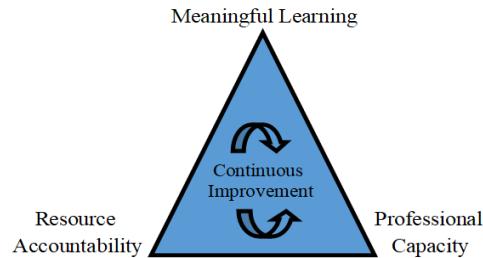
Professional Accountability Approach

In their paper "Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm," Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) present their Professional Accountability Approach, which illustrates our expectations and strategies for learning. Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) argue that genuine accountability is framed around three principles: meaningful learning, resource accountability, and professional capacity. These pillars value reciprocity, capacity-building, multiple measures, and performance.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) contend that educator capacity is a critical measure of professional accountability. They assert that "a more relational accountability is developed when educators act in a professional community with each other," creating a space for faculty to share information, invest in curriculum development, and address challenges in classroom management, instruction, and assessment (p. 10). Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) illustrate their approach as a triangle (Figure 1), with the concept of "continuous improvement" circling each vertex (p. 4). Although each point is vital to the accountability model, my research study focused primarily on the third principle: professional capacity and accountability.

Figure 1

Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach



Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2015) argue that professional capacity and accountability are concepts that often work in tandem to undergird most policy frameworks. In order for systems to operate at optimal levels, stakeholders must continuously assess, refine, and reform existing practices and standards (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2015; Diem et al., 2018; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2014; Malen, 2003; Scott & Jabbar, 2014).

Australian educator Peter Cole (2004) presents an interesting counter-position to Darling Hammond et al.'s (2014) perspectives on faculty development. His first contention is that in our current systems, most professional development “is development for performance (to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes necessary before changes can be made) rather than development of performance (professional learning to support a change in practice)” (p. 3). However, Cole (2004) makes an important distinction between professional learning and professional development. He believes that professional learning is the most helpful variable in driving teacher improvement and that school leaders need to take more responsibility for encouraging a culture of professional learning

within the school. With teacher improvement at the center of education reform, Cole (2004) argues that institutions must turn the lens inward to make meaningful progress.

Comparably, Fullan et al. (2015) in their essay, “Professional Capital as Accountability” explore the concepts of external and internal professional accountability in educational systems. They argue that educational systems heavily invested in external accountability are not showing improvements in their student success rates because their focus is directed outward—to the big picture. Instead, they theorize that internal accountability, looking inward, “must *precede* external accountability if lasting improvement in student achievement is the goal” (Fullan et al., 2015, p. 4). Their five-component accountability framework integrates key ideas from both domestic and international educational systems that have shown marked success in closing student achievement gaps and in raising the bar for educators. These components include: (a) vision and focus; (b) collective capacity and responsibility; (c) leadership development; (d) growth-oriented assessment; (e) system coherence and cohesion (p. 7). Fullan et al. (2015) argue that having an inspiring and inclusive vision is key to implementing a reform effort; specifically, they urge instructors to believe in themselves, their students, and in each other, which, in turn, will lead to collective capacity and responsibility.

Prioritizing internal accountability over external accountability means having a clear, inclusive vision and focus that inspires professionals to want to support change efforts. Most importantly, internal accountability emphasizes collective capacity and responsibility, and by consistently reviewing, assessing, and reflecting, organizations can move closer to achieving system coherence and cohesion.

Similarly, Elmore (2009) in his essay, “Institutions, Improvement, and Practice” argues that when we move the lens of responsibility outward, relying on monitoring and assessment systems that prove institutions are performing in line with societal expectations, we run the risk of creating a pathology of nestedness. Elmore (2009) defines nestedness as the result of outward accountability systems putting pressure on institutions and pushing problems down until there is nowhere left to go. This causes institutional dysfunction through a devolution of responsibility; essentially, everyone passes the buck until the problem lands on the most vulnerable target—faculty. Elmore (2009), like Fullan et al. (2015), posits that school improvement depends on internal accountability and on the development of a *practice*, including, “a shared set of understandings, a body of knowledge, and a set of protocols to develop a broad network of practitioners within schools and across professional networks” (p. 233).

Fullan (2016), in the New Meaning of Educational Change Model, also stresses the importance of professional capital in *whole-system* improvements made to educational institutions. In an updated version of his 1982 Meaning of Change model, which focused on how to get new educational programs to work in practice, Fullan (2016) improved his initial model by addressing the purposeful action taken by change agents to institutionalize education reform. Fullan (2016) states, “Fundamentally, collaborative cultures develop professional capital,” and that “we need teachers who are developing all three components of professional capital: human (quality and qualifications of the individual), social (the quality of the group), and decisional (expert use of evidence and judgment)” (p. 229). His model illustrates that it is the instructor’s

responsibility to refine and improve instructional practice in order to provide students a deeper and more meaningful learning experience.

Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy encourages critical or liberatory education through problem solving, dialogue, praxis, conscientization, and the politics of education (Boyd, 2016). Besides the pedagogically familiar concepts of problem solving and encouraging dialogue, Freire (1970) argues that praxis, the action of how a lesson is applied and practiced, is an important foundational skill that leads directly to conscientization—developing a critical awareness of one's reality. In 1971 Freire wrote that “To be a good educator, you must be convinced that the fundamental effort of education is to help with the liberation of people, never their domestication” (as cited in Shor, 1992, p. 24). Freire's underlying humanistic principle empowers students to shape their own learning by encouraging them to challenge established norms and practices. In this way, Freire (1970) rejects the banking approach to education in which teachers “deposit” knowledge into students and move on; instead, he values active student interactions and dynamic student/teacher relationships.

Through the years, Freire's ideas have been widely used as scaffolding to inform new methodologies and contexts. For example, the emphasis on critical dialogue, critical literacy, and rational thinking have emerged as threads of Freire's pedagogy, refuting goods-based, traditional models of education (Hilton, 2013; Watson, 2016). While many scholars attribute this shift to Dewey's influence, they agree that Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy was instrumental in renouncing the structuralist school model and encouraging “ideology critique, an analysis of culture, attention to discourse, and a recasting of the

teacher as an intellectual or cultural worker” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12). Freire’s (1970) belief that, “We cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become subjects” (hooks, 1993, pp. 145-146) has laid the groundwork for more contemporary movements like Critical Social Theory (CST) and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) (Leonardo, 2004; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Like Freire (1970), Schallert and Martin (2002) believe that learning is an intentional and strategic act made more mindful through engaging in metacognition; this purposeful thinking-about-thinking encourages students to do a deep dive into how learning is shaped. Therefore, if we are teaching them that learning is inherent and fixed, there is no space for reflection or for progression as a consequence of that reflection.

John Searle (1990), an opponent of Freire’s pedagogy, argues that Freire’s brand of critical theory creates “political radicals,” highlighting the antagonistic moral and political grounds of the ideals of citizenship and “public wisdom” (p. 21). Further, Hairston (1992) and O’Dair (2003) both argue that many composition instructors are not qualified to teach complex issues about race, inequities, and injustice. Hairston (1992) states, “Our society’s deep and tangled cultural conflicts can neither be explained nor resolved by simplistic ideological formulas” (p. 179). Similarly, O’Dair (2003) believes that critical theory compositionists are focusing too heavily on ideological issues and are privileging activism over language instruction. O’Dair argues that today’s faculty are more interested in creating student activists by pushing political agendas through their choice of materials than they are on teaching students the basic elements of essay writing. These criticisms condemn Freire’s emphasis on the politics of education, arguing that

students' educational journeys should concentrate on building practical and applicable skills through the acquisition of knowledge.

Kirkpatrick's (1959) Model of Training Effectiveness

In 1959, Kirkpatrick first published his Four Level Evaluation Model, which assessed how well training programs were achieving their intended purpose by using a range of feedback points. Kirkpatrick's (1959) four levels each represent an integral part in measuring training effectiveness and have been widely used by professionals who understand the benefits of feedback and whole-system improvement (Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick, 2009).

Level 1: Reaction. In level 1, Kirkpatrick (1959) focuses on the degree to which participants react favorably to the training. He considers this level to be about *customer satisfaction* and contends that for the training to attract new participants, it must get a positive reaction from its trainees. To evaluate participants' reactions after a training, Kirkpatrick (1959) devised a five-step guide: (a) determine what you, as the trainer, want to know; (b) create a questionnaire detailing the information you, as the trainer, want to know; (c) design the questionnaire so that it may be tabulated and quantified; (d) allow participants to write in qualitative, open-ended comments that will supplement quantitative data. Kirkpatrick's (1959) pragmatic approach helps trainers synthesize participants' perspectives on and attitudes about their experiences with the training sessions.

Level 2: Learning. While level 1 measures whether participants enjoyed and responded positively to a training, it does not assess whether any true learning has taken place. Therefore, Kirkpatrick's (1959) level 2 focuses on the degree to which participants

acquire the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes presented at the training. Kirkpatrick (1959) argues that the more favorable the reaction, the more likely participants are “to pay attention and learn the principles, facts, and techniques that are discussed” (p. 50). It is challenging to measure learning because of the many forms it can take, but Kirkpatrick (1959) introduces central guideposts for evaluating the amount of learning that takes place. First, participant learning must be measured quantitatively, using a before-and-after method of inquiry. Also, learning should be measured on an objective level, and whenever possible, a control group who is not receiving the training should be used to make comparisons. Finally, Kirkpatrick (1959) argues that the evaluation results should be analyzed statistically to prove that learning has occurred.

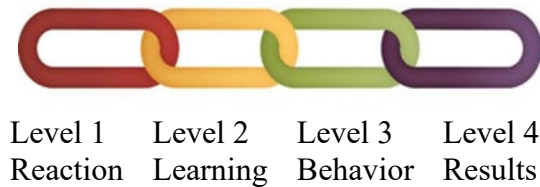
Level 3: Behavior. In level 3, Kirkpatrick’s (1959) model measures the degree to which participants apply what they learned during the training upon returning to work. Kirkpatrick (1959) recognizes that there is a big difference between acquiring knowledge and applying it to the workplace and explains that measuring becomes considerably more difficult as participants move through each level of the model. To evaluate level 3, Kirkpatrick (1959) references Katz’s (1956) five basic requirements for changing one’s behavior to illustrate how a trainee can transition from learning to application. Katz (1956) lists these requirements as participants’ (a) wanting to improve; (b) recognizing their own weaknesses; (c) working in permissive climates; (d) getting help from other interested and skilled people; (e) having opportunities to innovate.

Level 4: Results. The final level in Kirkpatrick’s (1959) model assesses the degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the subsequent reinforcements. Kirkpatrick (1959) argues that results are the final outcomes of what

participants have learned and applied from the trainings they have attended. Kirkpatrick (1959) contends that for a training to be successful, organizations must identify the results they are seeking and must be aware that some results are intangible, like increased customer satisfaction, intellectual capacity, and employee morale. When all four levels are measured, Kirkpatrick's (1956) Chain of Evidence (Figure 2) is established, proving or disproving the value of the training.

Figure 2

Kirkpatrick's Chain of Evidence



In critiquing Kirkpatrick's (1956) Four Levels Evaluation Model, Reio et al. (2017) introduce similar training models, such as Bushnell's (1990) input, process, output (IPO) and Holton's (2005) three level HRD evaluation. Bushnell (1990) contends that Kirkpatrick's (1959) model ignores what happens during the training process; instead, it focuses exclusively on what happens after the training. While the IPO Model does borrow certain elements of Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Levels Evaluation Model, it extends its reach by attempting to show the worth of the training in financial terms. Further, Holton (2005), the most vocal critic of Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Levels Evaluation Model, argues that Kirkpatrick (1959) failed to describe the casual relationship between the four levels; instead, he categorizes Kirkpatrick's (1959) work as taxonomy that lacks the research to further the concept of evaluation. Interestingly,

however, neither model has had the widespread use of Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Levels Evaluation Model (Bomberger, 2003).

Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's (2009) New World Kirkpatrick Model

In 2009, Donald Kirkpatrick's son and daughter-in-law updated and reimagined Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Level Evaluation Model. To each level, Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick (2009) contributed new world additions that modernized the approach to training evaluation (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2020). While the original level 1 focuses exclusively on measuring participant reactions, the New World Kirkpatrick Model adds two components to update the model: *engagement*—the degree to which participants are actively involved in the learning experience and *relevance*—the degree to which participants have the opportunity to apply what they have learned to their workplace (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2020).

Secondly, Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick (2009) add *confidence* and *commitment* to level 2, which originally focused primarily on knowledge, skill, and attitude. In level 3, the concept of *required drivers* has been added, encouraging the use of systems that reinforce, encourage, and incentivize critical behaviors in the workplace (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2020). Finally, in level 4, Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick (2009) add *leading indicators*, which are defined as, short-term observations and measurements that assess whether behaviors are on track to create a positive impact (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2020).

Relevance of Frameworks to Problem of Practice

The English Department at COC is comprised of 20 full-time and 58 adjuncts faculty members. Many adjunct faculty spend very little time on campus and are often

too busy to participate in departmental business; therefore, instilling a sense of accountability, ownership, and shared governance among faculty is very important.

In Spring and Summer 2019, prior to AB-705 implementation, the AB-705 FIG created a six-hour English 101 faculty training to help instructors understand and acclimate to the changes made to the English 101 Course Outline of Record. This initial training relied heavily on the concepts of critical pedagogy, capacity, and professional accountability (Freire, 1970; Darling-Hammond et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2015; Fullan et al.; 2015, Fullan, 2016).

Schallert and Martin (2002) contend that students' motivation seems to be linked to their perceptions of themselves as learners. At the start of the initial six-hour English 101 training, the AB-705 FIG members upended this idea by referring to the lessons we had learned from the athletic counselors: before instructors could focus on student attitudes, motivation, and achievement, they needed to first examine their own core belief systems. Faculty had to understand their own attitudes—did they believe in the course, in AB-705, and in their students? They had to consider their own motivations—were they actively trying to prove the legislation wrong and, in turn, derailing the reform effort? Finally, they had to examine their own achievement—had they used best practices to create a space of shared learning and collaborative inquiry? We asked instructors to reflect on these questions as we moved through the English 101 training. Further, since AB-705 demanded a full-system reform, we had to begin by turning the lens away from the politics of the reform effort (outward) to the policies and practices of our department (inward).

Our six-hour training focused extensively on Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy by highlighting relationship building, metacognition, student empowerment, and cooperation. Our breakout sessions included strategies for addressing the affective domain through Freire's (1970) concepts of praxis, dialogue, and problem solving. We also offered instructors sample collaborative learning activities, critical thinking exercises, and metacognitive assignment prompts to help them shift the learning process from the teacher to the student, all foundational principles adopted from Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy.

COC SkillShare Workshops

Three years after AB-705 implementation, it is now more important than ever to adopt systems of internal assessment and accountability that support the learning of faculty and students. As a department, we are responsible for creating an equitable and engaging classroom environment that is responsive to the needs of every student regardless of ability. Reassessing and redesigning our existing English curriculum and pathway have been the most challenging aspects of this journey; however, implementing a strong professional development program that foregrounds both personal and professional accountability has allowed us to get many critical conversations started.

One of the ways we modified our existing systems was by adopting Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach, which contends that genuine accountability strives to encourage deeper levels of learning for students, instructors, and the system as a whole by "triggering the intelligent investments and change strategies that make it possible to achieve such expectations" (p. 4). Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) state that the primary purpose for creating an accountability

system is to produce meaningful learning that improves educational opportunities and outcomes for students.

Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach helped us create meaningful and sustainable learning opportunities for our students by focusing on building faculty capacity and skill sharing. To accomplish this, we invited instructors, who have been excelling in a particular area, to share their successes with their colleagues. These professional development workshops have allowed the English Department to establish a collaborative and dynamic space of teaching and learning, echoing Fullan et al.'s (2015) guiding philosophy that inviting faculty to shape, lead, and renew the overall vision and standards of practice “will increase the likelihood of ownership, a better solution, and sustainability” (p. 8).

From the start, it was clear that for our English 101 class to be successful, we needed faculty buy-in. When educators take on “personal and collective responsibility” for student success, it can create a community of practitioners who strive for excellence (Fullan et al., 2015 p. 4). All five of Fullan et al.'s (2015) components, to differing degrees, have been used in the development of the COC SkillShare Workshops, but we have relied most heavily on collective capacity and responsibility, leadership development, and system coherence (p. 4). Since collaboration is at the heart of Fullan et al.'s (2015) accountability approach, our COC SkillShare Workshops offered instructors a place to share their best practices, exchange teaching materials, and recommend practical tips for success.

Another guiding principle of the COC SkillShare Workshops was Elmore's (2009) development of practice, including establishing a shared set of understandings, a

body of knowledge, and a set of protocols. It was imperative for the English Department to not atomize our program by creating isolated sets of practices. Instead, we needed to collaborate and innovate and, most importantly, we needed to forgo old standards and habits. Ultimately, we agreed that any decisions made about the future of this class would be data-driven, and that we would not create nested systems by making research, policy, and practice self-interested enterprises.

Darling-Hammond et al.'s, (2014), Fullan et al.'s (2015) and Elmore's (2009) accountability approaches encourage faculty investment and responsibility, which played an important role in determining whether the COC SkillShare Workshops were successful. AB-705 demanded that we engaged these essential steps because success must be measured not by just the course outcomes but by the outcomes of the entire system. If we properly structured our professional development workshops to meet the constructs of innovative adaptive systems, it would improve our chances for success.

During Cycle 1 of three cycles of my research project, to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, I began integrating Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy into our weekly COC SkillsShare Workshops, focusing on topics like student engagement, supporting faculty in times of change, shifting the power dynamic in the classroom, and student empowerment. Advocates of critical pedagogy insist that teachers, then, must become learners alongside their students, as well as students of their students (Gruenwald, 2003). Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy encourages instructors to flip classrooms and foreground student learning, which were also the primary objectives of the COC SkillShare Workshops. As we continue to offer these professional development

opportunities, the COC SkillShare Workshops have evolved according to the needs and desires of the instructors.

Application of Kirkpatrick's Model to COC's SkillShare Workshops

Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Level Evaluation Model offered practical ways to determine whether COC's SkillShare Workshops were meeting their intended goals and objectives: to improve student success and retention rates. There are many challenges associated with assessing the effects of professional development efforts as little empirical research exists on how to accurately measure the direct effects of professional development on student achievement and success (Yoon et al., 2007). However, by integrating the five principles of Kirkpatrick and Kayser- Kirkpatrick's (2009) New World Model, the process of conducting effective evaluations of professional development can be streamlined.

Kirkpatrick and Kayser- Kirkpatrick (2009) explain that Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four Level Evaluation Model was often misinterpreted and misrepresented as a pyramid, implying that level 1 was the most important while level 4 was the least. In their update, they clarify that the model must be represented as equal links in a continuous chain. In fact, their first principle, "The End is the Beginning," suggests that the model "should be used upside down, starting with determining the desired Level 4 Results" (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick-Kayser, 2009, p. 84). They believe that having a clearly defined target and focus is the necessary first step in establishing any training program. For the purposes of my work, the AB-705 FIG has set multiple goals for our COC SkillShare Workshops, the most pressing of which is increasing faculty capacity to improve student success and retention rates.

In this chapter, I have outlined the guiding conceptual frameworks and research that have influenced my work. Both accountability and critical pedagogy served as cornerstones in building my intervention, and the Four Levels Evaluation Model has given me a workable, practical approach in assessing its effectiveness and sustainability. In chapter 3, along with outlining my methods, I describe how I used Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick-Kayser's (2009) Four Levels Evaluation Model to evaluate the COC SkillShare Workshops.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students.

—Thomas R. Guskey

Introduction

The methods for this action research dissertation were designed to determine whether faculty participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops impacted instructors' attitudes and behaviors, resulting in improved student success and retention rates in English 101. The central principles of action research involve encouraging change in school programs or policies through a democratic process, empowering collaboration, transforming teachers into change agents, and encouraging metacognition (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2020). These principles played a foundational role in the creation and management of my intervention, the COC SkillShare Workshops. In this chapter, I describe the setting, participants, and my role as researcher while examining my intervention from two lenses: the effects on instructors and the consequent effects on students.

Due to the nature of my intervention and my operational timeline, I collected data over the course of one year. I implemented my intervention and collected pre- and post-survey data in Spring 2021. In Summer 2021, I conducted my one-on-one interviews, and in Fall 2021, I collected institutional student success and retention data. Since my research questions relied upon instructors having completed the COC SkillShare Workshops, participants needed to attend the workshops before I could conduct my

interviews and collect student success and retention data. For these reasons, my study deviated from the traditional Doctorate in Education (EdD) timeline of implementing my intervention and collecting data in one semester.

Setting

The setting of this study is COC in Santa Clarita, California, where I serve as the English Department Chair. The campus offers 170 associate degrees and certificate programs and serves 32,000 students per year, 36% of whom are full-time (COC Program Planning, 2018/2019). The college is a Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI), with 46.8% of its student body being full-time equivalent Hispanic undergraduates (COC Program Planning, 2018/2019). The institution prides itself on its innovative excellence, community partnerships, and student success (defined as a student earning a course grade of C or better). Over the past four fall semesters, student success rates have declined considerably (from 76% in 2017 to 63% in 2020) while retention rates have kept relatively steady at 85% (Saxena et al., 2021).

In the English Department, it is important to note a few interesting data points over the last two years. In 2018, after implementing multiple measures, 75% of students were placed into English 101, and then, in 2019, to comply with AB-705, 100% of students were directly placed into English 101 (Manzo et al., 2020). Understandably, the volume of students taking English 101 dramatically increased; therefore, it was not surprising to see a 38% increase in English 101 completers (from 1294 to 1786). Further, because of the radical nature of our reform, we also expected to see an overall drop in student success rates (Saxena et al., 2021). It is notable that while student success rates in

English 101 may have dropped, throughput has increased with more students moving on to the next course in the sequence.

Participants

The participants were drawn from a pool of 29 English 101 instructors; 18 responded to the pre-survey, 15 responded to the post-survey, and 13 responded to both. The participants were full-time and adjunct faculty members with a wide range of teaching experience. The most experienced faculty member was a full-time instructor who had been teaching at COC for 25 years while the least experienced faculty member was a full-time instructor in the second year of her tenure process. It is worth noting that while all English 101 faculty members were invited to participate in the study, not all attended the COC SkillShare Workshops. Since attendance was voluntary, the number of participants varied week to week. Further, eight faculty members, who participated in the COC SkillShare Workshops, were invited via email to participate in one-on-one interviews. From the eight invitations sent, six instructors responded and agreed to be interviewed. I intentionally included both adjunct and full-time and senior and junior faculty members to get a wider range of responses. I refer to these faculty members as Instructors A-F when discussing the results of my study in Chapter 4.

Role of the Researcher

In my action research study, I took on the dual role of participant and participant observer to answer my research questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2020). Mertler (2020) notes that a participant observer takes on a more active role in the context of the setting and has a greater opportunity to learn firsthand what is happening in that setting. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) add that a participant observer is an “insider,”

who has unique access to see experiences from the participants' points of view (p. 214). In the qualitative application of my study, I was both an observer and a participant observer during the COC SkillShare Workshops where I led, participated in, and observed the workshops as they were being conducted. Depending on the topic of the week, I took on a changing observational role and adapted to the situation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). For example, on certain occasions, when I had something noteworthy to contribute, I joined the conversation; other times, I stayed in the background and took notes. On a few occasions, I co-led the workshops with other FIG members.

Intervention

Foundational Research

The COC SkillShare Workshops encouraged instructors to participate, collaborate, and cooperate with all stakeholders, including students, colleagues, and administrators (Fullan et al. 2015; Freire, 1970; Lortie, 1975). Fullan et al. (2015) state that the participation of instructors and school leaders in shaping and refining their practices increases the likelihood of success and sustainability. This philosophy was embedded in every iteration of the English 101 professional development workshops we offered.

Further, the COC SkillShare Workshops aimed to minimize the feelings of isolation instructors experienced in and out of the classroom, especially for adjunct faculty who were often commuting from campus to campus. In Lortie's (1975) study of schoolteachers, he identifies three important ideas that were foundational to the creation of the COC SkillShare Workshops: (a) teachers often struggle with their problems in isolation, apart from their colleagues; (b) teachers do not see themselves as "sharing a

viable, generalized body of knowledge and practice” (p. 79); (c) teachers are uncertain of the difference they are making. Lortie’s (1975) study was published 45 years ago, but Fullan (2016) has determined that the “autonomous isolation” and uncertainty teachers feel have only gotten worse, creating barriers to learning (p. 103). Although the sudden and unexpected isolation due to COVID-19 cannot be categorized as “autonomous,” it has still resulted in instructors experiencing the same adverse consequences.

Additionally, building capacity and improving professional accountability were foundational to the creation and outcomes of the workshops and must be independently defined. First, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) classify educator capacity as a continuous process of learning and building expertise. They contend that good professional development helps instructors develop “sophisticated forms of teaching” to support the increasingly complex skills students are asked to demonstrate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. v). During the COC SkillShare Workshops, instructors were presented with new pedagogical approaches that were intended to build their capacity and to improve their classroom teaching practices.

Second, according to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), capacity building is a critical outcome of professional accountability. If instructors take personal responsibility for the advancement of their own teaching and learning, they are practicing accountability. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) contend that a paradigm for accountability is needed, one that fosters investment in “a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement at all levels of the system,” including “high-quality preparation, induction, and professional development” (p 9). During the COC SkillShare Workshops,

educators were asked to participate and collaborate with one another to improve their teaching and learning, thereby, investing in the outcomes of the students they serve.

Evolution of Intervention

First Iteration: Six-hour, One-Time Training. To ensure instructors were prepared for AB-705 implementation in Fall 2019, the AB-705 FIG created a six-hour, one-time, required training to help faculty transition from our former course sequence (pre-AB-705) to our updated course sequence (post-AB-705).

At the start of my research project, I co-led three, six-hour English 101 training sessions, offered in Spring and Summer 2019, which focused extensively on practicing a growth mindset, building professional capacities, and strengthening relationships. Our agenda addressed the new components of the English 101 class, including how to make the most of TLC's resources, how to integrate affective domain in the classroom, how to improve rhetorical analysis instruction, and how to cultivate stronger instructor-to-student relationships.

Prior to AB-705 implementation, 59 out of all 63 English instructors (nearly 94%) had taken one of the six-hour training sessions and understood the English 101 Course Outline of Record revision (Terzian-Zeitounian, personal attendance log, 2019). Offering this extensive training to the same instructors in my subsequent research cycles was not feasible because of the time commitment and replication of ideas; therefore, the AB-705 FIG decided to create monthly, in-person Brown Bag Discussion Forums that addressed the immediate problems instructors were facing in their classes.

To assess whether the one-time trainings were effective, during Cycle 0 of my research study, I interviewed three faculty members who were teaching English 101 and

three students who were taking English 101. For faculty, the results indicated that professional development in classroom management was needed to help instructors cope with the changes in students' behaviors due to a lack of maturity. For students, the results showed that it was important for instructors to provide a nurturing environment while giving students the tools they need to advance.

Second Iteration: Monthly Brown Bag Discussion Forums. After completing my Cycle 0 data collection, I realized that trying to tackle the effectiveness of both student support services and faculty outreach efforts in one research study was too broad and far-reaching. Therefore, for my Cycle 1 project, I began by identifying the core purpose of my study: were our faculty professional development and outreach efforts effective in helping instructors teach our new English 101 class, and consequently, were these efforts leading to improved student success and retention rates?

In Fall 2019, the AB-705 FIG created monthly, in-person Brown Bag Discussion Forums, which foregrounded sharing best practices, creating supportive teaching and learning conditions, and encouraging honest dialogue. These workshops marked the second iteration of my intervention. Our intention was to foster mutual engagement by participating in thoughtful discussions about course curricula, student equity, and collaborative practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014; Freire, 1969; Fullan et al. 2015).

Members of the AB-705 FIG led the monthly meetings, which were structured like open-ended, informal, round table discussions that focused on improving student engagement and providing faculty support. Specifically, a few of the topics for the Brown Bag Discussion Forums included, How to Make English 101 More Accessible to Students of Varying Abilities, How to Compassionately Make Noncredit Referrals, and

How to Improve Student Engagement. We also discussed having a shared goal (making our English 101 class successful), reviewing our shared experiences of English 101 (reflecting on our former class), and developing interpersonal relationships (remembering we are all in this together).

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts to offer the forums at different times of the day and on varying days of the week, attendance never surpassed five instructors and, ultimately, the intervention did not produce the results we were anticipating.

Due to COVID-19 and the emergency migration to online instruction, many of the Spring 2020 action items in my Cycle 1 research plan were either postponed or modified. While I was able to complete my tasks scheduled in February 2020, several of the tasks in March 2020 needed to be amended. Fortunately, I was able to meet my goal of interviewing 6 faculty members. I conducted three semi-structured face-to-face interviews prior to the transition; I also conducted three more semi-structured interviews via Zoom (2021) after the transition. The data collected from these interviews revealed several prevalent themes: 1) Instructors appreciated the extra 45 minutes of in-class time. 2) Teaching students with varied skill levels was a major challenge 3) Collaborating with others was the most important factor in our outreach and professional development offerings 4) Retaining and engaging students has become even more a challenge after migrating to online instruction.

Project Intervention: COC SkillShare Workshops. In Spring 2020, because of COVID-19 and our migration to online teaching, our Brown Bag Discussion Forums evolved once again. In this iteration, the AB-705 FIG created the COC SkillShare Workshops, which is the primary focus of this research study.

During Cycle 2 of my research study, as instructors were struggling to adjust to the new normal, I held weekly unofficial department meetings via Zoom (2021) to make instructors feel less isolated and anxious. At first, the meetings were a safe space to discuss challenges, ask questions, and voice frustrations and fears. However, as the weeks passed, I realized that these meetings would be an ideal place to share pedagogical tips, offer advice, and highlight best practices for online teaching. Therefore, in Fall 2020, on the Monday afternoons that we did not have official department or School of Humanities meetings, we created the COC SkillShare Workshops and offered six workshops that highlighted topics relevant to distance education. In Spring 2021, these workshops were my project intervention and signaled the beginning of my final cycle of action research.

The topics of the workshops were determined by faculty who were asked to select six options from a list ([Table 1](#)). It was important for faculty to guide this decision-making process because we wanted them to take ownership of and feel accountable for their own teaching and learning practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014; Fullan et al., 2015). The faculty learning outcomes from these workshops were grounded in the principles of Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Accountability Approach, Fullan et al.'s (2015) accountability as professional capital, and Freire's (1969) critical pedagogy as presented in chapter 2.

Table 1*COC SkillShare Workshop Options Spring 2021*

Possible Workshop Topics Spring 2021	Supporting Research & Learning Outcomes
Peer Review Online: Two instructors will guide a discussion on how to set up and lead peer review through Canvas.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Student Engagement: Humanizing the Online Experience: Two instructors will share ideas on how to best engage students in an online format. They will provide tips for humanizing the course to improve the student experience.	Improving student engagement and building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Canvas Shell Showcase: Two instructors will share their Canvas Course Shells to demonstrate how others can create an organized, accessible, and user-friendly student experience.	Improving student engagement, collaboration, and equity.
Using Open Educational Resources (OER): One instructor will review the new English 101 OER text and will offer tips on how to best integrate it in the coursework.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Feedback for TLC: Two TLC representatives will give an update on current TLC offerings and will ask instructors for feedback to improve both student and faculty experiences at the TLC.	Building instructor capacity, gathering data, and encouraging professional accountability.
Essay Prompt Exchange: Instructors will be asked to bring a prompt and to share it with others in the workshop. Participants will reflect on how to write and design effective essay prompts.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Having a Growth Mindset: AB-705 FIG members will address ways in which positive psychology will lead to an	Building instructor capacity and encouraging collaboration.

Possible Workshop Topics Spring 2021	Supporting Research & Learning Outcomes
improved classroom experience for both instructors and students.	
Building stronger student relationships: AB-705 FIG members will discuss strategies for building relationships with students that encourage high touch practices, such as regular contact, community building, and personalization.	Building instructor capacity and encouraging professional accountability.

To determine how to refine the COC SkillShare Workshops for Spring 2021, we used Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick’s (2009) New World Model, focusing on reaction, learning, behavior, and results. Based on participant feedback, we continued to emphasize strategies for teaching online, but we lessened the number of presenters and made the workshops more discussion based. As we transition to in-person instruction in the coming semesters, we will also offer workshops on returning to the classroom while managing pandemic constraints. It is important to note that the COC SkillShare Workshops were open to all English instructors; since we no longer offer basic skills classes, most instructors will eventually teach English 101 and will need to understand the Course Outline of Record.

Research Design

To answer my research questions, qualitative and quantitative data was collected simultaneously, given equal emphasis, and triangulated. The triangulation mixed-methods design allows researchers to combine the strengths of each form of data and to determine if the data yield similar and/or complementary results (Mertler, 2020). These data directly addressed my research questions by offering insights on whether the COC

SkillShare Workshops were influencing faculty attitudes and behaviors, and consequently, if their participation affected their students' success and retention rates.

Variables

The independent variable in my study was the COC SkillShare Workshops while the dependent variables were instructors' attitudes about participating in the workshops (RQ1), their attitudes about teaching and their teaching behaviors in the classroom (RQ2), and the consequent effects on student success and retention rates (RQ3).

In this study, instructors' attitudes were assessed in two distinct ways: instructors' overall perceptions of the COC SkillShare Workshops and their attitudes about teaching and learning pre- and post- participating in the workshops. These issues were addressed in my first two research questions: RQ1: *What were participants' attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops?* and RQ2: *How did the COC SkillShare Workshops affect English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes and (b) teaching behaviors?* To answer RQ2b, I defined teaching behaviors as the extent to which instructors increased student engagement, including assigning active learning strategies, encouraging dialogue, and creating a supportive and reciprocal learning environment.

To further clarify, *retention rates* referred to the proportion of students who persevered through the completion of the course as compared to the number of students who initially enrolled. Unfortunately, this study's purview did not extend into investigating the complex reasons why students do not persist. Instead, to identify retention, I used enrollment numbers from COC's institutional data to determine how many students registered for English 101 in Fall 2021 versus how many completed it.

Further, as previously noted, *student success* was operationalized as earning a C or better in a class, which allows a student to move to the next step in the English course sequence.

Instruments and Data Collection

Pre-Survey

To address my first two research questions regarding instructors' attitudes and teaching behaviors, pre/post surveys (Appendices A & B) were distributed to all English 101 faculty members. I created unique identifiers in Qualtrics for both the pre- and post-survey to facilitate matching respondents' answers, ensure anonymity, and preserve the validity of the study.

The pre-survey ([Appendix B](#)) had 14 questions; three used a 5-point Likert scale, eight were multiple-choice, and three allowed for open-ended responses. The survey began with four multiple-choice questions, asking instructors to indicate their full-time or part-time status, the number of years they have taught English 101, how many sections of English 101 they were teaching in Spring 2021, and the format of their class (100% Online or OnlineLive: virtual class meetings through Zoom).

The pre-survey measured faculty attitudes about teaching (RQ2a) and teaching behaviors (RQ2b) in several categories: student-to-student engagement, student-to-instructor engagement, and professionalism of teaching. Questions about student-to-student engagement asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with statements, such as, "In-class, student-to-student discussions are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101." Questions about student-to-instructor engagement asked instructors to indicate their level of agreement with statements like, "Students generally appreciate the feedback I provide on their written

assignments” and, “Regular in-class engagement between students and instructors helps students learn.” Likert-scale items were rated on a five-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

To address teaching behaviors (RQ2b), faculty indicated their frequency of practices. For example, instructors were provided statements like, “How often do you assign collaborative work in your English 101 class?” and, “In a typical week, how often do you give students the opportunity to provide you feedback about your teaching?” Instructors selected from *never*, *one class session*, or *two class sessions*.

Lastly, the survey asked instructors to elaborate on student-to-student engagement, student-to-instructor engagement, and professionalism of teaching in open-ended text entry questions. In this section, a sampling of questions included, “Please add anything more you would like to share about student-to-student or student-to-instructor classroom engagement in English 101” and, “Please add anything more you would like to share about the profession of teaching and collegiality.”

The pre-survey was administered to 29 English 101 instructors in February at the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester. I solicited participation, and instructors were given two weeks to complete and submit their responses. I sent two follow-up reminders, asking instructors to complete the survey.

Post-Survey

Once the last COC SkillShare Workshops was offered in June 2021, I distributed a post-survey ([Appendix C](#)) to English 101 faculty. In addition to the 14 pre-survey questions, the post-survey asked instructors if they attended the COC SkillShare Workshops. If they marked *yes*, the survey directed them to answer eight more questions

for a total of 22 questions. The first three were multiple-choice, asking how many and which of the COC SkillShare Workshops instructors attended and whether they found the workshops helpful. The survey concluded with two open-ended text entry questions:

“What was the most useful and valuable thing you learned at the COC SkillShare Workshops?” and, “What can the AB-705 Faculty Inquiry Group do to improve the COC SkillShare Workshops?”

I sent the post-survey to instructors at the end of May 2021 with instructions to complete and submit their responses within two weeks. Once again, I sent two reminder notices to prompt instructors to complete the survey.

Faculty Interviews

In Summer 2021, to better determine faculty attitudes and behaviors, I conducted six one-on-one interviews with English 101 faculty members who attended at least one COC SkillShare Workshop. To answer my first research question, I composed seven interview questions ([Appendix D](#)) that attempted to determine the usefulness and value of the COC SkillShare Workshops. Faculty were asked to describe the COC SkillShare Workshops they attended and to assess the impact on their attitudes and behaviors related to teaching. Also, they were asked to reflect on the question, “Can you identify one specific skill you learned and applied from your participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops?” These questions were used to measure the efficacy and viability of the COC SkillShare Workshops in impacting instructors’ attitudes and behaviors.

The semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted via Zoom. I took a phenomenological approach in my interviews in order to understand the social phenomena from the participants’ own experiences and perspectives (Brinkmann &

Kvale, 2015). The interview questions illustrated the epistemological conception of “knowledge construction” or as Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) state, “the interviewer as a miner” (p. 57). As such, the interviewer digs out facts and feelings from research participants’ “pure experiences” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 48).

Institutional Data

I requested two fall semesters of institutional data on student success and retention rates for each English 101 instructor to determine if there were any significant differences in English 101 instructors’ student success and retention rates pre- and post-participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops. Since student population size and designations (most students enrolled in the fall semester) differed from fall to spring, it was important, for the validity and reliability of my study, to analyze data from comparable semesters, i.e., only fall semesters. Specifically, I compared Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 data to keep my analysis more consistent. First, I conducted a pre-to-post workshop comparison for students enrolled in sections with instructors who participated in the workshops. Second, I compared the success and retention rates of English 101 students enrolled in classes taught by instructors who participated in the workshops with students’ success and retention rates of instructors who did not participate; these comparisons were made both before and after workshop participation. To take a closer look at success rates, I also compared instructors’ fail and withdrawal grades from Fall 2019 and Fall 2021.

Data Analysis

First, to address instructors’ attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops (RQ1), I analyzed quantitative survey data through SPSS. I provided descriptive statistics

from the Likert data, including measures of central tendency and variability, to determine how instructors reacted to the workshops. Since the instructors who answered the extra questions on the post-survey were only those who completed the workshop, I did not need to run additional tests. Also, the open-ended responses on the pre- and post-survey were coded and summarized.

Further, to address instructors' attitudes about teaching and their classroom behaviors (RQ2), I conducted a paired samples Wilcoxon test on pre- to post-survey data for the workshop participants to see if instructors' scores changed. Then, I ran another paired samples Wilcoxon test to analyze pre to post Likert data for instructors who did not participate in the workshops; from this, I was able to assess if change scores per item were different between the two groups. Lastly, I ran a paired samples Wilcoxon test on the aggregate variables to compare the total attitude and total behavior scores.

To analyze my qualitative data, I coded the interview data to find emerging themes and areas of convergence and divergence in addressing both my first and second research questions. I used grounded theory method to do line-by-line coding to find connections and themes among the data (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) argues that grounded theory allows researchers to investigate multiple strands of qualitative data systematically and analytically to gain a richer understanding of the implicit and explicit arguments within the data. For the purposes of my study, the data collected from the interviews was coded and organized categorically after conducting the interviews. I did not want to assign thematic categories ahead of time since the questions are general enough to elicit a broad range of responses.

Specifically, I used inductive, emergent coding to find themes and connections within my research. Urquhart (2017) argues that coding is more than simply adding descriptors to documents; instead, he says researchers must move beyond their initial descriptions and into analysis for coding to be meaningful. It was important to approach my documents without relying on literature or preconceived notions since making assumptions would limit my ability to thoughtfully deconstruct and find new meaning in the documents. I used HyperRESEARCH software to code my qualitative data, which allowed me to assemble, organize, and present my data in a way that was orderly and uncluttered, helping me to move beyond simple descriptions.

Next, to compare differences between retention rates, success rates, and grades among instructors who participated and those who did not, the following steps were taken. First, using independent samples *t*-tests, I compared pre workshop (Fall 2019) success and retention rates to post workshop (Fall 2021) success and retention rates between the two groups. Lastly, to take a closer look at student success rates, I compared the F and Withdrawal grade distributions of COC SkillShare participants and non-participants for Fall 2019 and Fall 2021. A full summary of methods can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2*Summary of Methods*

Research Question (RQ)	Collection Instrument	Data Analysis Tool
RQ1: What were participants' attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops?	Pre- and Post-Surveys One-on-one interviews	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Grounded Theory: In Vivo and Focused coding (HyperRESEARCH)
RQ2: How did the COC SkillShare Workshops affect English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes and (b) teaching behaviors?	Pre- and Post-Surveys One-on-one interviews	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Paired samples Wilcoxon tests Grounded Theory: In Vivo and Focused coding (HyperRESEARCH)
RQ3: To what extent did faculty participation in COC SkillShare Workshops affect students' retention (with a C or better) in English 101?	Institutional Data	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Independent samples <i>t</i> -test

Timeline and Procedures

As indicated in my introduction, I collected instructor-level data in Spring and Summer 2021 and student-level data in Fall 2021 to determine if faculty participation in Spring 2021 made a difference in instructors' student success and retention rates (Table 3). First, I met with IRPIE in December to review my survey questions; subsequently, the finalized survey was submitted to IRB for approval through both ASU and COC in January. Also, IRPIE determined that I should send the pre-survey to English 101 instructors through my COC email in February. Finally, I submitted a formal request, using IRPIE's online request form, for the institutional data required to answer my third research question.

Prior to the start of the semester, I sent an email to the AB-705 FIG members to set an initial meeting date; at this meeting, we discussed our goals for the semester and set dates for the COC SkillShare Workshops. We also brainstormed new workshop ideas and emailed instructors a list of 8-10 possible workshops to rank (Table 1). Once we collected the data, we determined who would lead each of the workshops. Also, at the start of February, I sent all English 101 instructors my pre-survey prior to the first COC SkillShare Workshop.

Throughout the entirety of the Spring 2021 semester, I met with the AB-705 FIG, typically once or twice a month to review our goals and work on developing our workshop topics. We used the Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick (2009) New World Model to discuss how to evaluate and streamline the workshops; we reviewed instructors' responses and created a list of desirable topics and made suggested changes, such as leaving more time for discussion and interaction. From February to May 2021, we conducted our COC SkillShare Workshops every Monday except for the days we had official English Department or School of Humanities meetings. I also emailed eight English 101 instructors, asking them to participate in one-on-one interviews throughout the months of March-May. Six of them responded, and I conducted interviews in June.

At the end of the semester, after our final COC SkillShare Workshops were concluded, I emailed instructors the post-survey through Qualtrics; once received, I analyzed the data and interpreted the results.

Table 3*Timeline and Procedures of the Study*

Time Frame (Spring and Fall 2021)	Actions	Procedures
December	Revised survey to address attitudes and behaviors	Brainstormed with IRPIE Reviewed and revise survey questions
January	Submitted survey to IRB at COC and at ASU	Completed the required forms Revised IRB based on ASU guidance
January	Asked IRPIE for two fall years of student success and retention data for each 101 instructor (2019 and 2021).	Submitted official data request form through IRPIE
February	Met with AB-705 FIG to determine workshop dates and possible presenters	Emailed FIG members to set an initial meeting date Brought list of possible workshops Asked for other workshop suggestions
February	Sent instructors a list of possible workshops and ask them to select 6	Emailed all instructors for their feedback
February	Distributed COC SkillShare pre-survey	Sent Qualtrics link to every instructor teaching English 101 with instructions for completing the survey
February-May	Conducted AB-705 FIG meetings and recorded just-in-time feedback	Emailed FIG members Made notes about the interventions, depending on the feedback
Mid-February-May	Conducted Weekly COC SkillShare Workshops	Emailed all instructors to attend workshops Emailed specific instructors to lead sessions

Time Frame (Spring and Fall 2021)	Actions	Procedures
May-June	Distributed COC SkillShare post-survey	Sent Qualtrics link to every instructor teaching English 101 with instructions for completing the survey
June	Collected surveys	Analyzed data and interpreted findings
June-July	Conducted interviews	Emailed 6-8 English 101 instructors who participated in the COC SkillShare Workshops in Spring 2021 to attend an interview via Zoom Coded interviews to find themes
December	Collect Institutional Data	Conducted a series of independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests after collecting post survey to compare attitudes and behaviors pre- and post-workshops participation

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the last ten years, there's been a lot of research done about what makes a difference for student achievement, and it's now clear that the single most important determinant of what students learn is what their teachers know. Teacher qualifications, teachers' knowledge and skills, make more difference for student learning than any other single factor.

—Linda Darling Hammond

Introduction

Darling Hammond's (2001) quote underscores the focus and purpose of this study—to build and encourage instructors' personal and professional capacities in and out of the classroom. The COC SkillShare Workshops were created to offer instructors strategies to improve their classroom practices by reflecting on their attitudes about teaching and their teaching behaviors.

The first goal of this action research study was to ascertain English 101 instructors' attitudes about the COC SkillShare Workshops (RQ 1). Additionally, this study explored the effects of the COC SkillShare Workshops on English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes about teaching and (b) their teaching behaviors (RQ 2). Finally, the study measured how and to what extent instructor participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops affected students' success and retention rates in English 101 (RQ 3). In Spring 2021, we offered six COC SkillShare Workshops: Improving Mindset and Integrating Affective Domain Strategies, Offering Effective Feedback and Creating Rubrics, Improving Student-to-Student Interaction and Varying Discussion Board Questions, Increasing Student Engagement in Online Classrooms, Learning How to Use Canvas Studio, and the Canvas Shell Showcase.

In this chapter, I share the results of the interview, survey, and institutional data I collected to answer my three research questions sequentially. The results are based on analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data sources: (a) semi-structured one-on-one interviews with six English 101 instructors; (b) pre- and post-survey quantitative and qualitative responses; (c) student course success rates, and (d) student retention rates with instructors who participated in at least one of the COC SkillShare Workshops.

Instructors' attitudes toward COC SkillShare Workshops Data (RQ1)

Interview Data

To answer my first research question, regarding instructors' attitudes about the COC SkillShare Workshops, qualitative interview data were collected and analyzed. I interviewed six English 101 faculty members, four full-time and two adjunct instructors, who attended the COC SkillShare Workshops. I coded the interviews in HyperRESEARCH using inductive, emergent coding (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2017). During my initial cycle of coding, I used the In Vivo coding method to ensure I was keeping participants' exact words, and not my interpretations, in the forefront (Saldana, 2021).

Once I created my initial codes, I mapped out their frequency, using a word cloud in HyperRESEARCH, and from there, I developed an "at a glance" table that helped me determine if the word cloud was representative of the categories that emerged from my conversations (Saldana, 2021). Ultimately, I determined that the words that appeared most frequently, *engagement*, *collaboration*, and *feedback*, were, in fact, the most important concepts that surfaced from my interviews.

Next, I bolstered my initial coding by using focused coding, which allowed me to create categories from my data corpus and make decisions about which initial codes made the most analytic sense (Charmaz, 2014). Keeping in mind Dey's (1999) caution that categories often have shifting boundaries and differing degrees of belonging, I was careful to be fluid in my categorizations.

Through focused coding, I created a hierarchy of codes and was able to determine which themes emerged as being the most influential for COC SkillShare Workshop participants. After completing my focused coding, I created a new, pared down code book, which helped me understand my participants' perspectives more accurately. Further, I narrowed my focus by categorizing the codes, finding commonalities, and determining the frequency of responses. From my second cycle codebook, three themes emerged across all six interviews: *creating a culture of collaboration*, *sharing techniques to keep students engaged*, and *finding effective methods to deliver student feedback*.

Emergent Themes

Culture of Collaboration. All six instructors indicated feeling isolated after migrating to online instruction due to COVID. While they had all taught online in some capacity prior to the pandemic, they each commented that COC's migration to 100% online classes forced them to find innovative ways to improve their pedagogical approaches. Several instructors mentioned that the COC SkillShare Workshops offered strategies to address the unexpected challenges teaching to a screen of black boxes raised. Further, all of the instructors mentioned that the workshops were a safe space to share ideas, have meaningful discussions, and learn new techniques for improving online instruction. For example, Instructor A reflected,

Having to do everything remotely from home, the thing I absolutely missed the most from my job was the regular interaction with colleagues and students and not just the in-person classroom teaching, which absolutely I love and am passionate about, but also so much gets achieved in simply being in a shared space with the people that you share responsibilities, enthusiasms, specialties, and knowledge with.

This sentiment was echoed by all six instructors who credited the COC SkillShare Workshops for creating a culture of collaboration and encouraging open and honest dialogue. When asked if the COC SkillShare Workshops were helpful, Instructor B said,

I grew significantly as a professor during this time because I got to ask pointed and specific questions. What do you do when a student does this? How do you set this up technology-wise? What are you doing in Canvas? What is your teaching philosophy? An array of questions that I get answers to in real time, and this didn't happen before during regular department meetings.

Instructor B also reflected that she loved collaborating because, “it helps me grow, and it makes me feel great to help others and give advice that people find useful that saves them time and stress. That makes me feel good as a colleague.”

Further, besides creating a culture of collaboration among instructors, three interviewees mentioned that the COC SkillShare Workshops helped them cultivate a stronger culture of collaboration among the students in their classes. Instructor B remarked, “Through the SkillShare Workshops, especially, I've learned all the different ways in Canvas to do asynchronous collaboration. It [group work] gives students a sense of community, and it gives me a chance to try out specific activities...so that's been very

helpful.” Several other instructors mentioned the importance of creating online spaces for students to share ideas and offer feedback, resulting in the formation of quasi student learning communities. Instructors were also concerned about reinforcing classroom participation and finding ways to keep collaboration foregrounded. For example, Instructor F reflected,

How can we continue to strengthen their participation? Because that's the future—collaboration—that's how students are going to solve big world problems. They're going to be working with people who don't necessarily even look like them, so how do I keep getting them to share their lived experiences?

Learning creative and inventive ways for establishing and sustaining a culture of collaboration, whether among students or instructors, was emphasized by all six instructors as being integral to their professional growth.

Student Engagement. When instructors were asked to discuss the ways the COC SkillShare Workshops were most helpful, all six acknowledged that learning new techniques to improve student engagement was one of the most valuable takeaways from the workshops. They reflected that keeping students engaged was the most challenging aspect of teaching English 101 during a pandemic, and that the COC SkillShare Workshops offered invaluable tips and advice for keeping students interested and motivated. When Instructor C was asked to identify one practical thing she learned from the workshops, she said,

They taught me ways to engage my students— maybe ideas that I had heard of people doing but really needed someone to show me on the screen, to walk me through how to do it because, I think, teachers have so many different ideas

floating around in our heads that when it really comes down to sit down and implement, that's always a big hurdle, so the SkillShare Workshops have been very specific guides for me.

Instructor F discussed how important it was to commiserate with others about the challenges they were having with engagement. She commented on the solution-oriented nature of the workshops, and how they gave her a practical model to follow while she was planning her classes.

Further, several instructors said the workshop about Canvas Studio not only offered them new ideas on how to improve student engagement, but it also improved their professional capacities. For example, Instructor E said that she learned how to create interactive videos through Canvas Studio, which helped keep her students connected and involved in class discussions. She also learned how to create smaller, revolving groups to ensure students were able to forge relationships with as many people in the class as possible. Instructor D reflected that even though he was very adept at using Canvas, “There is still so much to learn.” He said that he had been eagerly waiting for the release of Canvas Studio and was “really inspired” to see what others were doing with it during the workshop.

Offering Student Feedback. Based on the responses of five of the six instructors, offering effective student feedback was another important outcome of the COC SkillShare Workshops. Specifically, instructors indicated that the workshop on grade management helped them optimize the feedback they offered students and lessened their grading anxiety. Three instructors mentioned that asynchronous classes not only required offering more feedback than in-person classes, but because this feedback was often the

only way instructors could teach the student learning outcomes, it had to be precise and thoughtful. This level of attention created heavy grading loads for instructors, and all six commented on needing better strategies to reach a healthier balance.

To achieve this, Instructor A reflected that creating pre-written feedback templates helped him reduce his grading stress. He said,

It would take almost a full work week just to type feedback if I did it absolutely individually for each student, so when I heard that other professors are also doing pre-written feedback and seeing how they were doing that was really helpful. It allowed me to know that this is normal and okay, but that also it can be done extremely productively.

Instructors C and E also echoed this sentiment, affirming that the workshop on grade management helped them learn strategies to offer student feedback that was productive and effective without exceeding instructors' time and effort thresholds. In fact, these instructors said that while they did use pre-written feedback prior to attending the workshops, they often felt like they were cheating. After hearing that other faculty were also doing it, instructors felt more comfortable sharing their experiences and their comment logs.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

In February 2021, 29 instructors were invited to participate in the pre- and post-survey titled, COC SkillShare Workshops: Instructors Attitudes and Behaviors.

Information was gathered to assess instructors' attitudes about the COC SkillShare Workshops (RQ1) as well as to determine whether the workshops affected instructors' attitudes about teaching and their teaching behaviors (RQ2a/b). A total of 18 instructors

responded to the pre-survey, 15 responded to the post-survey, and 13 responded to both. Participants consisted of full-time and adjunct faculty members, teaching at least one section of English 101 in the Spring 2021 semester.

The post-survey asked instructors two open-ended questions that addressed RQ1, regarding their attitudes about the COC SkillShare Workshops. Once, the data were collected, I coded their responses in HyperRESEARCH, using focused coding, and a few common threads emerged. Overwhelmingly, instructors found the COC SkillShare Workshops useful in three ways: *building their professional capacities, helping with feelings of isolation, and encouraging collaboration.*

Question 23 on the post-survey asked instructors to identify the most useful and valuable thing they learned at the COC SkillShare Workshops. Nine responses were logged, and four instructors indicated that learning new approaches to online teaching was one of the most valuable outcomes of attending the workshops. Specifically, respondents pointed to using discussion boards more effectively, learning how to integrate Canvas Studio, and improving collaborative learning assignments.

Further, four respondents mentioned that the COC SkillShare Workshops made them feel less detached and isolated; one instructor said,

Honestly, this semester I had the chance to feel excited about teaching and connected to my colleagues. I have loads of notes on neat things to try in my future courses, but it was most important to me right now to feel connected to others.

This point was also expressed by another instructor who said, “The collaboration and sharing of teaching materials/approaches is very valuable—it makes us stronger as a whole when we support each other and collaborate in this way.”

Another question on the post-survey asked instructors to determine what the AB-705 Faculty Inquiry Group could do to improve the COC SkillShare Workshops. Eight respondents answered this question, and the overwhelming majority felt that the workshops were useful and helped instructors improve and/or refine their teaching practices. One respondent wished that more faculty would attend the workshops or, alternatively, watch the recordings online; this instructor also stated that it would be beneficial to collect data determining how many instructors actually engaged with the workshops.

Further, three respondents suggested topics for future workshops, including handling student behavioral issues online, implementing introverted versus extroverted pedagogy, and going back to in-person teaching.

Quantitative Survey Data

One multiple choice question was asked on the post-survey to determine whether instructors found the COC SkillShare Workshops helpful in teaching English 101 (RQ1). Respondents were given three options: Yes (1), No (2) and Maybe (3). Of the 15 instructors who completed the survey, 10 responded to this question; 80% of respondents said that the workshops helped them teach English 101 while 20% said that the workshops *may* have helped them teach English 101. Notable is the fact that no instructors selected the second *No* option.

Instructors' Attitudes and Teaching Behaviors After Attending COC SkillShare Workshops (RQ2)

Interview Data

Instructors' Attitudes (RQ2a). To address my second research question, I asked the six instructors who were interviewed to discuss one practical skill they learned and applied from participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops. As a follow-up, I asked them to consider how the workshops may have affected their attitudes, specifically. After coding their answers, two specific themes were identified as being most prevalent: *overcoming feelings of isolation* and *developing a growth mindset*.

Isolation. First, the instructors said the workshops helped ease their feelings of isolation. Three instructors mentioned that simply knowing that others were struggling with some of the same classroom issues eased their feelings of isolation during quarantine. Instructor A said the workshops helped him confront his self-doubts and apprehensions about teaching online. He reflected, "When you realize that what is stressing you is a group phenomenon, then that actually helps a little bit because sometimes we think we're alone in our stress and that makes you weird." Further, when asked whether she found the COC SkillShare Workshops helpful, Instructor B said,

I was worried that it would be very isolating certainly not having any of my students face to face in class. It was a bit sad to be honest, so getting to meet weekly with my colleagues was a way to keep us together to commiserate, to bond, and to couch that in a really positive productive way because we were learning skills from each other.

All six participants indicated feeling more confident and less isolated when they logged into the weekly Monday Zoom workshops.

Growth Mindset. Second, four instructors expressed developing more of a growth mindset after attending the COC SkillShare Workshops. For example, Instructor D stated that he was inspired by his colleagues' "desire to improve and to take some risks." He said the workshops helped him to overcome his complacency and fixed mindset about teaching during a pandemic. Three other instructors also made similar comments, emphasizing how difficult it was to remain positive in such uncertain times; they credited the workshops for giving them a safe space to voice their frustrations, commiserate, and learn strategies for improving their mindsets.

Teaching Behaviors (RQ2b). As a follow-up to the question about identifying one practical skill instructors learned and applied by attending the COC SkillShare Workshops, I asked how the workshops may have affected their teaching behaviors. All six instructors were emphatic that the COC SkillShare Workshops helped improve their teaching behaviors. They emphasized three primary teaching behaviors that were enhanced by participating in the workshops: *willingness to try new teaching strategies, redesigning student feedback, and keeping students engaged.*

New teaching strategies. All six instructors said that they were introduced to new ideas and strategies that improved their professional capacities. Four instructors mentioned learning how to conduct asynchronous group work in Canvas more effectively. Instructor B said that the group work techniques she learned, including how to divide students into smaller groups and to encourage more interaction in discussion boards, will be carried with her even after she returns to in-person teaching. Instructor D

also stated that prior to the workshops, the only group work he assigned in his asynchronous classes was peer review; however, after seeing how other instructors scaffolded their group work, he realized he could be doing more to improve active and collaborative student learning.

Another example that instructors referenced frequently was learning how to use Canvas Studio to make videos. Instructor E reflected that creating the videos will help improve the level of interaction in her future classes, especially with the varying skill levels of students in English 101. She said the videos will not only allow her students to get to know her better, but they will also help her present complex lessons in a more dynamic way.

Instructor D explained that seeing what his colleagues were doing helped him “up his game.” He said, “It's contagious and infectious. You see people exploring these new tools and new teaching strategies, and it makes you want to do the same, and I really feel that was one of the key impacts on me from my participation.” All six participants commented on their commitment to improve their teaching practices after attending the COC SkillShare Workshops.

Student Feedback. Four instructors commented that approaching student feedback differently was a valuable skill they learned from the workshop on grading management. Instructor E mentioned that professional development activities often neglect to address how instructors can balance all of their responsibilities, including grading load. She said the workshops helped her learn to balance “how much time it takes to prep, how much time we should be spending on grading, and what are the different ways we can make grading less soul-crushing.” She said that the workshop on grading

management helped her set a time limit on grading each paper and gave her permission to use prewritten feedback on discussion boards, cutting her grading time in half.

Further, three instructors said that they learned how to construct better rubrics, which helped grading become more streamlined and standardized. Instructor A said, “I really got a lot specifically out of the workshop about offering feedback and creating rubrics, especially now that we're all online that's especially challenging because we're giving more feedback than ever.” The instructors agreed that rubrics improved their teaching by greatly reducing the time they spent generating individualized feedback for every discussion post or scaffolded assignment.

Student Engagement. Since the pandemic forced instructors to migrate their classes online, one of the most pressing issues for all six instructors was keeping students engaged in the learning process. Instructors said that it was difficult enough to motivate students while in a physical classroom, but after migrating to online instruction, the communication challenges often seemed insurmountable. All of the instructors mentioned feeling defeated at some point in the semester as they tried to engage a screen of black boxes. To overcome this fixed mindset, all six instructors said that they attended the COC SkillShare Workshops. Instructor F mentioned that engagement was a common theme that ran throughout all of the workshops, and that despite the week’s specific topic, she was still given tips for keeping students motivated. She said the workshops,

gave me the agency to say ‘I don't know’ because that's difficult to admit. To say, ‘Oh I don't know how to keep them engaged,’ and then to go to a workshop and someone is opening up and saying, ‘Hey I didn't know either, but I’m trying this!’ That was really beneficial.

Instructor F said she was inspired by others who were also trying and failing to keep students interested in English 101 in an online format. She mentioned feeling a sense of relief at hearing how others were also feeling stuck and overwhelmed by how the pandemic was affecting their classroom environments.

Further, all six instructors reflected on learning how to integrate new ways to humanize the class “on the fly”. For example, Instructor D remembered one of his colleagues demonstrating, “a playfulness with his students” by having his dog make appearances on camera. He said,

Despite this sort of remote learning, which can obviously be an obstacle, he's managed to find a way to make it very engaging for students. He's very real and human, and for a long time, I mean I'm going back a really long time, my personality was sort of OZ behind the curtain; no one knew who I was really.

Instructor F said that by attending the COC SkillShare Workshops, she was inspired to be more a more vulnerable educator, which will help her create a stronger sense of community and connectedness in her future classes.

Instructor C reflected that the COC SkillShare Workshops were a guide to help her work on building her professional capacity, specifically as it applied to student engagement. She mentioned that she struggled with finding ways to improve student engagement until she attended the workshops and learned strategies, such as creating smaller and more intimate group discussions and having students work on a shared Google Doc.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

One free-form survey question, asking instructors to identify one useful and valuable thing they learned at the COC SkillShare Workshops, generated responses that addressed my second research question.

In response to RQ2a on teaching attitudes, three of the nine respondents reflected that the workshops helped them feel more bonded to their colleagues and more excited about teaching. These instructors mentioned that the workshops gave them a point of connection and a space to collaborate with others without judgment.

To address RQ2b on teaching behaviors, one instructor responded that they learned that a “wide array of approaches exists to improve my online pedagogy,” and that the workshops gave them options to with work and build from. Another instructor commented that learning how to modify grading practices helped lessen the time spent on grading without sacrificing the quality of feedback. Also, two instructors reflected that the workshops offered, “a variety of powerful tools” to help improve student engagement in the online classroom. Finally, three respondents mentioned that the workshops helped modify their approach to teaching online by giving them useful Canvas tips and tricks, including creating more user-friendly Canvas shells, operating Canvas Studio, and creating more effective discussion boards.

Quantitative Survey Data

Survey responses were analyzed to include all participants in the pre-survey ($n = 18$) and the post-survey ($n = 15$). Survey items were presented on a five-point Likert-scale ($1 = Strongly Disagree$; $2 = Disagree$; $3 = Neither$; $4 = Agree$; $5 = Strongly Agree$).

Attitudes about Teaching. Twelve questions were asked to determine instructors' attitudes about teaching (RQ2a). Corresponding with the order of the questions on the survey, I labeled each 1-12. Table 4 displays the resulting pre and post medians (med.), means, and standard deviations (SD) for the 12 post-survey attitude items. In all cases, the median and mean scores remained relatively stable, if not exact, indicating that the data did not support the premise that the COC SkillShare Workshops affected these specific attitudes among respondents.

Table 4

Pre/Post Attitudes about Teaching (n = 13)

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
1. In-class, student-to-student discussions are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101.	5.0	4.7	.48	4.0	4.5	.52	.08
2. Well-organized, lecture-based classes are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101.	3.0	3.6	1.1	4.0	3.5	1.1	.48
3. Organizing my classes to have students interact with each other online is an effective way for students to learn.	4.0	4.3	.75	4.0	4.3	.63	1.0

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
4. Providing small group opportunities for students to solve problems is an effective way for students to learn.	5.0	4.5	.52	5.0	4.6	.51	.66
5. Students can help each other learn more effectively when they are in small groups.	4.0	4.0	.91	4.0	4.0	.58	1.0
6. I feel a lot of teaching time in English 101 should be used to question students' ideas.	4.0	3.6	1.0	3.0	3.4	.77	.50
7. Giving students extensive feedback helps them learn the basic concepts of English 101.	4.0	4.1	.90	5.0	4.3	.86	.41
8. Students learn effectively without instructor intervention.	2.0	1.6	.51	2.0	1.7	.48	.31
9. I believe that teaching is a collaborative profession.	5.0	4.7	.63	5.0	4.7	.63	1.0
10. Professional development is a valuable resource for improving one's teaching practices in English 101.	5.0	4.7	.48	5.0	4.8	.44	.32
11. Learning from my colleagues is a good way to improve my	5.0	4.8	.44	5.0	4.9	.38	.32

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
teaching practices in English 101. 12. I feel the best way to improve my instruction is to work things out on my own.	2.0	1.9	.90	2.0	1.9	.90	1.0

To determine if instructors' attitudes about teaching changed from pre- to post-survey, I used SPSS to run a nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test. There was no statistically significant difference from pre- to post-survey among any of the 12 attitude items ($p > .05$). Based on these results, the evidence does not show that the COC SkillShare Workshops significantly affected teachers' attitudes about teaching.

Teaching Behaviors. Further, seven survey questions asked about instructors' teaching behaviors (RQ2b). Corresponding with the order of the questions on the survey, I labeled each 13-19. To determine if instructors' teaching behaviors changed from pre- to post-survey, I ran another nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test in SPSS. Table 5 displays the med., means, and SDs of the seven pre- and post-survey questions addressing instructors' teaching behaviors. Similar to the results in Table 4, the mean scores remained relatively stable, if not exact, indicating that the COC SkillShare Workshops did not dramatically affect self-reported behaviors among the respondents. Item 17 which states, *Because I have planned my classes ahead of time, I don't often change my lesson plans*, had the greatest change in mean scores with a pre-survey score of 2.7 and a post-survey score of 2.2.

Table 5*Pre/Post Teaching Behaviors (n = 13)*

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
13. In my interactions with students in English 101, I try to have a conversation with them about the topics we are studying.	5.0	4.5	.52	5.0	4.6	.51	.66
14. I design my teaching in English 101 with the assumption that students come in with very little useful knowledge of the topics covered.	3.0	3.2	1.2	3.0	3.1	.90	.91
15. I set aside some teaching time in English 101 so that students can discuss, among themselves, the difficulties they are having with assignments or readings.	4.0	3.9	.99	4.0	3.6	1.2	.26
16. I regularly change my teaching practices based on students' assessments and feedback.	4.0	3.9	.99	4.0	4.1	1.0	.41
17. Because I have planned my classes ahead of time, I don't often change my lesson plans.	2.0	2.7	1.2	2.0	2.2	1.2	.25
18. I would routinely participate in professional development	5.0	4.6	.65	5.0	4.5	.88	.31

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
activities even if it wasn't required by my institution. 19. I am comfortable sharing my teaching practices with my colleagues to help them improve their own practices.	4.0	3.9	1.1	4.0	4.1	.90	.48

The results in Table 5 indicate that there was no statistically significant change from pre- to post-survey among all variables related to teaching behaviors ($p > .05$). Based on these results, I determined that the evidence did not support assumption that COC SkillShare Workshops would affect teachers' attitudes about teaching.

Total Attitude and Behavior Aggregate Scores. To compare total pre-survey attitude and behavior to total post-survey attitude and behavior scores, I created an aggregate attitude and behavior score and ran a nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The aggregate pre attitude scores ranged from 3.7 to 4.7 while the post attitude scores ranged from 3.5 to 4.5. Further, the aggregate pre behavior scores ranged from 3.1 to 4.7 and the post behaviors ranged from 2.9 to 4.7. These scores were calculated as the mean per-item value for the 12 attitude items found in Table 4 and the seven behavior items found in Table 5. It is noted that attitude items #8 and #12 along with behavior item #17 were recoded to align with the positive direction of the other attitude and behavior items.

Table 6 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the aggregate pre- and post-attitude and behavior scores. When comparing the medians and means of instructors' pre-attitudes (4.3; 4.2) with that of their post-attitudes (4.0; 4.1), it was clear that there was no

statistically significant difference in their scores from pre to post ($p > .05$). Similarly, there was no significant relationship between participating in the workshops and changes in instructors' behaviors as indicated by the pre to post behavior scores remaining constant at 4.0 ($p > .05$).

Table 6

Pre/Post Aggregate Attitude and Behavior Comparison (n = 13)

Item	Med.	Mean	SD	<i>p</i>
Pre-attitude	4.3	4.2	.34	.45
Post-attitude	4.0	4.1	.30	
Pre-behavior	4.1	4.0	.50	.91
Post-behavior	4.0	4.0	.55	

Institutional Data on Student Success and Retention Rates (RQ3)

To address my third research question, I collected instructors' student success and retention rates from Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 and ran independent samples *t*-tests to compare participants' data against those of non-participants. When comparing the success and retention rates of students whose instructors participated in the workshops in 2019 ($n = 761$) to the success and retention rates of students whose instructors did not ($n = 1790$), it was noted that both groups had relatively identical student success and retention rates. As illustrated in Table 7 in Fall 2019, non-participant and participant retention rates were differentiated by one percentage point (85% for non-participants and 86% for participants; $t = .85$). Similarly, there was also a one percentage point difference in non-participant and participant success rates (66% for non-participants and 67% for participants; $t = .69$).

However, when assessing the scores for 2021, there were statistically significant differences in both the student success ($p < .05$) and retention rates ($p < .05$) of instructors who attended the COC SkillShare Workshops as compared to those who did not attend. As illustrated in Table 7, in 2021, participants' retention rates were six percentage points higher (84%) than non-participants' (78%). Correspondingly, participants' student success rates were ten percentage points higher (66%) than non-participants' (56%).

Further, when comparing the student success and retention rates of the 13 instructors who participated in the COC SkillShare Workshops and who taught English 101 in both Fall 2019 and 2021, it was noted that retention rates dropped 2 percentage points (from 86% to 84%) while student success rates remained consistent at 67%. Conversely, non-participant retention rates dropped six percentage points (from 85% to 79%), and student success rates dropped ten percentage points (from 67% to 57%), a 14.9% difference. Based on these data, I can conclude that the COC SkillShare Workshops contributed to the improvement in instructors' student success and retention rates.

Further, the data show that in 2021, the Cohen's d effect size for retention between non-participants and participants was .157; and for student success, the Cohen's d independent samples effect size was .217, both indicating a small effect size. This shows that the relationship between the groups was negligible, suggesting that the findings, while statistically significant, may not be as practically significant.

Table 7*Student Success and Retention Rates Fall 2019 and Fall 2021*

Term	Item	Mean	<i>p</i>
Fall 2019	Non-participants' Retention	85%	.40
	Participants' Retention	86%	
	Non-participants' Success	66%	.49
	Participants' Success	67%	
Fall 2021	Non-participants' Retention	78%	<.001
	Participants' Retention	84%	
	Non-participants' Success	56%	<.001
	Participants' Success	66%	

2019: $n_{\text{students of nonparticipants}} = 1790$, $n_{\text{students of participants}} = 761$;

2021: $n_{\text{students of nonparticipants}} = 1187$, $n_{\text{students of participants}} = 886$

Lastly, when comparing grade distributions in 2019 and 2021 between participants and non-participants, there were two noteworthy findings as indicated in Table 8. First, when comparing Fall 2019 to Fall 2021, the proportion of students getting a W (withdrawal) in their English 101 course increased among non-participant instructors by seven percentage points (from 15% to 22%) while participants experienced a change of only two percentage points (from 14% to 16%). Also, when comparing the proportion of students who failed English 101, the data showed a four-percentage point drop in Fs assigned by participants from Fall 2019 to Fall 2021.

Table 8*Percentage of students with Fs and Ws*

Participants	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Change
Ws	13.8	15.6	1.8
Fs	12.7	8.9	-3.8
Non-Participants	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Change
Ws	15.0	21.7	6.7
Fs	10.4	9.6	-0.8

Conclusion

While the pre- and post-survey data showed that the COC SkillShare Workshops did not significantly affect instructors' attitudes and behaviors, the interview data, success and retention rates, and the distribution of F and W grades indicated that they did positively affect instructors' attitudes about teaching and their teaching behaviors. In Chapter 5, possible reasons to explain these differences are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives.

—Robert John Meehan

Introduction

The problem of practice that was addressed in this action research study was determining whether participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops helped community college instructors improve their pedagogical practices, leading to an increase in student success and achievement rates.

Over the past five years, several key California advocacy groups have been pressuring legislators to reexamine the landscape of developmental education. Citing declining statewide completion rates, they argued that requiring students to take developmental classes created unnecessary, and often unsurmountable, barriers for them on their road to graduation. Their proposed solution was to introduce AB-705, a reform bill that required California community colleges to maximize the probability that students would complete transfer-level English and math within one year. To comply with AB-705, COC eliminated its developmental course sequence and revised their English 101 class, adding an extra unit and allowing for direct placement. To help instructors teach the new course, the COC SkillShare Workshops were created and are the focus of this mixed methods action research study.

Recently, Public Advocates, a nonprofit law firm, has criticized the Chancellor's office for not being tough enough on colleges that were not complying with AB-705. As

a result, they, along with the California Acceleration Project, are now calling for the elimination of remedial English and math courses altogether (Castro, 2021). If this new legislation passes, the COC English Department will not have to make any additional curricular changes since we are no longer offering developmental courses.

Initially, the purpose of the COC SkillShare Workshops was to educate instructors on the changes made to the English 101 Course Outline of Record and to help them teach the course most effectively. When the pandemic hit, the workshops evolved into spaces of connection and community—a place where instructors could commiserate, share best practices, and support one another both professionally and personally. The latest iteration of the COC SkillShare Workshops has been offered every semester since Spring 2020, and the next English Department Chair has confirmed the program will continue, thereby setting the groundwork for institutionalizing the practice.

My study was guided by the following three research questions:

RQ 1. What were instructors' attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops?

RQ 2. How did the COC SkillShare Workshops affect English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes about teaching and (b) their teaching behaviors?

RQ 3. How and to what extent did instructor participation in COC SkillShare Workshops affect students' success and retention rates (with a C or better) in English 101?

In this chapter, I discuss the results of my qualitative and quantitative measures as they relate to my research questions. I then connect the findings to the conceptual frameworks discussed in chapter 2: professional accountability, critical pedagogy, and

evaluating training effectiveness. Finally, I address the limitations of the study and implications for future research both personally and systemically.

Consideration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

I collected two forms of quantitative data for this research study: survey and institutional data. The quantitative survey data did not support the premise that the COC SkillShare Workshops would significantly affect instructors' attitudes and teaching behaviors. This conclusion is drawn from analyzing instructors' responses to the pre- and post-surveys. When comparing the 12 pre- to post-survey responses about attitude and the seven pre- to post-survey responses about behavior, no statistically significant change was detected ($p > .05$). Similarly, when comparing total pre-survey attitude to total post-survey attitude scores, the data did not show any statistical significance and did not support the hypothesis that the COC SkillShare Workshops affected instructors' attitudes or teaching behaviors in English 101.

There are a few potential reasons for these neutral findings. First, the survey questions addressed pedagogical approaches that have been popular for the past several decades, including the importance of active learning, student centered classrooms, and professional development. This indicates that instructors were most likely familiar with the pedagogical concepts and were already trying to implement them in their classrooms. Also, since many of these teaching strategies are considered best practices in the field, instructors would be more likely to agree with questions that support these types of practices, including collaborative classroom and professional learning.

Conversely, when comparing the quantitative student success and retention data of COC SkillShare participants to non-participants, a statistically significant finding was

recorded. These data demonstrated that instructors who attended the COC SkillShare Workshops showed a marked improvement in their student success and retention rates. These findings can be attributed to several factors. First, as evidenced by the interview data, the COC SkillShare Workshops helped instructors improve student engagement by showcasing effective active and collaborative learning techniques, tenets encouraged by Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy. Also, by connecting with other instructors, participants renewed their excitement for teaching and were able to acquire new skills, which helped improve their professional capacities, a key vertex of Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Accountability Approach. Ostensibly, these factors played an important role in improving participants' student success and retention rates.

Qualitative interview and open-ended survey data also do not align with the findings of the quantitative survey data. Instructors unequivocally affirmed that the COC SkillShare Workshops had positive impacts on their personal and professional capacities. First, the interview data indicated that all six instructors learned valuable skills to help them teach the new English 101 class. Further, they all agreed that the workshops created a safe space to build relationships and share best practices; most importantly, they indicated that the workshops shifted the silos in the department, creating a culture of collaboration and inclusion. Based on these testimonies, I concluded that instructors were impressed by the COC SkillShare Workshops and that their participation positively affected their attitudes about teaching and teaching behaviors in English 101.

Further, the qualitative data from the open-ended survey responses overwhelmingly cited the benefits of the workshops, especially in regard to improving online teaching strategies, fostering connections with colleagues, and reawakening an

excitement for teaching. These responses demonstrated that the COC SkillShare Workshop did have a positive effect on instructors' attitudes and teaching behaviors. Additionally, instructors asserted the workshops improved their personal and professional capacities, citing adjustments they made to their teaching materials and their conduct in the classroom. The positive feedback indicated that the workshops were valuable and that instructors were looking forward to continuing the practice.

The disparity between the quantitative and qualitative findings may be attributed to several factors. First, my interview data were collected in the summer when instructors had time to comfortably reflect on the impact of the workshops and to consider how they might implement strategies they learned in the coming semesters. Conversely, English 101 instructors took the survey in the last few weeks of the semester and may have felt inconvenienced by having to complete an extra task. Also, conducting an interview is an intimate and nuanced practice; therefore, participants may have been more willing to speak freely and expand on initial impressions and overall outcomes of the workshops. Further, as the interviewer, I could ask for clarity or offer guidance if questions were misunderstood—something respondents marking a survey could not do. Finally, while the smaller sample size of interview participants was an advantage for collecting qualitative data in that I could conduct a more thorough investigation, the smaller sample size of survey data was a disadvantage when collecting quantitative data.

Connections to Conceptual Frameworks

The COC SkillShare Workshops were created using the tenets of Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach, Freire's (1970) Critical Pedagogy, and Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirpatrick's (2009) New World Kirpatrick Model

of Training Effectiveness. The following section of this chapter describes how these frameworks contributed to the developments of the workshops and how they aligned with my findings.

Relevance of the Professional Accountability Approach

When AB-705 was implemented, the English Department recognized that accountability must be foregrounded—both to comply with the law and to ensure we were developing internal systems to support faculty and student learning. To accomplish this, we developed the COC SkillShare Workshops, a professional development program that improved the personal and professional capacities of faculty, leading to improvements in student learning and success.

We adopted Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach as the rationale for the workshops, acknowledging that accountability systems allow educators to participate in meaningful learning opportunities that will improve the overall educational experiences and outcomes for their students. By sharing best practices, helpful tips, and innovative strategies, the workshops helped faculty engage in meaningful learning to build professional capacity, fulfilling two of the vertices of Darling Hammond et al.'s (2014) triangular accountability model.

During the six workshops offered in Spring 2021, instructors shared their experiences with building Canvas shells, grading online/grading management, improving student engagement, using OER, building stronger student relationships, and practicing a growth mindset. In each workshop, peer presenters offered participants multiple approaches to solve a problem. In turn, participants shared their own experiences with the week's topic and openly discussed challenging issues that they would have otherwise

handled alone. By engaging in communal dialogue, instructors held themselves and each other accountable, improving their professional capacities as outlined in Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2014) Professional Accountability Approach.

Relevance of Freire's Critical Pedagogy

When the COC SkillShare Workshops were first introduced, the components of Freire's critical pedagogy were adopted to ensure we were keeping student learning in the foreground. Despite having specific topics every other week, the workshop discussions always returned to the concepts of equity, engagement, and collaboration. While Freire's (1970) pedagogy dates back to the early 1970's, many of the tenets, such as active learning, flipped classrooms, and critical literacy, have been widely embraced by contemporary education reformers (Hilton, 2013; Watson, 2016). The COC SkillShare Workshops reinforced these ideas, encouraging faculty to allow students to shape their own learning in active and dynamic classroom environments. Each workshop urged instructors to reflect, think critically, and to implement change to improve student learning. By using the tenets of Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy to shape the workshops, we shifted our departmental mindset from the traditional, goods-based, outcome-driven model of education to one that valued introspection, process, and discourse (Hilton, 2013; Watson, 2016).

Relevance of Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's (2009) New World Model

The Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick (2009) New World Kirkpatrick Model helped me create evaluative survey and interview questions that guided the reconceptualization of the workshops in Spring 2021. Implementing their streamlined framework for evaluating professional development gave me the necessary tools to make

substantive improvements to the workshops. For instance, Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's (2009) first and second guiding principles, participant reaction, engagement and knowledge were measured by post-survey and interview questions. Both approaches asked whether instructors found the workshops helpful in teaching English 101 and what could be done to improve their efficacy. Instructors were also asked to identify a specific skill they learned from a workshop that they implemented in their classes. By analyzing these data, I adjusted the workshops and began focusing on improving attendance and keeping instructors engaged.

Further, taking into consideration Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's (2009) third principle of behavior and required drivers, I was able to get the COC SkillShare Workshops approved by COC's Professional Development Committee, thereby incentivizing participation. Since full-time instructors are contractually required to complete 41 FLEX (professional development) hours per year, they were allowed to use the COC SkillShare Workshops hours to fulfill their FLEX obligation.

Lastly, the fourth principle of Kirkpatrick and Kayser-Kirkpatrick's (2009) model focuses on the degree to which targeted outcomes are reached as a result of the training. To assess this principle, I analyzed instructors' student success and retention data pre and post workshop attendance. These data determined that the COC SkillShare Workshops did improve instructors' success and retention rates.

Summary of Findings

Quantitative survey data suggested that the COC SkillShare Workshops did not support the premise that the workshops would significantly affect English 101 instructors' attitudes and teaching behaviors. However, the quantitative institutional data

and the qualitative survey and interview data indicated that the workshops were a positive and much needed professional development opportunity that helped instructors improve their professional capacities and their students' success and retention rates. Ultimately, while there was a disparity between the quantitative survey results and qualitative responses, the evidence supported the hypothesis that the workshops did positively affect instructors' attitudes and behaviors. Notably, the institutional data demonstrated that the COC SkillShare Workshops significantly increased the student success and retention rates of instructors who participated.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

Since my problem of practice was unfolding in real time at my workplace, the COC SkillShare Workshops became an immediate and novel response to a wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). The findings of this mixed methods action research study compelled me to share my intervention with other community college English Departments at several large-scale conferences over the past year. In October 2020, I, along with several AB-705 FIG members, presented some of my early data at the Strengthening Student Success Conference. Then in February 2021, our presentation, "Building Communities and Supporting Faculty in Times of Change, Post AB-705," was selected for the Innovations Conference. Soon after, COC was notified that we had won the prestigious Bellwether Award, which was heavily predicated on the work we had done in English and math post AB-705. Our presentation, "Dismantling Barriers to Support Students" was also accepted at the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Conference and at the Association of Community College Trustees

Conference in 2021. At each of these conferences, I shared my intervention and the initial findings of my research study.

My research study findings were relevant to other educators, administrators, and state legislators for several reasons. First, educators could model the framework of the COC SkillShare Workshops at their own institutions; in fact, several instructors from a wide range of disciplines and colleges have followed up, asking for further advice on how to create workshops for their own departments. Further, administrators have seen how important it is to sustain existing professional development programs and have continued to fund our efforts. Once our success and retention rates stabilize from the effects of the pandemic, we will have a clearer picture of where we stand, and if we continue to show improvements in throughput, completion, and retention rates, administrators will support the AB-705 FIG, and by extension, the COC SkillShare Workshops.

Further, the week prior to the start of each semester, we offer a variety of FLEX activities that highlight the college's strategic goals. For the past year and a half, I have been presenting parts of my action research study during FLEX week and have received positive feedback from those in attendance. In the coming year, I will continue to present during FLEX week but will take a different approach: in Fall 2022, I would like to do a deep dive into the data we have been collecting since the implementation of AB-705.

Every fall, beginning in 2019, we have surveyed students and faculty to inquire about their experiences teaching and taking English 101. The student surveys have primarily been focused on assessing whether students have benefited from and been satisfied the level of rigor, workload, and primary learning objectives in English 101. We

have used these data to discuss potential changes to the technical components of the class. However, future research may include putting more emphasis on specific attitudes and behaviors that students learn in English 101 and carry into the next course in the sequence. In fact, we can track the success and retention rates of a cohort of students as they move from English 101 into English 103 or 112. These data will help us make changes to our pedagogical approaches to help students move through our course sequence more successfully.

In the faculty surveys, we asked about the usefulness and effectiveness of the resources provided, including TLC and the COC SkillShare Workshops. I would like to present these data to the campus community to illustrate how fastidious English has been in its response to and compliance with AB-705. I would also like to use these data to inform decisions about revising the English 101 Course Outline of Record and guiding future AB-705 FIG work.

The Effects of AB-705

As California community college educators hold their breath for the next major reform policy, AB-705 continues to alter the landscape of English composition. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) recently reported that in Fall 2019, directly following AB-705 implementation, 57,000 more students passed English composition with a C or better (Mejia et al., 2020). At COC, we experienced a 38% increase in students completing English 101 since moving first to a disjunctive placement and then to direct placement due to AB-705 (Saxena et al., 2021). The high rates of student access and completion support the continued efforts of institutions to move students through transfer-level math and English as quickly and as equitably as possible.

However, not all emerging data is positive. The PPIC reported that while access to transfer-level classes for underrepresented populations had narrowed dramatically, (for instance, the access rate for Black students improved from 44% in 2015 to 96% in 2019), completion rates dropped (Mejia et al., 2020). In fact, from the 114 California community colleges named in the study, only 36% of colleges were reporting that completion for Black students was either near equity or at/above equity (Mejia et al., 2020). At COC, even though completion rates for Black students in English 101 improved 22% (from 28% in 2015 to 50% in 2020), these numbers are not something to applaud (Saxena et al., 2021). Statewide, and at COC, more work needs to be done to close equity gaps and eliminate disproportionate impact.

The truth is that we may have inadvertently created disproportionate impact in a way we never anticipated. COC is in an affluent suburb of Los Angeles, but many students commute from nearby cities with school districts that have far less access to resources. Students coming from K-12 systems in these underrepresented neighborhoods have less access to textbooks, technology, tutoring, and high-quality teachers, which often leaves them underprepared for college. In contrast, students who are enrolling from our own K-12 district have the resources and ability to succeed in ways that the others do not. While the direct placement class does give access to underrepresented students, it does not account for the skill level disparity once students actually enroll in the class. A student newly enrolling in college with far more foundational preparedness in General Education classes is more likely to succeed than a student who does not have that preparation. This may account for the stagnating success rates for underrepresented populations.

As a continuation of my work, I would like to study whether we are best supporting students coming in from outside our district; have we unintentionally set them up to fail? Ultimately, AB-705 appears to be an indictment against the K-12 system, and instead of addressing it from the ground-up, lawmakers have decided to apply pressure from the top-down. Unfortunately, by the time students reach the community college classroom, it is already too late to set foundational tenets. Therefore, as I continue to examine the impacts of AB-705 on our students and course offerings, it will be interesting to see whether lawmakers, and by extension, our department, have made the right decision. By giving all students access to transfer level English courses, have we unintentionally widened the equity gap? And if so, what can we do to minimize the damage? These queries are part of the next steps of this action research study.

Limitations

Engaging in this research study allowed me to reflect on the process and to identify several limitations that may have affected its overall validity and reliability. First, the instructors who agreed to participate in the interviews and who consistently attended the COC SkillShare Workshops are highly regarded in the department by students and other faculty for their dedication and classroom behaviors. Therefore, their positive responses to the workshops may be attributed to their years of active involvement in the department and commitment to improving their craft. These instructors believed that their participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops would improve their professional capacities, which would consequently improve their student success and retention rates.

Another limitation of this study was that my position as the English Department Chair could have affected participants' responses and swayed the outcomes of some of

my qualitative interview data. While I pride myself on having very strong relationships with the faculty and believe that the interviews were authentic and organic, it is possible that my role as their perceived superior may have influenced them to tell me what I wanted to hear. To mitigate this, I addressed the issue at the onset of the interviews, reminding instructors to disregard my role in the department and to think of me as a colleague researcher.

Seemingly, the most significant limitation of my study was COVID-19, but in reality, the pandemic benefited my study as much as it limited it. By migrating online, COC SkillShare Workshop participation increased substantially. The driving forces behind this upturn were likely the convenience of joining a Zoom call from home and the need for human connection. In many ways, my intervention flourished because the pandemic demanded that we reevaluate our pedagogical approaches and strategies. It forced us to redefine the traditional classroom and to reevaluate entrenched and outdated practices. Most importantly, it reinforced how much we needed each other, and for these reasons, the pandemic bolstered and energized my intervention.

On the other hand, the pandemic also created many gray areas in my study. For example, it has been essentially impossible to analyze student success and retention data without considering the effects COVID-19 had on enrollment. Therefore, the data I collected to address RQ 3, determining if the COC SkillShare Workshops helped instructors improve their student success and retention rates, cannot be truly assessed without considering how enrollment and retention rates were negatively affected by the pandemic.

Further, since my study did not identify students who dropped English 101 due to illness or other hardships predicated by COVID-19, the reported success and retention rates for Fall 2021 are ostensibly unreliable. To illustrate, in 2021, California community college enrollment fell below two million for the first time in 30 years, marking a 15% drop from 2020 (Burke, 2021). In Fall 2021, students enrolling in English classes at COC fell 4% from the previous year (703 students), demonstrating the effects of the pandemic on class size and student retention (Meuschke, D., 2021). Also, it is important to note that students' abilities, persistence, and completion varied class by class, which also directly affected instructors' success and retention rates.

Another validity threat that impacted my study was Theoretical Consistency (Ivankova, 2015). Since AB-705 is a relatively new reform measure and with the added weight of the pandemic, there was very little literature or theoretical and empirical knowledge that directly connected to my problem of practice. Further, since AB-705 implementation has been so inconsistently applied across the state, the interpretive agreement could be compromised because educators who have created different types of professional development may not necessarily agree with the inferences I have made in my study. To mitigate this threat, I collected information from PPIC reports and from CAP to determine what measures other English departments took to comply with AB-705. I also subscribed to online academic journals to ensure I was up to date on the latest theoretical and empirical data emerging across the state.

Also, instructors' grading philosophies and attitudes about grading may have also been another limitation of my study. Success data collected for RQ3 could have been influenced by instructors' traditional grading practices and embedded biases associated

with assigning certain grades. To minimize this threat, English has formed a Committee for Anti-Racism in English, and we are investigating new ways to evaluate and provide feedback on student work that encourage more responsive teaching pedagogies.

A final limitation of the study is the sample size. From the 29 English 101 instructors I reached out to, 18 responded to the pre-survey while only 15 responded to the post-survey. This small sampling makes it difficult to generalize the results, especially since the intervention is very specific to the path my department chose in response to AB-705. While I can share out my findings, and certainly other departments can adapt the workshops, their needs will most likely be different than ours at COC.

Conclusion

When I began this action research study, my problem of practice was so multi-faceted that I did not have a clear idea of where to begin. Initially, my intention was to study the levels of disproportionate impact AB-705 had on our students. I was interested in whether our solution to AB-705 had helped or hurt our students, but I quickly realized that this lofty research question would require data that would take years to collect and that I could not easily acquire.

When I revisit my work from the early cycles of this study, one question continues to surface: have we done the right thing? From a purely legislative angle, the answer is yes; we complied with the mandate and gave all students access to transfer-level English. However, from the perspective of a content expert and educator, the answer is also no, especially when we take into consideration the underrepresented populations who now have access to English 101 but are failing to pass the class.

When the pandemic hit, my action research study gained a new clarity and purpose. It was more important than ever to ensure instructors felt a sense of community and had a common goal: to reform our best practices to adapt to our new reality. The COC SkillShare Workshops took on a deeper significance. They standardized a culture of collaboration in our department and allowed instructors a space to learn and grow as educators.

Even though the quantitative survey data did not show a statistically significant effect on instructors' behaviors and attitudes, the qualitative data told another story. I have participated in every COC SkillShare Workshop and have seen first-hand how they have transformed our department. Participants not only gained skills to help them in the classroom, but they were also personally affected by their participation. To quote instructor A, "Seeing what my colleagues were doing in the workshops created a sense of group pride."

My nearly five-year tenure as chair has been fraught with devastating challenges—from fires to school shootings to massive legislative reform and political unrest, culminating in the continued battle to end the pandemic. I am honored to have been able to lead the department through these difficult times. The COC SkillShare Workshop were more than a research study for me; they were a way to create systemic change and to encourage dialogue and professional learning. We have become frontline workers, and our jobs, our capacities, have changed; my research study is a small contribution to this change that I hope will continue to flourish even in my absence.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

TABLE 1: COC SKILLSHARE WORKSHOP OPTIONS SPRING 2021

Possible Workshop Topics Spring 2021	Supporting Research & Learning Outcomes
Peer Review Online: Two instructors will guide a discussion on how to set up and lead peer review through Canvas.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Student Engagement: Humanizing the Online Experience: Two instructors will share ideas on how to best engage students in an online format. They will provide tips for humanizing the course to improve the student experience.	Improving student engagement and building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Canvas Shell Showcase: Two instructors will share their Canvas Course Shells to demonstrate how others can create an organized, accessible, and user-friendly student experience.	Improving student engagement, collaboration, and equity.
Using Open Educational Resources (OER): One instructor will review the new English 101 OER text and will offer tips on how to best integrate it in the coursework.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Feedback for TLC: Two TLC representatives will give an update on current TLC offerings and will ask instructors for feedback to improve both student and faculty experiences at the TLC.	Building instructor capacity, gathering data, and encouraging professional accountability.
Essay Prompt Exchange: Instructors will be asked to bring a prompt and to share it with others in the workshop. Participants will reflect on how to write and design effective essay prompts.	Building instructor capacity, sharing best practices, and collaborating.
Having a Growth Mindset: AB-705 FIG members will address ways in which positive psychology will lead to an improved classroom experience for both instructors and students.	Building instructor capacity and encouraging collaboration.

Possible Workshop Topics Spring 2021

Supporting Research & Learning
Outcomes

Building stronger student relationships:
AB-705 FIG members will discuss strategies for building relationships with students that encourage high touch practices, such as regular contact, community building, and personalization.

Building instructor capacity and encouraging professional accountability.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF METHODS

Research Question (RQ)	Collection Instrument	Data Analysis Tool
RQ1: What were participants' attitudes toward the COC SkillShare Workshops?	Pre- and Post-Surveys One-on-one interviews	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Grounded Theory: In Vivo and Focused coding (HyperRESEARCH)
RQ2: How did the COC SkillShare Workshops affect English 101 instructors' (a) attitudes and (b) teaching behaviors?	Pre- and Post-Surveys One-on-one interviews	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Paired samples Wilcoxon tests Grounded Theory: In Vivo and Focused coding (HyperRESEARCH)
RQ3: To what extent did faculty participation in COC SkillShare Workshops affect students' success and retention and (with a C or better in English 101?	Institutional Data	Descriptive Statistics (SPSS) Independent samples <i>t</i> -test

TABLE 3: TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Time Frame (Spring and Fall 2021)	Actions	Procedures
December	Revised survey to address attitudes and behaviors	Brainstormed with IRPIE Reviewed and revise survey questions
January	Submitted survey to IRB at COC and at ASU	Completed the required forms Contacted ASU and COC if any problems arise
January	Asked IRPIE for two fall years of student success and retention data for each 101 instructor (2019 and 2021).	Submitted official data request form through IRPIE
February	Met with AB-705 FIG to determine workshop dates and possible presenters	Emailed FIG members to set an initial meeting date Brought list of possible workshops Asked for other workshop suggestions
February	Sent instructors a list of possible workshops and ask them to select 6	Emailed all instructors for their feedback
February	Distributed COC SkillShare pre-survey	Sent Qualtrics link to every instructor teaching English 101 with instructions for completing the survey
February-May	Conducted AB-705 FIG meetings and Recorded just-in-time feedback	Emailed FIG members Made notes about the interventions, depending on the feedback
Mid-February-May	Conducted Weekly COC SkillShare Workshops	Emailed all instructors to attend workshops Emailed specific instructors to lead sessions

Time Frame (Spring and Fall 2021)	Actions	Procedures
May-June	Distributed COC SkillShare post-survey	Sent Qualtrics link to every instructor teaching English 101 with instructions for completing the survey
June	Collected surveys	Analyzed data and interpret
June-July	Conducted interviews	Emailed 6-8 English 101 instructors who participated in the COC SkillShare Workshops in Spring 2021 to attend an interview via Zoom Coded interviews to find themes
December	Collect Institutional Data	Conduct a series of independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests after collecting post survey to compare attitudes and behaviors pre- and post-workshops participation

TABLE 4: PRE/POST ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHING ($n = 13$)

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
1. In-class, student-to-student discussions are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101.	5.0	4.7	.48	4.0	4.5	.52	.08
2. Well-organized, lecture-based classes are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101.	3.0	3.6	1.1	4.0	3.5	1.1	.48
3. Organizing my classes to have students interact with each other online is an effective way for students to learn.	4.0	4.3	.75	4.0	4.3	.63	1.0
4. Providing small group opportunities for students to solve problems is an effective way for students to learn.	5.0	4.5	.52	5.0	4.6	.51	.66
5. Students can help each other learn more effectively when they are in small groups.	4.0	4.0	.91	4.0	4.0	.58	1.0
6. I feel a lot of teaching time in English 101 should be used to question students' ideas.	4.0	3.6	1.0	3.0	3.4	.77	.50

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
7. Giving students extensive feedback helps them learn the basic concepts of English 101.	4.0	4.1	.90	5.0	4.3	.86	.41
8. Students learn effectively without instructor intervention.	2.0	1.6	.51	2.0	1.7	.48	.31
9. I believe that teaching is a collaborative profession.	5.0	4.7	.63	5.0	4.7	.63	1.0
10. Professional development is a valuable resource for improving one's teaching practices in English 101.	5.0	4.7	.48	5.0	4.8	.44	.32
11. Learning from my colleagues is a good way to improve my teaching practices in English 101.	5.0	4.8	.44	5.0	4.9	.38	.32
12. I feel the best way to improve my instruction is to work things out on my own.	2.0	1.9	.90	2.0	1.9	.90	1.0

TABLE 5: PRE/POST TEACHING BEHAVIORS ($n = 13$)

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
13. In my interactions with students in English 101, I try to have a conversation with them about the topics we are studying.	5.0	4.5	.52	5.0	4.6	.51	.66
14. I design my teaching in English 101 with the assumption that students come in with very little useful knowledge of the topics covered.	3.0	3.2	1.2	3.0	3.1	.90	.91
15. I set aside some teaching time in English 101 so that students can discuss, among themselves, the difficulties they are having with assignments or readings.	4.0	3.9	.99	4.0	3.6	1.2	.26
16. I regularly change my teaching practices based on students' assessments and feedback.	4.0	3.9	.99	4.0	4.1	1.0	.41
17. Because I have planned my classes ahead of time, I don't often change my lesson plans.	2.0	2.7	1.2	2.0	2.2	1.2	.25
18. I would routinely participate in professional development activities even if it	5.0	4.6	.65	5.0	4.5	.88	.31

Item	Pre			Post			<i>p</i>
	Med.	Mean	SD	Med.	Mean	SD	
wasn't required by my institution. 19. I am comfortable sharing my teaching practices with my colleagues to help them improve their own practices.	4.0	3.9	1.1	4.0	4.1	.90	.48

TABLE 6: PRE/POST AGGREGATE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR COMPARISON

(n = 13)

Item	Med.	Mean	SD	<i>p</i>
Pre-attitude	4.3	4.2	.34	.45
Post-attitude	4.0	4.1	.30	
Pre-behavior	4.1	4.0	.50	.91
Post-behavior	4.0	4.0	.55	

TABLE 7: STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES FALL 2019 AND FALL
2021

Term	Item	Mean	<i>p</i>
Fall 2019	Non-participants' Retention	85%	.40
	Participants' Retention	86%	
	Non-participants' Success	66%	.49
	Participants' Success	67%	
Fall 2021	Non-participants' Retention	78%	<.001
	Participants' Retention	84%	
	Non-participants' Success	56%	<.001
	Participants' Success	66%	

2019: $n_{\text{students of nonparticipants}}=1790$, $n_{\text{students of participants}}=761$;

2021: $n_{\text{students of nonparticipants}}=1187$, $n_{\text{students of participants}}=886$

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH FS AND WS

Participants	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Change
Ws	13.8	15.6	1.8
Fs	12.7	8.9	-3.8
Non-Participants	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Change
Ws	15.0	21.7	6.7
Fs	10.4	9.6	-0.8

APPENDIX B

PRE-SURVEY: ENGLISH 101 FACULTY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Hello Colleagues!

My name is Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Eugene Judson, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on “Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students.” The purpose of this study is to understand better how participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops has affected instructors’ attitudes about teaching and behaviors in the classroom and to determine whether participating in the workshops has led to an increase in student success and retention rates.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to help me out!



Q1 Please list the first initial of your mother's first name. This will serve as a unique identifier to help match pre- and post-survey data.



Q2 Please list the last four digits of your cell phone number. This will serve as a unique identifier to help match pre- and post-survey data.

Q3 Are you a full-time or part-time instructor at COC?

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)

Q4 Including this semester, how many years have you taught English 101 at COC?

Q5 How many sections of English 101 are you currently teaching?

- 1 (1)
 - 2 (2)
 - 3 or more (3)
-

Q6 Please indicate the format of your current English 101 class.

- 100% Online (1)
 - OnlineLive (2)
 - Both (3)
-

Q7 Considering only the English 101 classes you are teaching this semester, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

In-class, student-to-student discussions are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101. (1)

Presenting well-organized, lecture-based classes is an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101. (2)

Organizing my classes to have students interact with each other online is an effective way for students to learn. (3)

Providing small group opportunities for students to solve problems is an effective way for students to learn. (4)

Students can learn more effectively when they have been assigned to small groups than working alone. (6)

Q8 How do you encourage student-to-student interaction in your English 101 class? Mark all that apply.

- Responding to other students' discussion boards (1)
 - Assigning group work/projects (2)
 - Creating peer review groups (3)
 - Using technology, like Google Docs, Flipgrid, or Whiteboard (5)
 - Having students teach each other (6)
 - Other (8) _____
-

Q9 Considering only the English 101 classes you are teaching, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

In my interactions with students in English 101, I try to have a conversation with them about the topics we are studying. (21)

I feel a lot of teaching time in English 101 should be used to question students' ideas. (24)

I design my teaching in English 101 with the assumption that students come in without much knowledge of the topics covered. (23)

I set aside some teaching time in English 101 so that students can discuss, among themselves, the difficulties they are having with assignments or readings. (18)

Giving students extensive feedback helps them learn the basic concepts of English 101. (4)

Students generally apply the feedback I provide to future assignments. (3)

I regularly change my teaching practices based on students' assessments and feedback. (6)

Because I have planned my classes ahead of time, I don't often change my lesson plans. (16)

Students learn effectively without instructor intervention. (5)

Q10 Reflecting on the last English 101 section you taught, what are the primary ways you engage students in their learning?

Q11 How many minutes does it typically take for you to provide feedback for one student's English 101 essay?

Q12 How often during the semester do you give students the opportunity to provide you feedback about your teaching?

▼ 0 (1) ... 16 (17)

Q13 Considering your experiences with professional development and professionalism of teaching, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I believe that teaching is a collaborative profession. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would routinely participate in professional development activities even if it wasn't required by my institution. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development is a valuable resource for improving one's teaching practices in English 101. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning from my colleagues is a good way to improve my teaching practices in English 101. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I routinely share my teaching practices with my colleagues to help them improve their own practices. (7)

I feel the best way to improve my instruction is to work things out on my own. (8)

Q14 Specifically, what are some of the benefits you have experienced from sharing/learning about teaching practices in professional development settings?

Q15 Specifically, what are some of the drawbacks you have experienced from sharing/learning about teaching practices in professional development settings?

Q16 How often do you speak to other instructors at COC about teaching practices?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Frequently (4)
- Always (5)

APPENDIX C

POST-SURVEY: ENGLISH 101 FACULTY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Hello Colleagues!

Thank you for taking my doctoral action research project pre-survey earlier this semester, but now, in order to complete my study and to begin comparing my data, I am kindly asking you to complete the post-survey as well. To refresh your memory about my study, please see the description below:

My name is Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Eugene Judson, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on “Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students.” The purpose of this study is to understand better how participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops has affected instructors’ attitudes about teaching and behaviors in the classroom and to determine whether participating in the workshops has led to an increase in student success and retention rates.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to help me out!



Q1 post Please list the first initial of your mother's first name. This will serve as a unique identifier to help match pre- and post-survey data.



Q2 post Please list the last four digits of your cell phone number. This will serve as a unique identifier to help match pre- and post-survey data.

Q3 post Are you a full-time or part-time instructor at COC?

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)

Q4 post Including this semester, how many years have you taught English 101 at COC?

Q5 post How many sections of English 101 are you currently teaching?

- 1 (1)
 - 2 (2)
 - 3 or more (3)
-

Q6 post Please indicate the format of your current English 101 class.

- 100% Online (1)
 - OnlineLive (2)
 - Both (3)
-

Q7 post Considering only the English 101 classes you are teaching this semester, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

In-class, student-to-student discussions are an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101. (1)

Presenting well-organized, lecture-based classes is an effective way for students to learn the fundamental concepts of English 101. (2)

Organizing my classes to have students interact with each other online is an effective way for students to learn. (3)

Providing small group opportunities for students to solve problems is an effective way for students to learn. (4)

Students can learn more effectively when they have been assigned to small groups than working alone. (6)

Q8 post How do you encourage student-to-student interaction in your English 101 class?
Mark all that apply.

- Responding to other students' discussion boards (1)
- Assigning group work/projects (2)
- Creating peer review groups (3)
- Using technology, like Google Docs, Flipgrid, or Whiteboard (5)
- Having students teach each other (6)
- Other (8) _____

Q9 post Considering only the English 101 classes you are teaching, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

In my interactions with students in English 101, I try to have a conversation with them about the topics we are studying. (21)

I feel a lot of teaching time in English 101 should be used to question students' ideas. (24)

I design my teaching in English 101 with the assumption that students come in without much knowledge of the topics covered. (23)

I set aside some teaching time in English 101 so that students can discuss, among themselves, the difficulties they are having with assignments or readings. (18)

Giving students extensive feedback helps them learn the basic concepts of English 101. (4)

Students generally apply the feedback I provide to future assignments. (3)

I regularly change my teaching practices based on students' assessments and feedback. (6)

Because I have planned my classes ahead of time, I don't often change my lesson plans. (16)

Students learn effectively without instructor intervention. (5)

Q10 post Reflecting on the last English 101 section you taught, what are the primary ways you engage students in their learning?

Q11 post How many minutes does it typically take for you to provide feedback for one student's English 101 essay?

Q12 post How often during the semester do you give students the opportunity to provide you feedback about your teaching?

▼ 0 (1) ... 16 (17)

Q13 post Considering your experiences with professional development and professionalism of teaching, please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I believe that teaching is a collaborative profession. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would routinely participate in professional development activities even if it wasn't required by my institution. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development is a valuable resource for improving one's teaching practices in English 101. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning from my colleagues is a good way to improve my teaching practices in English 101. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I routinely share my teaching practices with my colleagues to help them improve their own practices. (7)

I feel the best way to improve my instruction is to work things out on my own. (8)

Q14 post Specifically, what are some of the benefits you have experienced from sharing/learning about teaching practices in professional development settings?

Q15 post Specifically, what are some of the drawbacks you have experienced from sharing/learning about teaching practices in professional development settings?

Q16 post How often do you speak to other instructors at COC about teaching practices?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Frequently (4)
- Always (5)

End of Block: Introduction and Consent

Start of Block: Post Survey COC SkillShare Workshop Attendance

Q17 post Did you attend any optional English Department Meetings/COC SkillShare Workshops this semester?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Did you attend any optional English Department

Meetings/COC SkillShare Workshops this semester? = No

Skip To: Q18 post If Did you attend any optional English Department

Meetings/COC SkillShare Workshops this semester? = Yes

Q18 post How many optional English Department Meetings/COC SkillShare Workshops did you attend this semester?

- 1-2 (1)
- 3-4 (2)
- 5-6 (3)

Q19 post Which of the following COC SkillShare Workshops did you attend this semester? Mark all that apply.

- Canvas Shell Showcase (1)
- Grading online/Grading management (2)
- Student Engagement (3)
- Using Open Educational Resources (OER) (4)
- Building Stronger Student Relationships (5)
- Growth Mindset (6)

Q20 post Did the COC SkillShare Workshops help you teach English 101?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Maybe (3)
-

Q21 post If you did not find the COC SkillShare Workshops helpful in teaching English 101, please explain why not.

Q22 post Have you integrated a skill you learned from the COC SkillShare Workshops into your classroom?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Maybe (4)
-

Q23 post What was the most useful and valuable thing you learned at the COC SkillShare Workshops?

Q24 post What can the AB-705 Faculty Inquiry Group do to improve the COC SkillShare Workshops?

APPENDIX D
FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your experience teaching the 4-unit English 101 course.
2. Which of the COC SkillShare Workshops have you attended?
3. Did you find the COC SkillShare Workshops helpful? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Can you identify one practical thing you have learned and applied from your participation in the COC SkillShare Workshops?
5. In addition to the COC SkillShare Workshops we have already offered, what additional faculty professional development topics would be useful to you?
6. What other ideas/matters from the new English 101 would you like to share?
7. What questions do you have for me?

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Colleague:

My name is Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Eugene Judson, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on “Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students.” The purpose of this study is to understand better how participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops has affected instructors’ attitudes about teaching and behaviors in the classroom and to determine whether participating in the workshops has led to an increase in student retention and success rates.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in an interview concerning your knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about the COC SkillShare Workshops. We anticipate this interview to take 20 minutes total. I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about how the COC SkillShare Workshops have affected the way you teach English 101. Interview responses will also inform future iterations of the study and the workshops. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our colleagues and students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. If you consent to be recorded, audio recordings will be deleted from the original recording device upon transfer to the password-protected computer. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used. Data will be stored on a password-protected computer for a period of four years and then deleted.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Eugene Judson at eugene.judson@asu.edu or (602) 543-6343 or Alene Terzian-Zeitounian at alene.terzan@canyons.edu or (661) 362-5047.

Thank you,

Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, Doctoral Student
Eugene Judson, Associate Professor

Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study and will let me audio record your responses by verbally indicating your consent.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Eugene Judson at (480) 727-5216 or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.

APPENDIX F
SURVEY RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Colleague:

My name is Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Eugene Judson, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on “Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students.” The purpose of this study is to understand better how participating in the COC SkillShare Workshops has affected instructors’ attitudes about teaching and behaviors in the classroom and to determine whether participating in the workshops has led to an increase in student retention and success rates.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in a pre- and post-survey concerning your knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about the COC SkillShare Workshops. We anticipate each survey will take about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about how the COC SkillShare Workshops have affected the way you teach English 101. Survey responses will also inform future iterations of the study and the workshops. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our colleagues and students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Eugene Judson at eugene.judson@asu.edu or (602) 543-6343 or Alene Terzian-Zeitounian at alene.terzan@canyons.edu or (661) 362-5047.

Thank you,

Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, Doctoral Student
Eugene Judson, Associate Professor

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Eugene Judson at (480) 727-5216 or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.

APPENDIX G
LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Dr. Judson,

I support the work Alene Terzian-Zeitounian is conducting about Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students at College of the Canyons. Alene Terzian-Zeitounian will be interviewing 6-8 instructors and will be surveying all English 101 instructors. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andy McC

Andy McCutcheon, M.A.

Dean, School of Humanities

Interim Dean, School of Social & Behavioral Sciences

College of the Canyons

26455 Rockwell Canyon Road

Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Bonelli Hall 246, (661) 362-5919

andy.mccutcheon@canyons.edu



APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL, COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Santa Clarita Community College District Institutional Review Board

Notice of Expedited Review

Date: September 30, 2019
To: Alene Terzian-Zeitounian, Arizona State University Doctoral Candidate
From: Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D., Co-Chair, Santa Clarita Community College District Institutional Review Board

Protocol Title: Using Effective Academic Support Services to Improve Student Success and Retention in Transfer-Level Composition Courses Post AB-705.

Protocol ID: SCCCD-2019-5

The College of the Canyons Institutional Review Board approved your research protocol on September 30, 2019.

If this proposal is used in conjunction with any other human experimentation or if it is modified in any way, it must be re-reviewed for these special circumstances. In addition, the Panel requests prompt notification of any complications or incidents of noncompliance which may occur during any experimental procedure.

Please remember that all data including all signed consent form documents must be retained for a minimum of three years past the completion of this research. Your funding agency, your department, or other entities may impose additional requirements.



Daylene M. Meuschke, Co-Chair

Review Type:	Expedited
Funding:	N/A
Expedited Under Paragraph:	7
Assurance Number:	FWA 00026837 (SCCCD)
IRB Registration Number	IRB00005805

APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVAL, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Eugene Judson](#)
[Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe](#)
 480/727-5216
Eugene.Judson@asu.edu

Dear [Eugene Judson](#):

On 1/8/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Measuring the Impact of Professional Development on Community College Faculty and Students
Investigator:	Eugene Judson
IRB ID:	STUDY00013134
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alene Terzian-Zeitounian Email of Support.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Alene Terzian-Zeitounian IRB Protocol.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Alene Terzian-Zeitounian IRB Recruit Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Alene Terzian-Zeitounian IRB Survey Solicitation Request.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Faculty Interview Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Post-survey_COC_SkillShare_Workshops_Instructor_Attitudes_and_Behaviors.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Pre-Survey_COC_SkillShare_Workshops_Instructor_Attitudes_and_Behaviors.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview

	guides/focus group questions);
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The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 1/8/2021.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Alene Terzian-Zeitounian
Alene Terzian-Zeitounian