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Evaluation of a Collaborative Learning Program Training for Honor Society Chapter Sponsors

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Walden University

College of Education

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Susan Freda Edwards

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University

2022

Abstract

Evaluation of a Collaborative Learning Program Training
for Honor Society Chapter Sponsors

by

Susan Freda Edwards

MA, Clemson University, 1985

BA, Florida Southern College, 1977

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

October 2022

Abstract

In 2018, the Honor Society (pseudonym) developed an online, self-paced training module for chapter sponsors to help them coach community college students during the collaborative learning project process. The collaborative learning project is one of the principal ways the Honor Society fulfills its mission to provide opportunities to college students to grow as scholars and leaders. As of April 2022, the program had not been evaluated. This was an evaluation study using a basic qualitative methodology. The purpose of this qualitative formative program evaluation was to determine what aspects of the collaborative learning project training could be improved. The framework for this study was Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The research questions focused on the perceptions of participants about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training in helping chapter sponsors coach community college students to develop a collaborative learning project. Convenience sampling was used to select three Honor Society staff members and 14 chapter sponsors to participate in semistructured interviews. Interviews were analyzed and coded, leading to emergent themes. Findings included recommendations to update videos, to create sample project timelines, and to develop content on how to both coach students and motivate students. Implications for positive social change include development of more effective training designed by Honor Society staff for chapter sponsors. More effective training could help chapter sponsors better coach students through development, implementation, and reflection upon collaborative learning projects which could result in increased opportunities for community college students to grow as scholars and leaders who serve their communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the three most important people in my life, my grandmother, Margaret Telesca Arthur, my mother, Rosemary Arthur Freda, and my beloved Jeff, always

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To my husband, Jeff, thank you for your extraordinary support and sage advice over the years as I worked to complete my degree. Your intellectual curiosity, empathy, and kindness inspire me.

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Thank you to the individuals who took time from their busy schedules to take part in this study. Your dedication to your students and to your work with the Honor Society changes lives and makes a positive difference in the world.

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
The Local Problem.....	1
Definition of the Problem	2
Rationale	4
Evidence of the Problem at the Local/National Level.....	5
Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	15
Research Questions.....	16
Review of the Literature.....	17
Conceptual Framework.....	18
Review of the Broader Problem.....	19
Online Professional Development and Training.....	19
Active and Collaborative Learning.....	22
Academic Challenge.....	23
Opportunities for Student Effort.....	25
Student-Faculty Interaction.....	26
Support for Students Beyond the Classroom.....	27
Service Learning.....	28
Literature Review Summay.....	29

Implications.....	30
Summary.....	31
Section 2: The Methodology.....	32
Introduction.....	32
Qualitative Research Design and Approach.....	32
Participants.....	35
Population.....	35
Sampling and Sample Size.....	35
Establishing Researcher Participants Relationship.....	36
Ethical Protection of Participants.....	37
Data Collection.....	38
Interviews.....	39
Data Collection Procedures.....	40
Participant Access.....	41
Role of the Researcher.....	41
Data Analysis.....	43
Evidence of Quality.....	44
Limitations.....	46
Summary.....	46
Data Analysis Results.....	46
Interviews.....	49

Findings.....	52
Honor Society Staff Interviews.....	53
Chapter Sponsors Interviews.....	63
Shared Themes.....	70
Discrepant Data.....	72
Project Deliverable.....	72
Summary.....	75
Section 3: The Project.....	79
Introduction.....	79
Rationale.....	79
Review of the Literature.....	82
Project Description.....	103
Project Evaluation Plan.....	103
Project Implications.....	103
Summary.....	106
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	107
Introduction.....	107
Project Strengths and Limitations.....	107
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches.....	110
Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change.....	112
Scholarship.....	112
Project Development and Evaluation.....	113

Leadership and Change.....	114
Reflection on the Importance of the Work.....	114
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research.....	115
Conclusion.....	117
References.....	119
Appendix A: The Project.....	158

List of Tables

Table 1. Open Coding Example from Honor Society Staff Interview.....49

Table 2. NVivo Coding Example from Chapter Sponsor Interview.....50

Table 3. Honor Society Staff Interviews-Codes and Themes.....54

Table 4. Chapter Sponsors Interviews-Codes and Themes.....63

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Introduction

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) called for faculty to redefine their roles in ways that promote student development and engage students as collaborators in achieving educational success (AACC, 2012). Faculty-student interaction and interactions among students as necessary to student development and academic success (McClenney et al., 2021). The local site is the headquarters for an international community college organization that created a collaborative learning program to engage high-achieving students with chapter sponsors and each other at almost 1,300 colleges in 10 nations. To train chapter sponsors, who serve as coaches throughout the collaborative learning project process, the Honor Society (pseudonym), was created in 2018 as an online, self-paced training in the collaborative learning project. However, the Honor Society has yet to be evaluated to determine whether the training provides chapter sponsors with information they need to understand the collaborative learning project process. Effectiveness of online collaborative learning project training is important to the Honor Society's mission of creating opportunities for college students to grow as scholars and leaders, and leaders at the site for this study indicated support for this study and availability of the organization's staff and chapter sponsors as participants.

Colleges with Honor Society chapters select chapter sponsors from among faculty and student development personnel and report their selections to Honor Society headquarters. These chapter sponsors serve as liaisons between their colleges and the Honor Society's international headquarters, the local site for this study. The Honor

Society communicates with chapter sponsors from its headquarters in the southern part of the United States. Honor Society staff developed training for chapter sponsors who serve as coaches for students engaged in collaborative learning projects. Training consisted of two 1-hour sessions that highlighted steps in the collaborative learning project process. Initially, sessions were conducted in person by members of the Honor Society's headquarters staff. In 2018, the Honor Society created an online self-paced collaborative learning project training module. The purpose of developing online training was to reach as many chapter sponsors as possible without travel, lodging, and food costs to the Honors Society and sponsors who participated in in-person training.

Online training is reaching more chapter sponsors at college-based chapters. Honor Society executives indicated that the program has never been evaluated. As part of the Honor Society staff, the vice president encouraged me to investigate the organization's online collaborative learning program training for chapter sponsors. The President and CEO as well as Chief Engagement Officer wanted to know what about the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training works well and what may be improved.

Definition of the Problem

The Honor Society President and CEO agreed with the AACCC call to redefine faculty roles in ways that promote community college students' development and success. Chapter sponsors, they believed, were vital to the Honor Society's mission to provide opportunities to help high-achieving community college students grow as scholars and leaders (Honor Society, 2016b). The collaborative learning project was a key component of the Honor Society's plan to provide growth opportunities for its

members. Chapter sponsors are meant to serve as coaches throughout the collaborative learning project to help students navigate this multifaceted process. It is vital, therefore, that chapter sponsors understand required elements of the collaborative learning project.

Currently, the Honor Society's collaborative learning project is one of two projects chapters are encouraged to complete during each calendar year. The collaborative learning project involves the second part of the Honor Society's mission to provide opportunities for college students to grow as scholars and leaders (Honor Society, 2020a). The process by which chapters develop, implement, and reflect upon their work is multifaceted, and chapter sponsors are important as coaches who engage with and facilitate student work. Ongoing and effective collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors is essential, because the average tenure for Honor Society sponsors is 3.4 years (Honor Society, 2019). If chapter sponsors do not understand the collaborative learning project process, they cannot effectively coach students. Effectiveness of the online collaborative learning project training, therefore, has an impact on chapter sponsors and student members of the Honor Society. Training is important to Honor Society staff, because they want to engage all of the Honor Society's nearly 3,000 chapters in an annual collaborative learning project to help students develop as scholars and leaders (B. A. Ellis, personal communication, March 17, 2020).

Chapter sponsors need to be able to explain the collaborative learning project process and coach students through development and implementation of an annual project. By engaging in the Honor Society collaborative learning project, students connect with faculty and fellow students. Connecting with faculty and students has been shown to help community college students persevere and complete their degrees and

certificates (The University of Texas, 2021). There is a gap in knowledge about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module and whether it helps chapter sponsors coach students in terms of their development, implementation, and reflection upon projects. Addressing this gap in knowledge has a potentially far-reaching effect on community college student success. The problem that was the focus of this study is that online training developed for chapter sponsors in the Honor Society's collaborative learning project has not been evaluated since the program's inception in 2018.

Collaborative learning program training stakeholders who can provide valuable information about online training include the Honor Society's chapter sponsors, student members, headquarters staff, and community college presidents. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the online collaborative learning project training from its stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The Honor Society developed an online self-paced training module for chapter sponsors to assist them with membership recruitment, training chapter officers, and leading chapters. Training for the collaborative learning project was selected for this study because of the complex nature of the collaborative learning project process and the project's direct connection with the Honor Society's mission to provide opportunities to grow as scholars and leaders (Vendartham, 2016a). It was selected as well because there is potential for positive social change. Student-faculty and student-to-student interactions

engendered by the Honor Society's collaborative learning project process have been shown to be important in terms of community college student success (The University of Texas, 2021). Second, the Honor Society's collaborative learning projects promote research-based and intentional service with short-term and potential for long-term constructive impacts on communities as well as individual students (Honor Society, 2020d). The Honor Society introduced its collaborative learning program in 2011 and conducted its first in-person training program in fall 2012. The program was developed over 3 years to include the Honor Society's four official hallmarks of scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship. The foundation of the collaborative learning program is the Honor Society's biennial honors topic used by chapters as the foundation of collaborative learning projects (Honor Society, 2020d). An honors topic must be interdisciplinary, international in scope, intellectual, interesting, important, in-the-news, theme-oriented, and action-oriented (Honor Society, 2020b). Using these criteria, a topic is designed by headquarters staff and chapter sponsors who are selected by application to offer members opportunities to engage in community action in the form of identifying a problem and developing an in-depth and action-oriented solution (Honor Society, 2016c, p. 2). Due to the complex nature of the collaborative learning program that it takes years to understand the process well enough to coach students (Vendartham, 2016b). Costs in time to chapter sponsors as well as travel, lodging, and food associated with bringing groups of chapter sponsors to workshops were barriers to reaching people.

Moving collaborative learning project training online in 2018 led to increased access for chapter sponsors, and Honor Society staff developed training as self-paced to increase flexibility for chapter sponsors with varied schedules. Online self-paced

collaborative learning project training materials include information presented in different formats, such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and written resources, and includes a quiz about goal setting, academic resources and investigations, making connections between research and action, collaboration, and oral and written reflection and communication (Honor Society, 2018). Moving training online to reach chapter sponsors throughout the organization more than doubled the number of people who completed it from 225 between 2011 and 2017 to 572 between 2018 and 2019 (B.A. Ellis., personal communication, March 17, 2020). A formal evaluation is necessary to determine whether the self-paced online training by Honor Society staff has resulted in improved understanding by chapter sponsors and students in terms of what works well and what might be improved.

There are many factors contributing to the problem involving the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors has not been evaluated. Among these problems are heavy workloads for Honor Society headquarters staff that kept them from prioritizing evaluation of training. Staff at the headquarters organization understand that chapter sponsors are volunteers who have fulltime teaching or staff jobs at community colleges and often do not receive compensation for the work they do with the Honor Society and students beyond the classroom. Students and chapter sponsors have expressed anxiety about their lack of understanding in terms of how to work through the steps of a collaborative learning project (Vendartham, 2016b). Online training involving the Honor Society's collaborative learning project was designed to increase the ease with which chapter sponsors could access collaborative learning project training. Evaluation of training will have the potential to contribute to a better

understanding of the effectiveness of the online self-paced training needed to address this problem by determining whether it is effective.

While the collaborative learning program begins with academic investigation into a theme related to the Honor Society's honors topic, the program also involves service, collaboration, and reflection. Honor Society staff recognize that students need coaching involving the collaborative learning project process and look to the Honor Society's approximately 3,000 chapter sponsors to provide guidance to members as they engage with the program. The committee that develops the honors topic foundational to the collaborative learning project writes and the Honor Society publishes a biennial collaborative learning program guide to help members and chapter sponsors learn about the program.

The guide is published every other year by the Honor Society and is available in hard copy and digitally (Honor Society, 2020e). Each chapter receives a copy of the 36-page guide that introduces the honors topic and includes a planning rubric, information on developing a research question and identifying and analyzing academic sources, and instructions for keeping a collaborative learning project journal. It also includes a sample collaborative learning project (Honor Society, 2020d). Since the inception of the program, headquarters staff heard ongoing complaints from chapter sponsors and members that understanding the collaborative learning program is difficult, and projects developed by chapters are demanding in terms of time and effort. Those factors combine to make the program problematic for chapter sponsors to coach (Honor Society, 2016b).

Training that helps chapter sponsors understand the collaborative learning project is necessary to support their work, students' work, and the Honor Society in terms of its

mission to provide opportunities to help students grow as scholars and leaders and promotes student engagement at community colleges (Honor Society, 2020a). Three executives with more than 20 years of experience working with the Honor Society at its headquarters recognized the need for training involving collaborative learning project process. Two of the three executives had previously worked as chapter sponsors for Honor Society chapters at their community colleges before moving to Honor Society headquarters. The third executive had been in charge of chapter programs. A fourth executive with 5 years of experience and who previously served as a chapter sponsor before working for the Honor Society identified the need to put the collaborative learning project training online to reach the largest possible number of chapter sponsors and to make the training self-paced to allow accessibility to it when convenient for trainees. Three staff members had backgrounds in community college teaching, and the fourth had a background in experiential learning, though not in teaching. Despite training and supporting materials available to chapter sponsors, such as the biennial honors topic guide, a guide for chapter leaders, and an online workbook, bibliography, and film list, Honor Society stakeholders are concerned about continued confusion expressed by chapter sponsors in terms of the collaborative learning project process and lack of evidence to justify expending funds for collaborative learning and project training (Honor Society, 2020b).

During the first year of their tenure, the Honor Society President and CEO also heard numerous complaints about the time and effort it took to complete the collaborative learning project (Honor Society, 2017). Students and chapter sponsors did not understand academic research and why it was part of this process. They expressed frustration that the

project took considerable time and effort to complete, and many chapters had projects on which they had worked for years that had become traditions, but would not work within the parameters of the collaborative learning project process (J. D. Edwards, personal communication, May 14, 2020; Vendartham, 2016b). For the purpose of this study, senior administrators agreed to allow me access to archived documents and data as well as chapter sponsors and headquarters staff for interviews.

Evidence of the Problem in the Literature

The National Education Association (NEA) promoted online learning as a way to extend learning beyond boundaries of traditional classrooms. The NEA recommended several strategies that work for online professional development training. Training should be instructor led and student centered, instructions and expectations for working through curriculum should be clear, and activities and assessments should take varied learning styles into account. Online training should also be flexible enough to change and grow over time as developers incorporate up-to-date best practices.

Leonard (2016) discussed how training can help organizations retain experience and knowledge, share knowledge through mentoring, and produce new knowledge. Altinay-Gazi and Altinay-Aksal (2016) argued it is important for educational organizations to change and improve quality of their practices. Technology is a tool for professional development that allows organizations to help faculty members advance their content knowledge and skills. Sun and Chen (2016) traced the evolution of online learning and found that it had the potential to encourage people to “increase their capacities of analysis, imagination, critical synthesis, creative expression, self-awareness, and intentionality” (p.157). Cochrane et al. (2015) said online professional development

served as a catalyst for development of appropriate learning environments that connect formal and informal learning. Sözcön et al. (2018) reported that authentic online learning should involve employing presentations, opportunities for participants to chat, and videos, all of which can allow faculty to grow as learners and teachers.

Honor Society chapter sponsors coach students in the collaborative learning program and serve to increase opportunities for student engagement and support at community colleges. Nationwide, 29% of community college students report that their parents did not attend college, 64% of students hold jobs, and 59% of students receive financial aid (AACC, 2020). Community college students, in particular commuter students, have limited opportunities for interactions with faculty and engagement on campus and, therefore, their college success is at risk (Dwyer, 2017). Berg (2020) emphasized engagement opportunities that connect past lessons with current ones transform community college students and help them connect day-to-day activities with lifelong learning. Kilgo et al. (2016) said involvement in cocurricular activities had a significant positive psychological effect on students.

The Honor Society has grown in the 104 years since its founding along with the Community college movement and claims that more than 90% of the Honor Society's members graduate compared with 27.6% of community college students in general (Honor Society, 2019, p. 2). With its emphasis on providing opportunities for student growth as scholars and leaders, the Honor Society is modelling student engagement both in and beyond the classroom. The organization's collaborative learning project and online self-paced training for chapter sponsors models active and collaborative learning. Contact

with faculty members beyond the classroom contributed to student success (The University of Texas, 2021).

Educating chapter sponsors, most of whom serve as faculty at their colleges, in the Honor Society collaborative learning project process is critical to student achievement in terms of academic investigation, service, collaboration, reflection, and determining the impact of collaborative learning projects. Ödalen et al. (2019) found that training for faculty during the first several years of their careers, resulted in more student-centered behaviors in the classroom. Training them early in their tenure to address the student-centered collaborative learning project process may help sponsors engage students in ways that keep them central to the project and grow as scholars and leaders (Honor Society, 2019).

Honor Society collaborative learning projects highlight the connection between academic and soft skills through cocurricular student engagement. Students write about their work in reflection pieces that chapters submit for awards consideration and for inclusion in the Honor Society's published journal that is shared online and with community college presidents (Honor Society, 2020g). Collaborative learning project online self-paced training modules for chapter sponsors would be transferrable to community colleges and other higher education institutions that want to build and enhance cocurricular student engagement.

CCSSE researchers at the University of Texas identified five benchmarks of effective community college practice. The five benchmarks are "active and collaborative learning, opportunities for student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners beyond the classroom. These benchmarks fit with the Honor

Society's collaborative learning program (The University of Texas at Austin, 2021, p. 3). Kilgo et al. (2016) maintained that student affairs research promotes the benefits, such as feeling connected to others on campus, of college student involvement in campus organizations. Emotional awareness, problem solving, cultural competence, creativity, leadership, and collaboration communication were soft skills that were necessary for success in the workplace (Oktaviani, et al., 2019). Jones and Andrews (2019) found that coaching encouraged motivation and persistence when students and coaches believed in desired outcomes. Training coaches provides support for students as they develop skills as well as knowledge to find solutions to problems (Jones & Andrews, 2019).

Evans (2015) said professional development in education is complex but can result in behavioral, attitudinal, and intellectual growth. Growth as scholars and leaders is key to the Honor Society's mission. Carlson (2020) found training faculty to coach students promoted positive relationships that resulted in enhanced student learning. Moreover, training helped faculty create structures that resulted in students developing their abilities to manage their time and energy. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) identified seven design features of effective professional development. Professional development should (a) be content-focused, (b) incorporate active learning, (c) support collaboration, (d) use models and modeling of effective practice, (e) offer coaching and expert support, (f) provide opportunities for reflection and feedback, and (g) be of sustained duration (p. 4). Training that offers all seven elements have been found to be effective, though many effective training programs incorporate several but not all. Amandu et al. (2013) said the Moodle learning management system works as an online platform and provides a cost-effective

and easy-to-use professional development tool that affords opportunities for collaboration, reflection, and assessment.

Wynants and Dennis (2018) argued that professional development opportunities for faculty, particularly in terms of diverse student learning needs, are crucial to help faculty enrich their awareness and build teaching skills. Faculty were particularly responsive if they had a personal connection to the training and the ability to reach out to others who had participated in the same training. These programs should be, according to the authors, well-designed, accessible, meaningful, convenient, and flexible. Samuel (2016) assessed formal and informal methods of online faculty development and found older faculty tended to prefer formal training. Younger faculty preferred informal training and used formal training when other avenues of professional development were not readily available.

Definition of Terms

Chapter sponsor: A chapter sponsor is a faculty member, administrator, or staff member at a community college that has an active Honor Society chapter. Chapter sponsors are selected by administrators at community colleges where they are employed. Chapter sponsors are volunteers in terms of their relationship to the Honor Society (Honor Society, 2020a).

Collaborative learning project: Collaborative learning is a strategy in which groups of students work together to solve a problem or engage in a project or activity. For the Honor Society, collaborative learning refers to a program for high-achieving community college students that requires working on a project that addresses a problem determined by researching a theme of the Honor Society's honors topic, engaging in the

exercise of leadership and leadership development, and submitting to Honor Society headquarters a collaborative learning award entry (Honor Society, 2018).

Collaborative learning project award: The Honor Society designed a competitive annual award to ascertain the strongest collaborative learning projects completed by chapters during a calendar year. Scores from entries, which are judged by Honor Society alumni, sponsor emeriti, community college administrators, and Honor Society staff determine award-winning projects at 30 regional conferences and at the international convention of the Honor Society (Honor Society, 2020).

Honors study topic: A biennial topic selected by committee using eight criteria. The topic must be interdisciplinary, international, intellectual, interesting, important, in-the-news, theme-oriented, and action-oriented. The topic is the cornerstone of all the Honor Society's collaborative learning projects (Honor Society, 2020).

Moodle: Moodle is a Learning Management System used by the Honor Society to build and maintain its collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors (B. A. Ellis, personal communication, March 17, 2020).

Program: A program is a set of activities designed for a specific purpose. A program should have quantifiable objectives (Lodico et al., 2010).

Program evaluation: Program evaluation is a process of determining the strengths and weaknesses of a specific program the results of which may be used to make short-term and/or long-term changes (Lodico et al., 2010).

Student engagement: CCSSE (2020) defined student engagement as interaction between students and faculty and among students in and beyond the classroom. CCSSE

argued that engagement creates a learning environment that leads to improvements in student learning and retention (The University of Texas, 2021).

Significance of the Study

This formative program evaluation addressed a gap in knowledge involving the Honor Society regarding what works well in terms of its online self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. Results of this research may provide insights about what works and what needs to be improved in terms of online self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. Training chapter sponsors can help the Honor Society address in an effective and meaningful way to provide opportunities for students to gain and enhance academic and nonacademic skills through cocurricular engagement (Honor Society, 2020a). The study will address, too, the under-researched area of faculty training for the role of coach in cocurricular environments.

The Honor Society was founded in the early 20th century at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest to honor high-achieving community college students. Its headquarters is located in a small southern city in the state of Mississippi where a staff of 68 administers membership, programs, and technical support services (Honor Society, 2020b). Honor Society membership is by invitation only, and the organization annually inducts approximately 125,000 students who have completed at least 12 credit hours with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Since 1918, it has inducted more than 2.5 million students (Honor Society, 2020).

The Honor Society employs staff that works on ways to implement its mission in order to provide opportunities to help members grow as scholars and leaders. Chapter sponsors serve as coaches who guide students through the steps of developing,

implementing, and reflecting upon a collaborative learning project. Because the average tenure of a chapter sponsor is 3.4 years, the Honor Society's administration identified a need at the organizational level to evaluate its collaborative learning project training to learn if it has been effective in terms of helping chapter sponsors' perceptions of the program and its elements (Honor Society, 2019; Vendartham, 2016a).

Insights from this study may assist the Honor Society in its efforts to design programs that develop and hone members' academic and soft skills. The Honor Society's collaborative learning program provides a lens through which to view student success, and it is a program that fosters social change for an extensive and diverse group of community college students who must work together and with chapter sponsors to successfully plan, implement, and reflect upon their projects (Honor Society, 2016b). Moreover, study implications include providing stakeholders with evidence needed to make data-driven decisions regarding training for chapter sponsors in terms of the Honor Society's collaborative learning project training.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to evaluate an online collaborative learning project training from stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved. Online training was developed at the organizational level to train volunteers who serve in this position for the Honor Society at their community colleges.

Research questions that were the focus for this study are:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of trainees about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in terms of

helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of Honor Society staff about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in terms of helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects?

Review of Literature

A review of literature was conducted using printed and online scholarly articles, peer-reviewed sources, published doctoral studies, and research publications primarily published between 2018 and 2022. Sources were collected from the libraries of the Honor Society and Walden University. Databases searched for this research included Questia.com, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), and Google Scholar. I also used articles and project studies for this review from the Walden University Library. Keywords searches helped in terms of identifying the theoretical and conceptual framework appropriate for the program evaluation. Keywords were: *experiential learning, active learning, collaborative learning, curriculum development and design, co-curricular activities, co-curricular learning, co-curricular development and design, honor societies, community colleges, student-faculty interaction, faculty development, honors programs, professional development, online training, online professional development, coaching, student engagement, and formative program evaluation.*

The review of literature is organized into sections and includes background information for this study which are related to the topic. Subheadings address the conceptual framework, online professional development and training, service learning,

and those aligned with the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) benchmarks: (a) active and collaborative learning, (b) academic challenge, (c) opportunities for student effort, (d) student-faculty interaction, and (e) support for students beyond the classroom on which the Honor Society's collaborative learning project and chapter sponsor training is based (The University of Texas at Austin, 2021). Research into community college student success and professional development for community college professionals illuminated the issue at the core of my study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle. Learners move through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. McCarthy (2016) and Babakr et al. (2019) pointed out that Kolb's theory is grounded in the experiential works of Dewey (Dewey, 2007; Dewey, 2021) and Piaget (1962). Kolb and Kolb (2017) added William James (1988), Kurt Lewin (2013), Carl Rogers (2012), Carl Jung (1976), Lev Vygotsky (1978), Paulo Friere (2018), and Parker Follett (2018) as foundational scholars of experiential learning. Coulter and Mandell (2019) added that Dewey's (2021) philosophy of learning laid a foundation for democracy. Dewey wrote about children, but Coulter and Mandell, pointed out that adult learners routinely utilize Dewey's ideas to make decisions based on their experiences and informal learning. As a result, adult learners can transform their lives, the lives of others, and their communities. Experiential learning, McCarthy maintained, transforms knowledge through experience and cited Brickner and

Etter (2008) who contended that experiential learning works in the classroom and beyond the classroom with cocurricular activities.

Baker and Robinson (2016) stressed that experiential learning builds social skills, work ethic, and practical expertise all of which are valuable tools for teachers and learners. Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle was used because the training module that was examined is steeped in experiential learning for both Honor Society chapter sponsors and students they coach through the process. Kolb and Kolb (2017) concluded that experiential learning involves building a unique relationship between teachers, and in the case of this study, chapter sponsors, and students.

Review of the Broader Problem

Online Professional Development and Training

Communities of practice enhance professional development. These communities help build knowledge, share knowledge, build identity, and create social interaction (Lum Kai Mun, 2016). Elliott et al. (2015) acknowledged that the increase in online learning and faculty development needs requires effective training. They argued programs are most likely to be effective if faculty can actively apply what they learn. Including collaborative learning opportunities for faculty engaging in professional training promotes peer learning and measures of unity (Musa & Zulkafly, 2017).

Clinefelter (2012) observed that online professional development allowed faculty who live thousands of miles away from one another to access training. He revealed that including an orientation to training and making professional development ongoing were qualities vital to online training. While it is easier, Clinefelter contended, to keep training timely in face-to-face settings, it is important to be timely with online training as well.

Timeliness is effectively achieved when specific individuals are responsible for course features and for setting an appropriate tone and types of interaction with participants.

Castaneda and Selwyn (2018) maintained that the digitalization of higher education has its critics. Of concern is the role technology has played in obscuring the socialization, subjectification, and qualification purposes of education (Castañeda & Selwyn, 2018). A barrier to reaching all Honor Society chapter sponsors with online, self-paced collaborative learning project training may be the use of technology as the delivery method. Jääskelä et al. (2017) confirmed that faculty beliefs about technology have an effect on their willingness to use it, though the researchers found that there is movement in faculty attitudes. Increasingly, faculty view technology as a partner in the teaching and learning process. O'Doherty et al. (2018) concurred that attitudes of faculty can be barriers to effective online training and found that time, infrastructure, and poor communication similarly served as potential barriers.

While O'Doherty et al. (2018) identified barriers to effective online training, they also offered potential solutions to overcoming barriers. Tools that can free up participants' time, collaboration, and fostering positive organizational culture worked for organizations hoping to overcome obstacles. Donnelly (2016) shared that organizations using technology as a learning tool for faculty should consider it a pedagogical, rather than a technological, teaching innovation. Moreover, she concluded that online training should have a reflective element to help participants build confidence in content and their ability to use what they learned. Gore et al. (2017) added that the framework for the training is important to teachers as is the common language that helps build understanding among participants. Developing a growth mindset pedagogy can also help

overcome barriers to effective online training. Claro et al. (2016) explained that a growth mindset is a belief that intelligence is flexible and that humans are capable of developing their intelligence throughout their lives. Organizations can create a growth mindset pedagogy by focusing training on progress and learning outcomes rather than on performance or achievement (Rissanen et al., 2019).

Bond and Bedenlier (2019) argued training programs should consider participants' access to technology, the usability of the technology used for the training, the design of the online learning environment, support for users, and the sense of community developed for participants. They explained, too, the importance of assessing the learning environment and teaching strategies. Studies have found that when faculty assess their learning following training programs, they perceived small positive changes in themselves as educators, but they believed their pedagogical skills had considerably improved (Ödalen et al., 2019).

Liu et al. (2016) wrote about the importance of collaborative professional development for faculty members to help them develop strategies to work with students in and beyond the classroom. Moreillon (2016) stressed how professional development can help faculty develop professional learning networks that over time enhance the experience begun in training. Zueger et al. (2014) stressed the importance of evaluation of professional development programs. Shared experiences, discussion of subject content, and reflecting on coaching practices is at the heart of findings by Liu et al., and collaborative learning provides a common language, context, and experience for online, self-paced collaborative learning training. Haines and Persky (2014) determined that bringing faculty together in teaching and learning centers for development was ideal. Zia

(2014) sought to determine whether years of service mattered when it came to professional development and found that training had a positive impact on people at their mid-career. Knox et al. (2015) reported the importance of self-evaluation and reflection as key to continuous professional development.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Hamilton (2019) wrote that active learning takes place when people engage with and take ownership of their learning. Lee et al. (2018) defined collaborative learning as having students work together in group activities. Noh and Yusuf (2018) noted that, while students tend to use a variety of learning styles, active and collaborative learning can be memorable and fun, can enhance learning, and can engender responsibility in students who are working with peers to complete projects. Active learning can be structured or unstructured and can include such learning strategies as substantial community service, apprenticeship, field curriculum, team projects, improvisational play, and adventures or discoveries.

Cameron (2017) found that professional development that focused on active learning strategies can increase student interest and engagement. The important thing is to assure that learning activities, what educator John Taylor Gatto called “guerrilla curriculum” (Sawyer, 2019, 00:07:02), or curriculum that combines core skills with the ability for the learner to think and act creatively in pursuit of education, promoted intellectual quality (Sawyer, 2019). Babu et al. (2017) argued that collaborative learning can result in students gaining a deep understanding of content, taking ownership of their learning, and improving their self-esteem and motivation to stay on task. For all the benefits associated with active and collaborative learning, Stover and Holland (2017) found that students can

feel antipathy for collaborating with peers in the classroom. Faculty should develop ways to overcome students' objections to working together on projects, and faculty development should go beyond explaining how to engage students in active and collaborative learning. Stover and Hollard recommended using Tolman and Kreming's (2017) integrated model of student resistance as a practical model for overcoming student resistance to collaboration and to promote deep, meaningful learning.

Active learning pedagogy in professional development opportunities for community college faculty can foster social change after participants have completed training and returned to the classroom (Harmon, 2017). Harmon found that having time to engage students in active learning in the classroom was the leading barrier to faculty using it as a learning strategy. Trolian and Barnhardt (2017) supported the value of association and development of networks of relationships among people through cocurricular active learning opportunities that connect with classroom learning. They found that students who actively participate in learning activities while in school benefit from the experiences and highly regard civic engagement.

Academic Challenge

Engelen-Eigels and Milner (2014) expressed the importance of honors experiences in terms of improved retention and graduation rates. Ruffalo (2015) argued that honors programs are one of the top five things a community college can do to improve student retention. Gee (2015) agreed and emphasized how strong honors education can encourage students to stay local, which can ultimately serve the communities where they study and live. Engelen-Eigels and Milner (2014) suggested that honors programs can be tied to the mission of community colleges to address

achievement gaps, reduce barriers that limit students' educational prospects, and disrupt educational paradigms in ways that create social change. Community colleges focus on access and completion, and Honeycutt (2017) found that students who participate in honors programming were significantly more likely to graduate than students who did not participate in such programming. They found, too, that students who participate in honors programming are more likely to graduate than students who were honors-eligible but did not join in such programming. Kinghorn and Smith (2013) and Reichert (2013) wrote about the achievement gap for underrepresented and underserved populations, including nontraditional students, as well and maintained that honors programs provide access to enhanced opportunities for students.

Whether students enroll in honors classes or engage in honors-related activities, learning strategies that help students develop critical thinking skills is an important part of academic challenge. Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2020) included analysis, inference, induction, and evaluation among those critical thinking skills crucial for students in higher education to develop. Changwong et al. (2018) traced the concept of critical thinking back to the Ancient Greeks though educators often see critical thinking as a twenty-first century skill. Meeks (2017) contended that "well-developed critical thinking skills allow an individual not only to assess difficult and complex situation but also to reach feasible solutions and make logical and pragmatic decisions" (p. 35). Critical thinking skills can promote thinking beyond their perceived possibilities in community college students.

Rice (2015) argued that honors programs at places like community colleges can stretch boundaries and expand horizons for students while they remain close to home both of which help close the achievement gap for college students. In addition, honors programs help students make interdisciplinary connections that can enhance learning in all of their college courses (May, 2019). The Honor Society's collaborative learning program was designed to help students expand their horizons while studying close to home in ways that encourage them to think globally and act locally. Collaborative learning program training for the Honor Society's chapter sponsors who, in turn, train students in the process, is vital to help students grow as scholars and leaders. The training is important, too, for the success of the program offered to students.

Opportunities for Student Effort

McClenney et al. (2021) in CCSSE's summary of its validation of the organization's survey research identified student effort as one of its benchmarks. Student effort in this context measured time on task, preparation for classes, and use of student services. Opportunities for student effort are important, because, according to McClenney et al., analysis of CCSSE results showed a connection between student effort and retention from one semester to the next and from one year to the next. CCSSE correlated its survey results as they related to student effort with the credit completion ratio in Achieving the Dream's 2013 Community Colleges Count study (The University of Texas, 2021).

Cheng et al. (2016) argued that student-centered reflection and self-assessment enriched students' experiences, allowed them to take responsibility for their learning, and helped them close their performance gaps. de Ridder et al. (2014) argued that the

development of soft skills, particularly as honed through student group activities, results in better communication, organization, networking, troubleshooting, and foresight, all of which help students persist to complete transfer requirements or certificates and degrees. Yew and Goh (2016) focused on problem-based learning as an effective teaching and learning approach. Kassymova et al. (2020) defined problem-based learning as strategies that challenge students to “apply their knowledge to real-world problems” and to encourage them to “rephrase and rethink and reframe the problems to identify new solutions” (p. 347). Johnson (2015) highlighted the ways honors programming promotes problem-solving skills as well as creativity and cross-disciplinary innovative thinking.

Beyond developing soft skills that help students persist in their college studies, Kilgo et al. (2016) studied the impact of student involvement in college and found that quality involvement in student activities led to higher levels of student learning and development. Perrin (2014) also found that learning beyond the classroom is important for student development. Fink (2016) argued that significant learning that is learner-centered provides foundational knowledge and teaches students how to learn is needed in higher education.

Student-Faculty Interaction

Coaching by chapter sponsors on the collaborative learning project program is key to helping students develop skills they can use in the classroom and beyond. Barkley (2011) reviewed generations of students, how they are different, and how generational characteristics affect retention-related issues. Understanding how different generations view the world and how they learn can help faculty interact with students in ways that promote students’ resilience. Academic coaching in the form of rigorous curriculum and

continuous feedback by faculty is key to Barkley's approach to retention, because rigor and feedback from faculty help students thrive and persist in their college studies.

Student-faculty interaction can be particularly important for student persistence and success at community colleges since most students commute (Dwyer, 2017).

Johnson (2018) examined partnerships between college faculty and students and found that power exists in students learning to work together and with faculty in and beyond the classroom. It helps as well when faculty have students invite their families to be part of honors experiences during which faculty interact with students and their family members rather than having students work in isolation. Dean (2019) and Douglas (2018) argued that student-faculty interactions engendered by honors programs "seek to socialize to the institutional environment and provide support for the rigor of the collegiate environment in terms of academic preparedness" (p. 116). Archbald (2013) and Malmia et al. (2019) found that leaders should be dedicated to rigor and working closely with students and that those qualities can be enhanced through effective professional development and problem-based learning. Training chapter sponsors to be quality coaches makes understanding a program like the Honor Society's collaborative learning program possible for students.

Support for Students Beyond the Classroom

The Honor Society has expressed commitment to providing professional development training to its chapter sponsors, and training in the collaborative learning process has been a key component of that training (Honor Society, 2019). Hemphill (2015) determined that the assumption behind the faculty professional development is that it will improve performance and, as a result, will increase student success which is

the ultimate desired outcome for colleges. Graham (2017) concurred that professional development is tied to student learning outcomes, and successful faculty development can create agents of change. As chapter sponsors are, from the Honor Society's perspective, coaches who work with students on projects as part of the collaborative learning program outside the time they spend in the classroom, increasing Honor Society expectations for chapter sponsors and students is a delicate balancing act.

Increasing expectations for chapter sponsors about the work they coach students to do in local communities is a delicate balance between classwork, cocurricular activities, and responsibilities outside college. Having a robust program for students and up-to-date training for chapter sponsors is a factor in helping the Honor Society meet its mission. Ferro et al. (2016) found that professionals desired up-to-date training, but generally had limited time and resources to attend professional development workshops. Beriswill et al. (2016) argued that practical considerations such as time constraints should be considered when planning training for faculty as well as student assignments and activities.

Service Learning

Collaborative learning program training for chapter sponsors offered by the Honor Society includes elements of service learning. Lai and Hui (2020) determined that the combination of academic curricula and experiential learning engendered in service learning developed and nurtured students' social skills. Miller-Young et al. (2017) argued that engagement in service learning was an effective way to deepen learning and create collaborations between faculty and students. Kuntiaru (2019) found that service learning enhanced students' growth and development. This was particularly true when students

developed critical thinking tools through service learning projects that allowed them to understand others' points of view. Sackett and Alicea (2020) explained the appeal of service learning this way. It affords opportunities for students to apply academic knowledge to real-life situations, to reflect on themselves in relation to their communities, and to deepen the service experience in ways that are beneficial to the students and the organizations with which they are working to complete service learning projects.

Literature Review Summary

Honor Society chapter sponsors work closely with students to conceive, develop, implement, and reflect upon cocurricular collaborative learning projects that focus on experiential learning. The projects and the connections made while working on them offer students opportunities to engage in learning endeavors beyond the classroom that reflect CCSSE benchmarks: “active and collaborative learning, academic challenge, opportunities for student effort, and student-faculty interaction” (The University of Texas, 2021, p. 3). Literature showed that active and collaborative learning, academic challenge, opportunities for student effort, student-faculty interaction, service learning, and experiential learning opportunities help students persist and succeed in higher education. Social interactions and academic success can lead to increased student self-confidence which, in turn, is tied to aspiration, motivation, achievement, and persistence (Bickerstaff et al., 2017). Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff can help them hone their skills in ways that benefit students. Chapter sponsors' perceptions about the professional development training in the collaborative learning project process

offered by the Honor Society can illuminate what is working as planned and what might be improved.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the online collaborative learning project training module from its stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working and what might be improved. This is critical to the Honor Society's student engagement team, because the collaborative learning project supports the second part of the Honor Society's mission to provide opportunities to college students to grow as scholars and leaders. Chapter sponsors' role is to coach their students as the students develop a research-driven annual project that addresses a real-world problem in the communities where they live and work. The Society celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2018, and the organization, which serves as the local context for this study, has grown from eight to nearly 1,300 chapters at community colleges in its first 104 years.

To address the needs of students and advisors in the 21st century, the Honor Society's President and CEO embarked on a 5-year strategic plan at the organizational level that they hope will move the organization forward and help it address cocurricular adult learning, including remote forms of training, in ways that fulfill the Honor Society's mission to provide opportunities to students to help them grow as scholars and leaders (Honor Society, 2018). Stakeholders may be able to use the findings of this study to make evidence-based decisions regarding the current and future online self-paced training module of faculty sponsors regarding the collaborative learning project. Evidence-based decisions about the online, self-paced training could improve training practices in the local setting and throughout the Honor Society's 29 regions. This formative program

evaluation will detail findings and recommendations for what is working well with the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors and what might be improved.

Summary

The collaborative learning program was developed by 2011, and the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors began in 2018. No formal evaluation at the organizational level, which is the context for this study, has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of the training module. A formative program evaluation is needed to fill this gap in knowledge and to make evidence-driven recommendations to identify, based on analysis of data collected in this study, what is working well and possible areas of improvement. In Section 1, I defined the problem, provided evidence of the problem, explained the significance of the problem, addressed researcher qualifications, outlined the research focus, examined existing literature, and described study implications. In Section 2 of this formative program evaluation, I explore the methodology used to conduct the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate an online collaborative learning project training module from stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved. In this study I examined whether the online self-paced training module is effective and what improvements can be made. This study was focused on one method of self-paced training that was created by a team of Honor Society staff and was available online to chapter sponsors society wide. The module involves engaging Honor Society chapter sponsors to learn about the collaborative learning project in which student members annually participate based on a required honors study topic. Chapter sponsors coach students as they plan, implement, and reflect upon the collaborative learning project. Seventeen one-on-one semistructured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data for the study.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

For this study, I employed a formative program evaluation of the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. A formative program evaluation of training allowed me to determine stakeholders' perspectives and experiential understanding about what is working and what might be improved (Menéndez et al., 2019; Stake, 2010). The training program has the objective of helping chapter sponsors develop an understanding of the Honor Society's collaborative learning project. Honor Society staff used Moodle, a free learning management system, to develop procedures for chapter sponsors to work through training that includes accessing password-protected online materials via the Honor Society's website. Honor

Society staff also created processes to help chapter sponsors in turn move through the Honor Society's collaborative learning project training and coach students to develop, plan, implement, and reflect upon an annual collaborative learning project. A formative evaluation of a program is conducted to discover whether there are ways to improve instructional processes and resources for training (Brady & Spencer; 2018. Stake, 1972a). My evaluation was aligned with the proposed research questions and focused on what has actually been taught in the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module and whether it addresses needs of chapter sponsors.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) described three types of research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research involves exploring meanings humans ascribe to a problem. Quantitative research involves collecting and exploring numerical data using statistical methods, and mixed methods research involves incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Neither a mixed methods nor a quantitative approach would be appropriate for this study. Since I was interested in perceptions of Honor Society chapter sponsors who have completed the online collaborative learning project training module, collecting data via mixed methods or quantitative research approaches would not lead to data that were suitable for this study.

A formative program evaluation was conducted for the training program. This evaluation was conducted using qualitative methods. A formative program evaluation allows for an in-depth look at context, processes, and interactions via qualitative data (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). This qualitative approach to a formative program evaluation allowed me to determine at the organizational level how the training could be more

effective in preparing chapter sponsors to coach students in the organization's collaborative learning project process in the estimation of staff and training participants. Since the Honor Society depends on its chapter sponsors to take the collaborative learning project training back to their colleges to coach students through the process of developing and implementing a collaborative learning project, it was important to choose a method that allowed for collection of data from a pool of chapter sponsors and one that afforded them an opportunity to voice personal views on the topic of research.

Using a formative program evaluation inquiry for this study allowed me as well to utilize what Sitzmann and Weinhardt (2017) called a multilevel approach to training evaluation. Since participants' points of view about training effectiveness can vary, a multilevel approach allowed me to explore chapter sponsors' perceptions about training effectiveness. Looking at "between-person" evidence, or gathering perceptions from multiple participants, promoted stable analysis of who benefits from training and how the Honor Society can develop training that offers strategic return on investment as advocated by Sitzmann and Weinhardt (p. 3). Gathering data via qualitative interviews of Honor Society staff, including the leader of the team that developed the training, and chapter sponsors provided robust information from varied perspectives. Spaulding (2016) supported this approach, because a formative approach to program evaluation allows for research into a program that is ongoing. Wong and Cooper (2016) found that a qualitative investigation allows a researcher to identify explanations and achieve in-depth understandings of the subject being studied. Fitzpatrick et al. (2011) argued that a program-oriented approach to evaluation can provide purposeful knowledge about the intended rationale for a program. The goal of this formative evaluation was to address

chapter sponsors' perceptions about the online collaborative learning project training module and what improvements can be made.

Participants

Population

The population for this study was 672 people. Of this population, three were Honor Society staff and leaders who designed or worked with the organization's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module and 669 were chapter sponsors at the organizational level who have completed the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training module. Those who completed the collaborative learning project training module had knowledge about the collaborative learning project, because they are, as chapter sponsors, responsible for taking the training and then coaching students through the project.

Sampling and Sample Size

A convenience sampling design was most consistent with the purpose of this study. The inclusion criteria for selecting participants were defined as Honor Society chapter sponsors who completed the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module. Participants included three Honor Society staff members who worked with the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module. In addition to Honor Society staff members, 14 chapter sponsors who completed the training were selected from the population using convenience sampling. Emerson (2021) defined a convenience sample as one in which participants meet the criteria for the study. In a convenience sample, participants meet study criteria and are available to participate

(Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Jager et al. (2017) argued that convenience sampling is efficient.

I secured an electronic list of names and contact information for chapter sponsors who completed the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module from the organization's curriculum designer. I followed up the email with a telephone call to the curriculum designer to see if she had questions about data that were requested. Names are housed in the Honor Society's Moodle site which is used for the online training, and the curriculum designer has administrative access to names and contact information.

Interviewees were selected by choosing every third person on the list of chapter sponsors who had completed the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module. Potential participants were invited via email to take part in this study. This process was repeated and invitations were sent as needed until 14 people voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Onweugbuzie and Collins (2017) indicated that a sample of 12 participants was sufficient to provide minimum necessary saturation and information redundancy in qualitative research. Interviews therefore allowed me sufficient data to develop thick descriptions of perceptions about ways to improve instructional processes and resources involving collaborative learning training for chapter sponsors (Stake, 2010).

Establishing Researcher-Participant Working Relationships

To establish professional and courteous working relationships with study participants, I took the following steps. I requested permission from the Honor Society's President and CEO and Vice President of Student Engagement to collect data for the

study. I secured consent from Honor Society staff members as well as chapter sponsors who are part of the sample as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018). I work for the Honor Society. I have a professional relationship with staff members at the organizational level, but I have no supervisory role over any of the staff who work with the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training. I was not in a position to do them harm if Honor Society staff chose not to participate in the study, nor was I in a position to do chapter sponsors harm if they decided not to participate in the study. Therefore, it was important to establish boundaries between work we do together on a day-to-day basis and the parameters of this formative program evaluation of the Honor Society's online, self-paced collaborative learning project training. In addition to professionalism, courtesy, and flexibility, empathy is important to establishing a researcher-participant working relationship (Stake, 2010). Following Stake's recommendation, I listened with the understanding that chapter sponsors have characteristics in common, but they also have unique personalities, life situations, and experiences in their roles as chapter sponsors.

Ethical Protection

I did not begin data collection before gaining approval from the Walden University Institutional Research Board (IRB). The Honor Society senior administrator in charge of student engagement had already approved the project. The Honor Society does not have its own IRB process and accepted Walden University's IRB approval to allow research for this study to begin.

I anticipated, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018), that working as a member of the Honor Society's headquarters staff may raise ethical considerations. To

mitigate this, participants were asked to provide informed consent and were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time. I sent via email a consent form to potential participants prior to conducting interviews. The consent form was used to allow potential study participants to opt in or out of participating. The consent form used to protect participants contained all required elements and included contact details for Walden University's IRB office should participants want to discuss the study or should they have questions regarding their rights. Neither chapter sponsors nor Honor Society staff were subject to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) rules.

To protect study participants and to protect the integrity of my research, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018) Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), I have trained in the research process to protect human participants. No personally identifiable information was used as part of the analysis and reporting of findings for this study. All interviewees were identified as participants with assigned alphanumeric codes (e.g., Participant 1 [P1], Participant 2 [P2], Participant 3 [P3]) to protect their identities. No personal data will be released or shared to protect participants from harm (Schomakers et al., 2020). Electronic study data has been secured in a password-protected file on my laptop with a password only I know, and hard copies of data were printed and kept in a locked filing cabinet in my private office closet. The laptop will be housed in my private office, and the electronic and hard copy files related to this program evaluation destroyed after 5 years.

Data Collection

Data Collection Instruments

For this study, I used interviews as the primary and only data collection strategy. I

selected a convenience sample of Honor Society chapter sponsors who have completed the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module to interview as described in the sampling section above. I conducted conversational one-on-one interviews with the sample of chapter sponsors. These interviews were used to collect data on the perspectives of the participants to discover if there are ways to improve the instructional process and resources of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module.

Interviews

I conducted semistructured interviews that began with a greeting and asking permission to record the interview. I asked open-ended questions that were related to participants' service as Honor Society chapter sponsors and their perceptions of the online, self-paced collaborative learning training. Finally, I asked if participants had any additional questions and thanked them for participating. I developed broad questions and probes that aligned with this study's research questions and which allowed participants to provide their views and opinions in ways that did not restrict their responses as recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2017). I wrote questions that could also encourage participants to share their honest perceptions about the Honor Society's online, self-paced collaborative learning project training and some that encouraged Honor Society staff to provide historical information as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Correia and Harrison (2020) explained that inquiry-based conversation is designed to engage and motivate learners. To ensure I constructed interview questions that promoted an inquiry-based conversation with participants, I received feedback on

interview questions and protocols from my committee members as suggested by Castillo-Montoya (2016). Each chapter sponsor was asked the same questions during interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

I used email to contact participants, and they had 5 days to review, sign, and return the informed consent form. Once a participant had returned the completed consent form, a date and time was set to conduct the interview. If after 5 days no one responded, or the number of chapter sponsors who responded was not sufficient to make the study valid and reliable, another sample from the population was contacted and asked to participate. Interviews were conducted and recorded using online conferencing tools. I utilized Otter.ai (<https://otter.ai/login>), a web application designed to transcribe recorded information, that was password-protected and stored on my laptop and in hard copy in a locked filing cabinet in my private office. A research log and reflective journal was be used to capture written accounts of the interviews.

Given the geographic distribution of the Honor Society's chapters and chapter sponsors, each virtual synchronous interview was conducted online. Interviews lasted no more than 60 minutes. Recorded interviews were downloaded to my laptop computer at the end of every session. I kept track of data collected from interviews and emerging understandings about chapter sponsors' and Honors Society staff's perceptions to discover if there are ways to improve the instructional process and resources of the organization's online, self-paced collaborative learning project training. From the beginning of the data collection process, I kept a research log to keep track of data. The log was housed on my personal laptop computer and in hard copy locked in a filing

cabinet housed in my private office. Collected data was saved as recordings, transcripts of interviews, and evaluator notes. Data was housed in password-protected files on my personal laptop computer. Having data housed in password-protected files on my personal laptop computer gave me access to collected data as my understanding about whether the training could be more effectively developed from data collection.

Participant Access

As a former chapter sponsor and current employee of the Honor Society, I had an established rapport and open communications with chapter sponsors through our shared work with the organization. I utilized the aforementioned consent email to establish connections with potential participants. The email message stressed the volunteer nature of their involvement in this study. I clarified the confidential nature of the interview and ensured participants that their involvement will not affect their status with the Honor Society. Conducting the interviews online, since chapter sponsors live in varied parts of the United States, allowed them to secure a comfortable location in which to conduct the interviews at times that best worked for them.

Role of the Researcher

I served as a chapter sponsor for the Honor Society for 15 years, but my experience was different from the chapter sponsors who consented to being interviewed for this study. It has been 16 years since I served as a chapter sponsor, and the collaborative learning project was developed after I began work on the Honor Society staff. Still, having the experience of serving as a chapter sponsor, I understand the work that goes into coaching students. My experience as a former chapter sponsor and current headquarters staff member supported the establishment of a connection with interviewees

and credibility to my empathetic inquiry in this study. My professional experience and understanding of the Honor Society's mission and honors programming enhanced this study and the interview process. Chapter sponsors' and headquarters staff members' perspectives helped determine what is working as planned and what might be improved.

One bias I brought to this study was my desire for the online collaborative learning project training module to be an effective learning tool for chapter sponsors. These chapter sponsors coach students to develop, implement, and reflect upon the collaborative learning project process and, as a result, are key to accomplishing the second part of the Honor Society's mission. Another potential bias I brought to this study was the possibility that I have met or worked with some of the participants, particularly those chapter sponsors who have served the Honor Society for a long time. Interviews are not neutral. Knowing some study participants could lead to inadvertent influence on interviewees, unexpected responses to questions, and "new aspects of themes" previously not considered by a researcher (Langley & Meziani, 2020, p. 371).

Using technology to conduct interviews helped maintain focus and professionalism between me and participants. Edwards and Holland (2020) argued that technology created both ease for participants and the ability to create accurate records that could counter bias for the researcher. (Råheim et al. (2016) cautioned researchers who conduct interviews to be aware that participants could feel that their professionalism is being questioned. There was a previous connection between me and some interviewees. To handle this, I treated participants with respect and kept interviews focused on the study's research questions as Råheim et al. (2016) suggested.

Moreover, to address my biases, I entered the study with an open mind and genuine desire to evaluate the online collaborative learning project training module from stakeholders' perspectives. I utilized reflexivity throughout the study's data collection and analysis. Abrica (2018) argued that reflexivity is a tool that allows researchers to systematically consider their biases. Reflexivity also, Abrica contended, helps researchers develop political savvy and a deeper understanding of complex issues. Yao and Vital. (2018) maintained that self-reflection is a vital component of reflexivity. It is an applied as well as a conceptual research practice and helps scholars to "have a better sense of who they are and how they think" and how those things affect the research process (Yao & Vital, p. 3). Reflexivity helped me address my biases and to gain understanding and insight into chapter sponsors' perspectives about the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module and how it might be improved.

Data Analysis

Once each interview with a chapter sponsor who completed the online self-paced collaborative learning training module was completed, I began the process of NVivo coding by reading through the transcript of the interview and taking notes about ideas as they came to mind. NVivo allows researchers to track themes and link data sources (Dalkin et al., 2020). As recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018), I then went through each transcript to glean the underlying meaning of participants' responses and write thoughts in the margins of the transcripts. Thematic data analysis is an effective approach for systematic, non-linear, and iterative analysis that offers researchers flexibility while working to uncover the significance of sets of qualitative data (Lester et al., 2020).

Through subsequent readings of each transcript, I highlighted and annotated the text to ascertain common themes that emerged from my codes, patterns, issues, and key words that related to the research question and to experiential learning, the conceptual framework for this study and used in the evaluation report (Stake, 2010, p. 151). Similar topics were organized into columns of major, unique, and outlying topics. I developed descriptions of the themes and issues by grouping codes and checking for interconnections between codes. I abbreviated the topics as codes, alphabetized the codes and wrote them next to appropriate text in each transcript (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Once all interviews were completed and data coded and grouped, I searched for themes. When necessary, I searched for sub themes between each of the interviewees' answers to the questions asked. Groups of data were entered into a research journal and into a spreadsheet to determine how the themes and patterns answer the research questions guiding this study. I assembled data belonging to each category in one place, and I conducted a preliminary analysis. After the preliminary analysis, I recoded materials (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, Stake, 2010).

Evidence of Quality

Qualitative research requires the use of an interpretivist paradigm to ensure its credibility, (Rose and Johnson, 2020; Shenton, 2004). Validity, Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued "is one of the strengths of qualitative research" (p. 199). That validity is based on determining whether a study's findings are accurate from the perspectives of both the researcher and study participants. I used several strategies to address the validity of this study.

I used triangulation to establish the confirmability of this formative program evaluation. Triangulation strategies included use of an interview protocol, member checking, and data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018). Triangulation can help researchers get the meaning of evidence straight (Stake, 2010). Qualitative research is dependent on human skill and perception (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). It is, according to Fusch et al. (2018), “up to the researcher to make sense” of any contradictory data and to, “to demonstrate the richness of the information gleaned from the data” for readers (p. 26). I reviewed learning outcomes for the training to determine what the written record suggests advisors should learn from completing the Honor Society’s online collaborative learning training. In addition to examining learning outcomes, I assessed participants’ perspectives to build a “coherent justification for themes” developed from evaluating interview data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). I used rich, thick descriptions of participants’ perspectives about the online training and themes and findings gleaned from analysis of interview transcripts to provide readers a detailed sense of the setting for the study. Moreover, I noted in my analysis any discrepant cases that run counter to themes.

To ensure credibility of qualitative data collected for this program evaluation, I used appropriate, well-recognized research methods for interviews of chapter sponsors who have participated in the Honor Society’s online self-paced collaborative learning training module. I used my familiarity with the culture of the Honor Society as well as strategies to help insure honesty in interviewees, including iterative questioning in data collection interviews, debriefing sessions, use of reflective commentary, thick descriptions of code data, member checking, and examination of previous research to frame program evaluation findings in ways that allow other researchers to assess the

degree to which this study's results are similar to those of past studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Shenton, 2004, p. 73). To counter investigator bias, in addition to sending an email to interview participants to member check preliminary findings and using reflexivity, I expounded in the evaluation report on beliefs behind decisions made and methods used to conduct this study. I established an audit trail so that observers can trace the sequence of my research methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Limitations

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued that researchers should identify a research problem that will benefit the people or organization being studied and that the researcher should identify and be aware of study limitations. Evaluating collaborative learning program training will benefit the Honor Society and its chapter sponsors and members, but some limitations exist. The population of chapter sponsors and students changes regularly. The average tenure for an Honor Society advisor is 3.4 years (Honor Society, 2016b). Student members change every year or every 2 years depending on when they are inducted into Honor Society membership. As the population of chapter sponsors and members changes over a relatively short period of time, it is possible the findings of a program evaluation would not apply to future populations. Limiting the conceptual framework for the formative program evaluation to experiential learning theory will help mitigate the limitations as adult learning principles hold long-term value.

Data Analysis Results

Seventeen semistructured interviews were conducted for this study. Fourteen of the interviews were with Honor Society chapter sponsors, and three of the interviews

were with Honor Society staff. Interview questions for chapter sponsors represented the following areas related to the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors:

1. Reasons for participating in the training
 2. Skills learned as a result of the training
 3. Effectiveness of online learning tools
 4. Views of experiential learning
 5. Areas of training could be improved in terms of quality, relevance, and usefulness
- responses to interview questions were analyzed to identify similarities in responses.

Three members of the Honor Society staff who worked with the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors were interviewed for this study. Interview questions for Honor Society staff represented the following areas related to the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors:

1. Reasons the Honor Society developed the training
2. Promotion of the training to Honor Society chapter sponsors
3. Skills learned as a result of the training
4. Effectiveness of online learning tools and materials
5. Views on experiential learning
6. Areas of training that could be improved in terms of quality, relevance, and usefulness

As with interviewees who serve as chapter sponsors, responses to interview questions by Honor Society staff were analyzed to identify similarities in responses to one another and to answers from the 14 chapter sponsors who participated in the study.

Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle was used as the theoretical framework for this study to assist with analyzing data. Kolb and Kolb (2017) highlighted the elements of the experiential learning cycle. The authors explained that abstract conceptualization and concrete experience help learners grasp experiences. Reflective observation and active experimentation help learners transform experiences. All Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors were asked about their familiarity with experiential learning theory during interviews for this study. They were also asked whether they saw any of Kolb's theory embedded in the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. Answers to these questions about experiential learning theory were analyzed to identify similarities in responses from Honor Society staff to one another and to answers from the 14 chapter sponsors who participated in the study. Moreover, as I analyzed data from answers to other interview questions, references to abstract conceptualization, concrete experience, reflection, and active learning were noted.

James et al. (2020) studied the Virtual Business Projects utilized by universities to engage students in 2500 experiential learning projects. They argued that using technology to guide people through the process of project planning and development, particularly when there are built-in reflection activities, can enhance the learning experience. Technology can, therefore, not only project on demand access for Honor Society chapter sponsors to participate in the online collaborative learning project training, it may also enhance the experience by utilizing Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

Interviews

Interviews with three Honor Society staff and 14 chapter sponsors were conducted via Zoom, a video communications platform. With permission from participants, interviews were recorded. Data collected via interviews with three Honor Society staff and 14 chapter sponsors were uploaded to and transcribed by Otter.ai, a virtual transcription program that allows the user to generate both oral and written records. Once the data were transcribed and member checked, they were coded manually and utilizing NVivo, a software package designed to analyze qualitative data.

Themes were not defined prior to analysis of the data. I began the data analysis process utilizing open coding. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described open coding as “generating categories of information” (p. 198). Williams and Moser (2019) pointed out that open coding allows a researcher to organize and assemble data into broad themes. Transcripts of interviews with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors were carefully read the first time with notations made in the margins. Field notes were reviewed. Data were broken into distinct paragraphs and phrases. Table 1 is an example of how descriptive coding was applied to interview data in this study. The left column of the table is the summary of the primary topic of the excerpt, and the right column is a one- or two-word description.

Table 1

Open Coding Example from Honor Society Staff Interview

Excerpt	Code
I would say the training is very well rounded and thought out, even the way it's laid out in how it makes sense with the guides, and even just like the discussions, it was all very well laid out and detailed.	WELL ORGANIZED

I also coded interview transcripts using NVivo. NVivo codes transcripts using the language found in interview transcripts. Maher et al. (2018) noted that NVivo allows researchers to digitally link codes and to store data “for recording connections, annotations, and memos” (p. 9). NVivo supports, according to Maher et al., data analysis and write up of findings. Table 2 is an example of NVivo coding on the interview data for this study.

Table 2

NVivo Coding Example from Honor Society Chapter Sponsor Interview

Excerpt	Code
We were able to self pace. I was able to have it running on multiple monitors. If somebody came in and had a question, all I would do is just pause it. I could do what I had to do. I could leave. I could come back. So that was really the most convenient part. A lot of things don't allow you. Other trainings I've attended don't allow you to pause.	SELF PACE

I followed the first reading of interview transcripts and NVivo coding with axial coding. Reading over the codes and their underlying data during additional reviews of the transcripts, I highlighted and annotated text to identify key words, phrases, and patterns that referred to my research questions and, as Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended, to my theoretical framework, Kolb's experiential learning cycle. I made a list of all topics and clustered similar topics and, after coding each interview, compared the findings. Comparisons were made between each of the 14 interviewees who serve as chapter sponsors for the Honor Society and the three interviewees who are members of the Honor Society headquarters staff.

Different colored highlighting was used to identify and group similar material. For instance, most of the chapter sponsors and Honor Society staff interviewees commented on the on-demand accessibility of the online collaborative learning project training. I coded these responses in the same color and made annotations in the margins of interview transcripts to indicate that interviewees perceived that the on-demand nature of the training was a positive characteristic. Data were then arranged in groupings to coalesce and reduce the number of thematic categories. I then entered data into a spreadsheet to help me identify relationships between emerging themes. The spreadsheet also helped determine how the emerging themes addressed the research questions.

Once researchers have completed data collection, they analyze and interpret the data. Qualitative research involves coding for interpretation (Stake, 2010). Williams and Moser (2019) outlined the coding processes that “enable collected data to be assembled, categorized, and thematically sorted” (p. 45). They recommended sifting through data identifying recurring indicators and words to develop codes. Collected data addressed my research questions by identifying ways in which the Honor Society’s chapter sponsors and staff perceived the effectiveness of the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training in terms of coaching community college students through the development and implementation of a collaborative learning project.

Following recommendations by Creswell and Creswell (2018), responses to interview questions were carefully studied. I organized and prepared interview data for analysis and read each transcript. Mindful that analysis of the data should focus on perceptions about the online collaborative learning project training of Honor Society chapter sponsors and headquarters staff members, I then organized data into chunks and

developing common themes. The theoretical framework of experiential learning was used in coding and the development of common themes as well. The themes that developed from coding interview data from interviews with Honor Society staff were:

1. On-demand access from anywhere
2. Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process
3. Ideas for improvement of content including connection to Kolb's experiential learning cycle
4. Difficulties keeping content up to date and freshened

Themes that developed from coding interview data from interviews with Honor Society chapter sponsors were:

1. On-demand access from anywhere
2. Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process
3. Ideas for improvement of content including connection to Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Findings

I logged and analyzed data using recordings, transcripts, and evaluator notes. Data were analyzed to identify emerging and meaningful themes. Data collected from interviews with Honor Society staff generated four meaningful themes. Two themes indicated that the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors was effective in terms of being available on demand and in terms of the strength of the training content. Honor Society staff perceived that there were ways the training could be improved, and they shared concerns about being able to keep content up to date and fresh.

Data collected from interviews with Honor Society chapter sponsors produced three meaningful themes. As with data from interviews with Honor Society staff, two themes indicated that the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors was effective in terms of being available on demand and in terms of the strength of the training content. Honor Society chapter sponsors, like staff, perceived that there were ways the training could be improved. Data from the interviews with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors were used to inform the Evaluation Report (see Appendix A).

Honor Society Staff Interviews

The research question (RQ2) for this study that was geared toward Honor Society headquarters staff was: What are the perceptions of Honor Society staff about the effectiveness of the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects? Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) contended that coding helps explain and understand participants' perspectives. Codes from the interviews with Honor Society staff resulted in the emergence of four themes: (a) on-demand accessibility from anywhere, (b) strong content, (c) ideas for improvement of content including connection with experiential learning, and (d) difficulties related to keeping content up-to-date and freshened. These themes were used to develop the evaluation report (Appendix A). Codes and themes that emerged from data collected during interviews with Honor Society staff are presented in Table 3.

Table 3*Honor Society Staff Interviews: Codes and Themes*

Themes	Codes
On-demand access from anywhere	On demand content, accessible to all chapter sponsors, self-pace, leave and return, different sections at different times, past training experiences
Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process	Excellent content, follows project process, clarified collaborative learning project, considers varied experience levels, clearly incorporated examples, latest information, hands-on approach, leadership lab, real chapter examples, teacher verbiage, academic skills coaching, low stakes quizzes, well organized
Ideas for Improvement of content including connection to Kolb's experiential learning cycle	Varied delivery methods, experiential learning exercises, update to enhanced version of Moodle, enhance training experience, low stakes reflection, assessment exercises, updated examples and videos, coaching tips, experiential learning exercises, reflection pieces, joy of coaching students, benefits of training and of completing a project, tips from successful chapter sponsors, awards, rewards, room for improvement, hands-on approach, synchronous components, concrete examples and language
Difficulties keeping content up to date and freshened	Limited staff, extensive duties, need time, cost-benefit analysis, administrative support

Theme 1: On-demand access from anywhere. A key reason the Honor Society developed the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module was to make the curriculum available to all chapter sponsors. They wanted the training to fit into advisors' schedules, to make it convenient to access and complete, and to provide online collaborative learning project-related content and tools for chapter sponsors. Staff participant 2 explained that "through best practices in online learning...we learned...some autonomy is better...We want to give our learners, our participants the ability to learn the things as they need them." Responses from staff participants 1, 2, and 3 addressed the importance of online access to the curriculum due to the difficulty of reaching all approximately 3,000 chapter sponsors in person despite robust promotional efforts.

For staff members, there is a direct connection between accessible chapter sponsor education in Honor Society programs and student success. Staff participant 3 shared that training is "marketed to chapter sponsors as a resource for serving as a successful advisor." The training, staff participant 3 continued, was intended to "provide accessible tools for chapter sponsors to promote the Honor Society's mission" and to "align with other chapter programs" to "meet the needs of student learners at the community college level." Participant 1 explained that the online collaborative learning project for chapter sponsors is designed to help sponsors help "students see the connections of why they're doing a project like this and how it's really informing their role in society as a global citizen."

Though the online content is available for chapter sponsors when they need it, not all issues of access have been addressed. Guilbaud et al. (2021) surveyed 182 faculty

from three public universities about their perceptions on accessibility in online learning. They found low knowledge about accessibility and practice in online education. Honor Society staff members recognize the need for additional efforts related to access. Staff participant 2 mentioned, “When it was launched in 2018, the Moodle platform was basic. We are now able to upgrade the system to a more dynamic version.” Staff participant 3 noted that the Honor Society “hired a curriculum designer and will be able to use Captivate software” to address learning diversity issues and accessibility related to the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. Addressing varied learning styles and challenges would provide increased access to the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors.

Theme 2: Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process. Honor Society staff participants 1, 2, and 3 mentioned the strength of the online collaborative learning project training. Staff participant 2 stated that the “content of the course is very thorough.” It is, staff participant 1 stated, “very good with room for excellence.” Staff participant 3 stated that “the content is exceptional.” Staff participants 1, 2, and 3 spoke about the overall impression that the training is a strong base content to help chapter sponsors learn about the collaborative learning project. At the same time, staff participants 1, 2, and 3 acknowledged the complexity of the collaborative learning project and the perception of chapter sponsors that it is difficult to understand. Staff participant 1 expressed the challenge of helping chapter sponsors navigate a complex project this way, “For those of us who are in it, we’re like, oh, everybody can read the information” about the collaborative learning project “when it comes out and understand it, but if you are a brand new chapter sponsor, you don’t know.” Chapter sponsors, staff

participant 1 explained, “struggle to know what we mean” about the collaborative learning project process and how they can navigate through the training to help them coach students about the collaborative learning project. Staff participant 1 commented that staff could be “more mindful of complexity issues.” Glazewski and Ertner (2020) encouraged the practices of intentionality, critical reflection, and meaningful action, all of which are characteristics of the Honor Society’s collaborative learning project, and all of which could be adopted as part of the online collaborative learning project training module to help chapter sponsors work through the complexity of the project itself within the context of a strong curriculum.

Theme 3: Ideas for improvement of content including connection to Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. Honor Society staff participants 1, 2, and 3 indicated that there were many ways they could see to improve the current content of the online collaborative learning project training module. Those improvements included ways to incorporate Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. Staff participant 3 explained, “I learned [from designing the online curriculum] that I had a lot to learn about how to structure a course for chapter sponsors and college faculty.” Staff participant 3 further explained:

We really didn’t have the wherewithal to go back and forth on responses in the way that you would in an online class on campus. We needed the content to be a little bit more in depth. For me, that was a learning process because what I quickly learned from talking with chapter sponsors was 30 seconds of anything was not going to do it. If they were going to put their time and energy into this program, they needed it to be a bit more lengthy than that.

Staff participant 3 commented, “Frankly when you’re doing a course for a grade, you can use the grading to make students do what you want them to do.” Since, they acknowledged, chapter sponsors are “especially busy professionals” who “come from different backgrounds” it’s important to be “very explicit and mindful as we develop and revise the training.” Staff participant 2 stated:

We have focused on videos and written pieces, little bit of discussion, and quizzes at the end of each section. It would be better to have low-stakes and interactive assessments throughout the training. Maybe a video game and more advice on how to coach students.

Staff participant 1 stated that “one of the challenges is that we are trying to create curriculum for people with a variety of experience levels.” Staff participant 2 suggested that the Honor Society could “make the training dynamic enough that it holds the attention of all of those different experience levels” chapter sponsors bring to the training. “We can augment the training,” staff participant 1 said, “with examples of how other chapters have worked through the collaborative learning process.” Staff participant 3 stated, “We can include material on student-faculty interaction” and “coaching students through the academic process” to enhance the training. Staff participant 2 described still other changes the development team could make to the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors:

The course has no synchronous elements. We could add more links to materials outside the course shell and include shorter videos, because 15 minutes is too long for even adult learners. And, we could add more visual elements. I would love to see us have digital badges and other types of recognition to show someone has

gone above and beyond.

Other ideas expressed by staff interviewees for changes to the training included “more peer-to-peer coaching” (Staff Participant 2), being “more explicit in terms of student benefits” when chapter sponsors engage with and complete the training (Staff Participant 1), and “addressing how joyful it can be and how fulfilling it can be” for chapter sponsors to “coach students through a project” (Staff Participant 3). “We can,” staff participant 3 explained, “create an atmosphere where we’re expecting completion, not perfection” when it comes to both the online training and students’ collaborative learning projects.

Baker and Robinson (2016) believed that experiential learning builds social skills and practical expertise. Through the online collaborative learning project training, Honor Society chapter sponsors could use experiential learning exercises to build their own social and coaching skills and practical expertise in the collaborative learning project to help them, in turn, develop these skills in their students. Staff participants 1, 2, and 3 explained that the Honor Society could include more experiential exercises and elements in the training. Staff participant 3 stated:

I don’t think we probably go into [experiential learning] enough [in the training], because we get lots of chapters that do service [projects]. A lot of times they think of when they come to the collaborative learning project, they bring their preconceived ideas about service projects to do [collaborative learning project] work...I think we could give a more concrete overview of what we mean by experiential learning and the connection to scholarly activities from the start [of the training]. And then help chapter sponsors coach students to do intentional community-based activities in a linear way, not I did a bit of research and a little

bit of service. We can be really explicit with [experiential learning].

Staff participant 2 noted that “If we could provide chapter sponsors the opportunity to practice skills and then receive some feedback from them, that would be ideal.” Staff participants 1 and 3 also expressed the need to incorporate exercises into the training that would give chapter sponsors the ability to practice how to learn about and communicate to students the process through which they could develop meaningful collaborative learning projects. Staff participant 1 stated:

I would love to see us use a couple of case studies, very similar to videos sharing examples, but taking chapter sponsors behind the scenes of a chapter sponsor coaching a collaborative learning project. Something that is maybe 5 minutes or less with some interactive reflection elements giving chapter sponsors opportunities to see how their chapters might have done better with their projects...so, everybody sort of gains insights.

Staff participant 3 stated:

What I know now that I wish I had known then is that quizzing users in really low stakes assessments throughout the course gets you better results. We really need interactive assessments throughout, that are fun, and that feel like video games. The point is to make people feel engaged in the training.

Staff participant 1 noted that when the training was developed:

We relied on recorded narrative PowerPoint presentations, and I think that was probably a little stuffy. We need to make it more dynamic...I think it's one thing for someone to read about it, but to see and interact with the actual example of

chapters' work is really critical for other chapter sponsors to understand [the collaborative learning project] better.

In addition to revisions Honor Society staff recommended to the training itself, staff participant 1 suggested awarding digital badges for completion of parts of the training and for finishing the entire training. They noted:

I would love to see us have digital badges [for chapter sponsors]...for something that is transferable for them...that speaks to things like collaborative learning coaching...that would elevate their profiles and certainly their CVs at the college.

Ultimately, Honor Society staff expressed a desire to make the online collaborative learning training accessible and dynamic for all chapter sponsors. Staff participant 1 put it this way:

We are working with people that have fulltime job...that are volunteering a lot of their time [to the Honor Society] in addition to those fulltime jobs to do the work of chapter sponsors. So that's where you have to...give grace and understand that [for chapter sponsors], this is not their first priority. Their first priority is to the college. So, they do need refreshers, they do need that clarity provided...So, that's what we need to do. We want to make it not only about the students. But make it [chapter sponsors'] own...personal and professional development...There could be other visible recognition that's done...any kind of recognition that shows someone has gone above and beyond.

Theme 4: Difficulties keeping content up to date and freshened. One of the realities faced by Honor Society staff is the small size of the organization's staff. Staff participants 1, 2, and 3 commented on the difficulty of making timely revisions to the

training curriculum. Staff participant 2 explained that by having more staff or time, “We might have a more coordinated strategy of, like, every year” considering revisions and “sending email messages to chapter sponsors who have never engaged in the training.” Staff participant 3 expressed staff time this way, “We may need more staff, especially if we’re going to try to give more individualized attention to chapter sponsors.” Staff participant 2 mentioned that though staff and resources are limited, “we have great human resources among chapter sponsors.” To generate updated, relevant new videos, chapter sponsors are willing to help. Staff participants 3, “Acquiring those videos is a matter of “taking the time to create them and working collaboratively with chapter sponsors.” Support from the Honor Society headquarters, staff participant 1 explained, would be valuable in having time to make revisions to the online training,

continued support on the curriculum design side, continued facilitation of our relationships and professional network with chapter sponsors, and maybe an additional staff member so that we would have the bandwidth to do everything.

Despite limited time, Honor Society staff participants 1, 2, and 3 expressed their enthusiasm about the training for chapter sponsors related to what staff participant 3 called “one of our signature chapter projects” and for the opportunity “to think critically about the learning that we’ve already put out there and what could happen.” “We move so fast sometimes,” staff participant 1 stated that “we don’t always have time to reflect on what we’ve developed.” Given time and focus on the project, staff members perceived they could improve the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

Chapter Sponsors Interviews

Fourteen chapter sponsors who completed the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module participated in my study. The research question (RQ1) for this study that was geared toward Honor Society chapter sponsors was: What are the perceptions of trainees about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects? Interviewees were asked to review the transcript of their interview to ensure they accurately reflected what they shared with me and to provide additional thoughts about the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module. One participant provided additional thoughts after they reviewed the transcript of their interview. Codes from chapter sponsor interviews resulted in the emergence of three themes.

Table 4

Chapter Sponsor Interviews-Codes and Themes

Themes	Codes
On-demand access from anywhere	On demand content, accessible, self-paced, anytime, interruptions, no problem
Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process	Blueprint, insight into collaborative learning project, pitched at all levels, something for everyone, right verbiage, excellent professional development, thorough, well-presented, detailed, beneficial, personal growth, created by

Themes	Codes
Ideas for Improvement of content including connection to Kolb's experiential learning cycle	practitioners, expanded horizons, different perspectives, grew in work with students, learned proper steps, could articulate process to students, Include varied delivery methods, experiential learning exercises, use enhanced version of Moodle, need timeline, videos dated, assessments

Theme 1: On-demand access from anywhere. Chapter sponsor participants noted the desirability of the on-demand nature of the online collaborative learning project training module. The ability to access the training no matter the time or place from where chapter sponsors are trying to participate was perceived as beneficial and desirable. Ranieri et al. (2017) maintained that “Offering a flexible online format for training should provide opportunities to fit user needs better” (p. 104). Chapter sponsor participant 5 had beta tested the training as a new volunteer for the organization. They said the training made a big difference in the beginning of their tenure as a chapter sponsor and that, had the training only been available in person, they would have waited longer to consider participating. Chapter sponsor participant 7 explained, “The online training was wonderful, because I could self-pace.” They used multiple monitors to access the training and “go back and forth to kind of look if I didn’t understand something.” Chapter sponsor participant 9 noted that the on-demand training was valuable, because they were able to step away from the training, make note of what they learned, and “talk it through with a co-worker...I learned something every day.” Chapter sponsor participant 13:

appreciated the self-paced model [of the training]...being able to follow along at my own level and in my own timeframe. [I could] break [the training] up as many times as I needed to complete a section. That was super helpful given that every semester is kind of a new world. I wanted to be able to manage that on my own.

Theme 2: Content directly related to the collaborative learning project

process. Interviewees perceived that the training was strong in terms of content that helped them guide students to conduct intentional research. The training was also strong in terms of helping chapter sponsors engage in strategic selection of project collaborators, in terms of breaking down project components, and in terms of knowing where to find collaborative learning project-related resources. Chapter sponsors lauded the strength of the online training as it relates to the elements of the collaborative learning project.

Chapter sponsor participant 8 expressed that the training “gives you a blueprint. I like the structure. It was easy to follow. I like modular training with strong content.” Chapter sponsor participant 15 explained that the training was “great for understanding how to coach academic research.” Chapter sponsor participant 14 noted that [the training] “offered the opportunity to hear from many different perspectives.” Chapter sponsor participant 14 also mentioned that “the SMART goals section was perfect.” Compared to other professional development opportunities, chapter sponsor participant 9 explained:

How can you compare this training to other trainings? In one word, I would say thorough. And in more words, I would say very well rounded and thought out, even the way it’s laid out in how it’s presented makes sense with, like, guides and discussions. Much more detailed. I don’t think I’ve ever gone through a training that was this detailed. And I felt so equipped from going to not being able to

know where my resources were and who to contact, to understanding where to find things.

Chapter sponsor participant 11 liked that the training was “interactive, and you could apply what you learned almost immediately.” Chapter sponsor participant 10 explained that:

The components [of the training] were extremely informative, and some of them were things I didn’t think about. So, the whole thing was beneficial to me personally, for my personal growth...and in terms of being able to convey [the collaborative learning project] process to my students.

Chapter sponsor participant 11 noted that recommending that chapter sponsors repeat the training every two-to-three years could “keep the passion going and help chapter sponsors gain a renewed sense of energy.” Engaging with the training every two-to-three years could help chapter sponsors hone their understanding of the curriculum and could further develop their ability to coach students through implementation of a collaborative learning project.

Theme 3: Ideas for Improvement of content including experiential connection to Kolb’s (2014) experiential learning cycle

Despite their universal belief that the content of the online collaborative learning project training module was strong, chapter sponsor interviewees had thoughtful and plentiful suggestions for improving the training. The recommendations covered the entire collaborative learning project process as it is laid out in the online training. Chapter sponsor participant 12 mentioned including materials on how to motivate students to participate in a collaborative learning project. “Time is the biggest barrier for community

college students.” They said, “materials about how we can motivate and keep students around would be so helpful.” Chapter sponsor participant 6 explained that it would be value added to include content that would “help us help students see the big picture and help them relax a bit as they think about the collaborative learning project.”

Other suggestions for improving the online training module included creating and separating content for new advisors and seasoned advisors who have worked with the collaborative learning project. Chapter sponsor participants 4, 8, 10, 11 commented that they would like more information about coaching students included in the training. That material might incorporate such things as “helping students be open to critiques and constructive criticism” (chapter sponsor participant 4), understanding the boundaries between coaches and “students who have to execute the projects” (chapter sponsor participant 8), and “how to successfully follow a rubric and write substantial award entries” (chapter sponsor participant 10).

Interviewees recommended curricula that defines the terminology used by the Honor Society in collaborative learning project materials. Chapter sponsor participant 6 noted that “It’s important to include a glossary in the training as well as language that helps chapter sponsors talk to students about the idea of daily research, the idea of finding factual information, and the idea of planning.” Chapter sponsor participant 13 explained that communication of ideas is important:

Communication, choosing words carefully...thinking in those respects, give the same types of targeted training on specific elements of the collaborative learning project that chapter sponsors who are active on the international level get. Break

things down...for example, be explicit about how to use the collaborative learning project planning rubric.

Chapter sponsor participants 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 14 also suggested materials that engage chapter sponsors and students in strategies for project planning, finding facts, and reflecting on what they have learned. They would like more deliverables including the ability to chat with Honor Society staff as chapter sponsors move through the training. Chapter sponsor participants 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14 requested materials embedded in the training that can be downloaded and printed for use with their students.

All 14 of the chapter sponsor participants requested increased opportunities for experiential learning in the online collaborative learning project training. Chapter sponsor participant 4 noted that “the training doesn’t stick unless we have opportunities to use the material.” Chapter sponsor participants 15, 16, and 17 mentioned that it had been several years since they had completed the training, and they had not yet had occasions to practice what they had learned.

Chapter sponsor participants mentioned that having more and shorter quizzes and assessment activities throughout the training would help them retain the material. Chapter sponsor participant 7 explained, “Having detailed feedback on assessment questions would be super useful.” Chapter sponsor 5 expressed a desire to have more interactive exercises “explaining things like multimodality in academic research and how to determine whether a source is academic.” All of these ideas from interviewees who have completed the online collaborative learning project training were meant to keep chapter sponsors engaged and, as chapter sponsor participant 11 put it, “passionate,” about the training and coaching students through a collaborative learning project.

Chapter sponsor participants 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 15 cited the need for a sample timeline for completion of a collaborative learning project as something they would like to see incorporated into the online training. Chapter sponsor participant 13 mentioned having multiple timelines for chapters who begin their projects in January, those who begin in late-spring or summer, and those that start their projects during the fall semester. Ideally, chapter sponsor participant 7 noted, the timelines would be “connected to the collaborative learning project planning rubric.” Specific timelines, or road maps of the timing to finish the collaborative learning project within a calendar year, could help chapter sponsors more effectively coach students to complete their projects.

In addition to wanting sample timelines added to the collaborative learning project training, chapter sponsor participants 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 believed that more and updated examples of successful collaborative learning projects should be included in the online training. These ideas included testimonials from chapter advisors who had coached students through the collaborative learning project process, short videos with transcripts from chapter advisors whose chapters had won collaborative learning project awards from the Honor Society, and explanations of why chapter advisors and students should want to participate in a collaborative learning project. Chapter sponsor participant 13 recommended a video from a current chapter advisor explaining why words matter when working with students on a project. They also suggested including an interactive video in which several chapter advisors whose chapters’ collaborative learning projects had varying degrees of success in terms of

meeting project requirements compare and contrast the development and implementation of their chapter's projects.

Chapter sponsor participants 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 mentioned wanting videos from current chapter sponsors and interactive activities related to each step of the collaborative learning project process: (a) academic investigation, including how to develop a research question and how to identify and analyze academic sources, (b) how to set measurable goals, (c) how to identify and work with college and community collaborators, (d) how to reflect upon every aspect of the project, (e) how to measure the short term impact of the project, and (f) how to write, edit, and submit collaborative learning project award entries. Chapter sponsor participant 13 stated that it would enhance the training if it included "checklists to help bring in an element of experiential learning." Chapter sponsor participants 5, 13, 14, and 17 noted that synchronous or asynchronous and monitored discussion forums would be another way to interact with and learn from fellow chapter sponsors.

Shared Themes

Three similar codes and themes were discovered in the analysis of interview data from both Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors.

- On-demand access from anywhere
- Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process
- Ideas for improvement of content including connection with Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

The first similarity in codes was the on-demand access to the online collaborative learning project training module. Both groups of interviewees expressed perceptions that

moving the training online and providing 24/7 access was effective and desirable and worked well. Moving from in-person to online training expanded its reach. Having the training online meant that chapter sponsors who could not travel to in-person events could benefit and learn about the collaborative learning project and how to coach students through the process.

A second shared theme was the training content was directly related to the collaborative learning project process included in the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. Honor Society staff believed the training provided detailed information about the collaborative learning project and the process through which chapter sponsors could coach students. Chapter sponsors identified the training as “a great professional development opportunity” (chapter sponsor participant 5), “easy to follow” (chapter sponsor participant 8), and “thorough, well rounded and well thought out” (chapter sponsor participant 9). For them, there was a great deal of detailed information that was helpful in determining the elements of the collaborative learning project as well as how to convey the information to students.

The third shared theme was ideas for improvement of content including connection with experiential learning. All participants shared detailed thoughts about ways the online training, while strong, could be improved. The ideas ranged from better highlighting of the collaborative learning project workbook and other online tools available to Honor Society chapter sponsors and students to including experiential activities to give chapter sponsors avenues to practice what they are learning. The combination of studying reading materials and watching videos and engaging in

experiential learning activities, participants perceived, would strengthen chapter sponsors' ability to coach students through collaborative learning projects.

Discrepant Data

While there was considerable agreement among participants about the strengths and weaknesses of the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors, there were four instances of discrepant data. The first example of discrepant data was related to the inclusion of videos in the training module. Overwhelmingly, chapter sponsor interviewees believed there should be more videos, they should come from chapters whose sponsors had coached successful collaborative learning projects, and they should be short. Staff participant 3 believed, because of the complex nature of the collaborative learning project itself, longer videos with more detail would be necessary and desirable throughout the online collaborative learning project training.

Chapter sponsor participant 15 thought the Moodle learning management system was difficult to navigate, because it was difficult to immediately return to parts of the curriculum. The other discrepant data stemmed from a chapter sponsor interviewee who consistently veered off topic. They discussed matters that had nothing to do with the questions asked. At one point, the participant noted that "I've been doing this for so, so many times, I didn't learn a heck of a lot...it helped with remembering things you had forgotten." There were a few examples, though, where they offered ideas for improving the training that were included with data from the other 13 interviews.

Project Deliverable

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module from stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is

working as planned and what might be improved. Based on findings obtained from the interviews with three Honor Society staff members and 14 chapter sponsors who completed the online collaborative learning project training module, a Program Evaluation Report (Appendix A) was created to share with the Honor Society's executive in charge of chapter engagement and their team. The engagement team is in charge of development and revisions of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. The Program Evaluation Report can help them make evidence-based decisions regarding what is working well in the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors and what might be improved. Two groups of stakeholders were interviewed for this study: (a) Honor Society staff who worked with the online collaborative learning project training and (b) Honor Society chapter sponsors who completed the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. The four themes that resulted from the Honor Society staff interviews were:

1. on-demand access from anywhere
2. Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process
3. ideas for improvement of content including connection with experiential learning
4. difficulties related to keeping content up-to-date and refreshed

Honor Society staff expressed confidence in the fact that the collaborative learning project training was online and on-demand. They acknowledged that upgrading the Moodle platform would allow them to address accessibility issues and create more interactive content.

Staff were confident as well in the strength of the content and its direct connection to the collaborative learning project process. They expressed the desire to

incorporate experiential learning exercises and make other improvements in the content to make it more engaging for chapter sponsors. Staff interviewees also recognized that it was difficult, given the size of the staff and the number of projects on which they work, to keep content up to date and fresh.

The three themes that resulted from the chapter sponsor interviews were:

1. On-demand access from anywhere
2. Content directly related to the collaborative learning project process
3. Ideas for improvement of content including connection with experiential learning

Chapter sponsors who were interviewed for this project believed that having on demand access to the online collaborative learning project curriculum was valuable and fit with their busy schedules. They applauded the strong training content and offered ideas for ways to strengthen the ways the content was delivered and progress for participants assessed. To a person, chapter sponsors desired a timeline or sample timelines by which they could complete a collaborative learning project. The timeline would help them better coach their students by helping students plan projects according to specific timelines whether they begin their collaborative learning projects in the winter, spring, summer, or fall. They also wanted updated content included that highlighted current chapter sponsors' work with their students on collaborative learning projects. They were particularly interested in video content recorded by chapter sponsors whose chapters had successfully worked through the collaborative learning project process and had won awards for their projects.

Summary

This formative program evaluation utilized a qualitative approach to research. Findings from the study can help the Honor Society Chief Engagement Officer and their team to determine at the organizational level how effective the training has been in preparing chapter sponsors to coach students in the organization's collaborative learning project process in the estimation of staff and training participants. The Honor Society depends on its chapter sponsors to take the collaborative learning project training information back to their colleges to coach students through the process of developing and implementing a collaborative learning project. Therefore, interviewing chapter sponsors who have completed the online training module and Honor Society staff who developed and work with the training provided data that, through careful analysis and interpretation, provided thick descriptions in executive summary form to Honor Society leaders. Study findings can help Honor Society leaders make decisions about future directions for the training.

In Section two I described the research design and approach, participants, data collection, analysis, and findings, and limitations of the study. The research design used for my study was a qualitative formative program evaluation that examined the perceptions of Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through collaborative learning projects. Data collection was completed via face-to-face interviews with manual and NVivo coding and analysis of findings. I used member checking to ensure validity of my research findings.

Data from three semistructured interviews with Honor Society staff were coded to determine Honor Society staff perceptions about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects (RQ2). Data from 14 semistructured interviews with Honor Society chapter sponsors were coded and analyzed to determine Honor Society staff perceptions about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects (RQ1).

The result of coding interview transcripts was the emergence of four themes from interviews with Honor Society staff members and three themes from interviews with chapter sponsors. Themes from the Honor Society staff members were (a) on-demand accessibility from anywhere, (b) content directly related to the collaborative learning project process, (c) ideas for improvement of content including connection with experiential learning, and (d) difficulties related to keeping content up-to-date and refreshed. Themes that emerged from interviews with Honor Society chapter sponsors were (a) on-demand accessibility from anywhere, (b) content directly related to the collaborative learning project process, and (c) ideas for improvement of content including connection with Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Findings related to ideas for improvement of training content aligned with the theoretical framework on the experiential learning cycle.

Amolloh et al. (2018) conducted a descriptive survey of 78 trainee teachers at the University of Nairobi to determine their perceptions about whether the training provided adequately prepared them for teaching and working with students beyond the classroom. The researchers found that the University of Nairobi addressed “numerous objectives of experiential learning through teaching practice” (p. 126). that provided trainees “with a range of skills and competences of teaching, preparing daily lesson plans, class management and assessment” (p. 126). Amolloh et al. found that professional development should include both knowledge components and those that provide opportunities for teachers to practice what they learned during the training. Cocurricular activities, the researchers contended, are the types of experiential learning activities that help support professional development training.

The Honor Society’s collaborative learning project is an example of the types of cocurricular projects that include elements of experiential learning activities. Interview participants perceived that the knowledge they gained about the collaborative learning project was a strength of the training. They shared ideas to improve the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors that connect to Kolb’s experiential learning cycle: (1) plan, (2) do, (3) review, and (4) revise/think (Miller & Grooms, 2018).

Bradberry and De Maio (2018) surveyed university students who participated in the Model United Nations and judicial internship programs. The researchers found that students perceived that they developed and honed practical skills and the ability to use information they learned in their classes to help them succeed beyond the classroom.

The idea underpinning the training is that chapter sponsors will be able, after completing the training, to apply what they learned to coach students through the process of planning, implementing, and reflecting upon a collaborative learning project. The project itself is geared to helping students develop and hone their skills as scholars and leaders who serve their communities (Honor Society, 2022).

Themes and the theoretical framework of Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle will be used to create the Formative Program Evaluation Report (Appendix A). The evaluation will identify the areas of the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors that are working well and the areas that need improvement. These recommendations can be used by Honor Society executives and other program stakeholders to make decisions about revisions to the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate one portion of a larger training program. The problem that was the focus of this study was that online training module developed for chapter sponsors involving the Honor Society's collaborative learning project had not been evaluated at the organizational level since the program's inception in 2018. Honor Society leaders supported the idea that training of chapter sponsors in the collaborative learning project process is vital to helping them coach students through an annual collaborative learning project. The goal for this study was to determine what works well about the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors and what can be improved. A formal evaluation of this program and program evaluation report (Appendix A) can provide stakeholders with data to make evidence-based revisions to the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. In this section, I describe the project, present the rationale for the study, explore relevant literature related to the study, and discuss implications of the study.

Rationale

Owen (2020) maintained that program evaluation can enhance policies and programs and improve problems. My doctoral project was a formative program evaluation report (Appendix A) which provides Honor Society stakeholders with results of my evaluation of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in order to help them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects. My study involved

exploring perceptions of three Honor Society staff who designed and currently work with the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors and 14 Honor Society chapter sponsors who completed the training.

In this formative program evaluation, I examined what worked well and what could be improved about the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. The study was conducted because, since its inception in 2018, the training had never been formally evaluated. No formal guidelines currently exist for evaluating programs once they have been implemented. Training for the collaborative learning project was selected for this study as well because of the complex nature of the collaborative learning project process and the project's direct connection with the Honor Society's mission (Vendartham, 2016a).

Ongoing and effective collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors is essential, because the average tenure for Honor Society sponsors is 3.4 years (Honor Society, 2019). In its 2017-2022 strategic plan, the Honor Society expressed that "New...[chapter sponsors]...struggle for two to almost three years before they fully understand how to facilitate chapter success – particularly with Society programming" (Honor Society, 2017, p. 13). If chapter sponsors do not understand the collaborative learning project process, they cannot effectively coach students to develop and implement the annual project. It was selected as well, because there is potential for positive social change as a result of chapter sponsors coaching students through informed, intentional action (Honor Society, 2022). I conducted a literature review to determine the best approach to program evaluation for my study. If adopted by Honor Society stakeholders, the recommendations that resulted from this study can help Honor Society staff keep and

build upon the strong elements of the collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors and improve elements staff and chapter sponsors perceived to be areas where improvement is desirable.

Spaulding (2016) noted that the way program evaluation findings are reported to stakeholders sets this approach to qualitative research apart from other methods. The majority of evaluation reports include results of the evaluation and recommendations. Reports are given directly to stakeholders and are not available to others beyond the organization. Rossi et al. (2018) argued that "In the end, program evaluations must be judged by their utility for supporting responsible decision making that improves social well-being" (p. 310). An evaluation report should describe and present the findings of the program evaluation for stakeholders. Stake (2010) contended that evaluation reports could guide readers who are charged with setting policy and can "provide people with vicarious experiences" (p. 194) so they can manage situations similar to those studied by the researcher. The report should, therefore, be clearly written and the researcher should keep needs of stakeholders in mind.

My program evaluation report (Appendix A) includes a description of the program, focus of the formative evaluation, sources of data and methods used to conduct the evaluation, results of the study, and conclusions. Findings from my study, as presented in the evaluation report, suggest that Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors perceive the online collaborative learning project training content is strong and well-organized. Both chapter sponsors and Honor Society staff appreciate that the curriculum is online and can be accessed on demand. There are areas where Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors perceive the training module could be improved. My doctoral project

includes recommendations for changes to the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

Review of the Literature

The literature review for this study was conducted utilizing printed and online resources from the Walden University library and data bases, including ERIC, ProQuest Central, Futurity, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. Keyword searches included: *program evaluation, adult learning, curriculum development, cocurricular activities, coaching, coaching leadership, program evaluation reports, organizational change, social change, teaching social change, and knowledge transfer.*

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation can enhance quality of programs. There is a logic to program evaluation. Evaluation is "the process of making a judgement about the value or worth of an object under review" (Owen, 2020, p. 9). Owen (2020) and Podems (2019) argued that the logic of evaluation may seem simple. Researchers must make a series of interrelated decisions that lend complexity to the program evaluation process. Complexity is determined by (a) questions asked or phenomenon studied, (b) scope of inquiry, (c) flexibility of data collection, (d) variety and nature of study participants, (e) research aims, (f) number of strategies used, and (g) researcher expertise (Morse, 2020).

Programs for adult learners need continuous and supported evaluation. Assefa (2021) interviewed 83 adult education experts, school supervisors, teachers, and adult learners and found that monitoring and communicating with clarity and specificity to adult learners and appraising their learners' progress via program evaluation can make a difference in retention and engagement (Assefa 2021).

Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors work in nonprofit environments. Sheperis and Bayles (2022) conducted a case study of a nonprofit organization that specialized in helping adults with autism spectrum disorder and found it was vital to involve stakeholders in a program evaluation. An evaluator should value the community's knowledge base. Moreover, an evaluation should focus on "driving all stakeholders to take ownership over improvement of program performance" (p. 15) and assist with organizational learning.

Kroll and Moynihan (2018) examined two survey data samples from studies conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The samples were taken thirteen years apart and involved a total of 8,207 mid- and upper-level managers from 24 federal agencies. They used similar sampling techniques and survey samples to conduct the two waves of survey data collection. Kroll and Moynihan found that support for program evaluations and the ways they are implemented matter for determining the effectiveness of the program being assessed. The researchers noted that connections between program evaluation and subsequent performance do not happen naturally. The connection requires "a mixture of continuity and design" (p. 183). Evaluation of a program provides legitimacy for the program if the systematic assessment produces trustworthy information. Employing patience and persistence when implementing changes to programs can improve them via using evaluation results to make data-driven decisions and clearly communicating results to decision makers and stakeholders (Guyadeen & Seasons, 2018; Kroll & Moynihan, 2018).

Clinton and Dawson (2018) evaluated teacher assessment systems and evaluation data in Australian schools. The researchers found that it is important for organizations

and teachers to have an evaluative mindset. Clinton and Dawson mean that education leaders should seek evaluative evidence to measure their impact on students and to promote change.

The Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module can help chapter sponsors understand the collaborative learning project process so that they can support student engagement with the project at colleges and in communities.

Robinson et al. (2018) utilized a snowball sampling methodology to identify 500 global action research projects. The researchers sent questionnaires to each of the project leads and identified 195 projects to be included in a global directory created by the Evaluative Study of Action Research (ESAR) organization. From the 195 projects included in the directory, Robinson et al. conducted a short survey of 174 participants who were project leaders engaged with action research projects similar to those developed by Honor Society students. The researchers found via their program evaluation that participants desired change and often needed coaching and mentoring to focus action research efforts.

Adult Learning

Honor Society chapter sponsors are adult learners who work as faculty or staff at community colleges. Wlodarsky (2018) studied a voluntary sample of 25 faculty members from 4 divisions within a private liberal arts university in a Midwest town: (a) Education, (b) Arts and Sciences, (c) Business, and (d) Nursing and Health Sciences. Wlodarsky argued that adult learning can be viewed through the lenses of experiential learning and learning from reflection. They developed 2 research questions for the study: (a) "what does the reflective process look like" and (b) "how might this practice relate to professional growth and development and changes in professional practice" (p. 100)?

Eighteen participants anonymously completed the survey Wlodarsky (2018) developed. Seven participants anonymously submitted reflective narrative documents. The university departments studied implemented a reflection-based evaluation system for faculty. The researcher found that implementation of a reflection-based evaluation system was a "phenomenological trigger for reflection leading to change in professional practice" (p. 104). Reflection, Wlodarsky argued, is the way to make meaning of learning experiences. Wlodarsky found that those participants who completed the reflective narrative documents included information that was both cognitive and affective in nature. They recommended more studies that examine affective reactions to past learning experiences.

Yarbrough (2018) examined adult learning theories and determined that online learning environments "benefit from a solid foundation in adult learning theory" (p. 1). In particular, Yarbrough contended, John B. Watson's (1913) Behaviorism, Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory, Jack Mezirow's (1997) Critical Reflection, and John M. Dirkx's (2006) Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning (WVMD Model) provided a model by which to develop innovative, enriched, and robust content for adult learners who are studying online. Yarbrough summarized the theories included in the WVMD Model:

- Watson seeks to measure changes in behavior to acknowledge learning.
- Vygotsky believes learners should be engaged and active in their learning experiences, where they have social interactions and the MKO is scaffolding learning not directed learning.
- Mezirow encourages reflection in which learner's [sic] review experiences and their interpretations of the experiences, with this information they create meaning which can lead to changes in behavior.
- Dirkx supports expression of emotion within the learning experiences. When emotions are included with learning, there is potential for the learn [sic] to experience deep involvement in the construct of new meaning and new knowledge. (Yarbrough, 2018, p. 10)

Yarbrough proposed using the theories of Watson, Vygotsky, Mezirow, and Dirkx to create a checklist of assignments that can encourage adult learners who are taking online classes and training to go beyond solo assignments such as writing papers and taking exams. Learning activities that align with the WVMD Model, those that include such things as social interactions and reciprocal exchanges of information, can enhance adult learning.

Encouraging co-ownership of their learning can heighten adults' learning experiences. Owusu-Agyeman and Fourie-Malherbe (2019) conducted a mixed methods study to determine what factors played a role in helping adult learners successfully negotiate co-ownership of their learning experiences. The researchers administered 240 questionnaires to engineering students from three universities in Ghana. Two hundred valid questionnaires were returned to Owusu-Agyeman and Fourie-Malherbe. In addition to gathering data via questionnaires, the study included three focus group interviews with a total of 27 students. The researchers found that there were two factors necessary for adult learners to co-own their learning experiences: (a) engagement in the process and (b) acquisition of relevant knowledge to enable adult learners to engage in the learning process.

While Owusu-Agyeman and Fourie-Malherbe (2019) noted that co-ownership was an important element of adult learning, Ruhose et al. (2019) argued adult learning is essential for developing social capital in the workplace. Ruhose et al. used data from the 2000, 2004, and 2008 German Socio-Economic Panel Studies (SOEP) to measure social capital in adults who had participated in work-related training in the three years prior to participating in SOEP. The researchers focused on structural social capital and focused

on participants' behavior in civic/political participation, cultural participation, and social participation with friends, neighbors, and relatives. Ruhose et al. also considered as part of social capital trust in others and the number of close friends each participant reported. The researchers found that work-related training positively affects development of social capital for adult learners which, in the long run, benefits society.

Ruhose et al. (2019) argued that adult learning can foster resilience, grit, and awareness of political and societal issues. One caveat to results of their study of work-related training and the development of social capital was that the development of social capital as a result of work-related training was most pronounced for affluent adults. Lee and Desjardins (2019) investigated adult learning as a way to alleviate social inequality.

Given the knowledge economy of the 21st century, Lee and Desjardins (2019) observed that adult learning "is regarded as a route for continuing education and training to obtain new knowledge, skills, and competencies to keep up with the demands" of the workplace (p. 339). Lee and Desjardins conducted a quantitative analysis of public-use data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The researchers designated 19 nations that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to determine whether there was a relationship between advantages in job-related adult learning, individuals' social origins, and social inequality. Using two-stage multilevel analysis, Lee and Desjardins determined that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between social inequality and the advantages, including job-related adult learning, of an individual's social origins.

Schreiber-Barsch and Mauch (2019) examined adult learning as a response to global challenges. The researchers used two case studies, one each from Finland and Ghana, to illustrate how systemized adult learning can contribute to the 17 sustainable development goals established by the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Schreiber-Barsch and Mauch acknowledged that adult learning is one among many solutions to global challenges. Developing policies and procedures that promote social inclusion and recognize marginalized voices are keys to connecting adult learning and maintenance of a planet that can support its inhabitants. Education, the researchers noted, "may provide fertile ground from which change can grow, which in turn fertilizes the soil of a viable world" (p. 532). Adult learning can promote sustainable development, the researchers argued, because it can help adults deal with risks, processes, and structures in a world that is often random and chaotic.

Curriculum Development

The Honor Society's online collaborative learning training was designed as a curriculum that would help chapter sponsors understand one of the two major projects the organization asks them to coach students to develop, implement, and reflect upon annually. Azami and Ibrahim (2019) investigated the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) by surveying 73 university students who were studying Chemistry in Malaysia. The focus of the study was to determine user satisfaction with a chemistry MOOC that was developed as a supplementary learning tool for higher education students in face-to-face classes. Azami and Ibrahim found that students preferred on-demand access to courses and desired video and gaming elements. The researchers identified criteria for successful online courses. Including short videos of less

than 20 minutes in length as well as downloadable materials were two criteria for successful online courses. The courses should also have a clearly defined course outline with objectives and assessments included.

Azami and Ibrahim (2019) included stakeholders's voices in their research about curriculum development for online courses. Hidayah et al. (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders and determined that involving stakeholders in discussions is vital to both students and institutions. For students, Hidayah et al. argued, curriculum matters. It makes a difference in how they develop skills that will make them marketable after graduation. For institutions, the researchers note, being willing to be responsive to curriculum needs and desired changes makes them responsive to societal changes.

At the 2021 American Society for Engineering Education annual conference, Kittur et al. (2021) noted that "a curriculum should be more inclusive, not elusive, because every person in the world deserves a chance to participate in the developing and sustaining of the future of humanity" (p. 3). One of the goals of the Honor Society's collaborative learning project is to make a positive difference at community college students' colleges and in their communities (Honor Society, 2022). Kittur et al. identified five "discourses of design" through their literature review, interviews with three educators with expertise in curriculum design, and two case studies that are meant to help educators be more inclusive and effective with curriculum development.

According to Kittur et al. (2021), the five discourses of design are: (a) artifacts such as curricular materials, websites, and software; (b) processes such as lesson plans, instructional design, and learner support; (c) experiences like celebrations, learning communities, and events; (d) systems like schedules, teacher/student evaluation, and

community partnerships; and (e) cultures such as openness versus closed mentalities, community engagement, and policy. The researchers found that most educators work with artifacts but do not employ the other four discourses of design. Using all five design discourses can lead to an inclusive and engaging learning experience.

Collaboration with stakeholders is central to developing inclusive and responsive curricula (Annala et al., 2021; Kuttur et al, 2021; McInnes, 2019). Collaboration and consideration of stakeholders' perceptions matter to decision makers as well as to stakeholders. Otherwise, faculty do not trust the process and believe decisions have already been made. Annala et al. (2021) conducted 27 semistructured interviews with university stakeholders. Analysis of interview data showed that there are ways to overcome resistance to changing curricula. Developing relationships among stakeholders and connecting them in networks that take stakeholders beyond their normal boundaries can transform organizational cultures and resistance to changes to curricula.

McInnes (2019) studied curriculum development for online courses. Their case study conducted at an Australian university resulted in four key lessons: (a) collaboration is desirable when developing multimedia for online courses, (b) technology experts and content experts working together to develop curricula for courses can integrate best practices from varied sources to strengthen curricula, (c) there are financial and time constraint considerations when developing curricula for online courses, (d) a clearly-defined plan for incorporating multimedia into online courses is necessary before course development occurs.

Tuju et al. (2022) examined nine models of curriculum development: (a) context, input, process, product (CIPP) model, (b) quantitative evaluation model, (c) multivariate

mixed model, (d) illumination model, (e) innovative curriculum program evaluation model, (f) educational system evaluation model, (g) model black tyler, (h) research model evaluation, and (i) objective model evaluation model. Tuju et al. were particularly interested in the ways curricula were and could be evaluated and argued that "evaluation of the curriculum is inseparable from the evaluation models that will be used" p. 2031). Since the goal of curriculum assessment is to make sure the curriculum is working optimally, Tuju et al. urged higher education institutions to create comprehensive evaluation plans that scheduled regular assessments of curricula.

Cocurricular Activities

The Honor Society largely operates in the realm of cocurricular activities on community college campuses. The online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors is designed to teach chapter sponsors how to coach students through cocurricular opportunities. Cocurricular activities are recognized as valuable learning environment beyond the classroom (Laraib & Asmara, 2020; Sheokarah & Pillay, 2021; Yodur, 2019). Cocurricular activities also help students develop and hone soft skills, such as (a) communication skills, (b) critical thinking, (c) teamwork, (d) leadership skills, and (e) work ethic, desired by employers (Yodur, 2019).

Laraib and Asmara (2020) collected survey data from 400 students who were studying to earn Bachelor of Science degrees at coeducational higher education institutes in India. They were interested in how cocurricular activities had an impact on academic achievement. Laraib and Asmara found a positive relationship between student engagement in cocurricular activities and academic achievement. The connection

between cocurricular activities and academic achievement was particularly true in terms of mental acuity, creativity, and knowledge base.

Sheokarah and Pillay (2021) studied South African students who participated in an English language club in addition to their academic work in the classroom. The researchers developed a qualitative action research design that let them work closely with students beyond the classroom through observations, fieldnotes, and reflections.

Sheokarah and Pillay found that students developed a sense of community as a result of their engagement with the club and of the positive interactions they had with one another.

Khan et al. (2018) noted that cocurricular activities contributed to students' self-efficacy. Khan et al. surveyed 112 principals, 120 teachers, 120 parents, and 1200 students to determine which factors helped increase students' self-efficacy through cocurricular activities. The researchers found that cocurricular activities "advance energy, essentialness, constructive considering, and solidarity" (p. 71). Khan et al. argued that cocurricular activities are valuable learning tools and should be required in schools.

Vos et al. (2018) noted cocurricular activities should be part of an ongoing and deliberate professional development curriculum. Their qualitative longitudinal study of pharmacy students followed 756 students' cocurricular activities in professional service, leadership, and community engagement. Students reflected on their experiences and whether the activities helped them achieve goals. Students documented 29,341 hours of cocurricular activities and perceived that their cocurricular work afforded them opportunities to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Students engaged in more leadership activities than before they participated in the study and perceived they would

become lifelong learners as a result of ongoing professional development beyond the classroom.

In addition to being valuable to students while they are in school, cocurricular activities can help students increase their employability (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Karim, 2021). Karim conducted a literature review and noted that while cocurricular activities do not raise students' grades, the skills sharpened while involved in activities beyond the classroom were highly prized by employers. Employers noted that students who participated in cocurricular activities had strong communication skills, leadership skills, and integrity. Karim recorded that employers utilized information about applicants' cocurricular activities when making hiring decisions.

Jackson and Bridgstock (2021) conducted survey research to determine the perceptions of students who studied business and creative industries curricula at three Australian universities about the value of cocurricular activities. Jackson and Bridgstock discovered that students perceived value in cocurricular activities. The researchers stated that "embedded learning activities were perceived as broadly useful for skill development, gaining relevant experience and networking" (p. 38). Cocurricular activities did not result in improved employment opportunities for everyone surveyed. Students perceived that more networking opportunities would be helpful. Jackson and Bridgstock noted that networking opportunities help students gain social capital which, in turn, can lead to enhanced employment opportunities.

Coaching

Coaching has a positive impact on the innovative behavior and mindfulness of those being coached. Zhang (2020) described innovative behavior as having new ideas

and working to incorporate those ideas into work. They explained mindfulness as it relates to innovation as "attention, awareness, and non-judgement" (p. 74).

The Student Success Center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville began a two-year study of students who engaged with their three main academic success programs: (a) academic coaching, (b) tutoring, and (c) supplemental instruction such as peer-led collaboration and group work beyond the classroom. The researchers surveyed participants at the end of each semester and found that students who used academic coaches, tutors, and supplemental instruction five or more times perceived that coaching had a high impact on their academic success (Osborne et al., 2019). Qian et al. (2018) studied community college students with intellectual disabilities to determine the impact of coaching on academic success. The researchers conducted a phenomenological qualitative study that included both survey and interview data. The results of the study showed that students valued academic coaching and opportunities for social interaction. Coaching resulted in positive student-faculty interactions and open-door guidelines that allowed students to drop in without appointments on faculty and staff who were coaching the students.

Part of the curriculum for the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors is focused on providing information about coaching and support for chapter sponsors to coach students through a collaborative learning project. Gray (2018) studied educational leadership students and proposed a research-based model for coaching and mentoring students. Gray recommended using experiential learning activities and early field experiences to train education leaders. Leadership-based coaching focuses on training leaders with content-focused curricula and skills

development. This approach to training educators can result in improved growth and performance for educators who, in turn, will coach students.

Ali et al. (2018) reviewed approaches to coaching teachers. Student achievement, the researchers noted, will not improve without coaching for teachers and those training to teach. They found that effective coaching should encourage collaboration, use data analysis to inform practice, and promote positive cultural change. Coaching can encourage educators to find connections to people in organizations that result in encouragement, guidance, and the development of networks of people who support professional success in and beyond the classroom (Hakro & Mathew, 2020; Peng et al., 2019; Peregrina-Kretz et al., 2018).

Social Good and Sustainable Social Change

The Honor Society promotes lifelong learning and social good and sustainable social change through its collaborative learning project and through its online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. Lifelong learning is a common good. There are four dimensions of the common good as it relates to lifelong learning: (a) accessibility, (b) availability, (c) affordability, and (d) social commitment (Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2018). The dimensions outlined by Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2018) dovetail with the Honor Society's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan to dismantle barriers for students and chapter sponsors (Honor Society, 2022a).

Robinson (2022) developed a framework to structure the promotion of social change. The model, Critical Literacies for Advancement Model (CLAM), categorizes four literacies vital for social change: (a) foundational literacy, (b) sociocultural literacy, (c) technological and information literacy, and (d) psychosocial and environmental

literacy. Foundational literacies include (a) scientific, (b) scientific literacy, and (c) futures literacy. Sociocultural literacy covers (a) global literacy, (b) mother tongue literacy, (c) multilingual literacy, and (d) cultural literacy. Technological and informational literacy incorporates (a) information literacy, (b) visual literacy, (c) aural literacy, (d) game literacy, (e) data literacy, and (f) news and media literacy. Psychosocial and environmental literacy includes (a) health literacy, (b) emotional literacy (c) food literacy, (d) financial literacy, (e) ethical literacy, and (f) environmental literacy (Robinson, 2020). The Honor Society's collaborative learning project and its online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors is focused mainly on psychosocial and environmental literacy but includes elements of sociocultural literacy and technological and informational literacy to promote social good.

Sustainable social change requires moving from activities of individuals to involvement of communities. Smith and Iversen (2018) explored over three years the idea of participatory design in Danish primary and secondary schools. They conducted qualitative research at two schools. Teachers and students at the schools participated in fabricated technology exercises in what the researchers called the FabLab. Students were given control over how they worked with the experiential exercises. At the end of the eight weeks, teachers and students completed surveys about their perceptions of the exercises and their learning experiences. Their analysis of survey data showed, Smith and Iversen noted, that "students conceived the technology as media for consumption and communication...[but]...there was little understanding or critical awareness of technology beyond the screen or intended use" (p. 23). Teachers' perceptions were more advanced but similar to those of students. Getting students and teachers to engage in

complex problem solving and with making connections between what they are learning and applications beyond the classroom is vital to sustainable social change (Smith & Iverson, 2018).

Individual reflection and group actions support collective action (Kuk & Tarlau, 2020). Collective action can, in turn, result in positive social change as a result of bureaucratic connections, as a result of direct, observable connections among people, or as connections, or as a result of latent, or unobserved, common causes (Bork et al., 2019; Welch & Yates, 2018). These connections can be made in person or as a result of establishing connections via the metaverse in which learners use avatars that can interact with one another in three-dimensional virtual spaces (Duan et al., 2021).

Knowledge Transfer

A key aspect of the Honor Society's collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors is the ability to transfer knowledge about the collaborative learning project from Honor Society staff to chapter sponsors. In turn, chapter sponsors who complete the training should be able to transfer their knowledge about the collaborative learning project by coaching students through the process. Marques et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study of knowledge transfer with 383 participants at a public university in Brazil. They noted a significant positive connection between: (a) affective organizational commitment and knowledge transfer, (b) organizational commitment and maturity of knowledge transfer, (c) organizational compensation and knowledge transfer, (d) organizational compensation and maturity of knowledge transfer, (e) normative organizational commitment and maturity of knowledge transfer, and (f) knowledge transfer and the maturity of knowledge management. Results did not confirm a

significant connection between normative organizational commitment and knowledge transfer.

Bacon et al. (2019) conducted semistructured interviews with 30 participants selected by purposive sampling to determine optimal conditions for the transfer of knowledge among a diverse group of people. For academic institutions, the type and understanding of knowledge, trust, learning intent, and cultural diversity were found to be key characteristics for the successful transfer of knowledge. Cultural intelligence also played a role in knowledge transfer. In a study of 103 expatriate managers in Croatia via questionnaires, geographical distance had no significant impact on knowledge transfer (Vlajčić et al., 2018). Honor Society chapter sponsors represent chapters located in 10 sovereign nations, and the collaborative learning project training is online. Knowledge transfer should be accessible to those chapter sponsors who embrace technology. Technology readiness can impact knowledge transfer. Adult learners can believe that technology offers them flexibility and productivity, they can be skeptical about technology, or they can feel overwhelmed by it (Dolmark et al., 2019).

Dolmark et al. (2019) and de Wit-deVries et al. (2019) conducted systematic reviews of literature related to technology readiness and knowledge transfer. From 5,458 articles retrieved from their initial search, Dolmark et al. identified 227 articles to review. Their joint review led to reading 53 articles published between 2000 and 2017. Dolmark et al. (2019) noted that there are factors that have an impact on knowledge transfer. Those factors include the type of knowledge being transferred, structure of the environment in which the knowledge transfer takes place, and characteristics of knowledge being transferred. The motivation of learners and their learning styles, the partnership between

parties, and the evaluation of knowledge transfer matters, too. de Wit-de Vries et al. (2019) found through their review of 35 papers related to knowledge transfer that shared goals, trust, and explicitness of the knowledge being transferred were important to learners and organizations developing curricula.

Literature Review Summary

Literature showed that critical literacies, such as: a) foundational literacy, (b) sociocultural literacy, (c) technological and information literacy, and (d) psychosocial and environmental literacy supported development in students of commitment to social good. Accessibility, availability, affordability, and social commitment also contributed to sustainable social good. Literature also showed that coaching has a positive impact on students. Coaching learners with experiential activities and field experiences links the conceptual with the practical. The result can be enhanced learning (Gray, 2018). Literature illustrated that organizations can employ strategies such as advancing commitment, nurturing trust, and ensuring that curricula are explicit to ensure successful knowledge transfer in person or online.

Project Description

I conducted a formative program evaluation to examine the perceptions of Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects. I employed the theoretical framework of Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle in the design of my study as well as in data collection and analysis of research findings (Appendix A).

To make the recommended changes gleaned from interviews for this study with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors, staff will need two things: (1) updated technology, particularly a recent update of the Moodle learning management system, and (2) time to make changes to the training. Honor Society staff members who work with the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors are interested and engaged in wanting to make the training as relevant and useful as possible for chapter sponsors. These staff members include a curriculum designer who was hired after the training had been developed and posted online. They are an existing support for the program.

Another existing support for improving the online collaborative learning project training module is its connection to the Honor Society's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan (Honor Society, 2022a). The Honor Society is dedicated to investing "time and energy into creating flexible programming that allows...[people]...to participate in targeted programming activities at a time and place that works for them" (p. 7). Honor Society chapters sponsors who interviewed as part of this study are also interested and engaged in the collaborative learning project process. While both the Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors perceived that changes would enhance the training, they were advocates for the online collaborative learning project training module for all Honor Society chapter sponsors.

A potential barrier to implementing changes to the online collaborative learning project training module is securing updated technology. Garcia-Murillo et al. (2020) argued that characteristics of the online learning environment were "important moderators of student learning" (p. 619). The training is currently housed on an early

version of the Moodle learning management system. Rivers (2021) used the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) to determine traits that helped 149 students in an online asynchronous university course to achieve academic success via the Moodle learning management system. Rivers found that "self-efficacy" and "agreeableness" had a direct effect on academic success and an indirect effect on students' acceptance of Moodle as a learning tool. Garcia-Murillo et al. (2020) maintained that learning management systems play a significant role in higher education. Based on their research, Moodle "gave users a high degree of technological satisfaction" (p. 281).

Acquiring Moodle version 4.0 that was released in April 2022 would allow Honor Society staff to use programs such as Camtasia, a software suite with which users can record videos, tutorials, and presentations for online use. Handayani et al. (2021) contended that media developed in Camtasia can help people learn and help those who are teaching ease the transfer of knowledge. The fact that the 4.0 version of Moodle is free will help eliminate this barrier.

Another potential barrier to implementing changes to the online collaborative learning project training module is limited time to work on the project. The Honor Society's staff is small. The student engagement team is comprised of seven people who work on varied projects throughout the year to engage chapter sponsors and community college students. Hiring a curriculum designer with expertise in using technology to engage learners was a move that will help alleviate a barrier. Giving the curriculum designer time to specifically focus on implementing changes to the online collaborative learning project training and making it a priority will be key to removing the time barrier.

Developing a timeline with incremental steps and collaboration among the Honor Society's student engagement team members can help overcome the barrier of limited time to work on projects. Epley (2019) argued that practitioners often overlook applied aspects of curriculum development. While the development of curriculum should be grounded in theory, Epley noted, incorporating practical action steps into a timeline can facilitate the implementation process. Ismail et al. (2018) found that collaborating on projects helped teachers complete and strengthen curriculum. They further found that when an organization ensured a "conducive environment, culture and climate" (p. 495) quality service resulted.

Given the support from Honor Society leadership, the student engagement team, and chapter sponsors who interviewed as part of this study of the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors, revisions to the curriculum could be started immediately. Honor Society staff could begin by: (a) procuring and uploading for use by the Honor Society student engagement team the 4.0 version of Moodle and (b) reviewing and determining which videos and other curriculum materials should be updated or completely changed. Next steps would be to write and review sample timelines for developing, implementing, and reflecting upon collaborative learning projects. The timelines could be created simultaneously with writing and reviewing handouts for use by chapter sponsors who complete the online collaborative learning project training. Following review and development of the timelines and handouts, Honor Society staff could invite chapter sponsors to record updated videos and edit the videos for posting in the online collaborative learning project training module.

Project Evaluation Plan

There has not been a formal evaluation of the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors since it was developed in 2018 and posted on the Honor Society's website. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the online collaborative learning project training module from its stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved. The evaluation identified areas related to the online collaborative learning project training that could help Honor Society chapter sponsors gain an understanding of how to coach students to develop, implement, and reflect upon a collaborative learning project. I will work with Honor Society staff members to implement recommendations they wish to employ. I will follow up on a quarterly basis for one year and will extend an invitation to Honor Society leaders to contact me if they would like to discuss any aspect of my formative evaluation of the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors.

Project Implications

Joyce and Cartwright (2020) noted that it is difficult but necessary to bridge the gap between research and practice. In its 2022-2027 strategic plan, the Honor Society noted that three separate national tracking studies over the last ten years have shown that Honor Society members have regularly achieved an overall student success rate of 91%. Honor Society members' success rate is supported by a college completion rate of 87% "within six years of entering college" (p. 8). One of the Honor Society's strategies over the next five years will be to "provide curricular experiences for faculty and administrators seeking to deepen their understanding of students and student success" (p.

8). The Honor Society is committed to providing professional development opportunities like the online collaborative learning project training module to chapter sponsors that support student success and help the organization achieve its mission to provide opportunities for college students to grow as scholars and leaders (Honor Society, 2022).

Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle served as the conceptual framework for the study. Experiential learning can bridge the gap between theory and practice. Kolb's experiential learning cycle provides a fluid, interesting, and engaging learning environment. Experiential learning can enhance knowledge attainment as well as social interactions (Bhati & Song, 2019; Chiu, 2019; Fewster-Thuente & Batteson, 2018; Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2018). Utilizing experiential learning can have a positive impact on the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

While revisions to the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module can help the Honor Society achieve its goal of providing substantive professional development to chapter sponsors, the training itself has social change implications. Educating chapter sponsors about developing, implementing, and reflecting upon an annual collaborative learning project so they can coach their students through the process can result in social change throughout the communities served by the 1,300 Honor Society chapters throughout 10 sovereign nations (Honor Society, 2022).

The collaborative learning project "affords students opportunities to have an impact on their campuses and in their communities by addressing challenges related to their honors study topic research" (Honor Society, 2022, p. 2) The seven learning outcomes related to the collaborative learning project attest to the potential for social

change. Students who participate in developing, implementing, and reflecting upon a collaborative learning project will be able to:

- create awareness of the importance of seeking out multiple perspectives to augment understanding of a real-world, complex, interdisciplinary topic and improve decision making,
- demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills to draw research conclusions,
- initiate real-world problem-solving by developing an in-depth, action-oriented solution to make a difference for a challenge related to their honors study topic research,
- plan and set goals for each step of the collaborative learning project process,
- develop capacities to lead, manage, and motivate self and others, to perform in complicated environments, and to accomplish goals,
- collaborate and create effective teams to enhance project impact, and
- cultivate reflective skills and aptitudes to assess progress, adjust to circumstances, and measure results quantitatively and qualitatively (Honor Society, 2022, p. 2).

The conceptual framework for this study was Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle. Kolb identified four stages in his learning cycle. Learners move through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The Honor Society's collaborative learning project moves students through Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Budig et al. (2018) noted that participating in an action research project can boost students' self-esteem, create networks of friends and colleagues, help them gain knowledge and skills, and show them how to access and

utilize resources. As a result, the collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors can have far-reaching effects on community college students.

The Honor Society President and CEO noted that community college students face challenges. "The work of community colleges" they wrote, "is critical to improving the lives of individuals, families, communities, and the nation" (Honor Society, 2022a, p. 3). The online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors is one way the Honor Society is addressing the need to be intentional, to dismantle barriers, and to cultivate compassion for community college students.

Summary

For this study, I evaluated one portion of a larger training program. I included a description of the study, rationale for conducting the study, and literature related to the study. I described implementation and positive social change implications of the project. The problem that was the focus of this study was that the online training module developed for chapter sponsors in the Honor Society's collaborative learning project had not been evaluated at the organizational level since the program's inception in 2018. This formative program evaluation provides evidence that there are positive aspects of the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. The evaluation also offers evidence that changes to training based on perceptions of Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors could result in improved training.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In this section, I examine project strengths and limitations and recommend alternative approaches to address the problem of this study. I address issues related to scholarship including an analysis of myself as a scholar, practitioner, and developer of this program evaluation. I also discuss project development and evaluation, leadership, and implications for social change. McDavid et al. (2019) noted that program evaluation is used to generate information that can help organizations make evidence-based decisions for program planning, design, and implementation. Stakeholders can use data generated in this program evaluation (Appendix A) to make evidence-based decisions about the future of the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Spaulding (2016) explained the difference between research and program evaluation. Research is meant to build on what is known to broaden and deepen understanding of a subject. Program evaluation is conducted to assist in making evidence-based decisions. Spaulding described a formative program evaluation as research that provides feedback to people in charge of developing and delivering a program as that program is occurring. Data collected during interviews with Honor Society staff showed their willingness to consider what works well regarding the organization's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors as well as what might be improved. Participants praised the online collaborative learning

project training module, but also offered ideas about how it can be improved. Shared themes identified through analysis of interviews with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors is a strength of this project.

The program evaluation report includes three areas of training that both Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors observed could be improved. Shared concerns offered an opportunity to make specific recommendations about ways to strengthen the online collaborative learning project training module for Honor Society leaders and staff who design and implement the program. The evaluation report contains recommendations to strengthen the program that were shared by Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors during interviews. Utilizing the recommendations included in the evaluation report could enhance collaborative learning project training curricula and experiential learning activities for the online training.

Stake (2010) noted that it is important to triangulate evidence gathered during qualitative research to ensure that it is valid and reliable. The design and data collection methodology for this study were used in a transparent way by applying established research practices. I used member checking and focused on meanings of collected data. Honor Society leaders and staff who work with the online collaborative learning project training module can confidently use data collected as part of this formative program evaluation and reported in the program evaluation report (Appendix A) to support making program revisions.

The constitution of the convenience sample of Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors who were interviewed is both a strength and a limitation of this project's recommendations. Emerson (2021) defined a convenience sample as one in which

participants meet the criteria for the study. In a convenience sample, participants meet study criteria and are available to participate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Jager et al. (2017) argued that convenience sampling is efficient. Utilizing convenience sampling for this study was useful. Selecting every third name on the list of 669 chapter sponsors who had completed the online collaborative learning project training resulted in a diverse group of study participants. Evaluation results represent perceptions about the online collaborative learning project training module for Honor Society chapter sponsors from 11 states in each of the four divisions outlined by the Honor Society (Honor Society, 2022a). The project evaluation report incorporates recommendations based on perceptions of: (a) chapter sponsors from large and small chapters;(b) rural, urban, and suburban chapters; and (c) award-winning chapters and those that are beginning work on collaborative learning projects.

I employed convenience sampling to identify three Honor Society staff members and 14 chapter sponsors who completed the online collaborative learning project training module to interview for this study. The three staff members who comprised the convenience sample for this study all worked with development and implementation of the training and were eager to learn ways chapter sponsors perceived training could be improved. They expressed intellectual curiosity about results of this formative program evaluation. Their intellectual curiosity coupled with their desire to develop the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors so that it engages and helps all chapter sponsors to coach students in the collaborative learning project process bodes well for the immediate implementation of evidence-based revisions to the training.

Phillips (2010) argued that many factors other than the program being evaluated may have influenced participants. Since programs are developed and implemented as part of complex systems, these factors can influence results of a program evaluation. Honor Society chapter sponsors who participated in this study may have engaged in other training related to the collaborative learning project or other professional development opportunities in online settings. Some participants have served as chapter sponsors for decades. Others are new to the Honor Society and the collaborative learning project process. These factors could have had an impact on participants' perceptions of the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. For this study, influencing factors were unknown. That could be a limitation of this study.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

I examined the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors by conducting a formative program evaluation. A qualitative survey approach would have worked to address the problem that the training had not been formally evaluated since its inception in 2011. This approach would have potentially reached more of the 669 chapter sponsors who completed the training. Survey data could have provided "a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 12) about the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. However, survey data might not have provided detailed descriptions about study participants' perceptions about what works and what might be improved about the training.

An alternative approach to the local problem that the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors had not been evaluated since its inception in

2018 might be a mixed methods design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) noted that a mixed methods approach is "an intuitive way of doing research that is constantly displayed throughout our everyday lives" (p. 1). Combining quantitative data with people's narratives can provide multiple ways of seeing the problem being studied. The Honor Society has archived scores for annual collaborative learning project award entries. Interviewing chapter sponsors who have completed the training and checking their perceptions about how well the training has prepared them to coach students to develop, implement, and reflect upon a collaborative learning project would be coupled with the award entry scores from before and after chapter sponsors completed the training. The scores represent one measure of how well the training is working for chapter sponsors and the chapters they serve. Interview data provides another way of seeing the problem through the perceptions of chapter sponsors.

Another alternative approach to examining the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors would be to conduct a case study of a chapter whose sponsor has completed the training. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described a case study as an in-depth analysis of a program or activity over time that involves a person or group of people. According to Creswell and Creswell, case studies are "bounded by time and activity" and allow researchers to use "a variety of collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (p. 14). Using a case study would afford a researcher the opportunity to investigate a chapter sponsor's Honor Society chapter over the course of a year during which a team of students developed, implemented, and reflected upon a collaborative learning project. The researcher could

examine the chapter's sponsor as they coached students through the collaborative learning project process.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

All of my academic work before beginning this doctoral project was in the humanities. I feel comfortable in that space. For my Master of Arts degree in history, I combed libraries for documents, letters, and legal information to investigate divorce and the decline of patriarchy in a southern state. Working on this doctoral project moved me from my comfort zone to look at scholarship in different ways. While I could use the skills I developed through my study of history to search for academic articles relevant to my current study, I had to learn to critically read the educational research articles. The format and language of the articles were new to me. Scholarly writing in this context was new to me. It often felt like I was repeating myself.

Beyond learning to read scholarly articles and write in new ways, I had never before conducted academic interviews. Learning to write open-ended questions that aligned with my research questions was a valuable learning experience and one I will use again in my work with the Honor Society. As a practitioner, I am now able as well to speak with more authenticity about the process of organizing, conducting, and analyzing data from academic interviews to students and chapter sponsors who are working on collaborative learning projects. I will be able to relate to the experience of manually coding interview data and of using NVivo. I will also be able to write project reports that align with educational research professional practices. These skills are invaluable to me as a

practitioner who develops programs for the Honor Society and who will now be able to formally evaluate programs in ways I was not able before embarking on this study.

I have always been committed to promoting positive social change in the classroom and as a part of my work with the Honor Society. Walden University's dedication to positive social change was one of the things that most appealed to me about seeking a doctoral degree at the institution. The process of working on the degree has encouraged me to think about the impact I can have on Honor Society chapter sponsors and community college students through my work as a scholar and practitioner. I have learned that when people are intentional and open during the research process, they can develop deeper understandings about issues and possible ways to solve them. That understanding can lead to action to eliminate injustice and oppression, to improve practices, and to effect positive change.

I leave this educational journey richer in terms of enhanced intellectual curiosity, empathy, and dedication to lifelong learning. This was the first educational research project I have conducted, but it will not be the last. Working with honors programming for the Honor Society, I have the opportunity as a practitioner to use data from future studies to make the learning experience for community college students and faculty scholars meaningful and valuable.

Project Development

Developing this doctoral project was a worthwhile learning experience. It took a lot of time, energy, and detailed work to plan and execute the formative program evaluation. I invested hours searching for and reading existing literature related to my proposed topic and learning the elegant language of educational research and program evaluation. I spent

considerable time thinking about the problem of evaluating the Honor Society's collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. I considered the stakeholders, potential population, and existing resources when contemplating the most meaningful way to execute my study. I spent considerable time deliberating about how to add value to the literature related to this study. I wanted to be sure I did no harm to study participants or to the wider group of Honor Society stakeholders. I wanted the project to have short-term and potential for long-term impact. All the time spent deliberating led me to the conclusion that a formative program evaluation was the most appropriate approach to qualitative research for this study.

Leadership and Change

One of the tenets of the Honor Society's leadership curriculum is that "everyone has in them an inherent ability to learn and exercise leadership, even those not currently in leadership positions or holding leadership titles" (Byrd & Edwards, 2014, p. ix). The foundations of leadership are developing a personal leadership philosophy, vision, and flexibility. Through the process of working on my doctorate, I have had to tap reserves of patience, resilience, and flexibility. I have embraced lifelong learning. I have learned from making mistakes, seeing challenges as opportunities, setting measurable and achievable goals, and keeping the vision of degree completion at the front of my mind. I hope my efforts will inspire others to achieve the goals they set for themselves and to exercise leadership from wherever they are in life.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The Honor Society has grown over the past 104 years along with the community college movement and claims that more than 90% of the Honor Society's members

graduate compared with 27.6% of community college students in general (Honor Society, 2019, p. 2). With its emphasis on providing opportunities for student growth as scholars and leaders, the Honor Society is modelling student engagement both in and beyond the classroom, a key finding by CCSSE for student success (The University of Texas, 2021). The organization's collaborative learning project and online self-paced training module in the project process for chapter sponsors models active and collaborative learning. Another key CCSSE finding is that contact with faculty members beyond the classroom contributed to student success (The University of Texas, 2021).

The importance of this study rests in its implications for community college students and faculty. By addressing what is working well and what might be improved about the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors, the organization is modeling faculty engagement with students. The Honor Society, through its collaborative learning project and professional development training for chapter sponsors, is promoting positive social change. The online self-paced collaborative learning project training module is providing preparation for chapter sponsors to coach students through the development and implementation of an annual project that makes a positive difference to the college and community.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

I hope that this formative program evaluation will prove useful to Honor Society leaders and stakeholders as well as researchers who are conducting their own evaluations of programs designed and implemented for adult learners. Researchers who are interested in examining various aspects of adult learning at community colleges could use this study to inform their current or future research.

Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle served as the conceptual framework for this formative program evaluation. Experiential learning can enhance knowledge attainment, enrich social interactions, and bridge the gap between theory and practice (Bhati & Song., 2019; Chiu, 2019; Fewster-Thuente & Batteson, 2018; Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2018). All of these factors encompassed by Kolb's experiential learning cycle have implications for social change at the personal, organizational, and societal levels. As example, Honor Society members who participated in collaborative learning projects in their communities during 2021: (a) conducted workshops to address forest fires, (b) created food pantries to address intergenerational food insecurity, (c) organized information sessions about green burial practices, (d) collected and donated laptop computers for public students with no access to the technology during the COVID pandemic, and (e) designed materials about combatting misinformation for students on campus and in the community (Honor Society, 2021).

Utilizing experiential learning can have a positive impact on the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors. Fostering personal and professional change among chapter sponsors via the online collaborative learning project training can have a ripple effect. Each chapter sponsor may coach dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of students to develop, implement, and reflect upon annual collaborative learning projects throughout their tenure as volunteers with the Honor Society. Working on projects can change students personally and professionally through development of academic and leadership skills such as identifying academic sources, developing measurable goals, and working in teams. Students' work on collaborative learning projects can, in turn, effect positive change at their community colleges and in their

communities through development of in-depth, action-oriented solutions to college and community problems identified through academic investigation and supported through development of relationships with college and community collaborators.

Revisions to the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module can help the Honor Society achieve its goal of providing substantive professional development to chapter sponsors. The 14 chapter sponsors represented community college faculty and staff from 12 states. Their geographic diversity, while not inclusive of all the states and sovereign nations served by the Honor Society, offered the possibility of varied opinions about what works well and what might be improved about the online collaborative learning project training. Conversely, the 14 chapter sponsors represented .0046 percent of all Honor Society chapter sponsors. Onweugbuzie and Collins (2017) indicated that a sample of 12 participants will provide the minimum necessary saturation and information redundancy in qualitative research.

The online collaborative learning project training has been completed by 672 chapter sponsors, but the Honor Society works with approximately 3,000 chapter sponsors in 10 nations. Understanding why the majority of chapter sponsors have not completed the online collaborative learning project and finding ways to engage the more than 2,300 chapter sponsors who have not completed training may be a next step in evaluating the training.

Conclusion

A formative program evaluation was used for this study to determine what worked well and what could be improved regarding the Honor Society's online, self-paced collaborative learning project module for chapter sponsors. The collaborative

learning project was designed to build community college students' academic and leadership skills. Honor Society chapters provide opportunities for students to engage in intentional service that makes a positive difference in students' communities. Training chapter sponsors to coach students through the collaborative learning project process can create positive change in students' lives through skills development and positive social change in communities throughout the 10 nations' community colleges with Honor Society chapters (Honor Society, 2022). Utilizing recommendations included in the evaluation report can help Honor Society staff strengthen the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

In this section I addressed the project's strengths and limitations, scholarship, project development and evaluation, leadership, and change. I have considered myself as a scholar and practitioner, and I have described this project's implications for social change. Developing and implementing this formative program evaluation has been at times an arduous, but ultimately a rewarding, journey. I am committed to lifelong learning and to connecting academic investigation with practical applications of research to effect positive social change.

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Appendix A: The Project

Evaluation of a Collaborative Learning Program Training for Honor Society Chapter Sponsors

Susan Edwards



Executive Summary

The growth of online learning has expanded in the past 20 years in higher education (Borup & Evmenova, 2019). Advances in online learning have included increased opportunities for the design and delivery of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff (Bragg et al., 2021). The Honor Society was an early adapter of online learning to provide professional development for its chapter sponsors when the organization placed its collaborative learning project training in Moodle. The Moodle platform allowed chapter sponsors from 10 nations to access the training. The problem addressed in this study is that the Honor Society's collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors has not been evaluated since the online training was developed in 2011.

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings and recommendations of a formative program evaluation conducted as a doctoral project of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved. Informed by Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle, the questions asked in semistructured interviews of chapter sponsors who had completed the training for this qualitative study were focused on (a) reasons chapter sponsors chose to participating in the training, (b) skills learned as a result of the training, (c) effectiveness of online learning tools, (d) views of experiential learning, and (e) areas of the training that could be improved in terms of quality, relevance, and usefulness. Interview questions for Honor Society staff who developed and work with the online collaborative learning project training were focused on (a) reasons the Honor Society

developed the training; (b) promotion of the training to Honor Society chapter sponsors; (c) skills learned as a result of the training; (d) effectiveness of online learning tools and materials; (e) views on experiential learning; and (f) areas of training that could be improved in terms of quality, relevance, and usefulness.

Three shared themes emerged during the analysis of interview data from both Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors: (a) **on-demand access from anywhere**, (b) **strong content**, and (c) **ideas for improvement of content including connection with Kolb's experiential learning cycle**. These findings, along with research and best practices discussed in the related literature led to the following recommendations about ways to improve the Honor Society's online, self-paced collaborative learning training for chapter sponsors:

- Update course content with
 - short videos
 - timelines
 - content on how to coach and motivate students
 - handouts
 - feedback via assessments
- Provide dedicated time for Honor Society staff to revise and update the training.

The Problem

The problem addressed by this evaluation report is that the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors has not been formally evaluated since its inception.

The Honor Society's chapter sponsors coach students to develop annual collaborative learning projects and serve at the forefront of increased opportunities for student engagement and support at community colleges. Chapter sponsors' work with students on collaborative learning projects connects with Community College Survey of Student Success (CCSSE) (The University of Texas, 2021) benchmarks of effective community college educational practice:

- Active and collaborative learning,
- Opportunities for student effort,
- Academic challenge,
- Student-faculty interaction, and
- Support for learners beyond the classroom.

Robust professional development training for chapter sponsors has an impact on not just their success, but also on the success of community college students who they coach. Involvement in the development, implementation, and reflection upon a collaborative learning project provides students opportunities to engage in all of the CCSSE benchmarks for community college student success.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Nationwide, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2020):

- 29% of community college students report that their parents did not attend college.
- 64% of community college students hold jobs while attending classes.
- 59% of community college students receive financial aid.

"Community colleges, like their students, face challenges" (Honor Society, 2022a, p. 3.)

Data from the Honor Society (2022a) showed that students engaged with the Honor Society have a **91% success rate** in terms of graduation compared to a graduation rate of 27.6% for community college

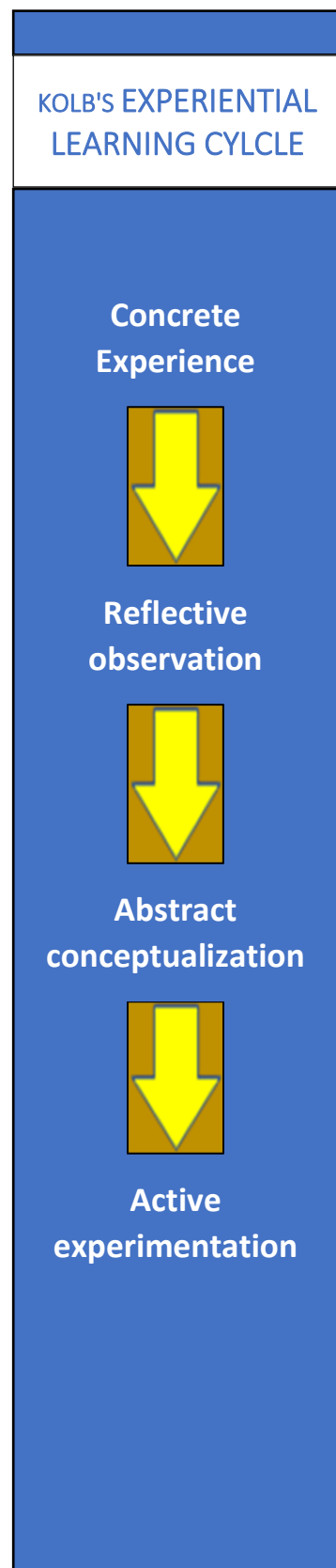
Recent research on professional development opportunities for faculty and staff focused on online learning as a way to extend learning beyond boundaries of traditional classrooms. Online training should incorporate clear instructions and expectations for working through curriculum. Activities and assessments should take varied learning styles into account. Online training should also be flexible enough to change and grow over time as developers incorporate up-to-date best practices (The National Education Association, n.d).

Training, such as that developed for Honor Society chapter sponsors, can help organizations retain experience and knowledge, share knowledge through mentoring, and produce new knowledge. Technology is a tool for professional development that allows organizations to help faculty members advance their content knowledge and skills. Online learning can help people to expand their ability to analyze, to use their imagination, to think critically, to raise their self-awareness, and to work with intention. Online professional development can also bridge formal and informal learning. Training should employ presentations, opportunities for participants to chat, and videos, all of which can allow faculty to grow as learners and teachers (Altinay & Altinary, 2016; An, 2021; Berg, 2020; Cochrane, 2015; Guilbaud, et al., 2021; Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2018; Lara-Alecio et al., 2021; Leonard, 2016; Philipsen et al., 2019; Sözügün et al., 2018; Sun & Chen, 2016; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle informed the study and the recommendations presented in this paper. This conceptual framework was developed by American psychologist David A. Kolb in the 1980s (Babakr et al., 2019). Kolb identified four stages of his learning cycle. Learners move through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Experiential learning can bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle is grounded in the experiential works of Dewey (Dewey, 2007; Dewey, 2021) and Piaget (1962). Kolb and Kolb (2017) added William James (1988), Kurt Lewin (2013), Carl Rogers (2012), Carl Jung (1976), Lev Vygotsky (1978), Paulo Friere (2018), and Parker Follett (2018) as foundational scholars of experiential learning. Experiential learning transforms knowledge through experience and works in the classroom and beyond the classroom through cocurricular activities (Brickner & Etter, 2008; McCarthy, 2016).



Experiential learning builds social skills, work ethic, and practical expertise all of which are valuable tools for teachers and learners (Baker & Robinson, 2016). Kolb's experiential learning cycle relates to this study, because the training that was examined is steeped in experiential learning for both Honor Society chapter sponsors and the students they coach through the process. Kolb and Kolb (2017) concluded that experiential learning builds a unique relationship between teachers, and in the case of this study, chapter sponsors, and students.

Purpose and Design

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the online collaborative learning project training module from its stakeholders' perspectives to determine what is working as planned and what might be improved. A formative program evaluation was used. Formative program evaluations allow for in-depth looks at context, processes, and interactions afforded by qualitative data (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). This qualitative approach to a formative program evaluation allowed me to determine at the organizational level how the Honor Society's online collaborative learning process training could be more effective in preparing chapter sponsors to coach students in the organization's collaborative learning project process in the estimation of staff and chapter sponsors who had completed the training and participated in this study. The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the perceptions of trainees about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping

them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects?

2. What are the perceptions of Honor Society staff about the effectiveness of the online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors in helping them coach community college students through development and implementation of collaborative learning projects?

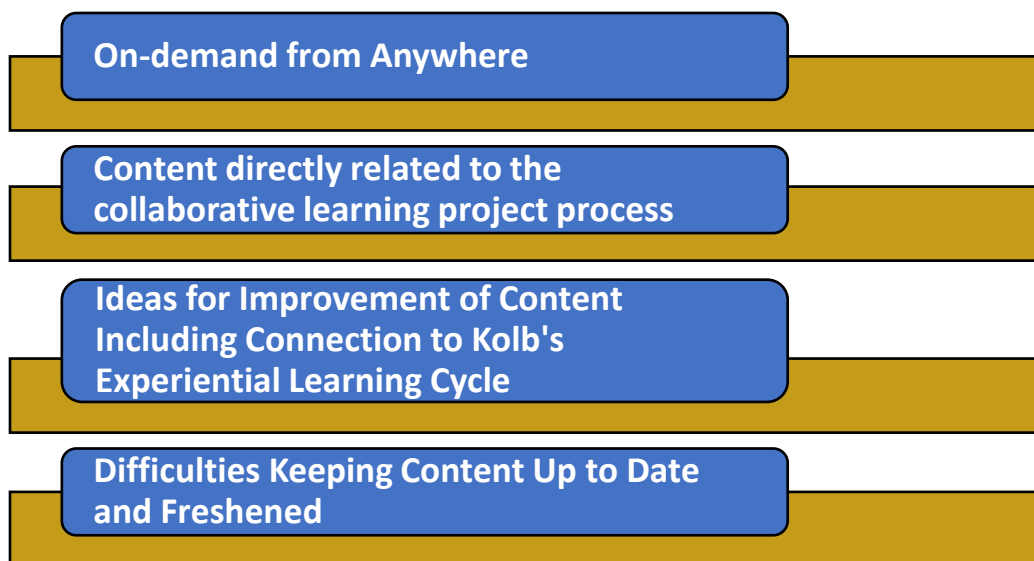
I conducted 17 semistructured one-on-one interviews via Zoom with three Honor Society staff members who developed and work with the online collaborative learning project training and 14 Honor Society chapter sponsors who had completed the training. A convenience sampling design was most consistent with the purpose of this study. The inclusion criteria for selecting participants were defined as Honor Society chapter sponsors who have completed the online, self-paced collaborative learning project and up to three Honor Society staff members who work with the online, self-paced collaborative learning project training. A convenience sample is one in which participants meet the criteria for the study and sampling is convenient (Emerson, 2021; Jager et al., 2017). In a convenience sample, participants meet study criteria and are available to participate (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

All participants signed via email an informed consent document prior to participating in the study. The consent form was used to allow potential study participants to opt in or out of participating. The consent form explained the background of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, the confidentiality of information related to the study, and the contact information for the researcher and for Walden University's Research Participant Advocate should participants have questions or decide to opt out of

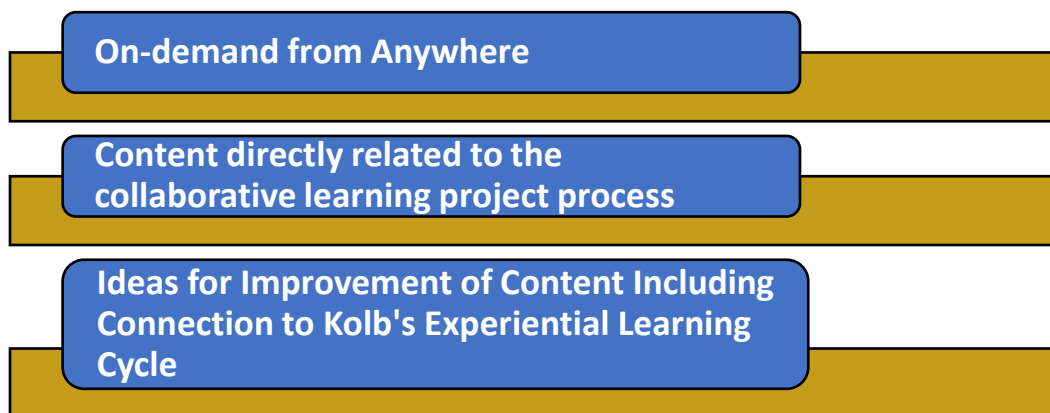
participating. Walden University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) representative granted approval for the study.

Results

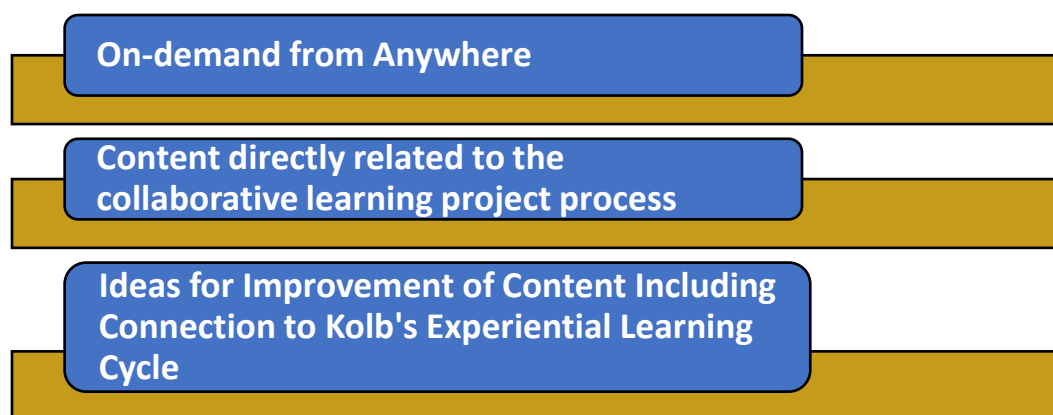
I utilized Otter.ai artificial intelligence program to transcribe interviews verbatim. Interviews were analyzed and coded manually and by NVivo. The codes were then grouped to develop categories and themes using the study's two research questions to inform the entire process. The repeated coding process generated four themes from interviews with Honor Society staff:



The repeated coding process generated three themes from interviews with Honor Society chapter sponsors:



Three of the generated themes were shared by Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors:



On-Demand from Anywhere

The first shared theme of on-demand from anywhere was directly connected to both research questions about what worked well about the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors. Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors agreed that developing the training as one that people could use on-demand using electronic devices made the resource accessible and desirable. Participants described how easy it was to access the training 24/7 from their offices, from home, or from their smart phones.

"We were able to self-pace. I was able to have the program running on multiple monitors. If somebody came in and had a question, all I had to do was pause it. I could do what I had to do and come back. That was really convenient."

One participant explained how accessing the training via technology allowed them to utilize more than one computer monitor to move back and forth between materials. Several participants mentioned that the online training gave them the ability to stop when they were interrupted and return to the training without missing anything. Moving from in-person to online training expanded its reach. Having the training online meant that chapter sponsors who could not travel to in-person events could benefit and learn about the collaborative learning project and how to coach students through the process. The emergence of this theme supports the conclusion of Azami and Ibrahim (2019) who found that learners preferred on-demand access to courses.

Content Directly Related to the Collaborative Learning Project Process

A second shared theme was the strong content directly related to the collaborative learning project process. Honor Society staff believed the training provided detailed information about the collaborative learning project and the process through which chapter sponsors could coach students. Chapter sponsors identified the training as “a great professional development opportunity,” “easy to follow,” and “thorough, well rounded and well thought out.” Participants noted that the training helped them help their students develop and hone critical thinking skills, soft skills, and research skills.

One participant noted that they learned something new every day from the training. Another participant explained that they did not know much about research, but the training helped them learn about how to identify and analyze academic sources and

how to develop research conclusions. For them, there was a great deal of detailed information that was helpful in determining the elements of the collaborative learning project as well as how to convey the information to students.

"The content of the course really gives you a blueprint that can help chapter sponsors understand how to accomplish a collaborative learning project."

In addition to learning about the Honor Society's collaborative learning project from the training, chapter sponsors expressed that the training helped them to understand the process so that they could coach their students to develop, implement, and reflect upon an annual collaborative learning project. These findings are consistent with the literature on active and experiential learning as well as online learning (Cameron, 2017; Cheng et al., 2016; Hamilton, 2019; Noh & Yusuf, 2018).

Ideas for Improvement of Content Including Connection to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

The third shared theme that emerged from interviews with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors was ideas for improvement of content including connection to Kolb's experiential learning cycle. All participants shared detailed thoughts about ways the online collaborative learning project training could be improved. The ideas ranged from focus on available online resources that chapter sponsors could access to help them coach students to including experiential learning exercises that chapter sponsors would use during the training and then utilize when coaching their students.

Regularly updating the videos used throughout the training was mentioned by all participants. They were interested in learning about the collaborative learning project

from sponsors whose chapters had won awards at the regional and international levels of the Honor Society. One participant mentioned also wanting to hear from chapter sponsors whose students' projects had challenges and to hear how they overcame the challenges or what they learned from not being about to overcome them. With one exception, all Honor Society headquarters staff and chapter sponsor participants urged that videos be kept short. The exception was a participant who believed some of the topics were too complex to be explained in short videos.

"We struggle with motivation. A short video on how to motivate students to participate would be helpful. So would a video about how to weed out the sensationalism, the fake news. How do you really dig through all of the minutiae of sources?"

Chapter sponsors, even those who had successfully coached students through a collaborative learning project, desired sample timelines. Community colleges operate on varied schedules, so participants requested timelines that fit different academic schedules. Participants requested that the timelines be inclusive of all the steps a chapter needed to complete in order to finish an annual collaborative learning project. This request fits with the idea that practitioners often overlook applied aspects of curriculum development (Epley, 2019).

Participants desired specific content about how to motivate and coach their students. Given that community college students typically have family and work obligations in addition to their classwork, it can be difficult to motivate them to participate in cocurricular activities. This request fits with the assumption behind the faculty professional development in that it will improve performance and, as a result, will

increase student success which is the ultimate desired outcome for colleges (Dean, 2019; Graham, 2017; Hemphill, 2015; Johnson 2018; Malmia et al., 2019).

Participants had two additional recommendations for changes to the online collaborative learning project training. They requested handouts they can download for their own use and to share with students. Additionally, participants desired experiential learning exercises that provide opportunities for feedback. They requested low stakes assessments throughout the training as well as some synchronous elements. Using tools such as Zoom and live chats would give chapter sponsors opportunities to interact with and ask questions of Honor Society staff and fellow chapter sponsors who are also working through the online collaborative learning project training.

Difficulties Keeping Content Up to Date and Freshened

One theme that developed only for Honor Society staff was difficulties keeping content up to date and freshened. One of the realities faced by Honor Society staff is the small size of the organization's staff. Staff participants commented on the difficulty of making timely revisions to the training curriculum.

" We move so fast sometimes. We don't always have time to reflect on what we've developed "

Support from the Honor Society headquarters would be valuable in having time to make revisions to the online training. Having time, one participant noted, "to think critically about the learning that we've already put out there and what could happen" would be valuable in considering ways to consistently review and revise the online collaborative

learning project training. Given time and focus on the project, staff members perceived they could improve the online collaborative learning project training for chapter sponsors.

Recommendations

I developed recommendations for Honor Society leaders based on evaluation results, the conceptual framework of Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle, and current literature. The Honor Society's collaborative learning project mirrors Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Honor Society, 2022). The training for chapter sponsors incorporates elements of experiential learning and connects concrete experience, some reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and recommended active experimentation (Kolb, 2014). While all study participants agreed the training content was strong, there is room for improvement to the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

Recommendations for improving the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors include:

1 - Update Videos

2 - Create Timelines

3 - Develop Content on How to Coach and How to Motivate Students

Recommendation 1

Update videos

Creating videos for online curriculum is one way to engage learners. Short videos of 30 seconds to two minutes in length can capture learners' attention and set the tone for related training materials that reinforce and add to the subjects of the videos. Short videos can also serve as pedagogical content, engagement, and learner support activities (Walsh et al., 2021). Subjects for videos suggested by study participants include:

- setting research, action, and collaboration objectives
- brainstorming topics
- developing a research question
- identifying and analyzing academic resources
- developing research conclusions
- cultivating college and community collaborators that can help strengthen a project
- communicating with college and community collaborators
- journaling for the collaborative learning project
- moving from research to action
- motivating members
- coaching techniques for working with students
- writing and editing strong collaborative learning project award entries

Chapter sponsor participants were particularly interested in videos that feature fellow chapter sponsors whose chapters have developed, implemented, and reflected upon successful collaborative learning projects in the last three years. Creating these videos

will require development time on the part of Honor Society staff and collaboration between staff and chapter sponsors who are willing and able to record videos.

To support updated videos, participants perceived that including handouts related to the material covered in the videos in the training would enhance their learning and provide opportunities for reinforcement for what they learn during the training. Another recommended strategy that could reinforce what chapter sponsors are learning from the videos would be to employ throughout the training short assessments with feedback built into them. The updated videos combined with handouts and brief assessments would address chapter sponsor participants' perceptions about ways the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training can be improved.

Recommendation 2

Create Timelines

All chapter sponsor participants perceived that the Honor Society's online collaborative learning project training needed sample timelines. They were particularly interested in how chapters could successfully complete collaborative learning projects if they began in January each year, in the spring, in the summer, or in the fall. Since the Honor Society requires chapters to complete projects within a calendar year, and community colleges operate with different academic calendars, chapter sponsors thought it would help to have varied timelines and that having varied timelines with detailed information about how to complete a collaborative learning project within each of the sample time frames would encourage chapters who do not currently participate in the collaborative learning project to try to develop and implement one.

Chapter sponsors interviewed also thought the timelines would be useful to them as they worked with students. They could print and share the timelines so that chapter teams would be working together with accurate and collectively understood project benchmarks. Epley (2019), while acknowledging that curricula are developed with theory in mind, encouraged developers to create practical tools as they create course content.

Recommendation 3

Create content on how to coach and how to motivate students

Participants acknowledged that ideas about coaching and motivating students were implicitly included in the online collaborative learning project curriculum. Chapter sponsor participants desired specific information about how to coach and how to motivate students to participate and excel in collaborative learning projects was needed to improve the training. In addition to specific information about how to coach, participants perceived that content explaining why coaching students is important and when it is appropriate to coach students through the collaborative learning project.

Motivating members to participate in collaborative learning projects has been difficult for some chapter sponsor study participants. They would like specific motivation strategies used by fellow chapter sponsors and those recommended in the literature (Ali et al., 2018; Barkley, 2011; Bond & Bedenlier, 2019; Carlson, 2020; Claro et al., 2016; Hakro & Mathew, 2020; Peng et al., 2019). The literature shows that community college students who (a) interact with faculty in and beyond the classroom, (b) participate in active and collaborative learning activities, (c) engage in pursuits that provide them with opportunities for academic challenge and student effort, and (d) are supported beyond the

classroom have a greater chance to succeed in college than those who do not get involved (McClenney et al., 2021; The University of Texas, 2021).

Concluding Thoughts

To make the recommended changes gleaned from interviews for this study with Honor Society staff and chapter sponsors, staff will need two things: (a) updated technology, particularly a recent update of the Moodle learning management system; and (b) time to make changes to the training. Honor Society staff members who work with the online collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors are interested and engaged in wanting to make the training as relevant and useful as possible for chapter sponsors. Chapter sponsor participants mirrored Honor Society staff members' enthusiasm for the organization and the online training. Implementing the recommendations in this paper could strengthen the Honor Society's online self-paced collaborative learning project training module for chapter sponsors.

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