1-1-2008

Understanding and application of Learning College concepts among community college support staff employees

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2008

ABSTRACT

Understanding and Application of Learning College Concepts
Among Community College Support Staff Employees

by

Laura E. Weidner

M.A., Johns Hopkins University, 1979
B.S., Frostburg State University, 1973

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education
Community College Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Research on the Learning College indicates that everyone in the college must support learning. There have not been previous studies that centered on whether or not support staff, a major constituency group in community colleges, participates in supporting learning. This adapted phenomenological study examined staff in a Learning College to determine their understanding and application of the Learning College concept. Three research questions addressed how these employees understand the concept, perceive their roles, and apply Learning College principles. The study was conducted in a theoretical framework combining Learning College, change, and organizational culture theories. Data were collected from a purposive sample of full time employees classified by the human resources department as support staff using pre-screening questionnaires and in-depth interviews that were then coded and analyzed using a typological methodology. Themes identified emphasized learning, the availability of lifelong learning, and the importance of every employee. Support staff actions reflected some principles of Learning College theory, and though respondents understood their role in student success, they did not see this role as supporting learning. The study showed that staff do not fully understand the Learning College concept and believe that staff development would be useful in helping them support learning. With professional development, staff may gain greater understanding about supporting learning. The findings have the potential for impacting social change by: (a) helping support staff feel more valued, and, therefore, likely to perform more effectively; and (b) increasing staff understanding of student learning may give greater meaning to their work. Recommendations encourage college leaders to tap into the support staff as a resource.

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Dedication

To my father and mother, Jack and Louise Gentry,

in appreciation for a lifetime of encouragement and inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals who helped me throughout my doctoral studies:

- My husband, Dan, who demonstrated interminable patience and willingness to do whatever was necessary behind the scenes so I would succeed.

- My children, Allison and Jeff, who believed their mother could do anything.

- My mentor and persistent cheerleader, Dr. Faith Harland-White, who convinced me I could do this, nudged me along the way, and never let me stop working, or believing in myself, no matter what.

- My many friends and colleagues, both professional and personal, whose abiding friendship and support never let me lose sight of the end goal.

- My dissertation committee: Dr. Terry O'Banion, who inspired me, and kept me going from the beginning and throughout the process; Dr. Laura Lynn, who convinced me I really could conduct qualitative research and challenged me to think differently; and Dr. Larry Warford, who offered quiet but firm direction and encouragement when I needed it.

- Dr. Martha Smith and Dr. Andrew Meyer, along with the other leaders and employees of Anne Arundel Community College, who supported my research at their wonderful institution.

- Finally, everyone who stood by me, overlooked and ignored, while I pursued this personal goal. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, higher education in America is at a crossroads. Leaders and policy-makers are in constant debate about whether to continue providing traditional postsecondary education or to rethink the role of postsecondary education in a constantly changing global society. Some 4-year colleges hold firm to their traditional primary role of providing a liberal arts curriculum and producing well-rounded citizens. Most universities hold firm to their commitment to research. Both 4-year colleges and universities add new programs and degrees, attempting to provide better career preparation for their graduates. What postsecondary education needs, though, is not different programs, but a different approach or a different way of thinking about what it does and how it does what it does. Community colleges are generally considered to demonstrate greater institutional flexibility and a willingness to implement change than are universities and 4-year colleges and are thus better poised to meet the changing needs of their communities (O'Banion, 1997; Vaughan, 2000). Perhaps, then, the greatest opportunity for addressing the needs of this changing global society lies with America's community colleges.

A Changing Institutional Mission and Role

The beginnings of the mission concept behind community colleges in the United States reach back far beyond the formation of the first junior college, Joliet Junior College, in 1901, perhaps as far back as Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson (Boone, 1997). According to Boone, both of these early American leaders advocated publicly-

supported education for large numbers of the population, with Jefferson even supporting the value of practical as well as liberal arts education. This belief became one of the cornerstone tenets of the community college mission as it has developed throughout the 20th century.

According to Deegan, Tillery, and Associates (1985), American community colleges have undergone four generations of evolutionary development since their beginnings in 1901, starting as an extension of high school and changing by the 1930s to be more collegiate, with a focus on the first two years of baccalaureate programs. Shortly after the Truman Commission Report in the late 1940s, these institutions became more connected to their communities, providing vocational and job training and offering open access to education for everyone, particularly the large numbers of World War II veterans. This period of the community college development, the 1950s and 1960s, was a time of tremendous growth, not only in numbers of colleges, but also in size of existing colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2002; Deegan, Tillery, & Associates; Dougherty, 1994; Vaughan, 2000). Deegan, Tillery, and Associates' fourth generation encompassed the 1970s through most of the 1980s and represented the rise of the comprehensive community college, an institution with a mixed mission and diverse audiences. Dougherty (1994) identified a fifth generation underway for community colleges as the 20th century closed. In this period, community colleges found themselves at a crossroads, challenged to meet the needs of numerous populations while attempting to remain true to their missions.

Throughout the growth and development of community colleges, the democratic ideal of educational access for the entire population remained at the core of their mission. However, in recent years, the issues community colleges must face have continued to increase and to challenge that core mission of the community college as an institution.

Challenges Facing Community Colleges in the 21st Century

Numerous challenges face higher education in the 21st century, and institutions and leaders no longer have the option of ignoring changes or working around them. One of the key challenges is the changing demographics of community college students. Increasing numbers of minority, older, and underprepared students are turning to community colleges to help them meet their goals (Boggs, 1998; Wilson, 2004). Traditional and conventional college programs and services may not be able to meet the diverse needs of these student populations, and adding programs and services for special populations increases costs and places additional burdens on the fiscal, human, and physical resources of the colleges.

In addition to these significant changes in student demographics, community colleges, along with much of American society, are facing massive numbers of retirements among faculty and staff, as baby boomers reach retirement age. Finding sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced individuals to fill vacant leadership positions is becoming increasingly difficult for colleges as they compete with each other for candidates from a limited pool (Gibson-Harman, Rodriquez, and Haworth, 2002). Both of these demographic changes challenge community college leaders to think and act in new ways.

Another challenge facing community colleges is the combined pressure of rising costs and decreasing public funds. Community colleges must find funding support and resources from new and innovative sources as public funds slowly but surely decline (Cohen & Brawer, 2002; Flynn, 1999; Gordon, 2003). Yet coupled with this decline is a reticence to raise tuition costs for students, an action that would significantly limit accessibility for many students. As a result, community colleges find themselves constantly seeking new revenue streams and ways to reduce expenditures.

There is little doubt that technology has exerted a tremendous influence on and in community colleges, creating other types of challenges. Since the early 1990s, the rapid infusion of technology into almost every aspect of society, including community colleges, has forced colleges to make decisions and institute changes around technological needs and capabilities (Boggs, 1998; Doucette, 1994; Flynn, 1999; Milliron & Prentice, 2005). Colleges struggle to keep instructional technology at levels comparable with business and industry so that students are adequately prepared for jobs. Additionally, keeping institutional technology up-to-date presents community colleges with continual demands on limited resources. Finally, maintaining internal technological needs and systems places further strain on these institutions.

Globalization has resulted in yet another set of challenges for community colleges, creating service areas that extend beyond local jurisdictions, forcing companies to seek graduates and employees with business acumen in multiple languages and cultures, increasing numbers of international and non-English-speaking students, and multiplying demands for technology-enhanced learning (Friedman, 2005; Levin, 2001).

Where a community college once focused solely on the needs of its local community, most institutions no longer have that option. In many cases, the local community is bringing its global needs to the community college, searching for help.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there are numerous calls for increased accountability in higher education (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Secretary of Education's Commission, 2006; Wingspread Group, 1993). These reports and commissions challenge colleges to define and measure student learning and student success in clear and measurable terms. Employers seek workers with demonstrable skills, not just a high grade point average in their college classes. Students expect to have skills they can immediately apply in jobs. Government and other funding sources expect to see measurable returns on their investment in education. Indeed, as Barr (1993) noted, colleges need to "take responsibility for learning and judge their success not on the quality of instruction but on the quality of learning; on their ability to produce ever greater and more sophisticated student learning and educational success" (p. 3).

Finding innovative and effective means of addressing these numerous challenges has placed the 21st century community college in a precarious position. They must decide how to handle these challenges. For years, many have taken a piecemeal approach, adding or deleting a program, seeking a few new positions, or investing in a new technology only to find the situation demanding a more comprehensive approach (Barr & Fear, 2005; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; O'Banion, 1997). As a result, many institutions

have begun to embrace the concept of the Learning College as a comprehensive

institutional approach in response to these diverse challenges.

The Learning College as a Response

O'Banion (1997) first defined the term *Learning College* as an institution which

"places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners anyway,

anyplace, anytime" (p. 47). In other words, a Learning College focuses on learning and

learning outcomes and the most effective ways to ensure that every student learns. The

Learning College was originally based on six key principles identified by O'Banion:

> 1. The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.
> 2. The learning college engages learners as full partners in the learning
> process, with learners assuming primary responsibility for their own
> choices.
> 3. The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as
> possible.
> 4. The learning college assists learners to form and participate in
> collaborative learning activities.
> 5. The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the
> needs of the learners.
> 6. The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when
> improved and expanded learning can be documented for learners. (p. 47)

Additionally, Harvey-Smith (2005) created, and O'Banion endorsed, a seventh Learning

College principle that calls for the development of an "organizational culture that is open

and responsive to change and learning" (p. xvi).

Taken as a whole, these principles clearly demonstrate the need for

comprehensive changes in traditional community college approaches and likewise call for

institution-wide involvement in focusing on learning. College leadership, beginning with

the president or provost, and including administrators in all areas, must rethink college

policies, processes, and practices to ensure that student learning is kept at the forefront of everything, particularly the strategic vision and mission of the institution. Faculty and instructional staff must find ways to facilitate learning and to provide new learning experiences for students, beyond the lecture and traditional classroom. Student services personnel need to able to help students find and engage in the most appropriate learning experiences for their individual needs. Students must learn to take responsibility for their own learning by seeking out and actively engaging in learning experiences that support their goals and plans. College staff members throughout the institution need to see their jobs as an important part of student learning.

Indeed, every constituency group at a Learning College must play an active role in supporting and enhancing student learning (Flynn, 2000; Harvey-Smith, 2005; O'Banion, 1997). Much has been written to provide guidance, support, and direction for faculty and administrators in understanding and applying Learning College concepts in their roles. However, a key constituency group in the community college, support staff employees, remains virtually unnoticed by the leaders and thinkers in this transformation. Support staff, often one of the largest employee groups, frequently is the first point of contact for a student in the community college. There is little indication of how well, if at all, they understand and apply the concepts of supporting and enhancing student learning in their daily work. As the literature review in chapter 2 demonstrates, there is little published research on this critical employee group's importance and role in the Learning College.

This study focused on the support staff constituency and its role in the Learning College. As the frontline workers in a community college, support staff employees play a critical role, and community college leaders need to understand the members of this group and their frequently significant contributions to student learning. Support staff themselves also need to realize the importance of their role in the college with regard to student learning. In order to help both support staff members and community college leaders deal with these issues, this study offered a better understanding of the experience of support staff employees in a Learning College. Within the context of a large Learning College, the researcher investigated the phenomenon of how support staff employees perceive their role in supporting and enhancing learning. Also under examination was how important concepts and changes such as the Learning College, are communicated to the support staff constituency.

Problem Statement

This study was based on the premise that a Learning College focuses its resources on learning, specifically supporting and enhancing student learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Ewell, 1997; I. McPhail, 2005; O'Banion, 1997). This means that the strategic planning, fiscal decisions, staffing, and virtually all other decisions the institution makes must keep learning at the core. The literature also indicates that the involvement of all stakeholders is integral to the success of a Learning College in meeting its goal of supporting and enhancing student learning (Ewell; Flynn, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2005; O'Banion). Stakeholders include, of course, the faculty and students themselves. However, in order for an institution to maximize its effectiveness in producing learning, the president and

senior leaders, trustees, administrators, student services professionals, and every employee of the college must understand and actively participate in supporting and enhancing learning. The study will examine the support staff experience and role to determine whether the members of this specific group understand and participate in supporting student learning.

As the literature review in chapter 2 clearly shows, much has been written to demonstrate the importance and role of stakeholders in the Learning College, with one notable exception. Little research has been published on the role of the support staff employees in supporting and enhancing learning in a Learning College. However, these employees play a critical role in virtually every aspect of a community college's life, often on the front lines, though many times behind the scenes. Support staff members included in this study are (a) instructional department support, such as program and lab assistants; (b) library, testing, bookstore, and dining services employees; (c) facilities, grounds, maintenance, and plant workers; (d) business office, accounting, mail, printing, procurement, human resources, and other behind the scenes employees; (e) technical support, including media services, distance learning, and infrastructure support staff; (f) student services, admissions, advising, and student life staff; or (g) administrative assistants, secretaries, and receptionists.

Therefore, this study examined specifically how support staff employees in a Learning College understand their role in supporting and enhancing learning and how well they apply the concepts of a Learning College in their day-to-day work.

Nature of the Study

This study was conducted in the qualitative paradigm following the phenomenological tradition. This methodology was selected based on Moustakas (1994), who described the goal of phenomenological research:

> to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essences or structures of the experience. (p. 13)

To that end, the researcher investigated the experiences of a group of support staff employees at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland. By examining their roles and duties in the community college, the researcher identified specific ways that support staff employees facilitate, support, and enhance student learning. The researcher's role was to examine what support staff employees at Anne Arundel Community College know and understand about the concept of a Learning College, in the context of how the institution actually transformed itself into a Learning College.

This study included an investigation of how the leadership communicated with employees, particularly support staff, during this transformation. Of particular interest was whether support staff employees perceive their role and work as supporting and enhancing learning, regardless of their understanding of the terminology of the Learning College. The study closely examined employee perceptions to identify their application of key Learning College concepts and principles in their work.

The data collection instruments and methods used in this study consisted of a questionnaire developed by the researcher, reviewed by experts and research

professionals, and adapted for the Zoomerang® electronic survey software. The researcher also developed the interview questions for in-depth, one-on-one interviews with selected questionnaire participants. Interview participants were selected from questionnaire respondents based on their responses to specific questions. These criteria are fully explained in chapter 3.

The data analysis followed phenomenological methods as outlined by Moustakas (1994) and Hatch (2002). Data from both the questionnaire and the interviews were carefully reviewed, analyzed, and coded, with patterns and themes identified across the data. From these patterns and themes, the researcher constructed comprehensive descriptions of the experiences of the support staff at a Learning College.

Complete descriptions of the study, its methods, and data analysis are included in chapter 3.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are support staff employees' understandings of the concepts and principles of a Learning College in a large mid-Atlantic community college that is well-known nationally as a Learning College and includes learning centeredness in its vision, mission, and philosophy?

2. How do these support staff employees perceive their roles and actions as supporting and enhancing student learning in a Learning College?

3. Which, if any, aspects of a Learning College do these support staff employees apply in their daily work in a community college?

These research questions and how the study addressed each one are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was investigate how support staff employees in a Learning College understand their roles in facilitating student learning and the extent to which they exhibit attitudes and behaviors in their work that demonstrate how they participate in supporting and enhancing student learning. In investigating and describing how support staff employees perceive their own roles in supporting and enhancing student learning, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on learning-centeredness, Learning Colleges, and the future success of community colleges in America. Additionally, the study investigated and reported the experiences of this frequently overlooked community college constituency group to help community college leaders better understand the importance of support staff roles in all aspects of change, specifically in major educational reform, such as that of learning centeredness taking place in community colleges today. Outcomes will be addressed in detail in the following section on the significance of this study.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study have the potential to impact community colleges as institutions, as well as the individual employees within the institutions, due to its focus on how a single constituency understands and applies its role and applies in fulfilling the college's mission. Since the literature indicated a gap in studies of support staff in the

Learning College, this study also adds to the growing body of knowledge on the Learning

College movement.

A Literature Gap

This study addressed the lack of published research and studies of support staff

employees' roles in a Learning College, as well as their understanding and application of

Learning College concepts in their daily work. As the literature review in chapter 2

clearly demonstrates, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding this employee

group and its importance in a Learning College.

Professional Application

The institution selected for this study was Anne Arundel Community College

(AACC), in Arnold, Maryland. Cohen and Brawer's (2002) description of typical

community college visions, missions, student populations, faculty characteristics, and

programming are reflected at Anne Arundel Community College. Since an examination

of the support staff of this institution may be reflective of the support staff in many other

colleges, the findings from this research have implications beyond one college.

Anne Arundel Community College clearly reflects the concepts and principles of

the Learning College theory in its vision, mission, and publications. Both in public

sessions and in written materials, administration and faculty communicate the concept

that learning is at the center of the institution, and that identifying and measuring learning

outcomes are principal activities of the institution. This widespread dissemination

suggested that all college employees would be knowledgeable about these concepts.

Since this widespread understanding is not necessarily true, as demonstrated by this

study, it has implications for other community colleges which profess to place learning

first and see themselves as Learning Colleges.

Social Change

This study contributes to social change by beginning to provide research into an

employee group that is often overlooked by leadership when major change initiatives are

conceived, planned, and implemented. This study can positively influence not only the

fact of change and its magnitude, but also how change is implemented in community

colleges and other organizations. This study gives voice to an often-neglected group, one

that plays a critical role in every community college in America.

Conceptual Framework

Three major conceptual frameworks formed the basis of this study. The first

included the concept of organizational culture, particularly the importance of an inclusive

culture in which all stakeholders are involved and have opportunities to express their

points of view (Ayers, 2005; Brown, 1999; Kezar & Eckel, 2000; Smart & Hamm, 1993).

The second conceptual framework was that of implementing change and change

processes within a system or institution, particularly a community college (Cain, 1999;

Eddy, 2003; Levin, 1998a; Senge, 1990). A third component of the conceptual

framework, and perhaps the most important, was that of the Learning College as a

transformative idea that focuses on learning and produces student learning as a primary

outcome (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Barr & Fear, 2005; Flynn, 2005; C. McPhail, 2005;

O'Banion, 1997).

Organizational Culture Theory

Many definitions of organizational culture exist, but as Craig (2004) noted, most

include the assumptions, values, and beliefs that the members of the organization hold in

common. Organizational culture lies behind the written policies and procedures, beyond

meetings and pronouncements, and rarely is discussed. It is not that the culture is secret;

it is simply unspoken and invisible. Yet, it is pervasive and persistent. Gizir (2007), citing

studies by Dill (2000), Masland (2000), and Peterson and Spencer (2000), found that

organizational culture could affect almost every aspect of institutional activity including

"student life, faculty life, curriculum, administration, administrative and organizational

themes and processes such as leadership, decision making, motivation, job satisfaction,

effectiveness, and organizational communication" (p. 259). Employee and constituency

groups within a college are part of the organization's culture and must understand that

culture if they are to have an effective voice in institutional activity and change, even if

they do not fully accept the culture's components and values.

It is important to note that organizational culture does not describe a groupthink

or unanimous acceptance of the components of the culture. Ayers (2005) cited numerous

differences among various groups within the organization. Brown (1999) also found that

because group members also exist outside of a group, they bring different experiences,

backgrounds, and interpretations to the organization.

Organizational culture is a critical component in effecting institutional change

according to Kezar and Eckel (2000). They found that a college would benefit from a

careful examination and understanding of its institutional culture before undertaking any

major change initiatives. Kezar and Eckel noted, "the distinct nature of the campus culture can not [sic] be overlooked in trying to understand how change processes unfold and the strategies institutional leaders should emphasize" (p. 28).

Change Theory

As with organizational culture, there are numerous change theories in the literature. For the framework of this study, however, the researcher relied on change theories as they are applied in community colleges. Throughout the past 20 years, many community colleges have adopted, with mixed success, portions or all of various change philosophies, including Senge's (1990) learning organization, Total Quality Management (Clauson, 1998), among others (Craig, 2004; Eddy, 2006; Kezar & Eckel, 2000; Levin, 1998b, 2001).

These change efforts in the community college share several aspects including a common vision, stakeholder involvement, strategic planning, effective communication, resource commitment, and leadership roles. These commonalities form the basis of this portion of the conceptual framework.

Learning College Theory

The theory of focusing on learning rather than instruction in institutions of higher education developed during the late 20th century when earlier education reforms failed to bring about substantive changes (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1995; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; O'Banion, 1997). Through numerous iterations and interpretations of the theories, as well as both successful and unsuccessful implementations at individual colleges, the concept of placing learning first

eventually formed the basis for a major reform movement in higher education, the

Learning College movement. The clearest definition of Learning College theory, "The

learning college places learning first and emphasizes educational experiences for learners

anyway, anyplace, anytime" (O'Banion, 1995, p. 22).

At first glance, the Learning College concept seems to be self-evident—focus on

learning rather than teaching and provide learning experiences that meet students'

individual needs. Upon closer examination, the Learning College concept proposes a

completely different way of thinking about learning and how it occurs, how it is

measured, and how it is documented. It is not a matter of simply changing terminology in

college publications. The true Learning College integrates learning outcomes with

attention to individual learners and their needs, thus becoming both learning-centered and

learner-centered.

The concept is complex in its practical application, as many community colleges

have discovered in their attempts to implement the principles in their day-to-day

activities. There are four key elements essential to a successful Learning College: (1)

mission and vision change, (2) institution-wide involvement, (3) decision-making based

on enhancing learning, and (4) resource reallocation to support learning (Barr & Tagg,

1995; Boggs, 1995; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; McPhail, Heacock, & Linck, 2001;

Wilson, 2002). Though all of these elements are critical, this researcher focused on the

institution-wide involvement of all stakeholders as part of the conceptual framework for

this study. The concept of the Learning College as described by these and other writers

requires active participation and involvement of every stakeholder of the institution as a contributor to supporting and enhancing student learning.

By framing this study in Learning College theory and change theory, within the context of the importance of organizational culture and the full participation of all stakeholders, this researcher constructed a strong framework within which she examined (1) a specific constituency group, (2) whether major change is communicated effectively to its members, and (3) the importance of the constituency group's members in supporting and enhancing learning.

Operational Definitions

The following represents a compilation of operational definitions for terms used in this study.

Community College: a public or private postsecondary institution with a commitment to meeting the training and educational needs and interests of its local community by offering courses and training in credit and non-credit disciplines; community colleges generally have an open access policy and are sometimes known as technical or vocational colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2002; Vaughan, 2000).

Learning College: a college that places student learning at the core of its vision, mission, and values; makes its decisions based upon the impact of the decision on student learning; and provides learning opportunities and experiences for students in a time, place, and delivery method that effectively meet the student's needs. For the purposes of this study, only community colleges will be included in the definition of a Learning College.

Support Staff: the employees of a community college whose primary function is to support the work of the college through non-professional, non-teaching roles, sometimes referred to as classified staff or non-professional staff. Examples include secretarial, grounds keeping, maintenance, and clerical staff. Professional staff whose work is sometimes considered to be support, such as academic advisors, admissions counselors, or tutors, were not included in this definition or this study.

Learning Organizations: "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

Learner-Centered: any activity or organization that places the needs and interests of its students or learners at its core, making decisions and taking actions that support the needs of that learner; sometimes referred to as student-centered, client-centered, or customer-centered.

Learning-Centered: an activity or organization that places the learning acquired by its students or learners at its core, making decisions and taking actions that support and enhance learning; sometimes used in opposition to instruction-centered or teaching-centered.

Organizational Culture: "the prevailing values, expectations, and conventions within an organization or institution, often unspoken and persistent" (*Online Dictionary of Library and Information Services,* 2007).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

This study assumed that support staff employees in a Learning College play a critical role in institutional and student success, as they are often the first point of contact for students and often the individuals students turn to for answers and direction. This study also assumes that the role(s) support staff play have not been fully defined or appreciated, and that these participants honestly and accurately reported their own understandings and job-related activities.

A limitation of the study was that perhaps some employees were reluctant to complete a questionnaire or participate in an interview related to their work, despite assurances of complete anonymity. The primary distribution of the invitations, questionnaires, and other study information was through email to employees' college addresses. It was anticipated that this might have been a limitation for some individuals, so the researcher offered an alternative pen and paper questionnaire and correspondence to anyone who preferred this format. The pen and paper version of the questionnaire also provided an alternative for those who were less comfortable with using electronic resources. Only one individual requested the pen and paper version.

Additionally, this study was limited in scope to the support staff in all three divisions at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), a large mid-Atlantic community college recognized as a Learning College (O'Banion, personal correspondence, April 20, 2007; Smith & Meyer, 2003). The League for Innovation in the Community College has recognized Anne Arundel as a Champion College in the Learning College Project (*Learning College Project,* 2006). Though Anne Arundel Community College is

reflective of other community colleges as described by Cohen and Brawer (2002), the demographics and experiences of other community colleges may be sufficiently different to limit the generalizability of the study's findings.

It is important to note this researcher is an administrator at Anne Arundel Community College, the institution where the study took place. This fact raised the possibility of researcher bias, perceived coercion, or perceived incentives by invited participants to respond in certain ways, and participant concerns regarding confidentiality. Numerous safeguards were put in place to address these potential issues. The study was not sponsored by any group in the college or any external group.

Finally, this researcher is a proponent of the Learning College concept and its application in community colleges. The researcher used bracketing to help identify and set aside any indications of bias in the questionnaire analysis, interview notes, and final data analysis.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The primary goal of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of the support staff workers in a Learning College and to describe that phenomenon in such a way that other community colleges and their employees could benefit. Based on the findings from this study, community college leaders implementing major changes have better information about the importance of the support staff employees. Additionally, this study helps give voice to an often neglected employee group in community colleges, providing these participants with an opportunity to share their understandings of their own role in facilitating student learning. Though there are calls for involvement of all

stakeholders in implementing a successful Learning College (Flynn, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2005; O'Banion, 1997), very little actual research has been undertaken with this group.

This study, examining the experience of support staff employees, attempted to gain a greater understanding of how this employee group sees itself and its role in major change within an institution. Research questions guided the work through this examination of support staff opinions, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward student learning and their role in supporting it. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on the Learning College, the research questions for this study, and the research methodology to be used in this study. As the literature review showed, there is very little published research on support staff employees in community colleges or other organizations.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review investigated the current scholarly body of knowledge surrounding the problem and the research questions of this study. The review consists of a comprehensive examination of literature on higher education reform, the Learning College concept, community college faculty and staff roles, and other topics that shed light on the problem under investigation in this study, i.e., whether support staff employees in a Learning College understand their role in supporting and enhancing learning and how well they apply, consciously or unconsciously, the concepts of a Learning College in their day-to-day work.

Organization of Literature

This literature review was organized to provide a logical and descriptive explanation of writings on the subject of support staff roles in a Learning College. Beginning with an understanding of reform movements and calls for change in higher education in the latter part of the 20th century, the review then investigated reforms and changes with learning as the focus. The Learning College literature constitutes the most comprehensive section of this review, narrowing the literature to identify specific constituency group roles within the Learning College. Since this investigation was shaped by the three components of the conceptual framework for the study—Learning College theory, change theory, and organizational culture—this approach clearly identified where there were gaps in the literature, specifically in literature that addresses the problem of this study, the role of support staff in a Learning College.

This review also provided a summary of search strategies used by this researcher to address the vast literature available on this research problem. Additionally, a summary of literature supporting the research methodology selected by this researcher is included in this review.

Search Strategies

The literature reviewed for this study included articles, reports, and books identified through the EBSCO Information Services and ProQuest database portals. The researcher searched specific databases including Academic Search Premier, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), Academic OneFile, Education Research Complete, Teacher Reference Center, and the SAGE Full-Text Collections. The researcher also reviewed dissertations obtained from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (PQDT), University Microfilms (UMI) and from direct contact with dissertation authors. In addition to databases, the researcher identified government and professional organizations and searched their collections to obtain access to additional resources. Those sources included the U.S. Department of Education, The League for Innovation in the Community College, the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Council for Continuing Education and Workforce Development, the Educational Commission of the States, and the National Center for Education Statistics, among others. Instructor, assessor, and faculty mentor recommendations also helped guide the search. Finally, this researcher identified appropriate bibliographies and in-text references obtained while doing research to help her identify additional resources.

Search methodologies included the use of numerous key words and phrases including, but not limited to, community colleges, 2-year colleges, technical colleges, Learning College, change, learning, student outcomes, outcomes assessment, organizational culture, support staff, clerical staff. By varying forms of these key words and phrases, the researcher was able to identify well over 300 sources related to this topic. Review of these sources uncovered approximately 125 directly applicable to this study.

While the vast majority of resources used in this study represent peer-reviewed, scholarly materials, the astute reader will note a small number of other resources that may not be peer-reviewed. These resources were included to fill in missing elements and to demonstrate the breadth of thinking on the subject of this study. Additionally, since the development of the Learning College concept is relatively recent, occurring within the last 15 years, limited scholarly research has been completed and published. The sources of the included non-peer-reviewed materials are well-known, recognized organizations and writers in the field of community college leadership and the Learning College. Therefore, the researcher has included a limited number of these sources in this review.

This comprehensive strategy provided a wealth of resources in the literature and enabled the researcher to identify many different perspectives on the research questions and problem.

<center>Literature on Research Methodology</center>

As noted above, the relatively recent application of the Learning College concept has resulted in a comparatively small amount of scholarly research on the subject. A

significant number of the research studies conducted on the Learning College were quantitative studies, evaluating faculty and student responses to the approach and its impact on student success. A number of qualitative case studies on specific college implementations have also been conducted.

This researcher identified the need to understand the experiences of specific community college employee groups involved in the daily work of a Learning College. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to investigate more deeply into the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of a particular group. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research succinctly and captures the essence of what this particular study proposes to accomplish:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Many of the characteristics of qualitative research as delineated by Hatch (2002) fit naturally into this study, including (a) the importance of individual perspectives, (b) the researcher as data collector, (c) the use of a natural setting, (d) the examination of a whole situation or setting rather than its parts, (e) the fluid nature of the study as it is conducted, (f) the elements of subjectivity and judgment, and (g) an inductive rather than deductive approach.

Of the numerous qualitative research methodologies that exist, an adapted phenomenological methodology best suited the study. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenology is a natural fit for human science research in several key areas: (a) seeing things as they are, (be) looking at all sides of an experience, (c) trying to find meaning

through reflection and intuition, (d) describing experiences rather than analyzing them, (e) questioning to give direction and focus, (f) integrating the subjective and objective into meaning, and (g) using experience and the researcher's own thinking as evidence. In this study, the researcher examined the experience of support staff employees in a community college in an attempt to understand their experience as front line workers in a Learning College. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews of individual support staff employees to learn about their understanding and experiences in their own words. The outcome is a comprehensive picture of these experiences.

Summary of the Literature

Educational Reform Efforts

All too often, the popular press and scholarly writers alike find the American education system, from pre-kindergarten to postsecondary levels, in need of change and reform. Indeed, O'Banion (1997) went so far as to suggest that at least one call for reform has been produced annually for the past half century. Given that proliferation of criticism, it is important to narrow the focus to those calls to action that form the framework for the Learning College movement today.

The President's Commission on Higher Education (1947) , commonly known as the Truman Commission report, emphasized the critical role of higher education in society and specifically called for community colleges to meet the national challenge of offering equal access to postsecondary education. Additionally, the Commission challenged community colleges to meet society's needs for well-educated and thinking citizens. Others echoed the importance of equal access and the role of community

colleges, calling for these institutions to play a major role in American higher education (Bogue, 1950; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994; Dowd, 2003). The Pew Charitable Trusts sponsored Higher Education Roundtables (1993) that brought higher education leaders from around the country together to identify and discuss necessary changes for the future.

Two national reports from the late 20th century stood out as significant among the other many calls for reform. They drew attention to the failures of American education in a way that stimulated thinking about systemic rather than piecemeal changes. The National Commission on Educational Excellence published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* in 1983 both criticizing the effectiveness of the American education system and calling for dramatic changes in that system. This report suggested that rather than excellence, education was steeped in "mediocrity" that endangered the nation's democratic ideals and superior position in the world (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). Though the report focused primarily on the elementary and secondary education system, its findings and recommendations are meaningful for this study on community colleges, particularly as community colleges enroll nearly 40% of the high school graduates who attend college (Secretary of Education's Commission on Excellence in Education, 2006, p. viii). This report criticized the outputs of the educational system, the quality of the students' education, and how those outputs put many aspects of American life at risk, particularly the United States' ability to remain competitive in an increasingly global society.

The second major national report appeared 10 years later and unfortunately echoed many of the concerns of the 1983 report, noting little progress in the ensuing decade. *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education*, published in 1993 by the Wingspread Group, focused on higher education and leveled many of the same criticisms and challenges of earlier writers and reports. The Wingspread Group called for colleges and universities to address three essential issues common to every institution of higher education: "taking values seriously; putting student learning first; creating a nation of learners" (p. 7). In addressing these critical areas, higher education would then be addressing the larger concerns of producing students and graduates who would be well rounded, well educated, well skilled, and capable of functioning in the new global society.

During the 1990s, numerous other reports and writers called for dramatic changes in the educational system, including the National Education Goals established by the states' governors in 1989 and later adapted to become part of President Bill Clinton's *Goals 2000* (as cited in O'Banion, 1997, p. 5). These goals, coupled with the 1995 and 1996 reports of the Education Commission of the States, suggested that education needed to make these changes rapidly and comprehensively in order to keep up with the rapid changes in society.

Other writers and reports supported these two seminal documents with calls for change and reform in education even after the turn of the century. Levin (2001, 2002) called for community colleges specifically to rise up to the challenges of a more global society and carefully evaluate and consider their existing mission, vision, and role in

society and implement changes that would make their institutions more effective in

responding to the needs of society. Dowd (2003) suggested changes that would address

another challenge community colleges face—that of providing open access to all citizens.

She suggested that unless colleges change their traditional purely academic approach,

they would continue to limit access to many Americans, such as immigrants,

underprepared students, disabled individuals, and older adults. Even before publishing his

seminal work on the Learning College in 1997, O'Banion (1994, 1995)was calling for

reform in community colleges, suggesting a focus on learning.

As recently as 2006, another high-level commission released its report, calling yet

again for higher education to face its failures and change itself to better meet the needs of

society. Over 20 years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and the criticism of

mediocrity in education*,* Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher

Education published *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*

(2006), criticizing higher education for "complacency" (p. vi) and the failure to give

Americans the education they need and deserve (p. vii). This report, commonly known as

the Spellings' Commission Report, called for a revised system of higher education in

which

> The result would be institutions and programs that are more nimble, more
> efficient, and more effective. What the nation would gain is a heightened
> capacity to compete in the global market place. What individuals would
> gain is full access to educational opportunities that allow them to be
> lifelong learners, productive workers, and engaged citizens. (p. x)

Clearly, despite so many compelling and sometimes poignant demands for change

in the past three decades, higher education has not changed sufficiently to meet its

challengers' calls to action. The problem, according to many, was that the changes and reforms being attempted were fragmented and only additions to, or deletions from, an existing system, rather than a comprehensive reform of the system itself (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; O'Banion, 1997; Tagg, 2003). The question then became how to bring about systemic change so that the education system could meet the myriad challenges facing the United States, specifically in its higher education system, in the 21st century and beyond.

Reforming to a Learning Focus

Suggested most often in the literature as a critical systemic reform was one that seems obvious—change the mission of the higher education system to focus on learning. Though this may seem straightforward and relatively easy to accomplish, such a change would require a complete overhaul of the vision, structure, and thinking of higher education in general and community colleges in particular. As this review showed, the initial changes within community colleges to a learning focus were still fragmented and not systemic. However, it was important to consider these early ideas as they too contributed to the eventual rise of the Learning College movement.

The model of education most widely embraced throughout history is a didactic one in which one individual (teacher, mentor, instructor, tutor, etc.) imparts knowledge, information, skills, ideas, concepts, and thinking to one or more individuals seeking to learn (students, learners, apprentices, etc.). The difficulty with this model is that the purpose or mission of the education is to teach or impart knowledge, evoking an image of a learned person pouring knowledge into the empty brain of an uneducated person. Thus,

in this model, education produces teaching, a model that inspired reformers to call for education to produce learning rather than teaching as its outcome (Barr, 1993, 1995; Flynn, 1999; O'Banion, 1997).

Initially, scholars and institutions interpreted the reforms to be learner centered or student centered rather than learning centered, meaning that the student or learner is the most important component and the center of the institutional effort. This misinterpretation remains common even today (Holmes, 2007; O'Banion, 1997). Taking learner centered to a more extreme point, Alfred (1998), McMillan and Cheney (1996), and Wallace (1999) went so far as to suggest that community colleges consider their students as customers or consumers of education and learning, an idea that has met substantial resistance, particularly among college faculty (McMillan & Cheney; Shugart, 2002).

The landmark President's Commission on Higher Education (1947) was among the first to suggest, albeit indirectly, that learning should be central. This report noted that adult students participate in higher education by choice and have opinions and subsequent choices about their education and, therefore, should not be seen as "conscript classes" (p. 98). Additionally, the Truman Commission suggested that community colleges should fit their curriculum and methods to the needs of the students, rather than to what the institutions' perceived the students should have (p. 98). This report may be the first suggestion of learner-centered education and one of the earliest predecessors of the Learning College concept.

The Wingspread Group (1993), as part of its call for reforms in education, clearly insisted that one of the keys to bringing about real change in higher education was to put student learning front and center, in the midst of all that a college or university does. In this way, learning would become a core component of the institutional mission. The Education Commission of the States (1996) also listed several aspects of learning as key components of their attributes of quality undergraduate education.

As the mission of community colleges began to evolve toward becoming more comprehensive in the latter half of the 20th century, scholars began to discuss how these institutions could best thrive. Gleazer (1980) suggested that the community college could become the "nexus of a community educational system" (p. 10), but went on to comment that this concept would be effective only if everything in this nexus was centered on learning, while Freire (1992) held that in true education, there could not be teaching unless learning was occurring. Indeed, as O'Banion (2000) noted, numerous educational organizations and reports of the 1990s in some way indicated that learning, as an outcome for higher education, was critical. In addition to reports discussed earlier, these organizations include the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Council on Education, the American College Personnel Association, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Education Commission of the States, and the National Policy Board of Higher Education Institutional Accreditation. Clearly, the message was about learning, but the challenge lay in how to bring learning to the center of every institution's purpose.

One of the themes throughout the literature was a greater emphasis on learning outside the traditional classroom from theorists like Freire (1992), Illich (1971), and Illich and Verne (1976) to contemporary practitioners such as Barr and Tagg (1995), Gleazer (2000), O'Banion (1997), and Senge (1990). This concept of informal learning experiences held that individual learners can and do learn throughout their lives, and formal classroom education is only a part of that learning. By focusing on the learning, whenever and wherever it occurred, a college would begin to look at the entire learner, not just a single slice of the learner's situation. Though this focus on learning anywhere and anytime became one of the core principles of the Learning College, it also has manifested itself in colleges' increased emphasis on internships, cooperative learning experiences, credit for prior learning, and competency-based programs, as well as considering how every aspect of college life is indeed a learning experience for its students.

Another theme found in the literature was that learning is the outcome or product of college rather than the process of getting through college (American Association of Community Colleges, 1995; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Flynn, 1999; Harvey-Smith, 2005; O'Banion, 1997; Tagg, 2003). This meant that colleges must first identify what learning needs to take place. In other words, what does the student need to know or be able to do upon completion of a specific learning experience or a college education. After identifying the learning outcomes, then the college must provide the tools, opportunities, resources, and learning experiences (both formal and informal) for students to access so they can acquire that learning.

With the emphasis on the outcome of college being what is learned as opposed to how many credits are earned, a third theme emerged, that of an emphasis on learning, not teaching (Barr, 1995; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Battersby, 2005; Boggs, 1999; Flynn, 1999, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2007; O'Banion, 1994, 1995, 1997; Smith & Meyer, 2003). Some of the earliest attempts to emphasize learning occurred in learning communities (Gabelnick et al. 1990; McPhail, I., McCusick, & Starr, 2006; O'Banion, 1996) and learning organizations (Dibella, Gould, & Nevis, 1995; Kim, 1993; O'Banion, 1996; O'Neil, 1995; Senge, 1990; Tinto, 1997). Barr and Tagg referred to this as a shift from an instructional paradigm to a learning paradigm. This shift required a substantive change to a community college, from a change in vision and mission to changes in the jobs of every college employee. This more comprehensive approach led community college leaders to begin considering O'Banion's call for a Learning College.

The Learning College

Though the label of *Learning College* was not really applied to community colleges with a focus on learning prior to O'Banion's 1997 seminal work, *A Learning College for the 21ˢᵗ Century*, the literature clearly showed that community colleges in the early 1990s were beginning to respond to the call to place learning at the center. This manifested itself in a variety of ways at different colleges. For example, Palomar College in California engaged in college-wide discussion, advocating a move from an instruction-focused paradigm to a learning-focused paradigm (Barr, 1995; Barr & Fear, 2005, Barr & Tagg 1995; Flynn, 1999, 2005). At Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, the entire college community engaged in in-depth discussions and planning to create a new

vision and structure centered on learning, making learning a part of planning documents and discussions and central to any institutional changes (Lane Community College, 2001; O'Banion, 1995). As part of the Pew Higher Education Roundtables in 1993, Maricopa Community College District in Arizona began changing its vocabulary, holding stakeholder meetings, and rewriting its vision, mission, and goals (O'Banion, 1995).

The critical change these and other community colleges needed to undertake centered on the change in focus from teaching to learning, one of the key components of Learning College theory and part of the conceptual framework for this study. Community colleges have long prided themselves on being institutions with a teaching focus, particularly in contrast to universities and 4-year colleges with a research focus (Barr, 1995; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Flynn, 1999; O'Banion, 1997; President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). However, there is another, more comprehensive, distinction between a teaching and a learning focus. Putting learning at the center means that decisions are made based on how they will affect learning, the faculty and the institution are measured on the learning that is produced, and resources are committed to supporting and enhancing learning. Virtually every scholar on the Learning College concurs with this core element of Learning College theory (Boggs, 1995; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; Harvey-Smith, 2005; Krakauer, 2000; O'Banion, 1995, 1997, 2000; McPhail, C., 2005; McPhail, I., 1999, 2005; McPhail, I., Heacock, & Linck, 2001; Troyer, 2005; Wilson, 2002).

One of the most important aspects of understanding change in the context of an organizational culture is the involvement of every stakeholder in any change. This idea is

frequently found in the literature in terms of the involvement of all stakeholders and employee constituencies in a community college's transformation to a Learning College (Boggs, 1998; Flynn, 2000, 2005; James, 2005; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006; O'Banion, 1997, 2000; Showden, 2005; Shugart & Romano, 2005; Shupe, 2005; Wilson, 2002), though much of it is focused on faculty and administrative employees to the exclusion of other staff.

Faculty and Administrators in the Learning College

If, as noted above, the inclusion of all constituencies and stakeholders of the institution is critical to successful change, one could relatively safely assume that this inclusion was the common practice, particularly among colleges that wanted to change the entire focus of the college to learning. However, most of the literature on constituency involvement was related to faculty, with a somewhat lesser amount addressing the role of administration.

The predominance of literature on the role of faculty in a Learning College was to be expected, as faculty are directly involved in student learning. After all, faculty members were likely to experience the greatest impact of a transformation to a Learning College as the nature of learning and instruction evolve at the institution (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Flynn, 1999; Guskin, 1994; Holmes, 2007; O'Banion, 1997; Waskow, 2006). Faculty job descriptions and roles related to their students change as they became more like learning facilitators rather than lecturers (Barr, 1995, 1998; Flynn, 1999; Guskin, 1994; Smith & Meyer, 2003). Students are measured in terms of their learning rather than seat time or assignments completed, altering the way faculty evaluate students (Smith &

Meyer; Waskow, 2006). Additionally, faculty resistance to the Learning College concept

was well documented in the literature (Boggs, 1995; Holmes, 2007; O'Banion, 1997;

Shupe, 2005). Thus, the importance of, the impact on, and the resistance to the Learning

College concept was relatively well researched, especially considering that the concept is

less than two decades old.

The roles and responsibilities of administration were likewise addressed in the

literature, though to a somewhat lesser extent. Much of the discussion around

administration centered on the college president and his or her executive leaders and

student services personnel such as counselors, advisors, and admissions and enrollment

specialists (Dale and Drake, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2005; Koester, Hellenbrand, & Piper,

2005; McPhail, I., 1999; Smith & Meyer, 2003; Wilson, 2005).

The college administration's role was seen primarily in terms of transforming a

college to a Learning College by presenting ideas, leading the discussion, communicating

with both internal and external stakeholders, and managing the change (Association of

American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Boggs, 2003; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 2005;

O'Banion, 1997; Smith & Meyer, 2003). Administrative roles regarding learning were

more focused on ensuring that strategic planning, resource allocation, and decision

making were all accomplished with learning at the center, answering the important

question of how a particular goal, activity, or decision helps to facilitate, support, and

enhance student learning (McPhail, I., 1999, 2005; McPhail, I., Heacock, & Linck, 2001;

O'Banion, 1997).

Besides faculty and the executive leadership of the college, student services professionals were also specifically addressed in the literature, albeit with even less frequency, focusing on their role of guiding students to the most appropriate learning experiences (Harvey-Smith, 2005; James, 2005). This was a different role for student services personnel than is generally found in a community college where the most common role has evolved to one of recruiting students and helping them schedule classes they need to graduate. In a Learning College, the student services professional became an important member of a team of learning facilitators, helping students achieve their learning goals and working closely and sharing information and ideas with faculty members, tutors, intern coordinators, and any others involved in facilitating learning (Harvey-Smith, 2005; James, 2005; Shugart & Romano, 2005).

Though the emphasis in the literature was on faculty and administrators, with a nod to student personnel professionals, there were certainly other constituencies and stakeholders, both internal and external, who needed to be involved in a Learning College. These include support staff, trustees, advisory boards, businesses and organizations, the community served by the college, funding agencies, and of course, students. Yet little research has been done regarding their roles. This study focused on only one of these often neglected groups, that of support staff.

Support Staff in the Learning College

As previously noted, much of the literature concerning the Learning College concept suggested that if learning is to be the center of the institution, then wholesale change is necessary, and college-wide involvement is required. A significant change,

such as the transformation to a Learning College, impacts every job in the college, including the support staff. Yet, when specific research was conducted and studies were undertaken on the Learning College, few, if any, focused specifically on the role of support staff in a Learning College.

Locke and Guglielmino (2006) studied subcultures in one community college during a major change initiative to determine how they reacted to the change. Though the subculture was not specifically support staff, the authors demonstrated the importance of thorough inclusion of all subculture members early in the process of major change. This concept of inclusion could easily be applied to the leaders of a college transforming to a Learning College—a caveat to include every group in the college beginning with the early discussions and throughout the process. In his study of change among employee groups in terms of institutional effectiveness, Fillpot (1990) observed "attention paid to specific areas, even minor attention, appears to have had a dramatic impact on its perceived effectiveness" (p. 7).

In the context of the Learning College concept, the research was even more limited. Boggs (1995) noted that most staff feel little direct connection with student learning and, in truth, may be surprised to discover that their jobs include creating "an environment conducive to learning" (p. 27), something they have little or no training or background in doing. O'Banion (1997) made it clear that "support staff will be called upon to help manage and coordinate learning activities as faculty members are freed to take on new roles as learning facilitators" (p. 33). Shupe (2005) acknowledged the need for college-wide involvement since much of what students say they learn in college is

outside the classroom, yet the only example he provided for a support staff role was supervising work-study students, a somewhat limited view of the potential for this group. Little was said about preparing this group for these new roles in the Learning College, and the lack of published research may indicate that indeed this group is often overlooked in the planning and preparation in the transformation to a Learning College.

Also not discussed in the literature was the importance of support staff employees as the front lines of the college. In many colleges, the first college employee a new or prospective student encounters was very likely to be a support staff member—the receptionist, the call center operator, the groundskeeper, the public safety officer, the departmental secretary. If these individuals were indeed most often the first point of contact for a student, could they help students understand they are at a Learning College? Did those employees believe they were part of that student's learning experiences and they have a role to play in supporting and facilitating learning for that student? How would an effective community college leader account for the discrepancy between what the scholars say needs to occur and what actually does occur?

<center>Support for Conceptual Framework</center>

Though the literature clearly showed a gap regarding the experience of support staff employees in a Learning College, there was ample support for the conceptual framework for this study. In addition, as a result of increased interest and study of the Learning College during the last 10 years, the literature has begun to reflect more clearly the remaining two components of this study's conceptual framework specifically in terms of colleges transforming to Learning Colleges. Writers and researchers on Learning

College theory, change theory, and organizational culture, specifically in the community

college, supported the above calls for change, though not all agreed on the methods.

Many scholars and writers related their theories and applications to O'Banion's

(1997) six principles of a Learning College:

> 1. The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.
> 2. The learning college engages learners as full partners in the learning
> process, with learners assuming primary responsibility for their own
> choices.
> 3. The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as
> possible.
> 4. The learning college assists learners to form and participate in
> collaborative learning activities.
> 5. The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the
> needs of the learners.
> 6. The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when
> improved and expanded learning can be documented for learners. (p. 47)

As previously noted in this review, Learning College theory calls for institutions

to place learning at the center or core of all that they do and to view learning as the

product or outcome of the work the institution undertakes, echoing O'Banion's six

principles (Boggs, 1995; Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 1999; Harvey-Smith, 2005; Krakauer,

2000; McPhail, C., 2005; McPhail, I., 1999, 2005; McPhail, I., Heacock, & Linck, 2001;

O'Banion, 1995, 1997, 2000; Troyer, 2005; Wilson, 2002).

For the purposes of this study, change theory was investigated in terms of change

within and by community colleges. Community colleges have been changing and

evolving institutions almost since their beginning, and the literature clearly reflected this

(Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2002; Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985;

Dougherty, 1994; Gleazer, 2000; McPhail, C., 2005; O'Banion, 1997; Vaughan, 2000).

Though minor changes occur almost daily at individual institutions across the country,

several major change themes have occurred during the first century of the community college as an educational institution. The most obvious change was the evolution in the vision and mission of the community college, from junior college to vocational institute, to a comprehensive community college, and perhaps to a completely different model in the early years of the 21st century (Boggs, 1993; Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985; Dougherty, 1994; Eddy, 2003; Gleazer, 1980; Levin, 1998a, 1998b, 2001; Vaughan, 1988).

Another major theme was the need for systemic rather than piecemeal change. Senge (1990) is perhaps the most widely known proponent of systems change, advocating learning as a key component of systemic change. Ewell (1997), Flynn (2000), Krakauer (2005), McPhail, I. (2005), and Shugart and Romero (2005) all supported Senge's theories with examples of the importance of systemic rather than piecemeal change in community colleges. Systemic change required participation of the entire institution, which in turn, impacted the organizational culture and the involvement of all constituencies.

In recent years, writers also have begun to incorporate and study organizational culture in the community college, the third component of this study's conceptual framework, as a critical component of a successful Learning College (Brown, 1999; Craig, 2004; Eddy, 2006; Fillpot, 1990, Gizir, 2007; Kezar & Eckel, 2000; Lee, 2004; Yoder, 2005). Krakauer (2000, 2001) offered 80 criteria for a Learning College organized into nine broad categories. Two of her categories, Organization and College Culture, incorporate over 40 % of her criteria, clearly establishing the importance of these

concepts. Harvey-Smith (2005) proposed a seventh principle for the Learning College that calls for a college to "create and nurture an organizational culture that is both open and responsive to change and learning" (p. 49). Other writers also addressed the importance of understanding, acknowledging, and in some cases, changing the organizational culture as a critical part of a Learning College (Ayers, 2005; Brown, 1999; Harvey-Smith, 2005; McPhail, C., 2005; Tagg, 2003; Wilson, 2005).

Clearly, the literature supported the concept that the institutional transformation to a Learning College should occur within the combined frameworks of Learning College theory, change theory, and organizational culture. Again, one of the most important aspects of understanding such a major change in the context of an organizational culture is the involvement of every stakeholder in any change as noted earlier in this chapter.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

From the early calls for reform to the current writings on the Learning College, it was clear throughout the literature that higher education not only needed to change, but was, in fact, changing. Though there may be other kinds of reforms underway in higher education, for America's community colleges, the Learning College concept was gaining a strong foothold in the literature and in practice. The League for Innovation in the Community College's Learning College Project, now in its sixth year, has enabled leading colleges to develop their own styles and interpretations of the concept while sharing and disseminating successes and challenges to other colleges. Beyond the League project, national accreditation organizations, such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, have incorporated learning outcomes as a critical measure of an

institution when awarding accreditation. National organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges, the League for Innovation in the Community College, and the National Council for Continuing Education and Training are hosting professional conferences and colloquia focused on learning, learning outcomes, and student success.

In the midst of the increasing publicity and literature about the Learning College concept, the fact remains that at least one important employee group remains in the background. By investigating the support staff experience at a Learning College, this study began to address this gap in the literature. As chapter 3 will show, investigating the experience of an employee group to derive understanding and a description of their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences led to an adapted phenomenological study. The researcher used both a questionnaire and interviews to collect data for this study and a typological methodology to code and analyze the data, resulting in a wealth of information on the subject.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

As noted in the literature review in chapter 2, little published research addresses the specific population this study addressed, support staff employees in a community college that is a Learning College. This researcher studied the experiences of this employee group in terms of their day-to-day work and their understanding of the Learning College concept. The study examined specifically how support staff employees in a Learning College understand their role in supporting and enhancing learning and how well they apply the concepts of a Learning College in their day-to-day work. Three research questions, as described in chapter 1guided this study:

1. What are support staff employees' understandings of the concepts and principles of a Learning College in a large mid-Atlantic community college that is well known nationally as a Learning College and includes learning centeredness in its vision, mission, and philosophy?

2. How do these support staff employees perceive their roles and actions as supporting and enhancing student learning in a Learning College?

3. Which, if any, aspects of a Learning College do these support staff employees apply in their daily work at a community college?

The nature of this study led the researcher to select an adapted phenomenological design. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological study is one that attempts to understand the experiences of its individuals through questioning, probing, and analyzing what those participants say. Since these questions seek to understand a specific

constituency and its experience of a particular reform movement, an adapted

phenomenological study allowed the researcher to examine and analyze the experience of

the support staff employees in a community college. This chapter describes in detail the

research methodology used in this study in addressing the problem and research

questions, including the research design, role of the researcher, context for the study,

participant selection process and criteria, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

Based on the literature review of qualitative research designs discussed in chapter

2, the researcher determined that an adapted phenomenological methodology was most

appropriate for this study. An adapted phenomenological approach allowed the researcher

to examine a phenomenon or experience through the eyes of the participants who have or

are living that experience. As Moustakas (1994) noted, the goal of phenomenological

research is

> to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the
> experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From
> the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in
> other words the essences or structures of the experience. (p. 13)

For this study, the phenomenon investigated centered on the views and

perceptions of support staff about their own understanding of the Learning College

concept and what they do that helps to implement this concept of facilitating, supporting,

and enhancing student learning in their institutions. As the front line workers in a

community college, support staff employees are impacted by any change the institution

makes in its approach to working with students. Implementing a transformation such as

the Learning College affects everyone in the college because the vision, and indeed, the

entire approach to everything the college does, takes on a different focus. Support staff

employees need to be involved and need to understand that their jobs are a critical

component of students' learning experiences at the college. As a result of this wholesale

change in philosophy, support staff experience the change, but the questions remain as to

whether this change is effectively communicated to them, whether or not they understand

the change and its implications for their jobs, and how they interpret and apply the

change in their work.

The methods of an adapted phenomenological study allowed the researcher to

address the three research questions by examining in-depth the experience of the support

staff employees in a Learning College. The research questions sought to understand and

develop a composite picture of support staff employees' understanding, perceptions, and

implementations of the Learning College concept. An adapted phenomenological design

allowed the researcher to do just that—develop a deeper understanding of and composite

picture of a particular phenomenon. In this study, that phenomenon includes the views

and perceptions of the support staff concerning their understanding of the Learning

College concept and what they do to implement it.

The researcher gathered the raw data from the participants' descriptions as the

first part of the process. This data collection required intense listening and probing of

individuals' statements to gather as much detail about the experience as possible.

The second part of the process in a phenomenological study, according to

Moustakas (1994), is for the researcher to describe the experience or phenomenon in

terms of the commonalities among the group. Preparing this description meant that the

researcher had to conduct careful analysis and reflection of the raw data and then apply

interpretations of the data and findings, seeking Moustakas's "general or universal

meanings" (p. 13).

This study undertook to follow closely the model laid out by Moustakas (1994)

and to examine the experience of support staff at a Learning College. This employee

group's role is critical in any community college, but especially in a Learning College,

where it is essential that every employee is part of supporting, facilitating, and enhancing

learning experiences for students. As O'Banion noted, "We know intuitively and by staff

anecdote and student testimony the significant role classified staff play in the lives of

students" (personal correspondence, April 19, 2007). However, this employee group is

often left out of discussions and planning, and sometimes even staff development, related

to the Learning College, or so the lack of literature related to this group would indicate.

Additionally, members of this group often feel that their voice is not heard by the college

administration (Data from Weidner Pilot Study, November 2007; O'Banion, personal

correspondence, April 19, 2007).

To obtain the raw data of the participants' experience working as a support staff

employee in a Learning College, the researcher first conducted a questionnaire (see

Appendix A for questionnaire questions). This questionnaire served as a screening tool to

allow the researcher to identify an appropriate sample of participants for the interviews.

The questionnaire, consisting primarily of open-ended questions, provided every support

staff employee with the opportunity to be heard. Questions were designed to encourage

respondents to describe their work experience, their knowledge of the Learning College

concept, and their perceptions of their own college as a Learning College. These initial

data were compiled and analyzed against the criteria for selection of interview

participants, described in the Participant Selection section of this chapter. The data from

the questionnaire allowed the researcher to identify interview participants.

The more comprehensive and detailed data, and the heart of the study, were

obtained from the in-depth interviews of selected participants. The interview questions

followed-up on the questionnaire responses, and probed and encouraged the respondents

to fully describe their experiences working in a Learning College.

The data analysis, along with the reflection and interpretation in which the

researcher engaged after the interviews, revealed the commonalities and universal aspects

of the experience. These results provide explanation and data for Learning College

leaders and other community college leaders, which should encourage them to consider

the support staff role and experience in their own institutions, particularly with regard to

supporting and enhancing student learning.

<div align="center">Role of the Researcher</div>

In a phenomenological study, the researcher has a major role to play, in that she is

the collector of the data (Moustakas, 1994). This role carries with it the responsibility to

remain as objective as possible throughout the process, despite any personal opinions,

biases, or preconceived notions. Moustakas (1994) noted that the researcher

> engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments
> regarding the phenomenon being investigated (known as the Epoche
> process) in order to launch the study as far as possible free of
> preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior
> experience and professional studies—to be completely open, receptive,

and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being described. (p. 22)

This necessary objectivity means the researcher had to challenge herself and her beliefs and notions going into the research study, and once they were identified, set them aside during the research and analysis. Achieving this objectivity was more challenging in this qualitative and adapted phenomenological study where the researcher was directly responsible for gathering the data from the participants.

The researcher used bracketing, as described by Hatch (2002) and Moustakas (1994), to acknowledge and set aside any preconceived notions or ideas in research notes and a journal to ensure the data collection was as objective as possible. As Hatch described, a separate journal in which the researcher wrote notes and thoughts to herself while analyzing questionnaire data, communicating with participants, conducting questionnaires, and coding all study data enabled the researcher to separate as much as possible personal ideas and opinions. While the researcher had no prior knowledge of the support staff employees' experience, she does have a predisposition favoring the Learning College concept. Thus, it was important to bracket those ideas and perceptions as part of her role in this study.

Another important role of the researcher in a phenomenological study is one of reflection and self-analysis (Moustakas, 1994). By bracketing personal thoughts and ideas prior to collecting the data, the researcher was able to reflect upon the similarities and differences between her preconceived ideas and the actual experiences of the phenomenon as described by the participants.

Context for the Study

This study took place at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), the largest single-campus community college of Maryland's 16 community colleges, with combined credit and non-credit annual enrollments of 54,000. AACC is a public 2-year college offering degree, certificate, and transfer programs, as well as robust continuing education and workforce development programming to meet its community's needs.

Anne Arundel Community College is a Learning College, as reflected in its vision, mission, and goals (see Appendix B for AACC vision and mission). As Terry O'Banion, President Emeritus of the League for Innovation in the Community College and author of *A Learning College for the 21st Century* said of Anne Arundel Community College, "While hundreds of community colleges claim to be Learning Colleges, few have achieved the status of Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland which is now one of the flagship Learning Colleges in the nation" (personal correspondence, April 19, 2007). AACC is also a "Champion College" in the League for Innovation in the Community College's prestigious Learning College Project. Anne Arundel Community College's president and other administrators and faculty frequently make presentations at national professional conferences and are asked to serve as consultants to other colleges seeking to emulate Anne Arundel's innovative and effective model. In recognition of AACC's national leadership in the Learning College movement, the League for Innovation requested the president and vice president to coauthor a special article on the College's implementation of the Learning College idea. Smith and Meyer's (2003) *Institutionalizing the Commitment to Learning: Evolution, Not Revolution* has been

widely circulated to the nation's community colleges. Additionally, Dr. Martha A. Smith, president, presented the keynote speech at the 2008 Learning College Summit, on the topic, *Creating a Culture of Learning: Evolution, Not Revolution*.

Further details on Anne Arundel Community College's transformation to a Learning College and how the concept is applied in the institution are addressed in chapter 4 as part of establishing the context for the study.

Participant Selection

Eligibility

Participants were selected from a population of all Anne Arundel Community College employees who are classified by the human resources payroll as "support staff." The college's human resources director, as directed by the president, provided this list to the researcher. All full-time college employees under the above classification were invited to participate in the study.

Exclusions

However, in order to eliminate any perception of coercion to participate or to respond in a particular way, the researcher excluded the following individuals from eligibility to participate: (a) any employees who work at the same campus where the researcher works, (b) any employees who report to the researcher directly, and (c) any employees who report to anyone that the researcher supervises. Anne Arundel Community College has three college locations within the college's service area, and the researcher works at one of the two satellite centers, not on the main or primary campus.

All part-time employees, as well as temporary or hourly employees, were excluded as they have not had equal opportunity to participate in college-wide meetings and presentations by the college leadership. Additionally, hourly employees do not have access to college staff and professional development opportunities as their employment by the college is deemed temporary.

Population and Sample

Questionnaires were sent to all eligible employees, a population of 224. The sample size was 82, or 37 percent of the population. The sample size was selected with the assumption that at least one third of the population would be eligible for inclusion in the questionnaire sample. Participation was voluntary and confidential. All eligible employees were encouraged to participate in the questionnaire. Based on questionnaire responses, specific individuals were asked to participate in in-depth, one-on-one interviews to gain further insight into the experiences of this specific employee group. Of the population of 82 questionnaire respondents, the researcher selected a sample size between 10 and 15 individuals to be interviewed.

The interview process yielded the heart of the data for the study, as according to Moustakas (1994), in a phenomenological research study, there are two key methods:

> Conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview that focuses on a bracketed topic and question. A follow-up interview may also be needed;
> Organizing and analyzing the data to facilitate development of individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite textural description, a composite structural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences. (p. 104)

Thus, the selection of interview participants was a critically important aspect of this study, ensuring the researcher had the best opportunity to conduct sufficiently comprehensive interviews to develop the "composite descriptions" Moustakas described (p. 118). Using selected questionnaire responses to help identify the interview participants helped the researcher to identify an appropriate and meaningful sample for the interviews.

Interview Selection Criteria

After the initial questionnaire, potential interview participants were identified based on the following criteria:

1. Responses to the following questions were either "Strongly Agree" (5) or "Agree"(4) —indicating respondent understanding that support staff have some role in supporting, enhancing, and/or improving student learning.

   Q11—Every AACC employee plays a role in helping our students learn, no matter what the job is.

   Q13—Support staff play an important role at AACC in helping students learn.

   Q15—My role as a support staff employee at AACC is important in helping students learn.

   Q17—AACC leadership understands the importance of the role of support staff in helping students learn.

   The researcher was prepared to select staff to be interviewed who marked at least three of the questions as a four or five, in the event there were insufficient numbers of respondents who met the criterion of a four or five on all four

questions. However, this deviation was not necessary when the study was

conducted.

2. Response to the following question included the use of key words or phrases,

    indicating respondent had some understanding of the term Learning College.

    Q10—Let's start with the question, what does the term "Learning College" mean

    to you? Don't look it up. Just tell me what you think.

Respondents who met the above criteria were invited to participate in one-on-one

in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher. Some individuals selected declined to be

interviewed or did not respond, as was expected in a voluntary study.

Ethical Issues

This researcher has carefully addressed any ethical issues related to the proposed

study. Doing so was particularly important as she conducted the study at the college

where she works. Prior to proceeding with any activity, she sought and received approval

to conduct the study at Anne Arundel Community College from the college president and

the vice president for learning, the researcher's immediate supervisor. Once she had those

approvals, the researcher obtained approval from the chair of the Research Department at

Walden University. In order to address any concerns about coercion, real or perceived,

the researcher put numerous safeguards into place before planning her pilot study and

submitting the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation. The

IRB approval number for this study is 03-17-08-0052372.

Safeguards and Checks

The following steps were taken to minimize risks and to protect participant welfare, as well as to eliminate perception of coercion to participate or refrain from participating, or any perception of pressure to respond in a particular manner. First, no group in the college or other external group sponsored the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all participants had the opportunity to decline to participate or to withdraw at any point in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted in the participant's office or in a neutral location at the choice of the participant, ensuring confidentially and freedom from perceived pressures. All questionnaires and interviews were coded, and only pseudonyms are used in this study to ensure confidentiality. No individual or demographic information was shared with any supervisors or anyone else at the institution or in the study findings. All participants were informed prior to the questionnaire and interviews about the purposes of the study, noting that all data collected would be held confidential and used only for the purposes of doctoral study. All participants were given the opportunity to review their own questionnaire and interview responses, and to make changes and/or corrections to their responses before the responses were included in the study. Questionnaires and interviews took place during work hours with supervisor approval, during lunch hours, or before or after work, according to participant preference.

To provide additional safeguards, member checking was conducted by an independent third party not connected with the institution being studied. The external member checker was selected based on her more than 30 years of experience in a

community college and her familiarity with issues common to support staff and other entry level workers. Additionally, the external checker, a community college professional, does not work at the college where this study took place and is not known to any of the questionnaire or interview respondents. This third party (a) asked participants whether they felt any coercion or pressure to participate in the study, any coercion or pressure to respond in any particular way to questions, or any fear about making controversial comments or negative responses and (b) confirmed that participants were offered the opportunity to review and make changes to their responses to both the questionnaire and the interviews to ensure accurate representation of their words and thoughts.

Special Populations

Though no special populations were targeted in this study, it is possible that within the support staff employee population at Anne Arundel Community College some employees are either pregnant or over the age of 65. This was the case in several situations, and the affected employees that met the other selection criteria had the same option of voluntary participation in the study. The researcher did not actively seek individuals in either group, but did not exclude them if they chose to participate.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study consisted of an initial questionnaire of the entire population, followed by in-depth interviews of individuals selected based on specific responses to the questionnaire.

Data Collection Instruments

Both of the data collection instruments used in this study were developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was developed using guidelines set out by Fink (2006) and Salant and Dillman (1994). The first version was initially developed and tested as a pen and paper version as part of a Knowledge Area Module application component. It was reviewed and evaluated by representatives of the following groups: Walden University faculty, Learning College administrators, Learning College faculty, community college research professionals, and other community college staff. As a result of this review, the questionnaire was revised several times prior to testing. Test participant feedback resulted in further revisions and a decision to convert the questionnaire into an electronic format for ease of use by participants.

The researcher developed an electronic version using the well-known survey software, Zoomerang®. The researcher again submitted the questionnaire for review by several professionals in the community college and some of the original test participants. After numerous revisions, this Zoomerang® version was used in the pilot study (see Appendix A for questionnaire questions).

The researcher also developed the interview questions using guidelines from respected qualitative scholars (Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questions were reviewed by a number of Walden University faculty and other community college professionals and revised according to recommendations.

In qualitative interviews, particularly phenomenological studies, approximately six to eight main interview questions are developed prior to the interviews. These

interview questions are of necessity broad and open-ended, allowing participants greater opportunity to elaborate upon their experiences (Hatch, 2002; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher used additional probes and follow-up questions, developed during the interview, to encourage the participants to describe their experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This researcher followed these recommendations and developed a set of eight main questions (see Appendix C for interview questions).

In both the questionnaire and the interview, the researcher developed open-ended questions that would encourage participants to describe and explain their experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs in detail. The extensive testing and retesting of questionnaire questions through the KAM application and the pilot study enabled the researcher to identify questions that would most effectively glean the responses that would provide the richest data to describe the phenomenon. The questions were structured to address each of the three research questions separately, but to also provide deeper data concerning the phenomenon being studied. Table 1 indicates which questionnaire and interview questions address each of the three research questions. A complete list of all questionnaire questions may be found in Appendix A, and a complete list of interview main questions may be found in Appendix C. Follow-up and probe questions were developed as each interview progressed, as is appropriate in phenomenological research (Hatch, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Table 1

Research Questions Addressed by Questionnaire and Interview Instruments

	Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3	Other Data, e.g. demographic, consent
Questionnaire Questions	10, 19, 21, 23,	11, 13, 15, 16,	12, 14, 33	1 – 9, 18, 22, 24, 30
	27, 28, 29, 31	17, 25, 26		
Interview Questions	3, 4, 7	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8	NA

Questionnaire Data Collection

An initial invitation to participate was sent via email to all eligible support staff employees, a population of 224 individuals as defined above, inviting them to participate in the electronic questionnaire and providing information about the study (see Appendix D for invitation to participate). All college employees at Anne Arundel Community College are assigned a college email account and are expected to use it regularly to obtain official college correspondence. However, in this first correspondence, the researcher offered the option for individuals to request that all future correspondence and the questionnaire be provided in pen and paper format or to a different email address unrelated to their college employment.

Two days later, the researcher sent a second correspondence to all eligible employees with the informed consent document, along with directions and the link to access the questionnaire (see Appendix E for the questionnaire directions and the informed consent document). The participants gave their consent electronically in the first question of the questionnaire. If this was not completed, they were unable access the

questionnaire. For those who requested pen and paper correspondence, a signed original

consent form was returned before the researcher sent the print questionnaire and

directions.

Participants had approximately 21 days to complete the questionnaire. The

researcher sent a reminder at two points during the time allowed for completion to

encourage participation. The final question in the questionnaire offered participants the

option of requesting a copy of their responses. The researcher sent a copy of the

responses with a message explaining that the participant could make any changes he or

she wished and return a revised copy to the researcher for inclusion in the final data (see

Appendix F for the letter that accompanies the questionnaire responses). Questionnaire

participants' names were entered into a random drawing for a $25 gift certificate to a

local establishment as a thank you for their time and effort.

Immediately after the questionnaire closed, the external consultant conducted

member checking to confirm with participants the checks noted in the Ethics section of

this chapter (see Appendix G for the questionnaire member check questions).

Concurrently, the researcher analyzed responses to the questionnaire to identify potential

interview participants, based on the criteria described in the Participant Selection section

of this chapter. As previously noted, bracketing and journaling were used so the

researcher could separate any potential bias and personal opinion from the actual

questionnaire data (Moustakas, 1994).

Interview Data Collection

The researcher contacted selected interview participants via email and a follow-up phone call and invited them to participate in an in-depth interview with the researcher (see Appendix H for the interview invitation). Invitations were issued to the initial sample of 15 questionnaire respondents with the highest overall score according to the selection criteria. Since the interview was voluntary, some invited participants declined to be interviewed. The researcher extended the invitation to five additional selected individuals until 14 agreed to participate in interviews, meeting the targeted number for the study sample. Interviews were scheduled at a time and place of the participant's choice.

Interviews consisted of open-ended questions and probes, encouraging participants to describe and explain their impressions and understandings of the work they do in a Learning College, as well as their understanding of the term Learning College. According to Moustakas (1994), it is this lengthy and comprehensive interview, replete with follow-up questions and opportunities for participants to elaborate thoughts and experiences, that provides the rich data for this adapted phenomenological study.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed by a professional court reporter. Each individual who was interviewed received a copy of the transcript to review and adjust, if desired, before it was included in the data for the study (see Appendix I for the message that accompanied the interview transcript). The external consultant conducted member checks for the interviews concurrently with the participant review of transcripts (see Appendix J for the interview member check questions). Once reviewed and approved by the participant, the interviews were analyzed and coded to identify commonalities, shared

experiences, and differences among the support staff employees, enabling the researcher

to describe the experiences of this employee group in a Learning College. All interview

participants received a $10 gift card to the college dining services as a thank you for their

time and effort.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Data analysis in an adapted phenomenological study such as this one requires

careful and thorough detailed analysis and interpretation by the researcher. The process is

primarily inductive reasoning, as the researcher must form generalizations from a number

of single individual experiences. These generalizations comprise the "composite textural

descriptions" and "composite structural descriptions" Moustakas (1994) identified as the

outcomes of a phenomenological study (p. 104).

In order to complete the typological analysis in this study, the researcher

combined both the questionnaire results and interview results. The process for

accomplishing this, according to Moustakas (1994), involves "horizontaling" or

assigning every comment or response an equal value in the data, extracting the meaning

from the horizonatalized data, "clustering" the meanings into categories, developing from

these categories the "textural descriptions of the experience," and finally creating the

"meanings and essences of the phenomenon" (pp. 118-119). This was accomplished

following the typological methodology described by Hatch (2002).

To accomplish this process of horizontaling and analysis, the researcher compiled

all questionnaire data in a master spreadsheet by reviewing and annotating individual

responses, looking for persistent themes, recurring ideas and experiences, common

language, and other examples of shared or common experiences, following Hatch's (2002) recommendations to seek patterns, relationships, and themes in the data (pp. 155-156). Additionally, the researcher carefully read, annotated, and compiled in the master spreadsheet the transcriptions of all interviews, looking for themes, ideas, experiences, and common language found in the questionnaire analysis, as well as new and more in-depth themes that arose in the interviews. These annotations and analyses were completed within the framework of the three research questions posed by this study. This process was repeated and refined through several iterations. The themes and commonalities were coded and compiled into a master table organized by research questions. Once the master table was constructed, the researcher returned to the questionnaire data and transcripts to refine the search and identify all examples and data that fit the themes. Once the master table was developed and completed, the volume of data required separate tables for each of the research questions. This process of review and refinement of the data included continual analysis until the main conclusions and interpretations were determined.

In addition to the comprehensive analysis of the combined questionnaire and interview data described above, the researcher provided a general summary of the questionnaire responses, including individual demographic data.

<div align="center">Pilot Study</div>

The researcher has conducted a pilot study in the same setting in which the dissertation study will occur. Questionnaires were sent to 15 support staff employees, five from each of the college's three divisions to ensure the most representative group

possible for the pilot study. Eleven of the 15 questionnaires were returned for a 73%

return rate. The researcher analyzed the responses according to criteria described in the

Participant Selection section of this chapter. Invitations to participate in interviews were

issued to the three individuals with the highest score on the selection criteria. Two

declined, so two additional invitations were issued to the next highest scoring individuals.

Two interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. All of the safeguards and

checks were conducted in the pilot study.

As a result of the pilot study, the researcher, in consultation with her dissertation

chairperson, elected to keep the questionnaire questions as they currently are with minor

language revisions. The interview questions were refined to eliminate some duplication

of interpretation among the interview participants and to encourage deeper expression

from the participants. The researcher found the opportunity to practice with a small group

to be invaluable in preparation for the dissertation study.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology used in investigating the problem of how

support staff employees in a Learning College understand their role in supporting and

enhancing learning and how well they apply the concepts of a Learning College in their

day-to-day work. The researcher conducted a qualitative study, using an adapted

phenomenological approach, of these employees and their experiences. The data were

collected using both questionnaire and interview processes, and were analyzed using a

typological methodology. This methodology allowed the researcher to review and

analyze the data through numerous iterations, ensuring the most comprehensive picture of the support staff employee experience in a Learning College.

The findings discussed in chapter 4 will demonstrate the breadth and depth of the role of support staff in a Learning College, while also indicating some of the limitations of these employees' understandings of the concept. These findings were based on participants' descriptions of their experiences in both the questionnaire and the interviews, yielding a richer, and more meaningful description of the support staff experience. In addition to the findings related to the three research questions, chapter 4 will discuss several overarching findings that cross the questions and provide greater understanding of how support staff employees perceive their roles.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

Introduction

The researcher conducted this study following the methodology and process outlined in chapter 3 of this document. The researcher sent questionnaires to the identified support staff population at Anne Arundel Community College and conducted in-depth interviews with support staff employees identified by the selection criteria. Data were analyzed following the typological methodology described by Hatch (2002).

To appreciate fully the meanings of the data gleaned from the questionnaire and interview participants, it is important to understand the context in which the participants worked and in which this study took place. A brief description of Anne Arundel Community College's journey to becoming a Learning College will provide a more comprehensive picture of that context.

Context for the Study

Anne Arundel Community College, a fully accredited public 2-year community college, is the largest single campus community college in Maryland. Established in 1961, the college has experienced significant growth since then. Originally conceived primarily as a 2-year transfer institution, and following the pattern of many community colleges formed in the 1960s and 1970s (Dougherty, 1994), Anne Arundel Community College has evolved in the 21st century to become a comprehensive community college, offering 85 associate degrees and 91 career credit certificates, and enrolling 54,970 credit and noncredit students in over 2,800 courses in FY2006 at four major campus locations and over 100 off-campus sites (Anne Arundel Community College, 2006, p. 1).

Approximately 64% of the college's FY2006 82.7 million-dollar budget was committed

directly to instruction-related expenditures (Anne Arundel Community College, 2006, p.

6). As it approaches its 50th anniversary, the college is under the leadership of its fifth

president, Dr. Martha A. Smith.

A Traditional Community College

Anne Arundel Community College was not always a Learning College. Prior to

1994, Anne Arundel was a budget-controlled institution. Leadership based all decisions

and initiatives on whether or not the state and county funded budgets were sufficient. The

strongest focus was on capital projects rather than strategic planning. As one

administrator present during the 1980s and early 1990s described it, "the college's goals

were important, not student goals" (Anonymous, personal communication, September 11,

2007).

The earliest discussions of focusing on teaching and learning appeared in 1994 as

a part of the college's self-study report for its accreditation with the Middle States

Commission on Colleges and Schools. In this report, the self-study committee

recommended, and the college endorsed, the need to (a) increase the college's emphasis

on teaching and learning, (b) develop outcomes and assessments for general education

courses, (c) collect data on instructional assessment techniques, and (d) review the

college mission for thoroughness and understanding by all members of the college

community (Anne Arundel Community College, 1994a).

A New Emphasis on Teaching and Learning

Within six months of the completion of the self-study report, the college hired Dr. Martha A. Smith as its new president. Dr. Smith arrived at Anne Arundel in July 1994, charged by the Board of Trustees to establish a new vision for the college. She was already deep in thought on the concept of a learning organization when she arrived, having recently been studying Senge's works (Martha A. Smith, PhD, personal communication, August 9, 2007). The emerging vision statement Dr. Smith brought to Anne Arundel Community College was presented in draft form in August 1994 to the members of the college's Academic Forum, which includes all faculty and administrators as well as representatives of the professional and support staff constituency group. Within three months, the Academic Forum and Dr. Smith had engaged in discussions around the vision, approving the final version:

> Anne Arundel Community College is a premier learning
> community whose graduates are among the best-prepared citizens
> and workers worldwide. (Anne Arundel Community College,
> 1994b, Academic Forum Minutes, p. 2)

During the first year, the college began establishing and implementing strategies to help it move toward its new vision. By the fall of 1995, the college foundation began funding for a Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, developed under a charge from Dr. Smith, to find ways to support the new vision. Faculty and staff visited other teaching and learning centers, assessed current faculty needs, and designed the concept and implementation plan for a state of the art center and resource for curriculum and instructional development.

By January 1996, the college had drafted its new 5-year strategic plan,

2001@aacc.qual.edu, the first strategic plan in its history with an emphasis on teaching

and learning. The college enhanced the vision statement to include students in addition to

graduates and changed the term worldwide to "of the world" (Anne Arundel Community

College, 1996). This strategic plan also included a revised mission and philosophy

statement that began as follows: "With teaching as its central mission" (Anne Arundel

Community College, 1996, p. v). It is important to note that this strategic plan also

included seven new strategic priorities, one of which was teaching and learning:

> Enhance the quality of teaching and learning in response to the new and
> changing demands of our community by: (3.1) continuously improving the
> teaching and learning function, (3.2) developing and improving courses
> and curricula, and (3.3) meeting the needs of students in special programs
> or with special instructional needs. (Anne Arundel Community College,
> 1996, pp. 4-5)

In fall 1995, the president and college leadership formed the Outcomes

Assessment Team for Student Success (OATSS) to begin assessing learning outcomes, an

activity in which this college had not engaged prior to this time. In the early years, the

team focused primarily on defining terms, assessing best practices nationally, and making

recommendations to the president and vice presidents for policy changes (Anne Arundel

Community College, 1998, p. 2).

Early in 1996, the president announced what would be the first of several major

realignments of the organization to make it more responsive to both internal and external

forces and align more effectively with the new vision. Perhaps the most significant

components of this realignment combined student affairs and academic affairs to

reinforce the commitment to student success and created a new vice president position for

continuing education and workforce development. This move elevated noncredit and continuing education to an equal status and included administrative representation with the credit academic departments. This change marked the beginning of a new college approach that "learning is learning is learning" and "a student is a student is a student" (Smith & Meyer, 2003, p. 2). The three guiding principles for the college were as follows: "students are first, always seek to improve and get better, and we are a learning community" (Martha A. Smith, PhD, personal communication, August 7, 2007).

Numerous other college-wide initiatives were put into place between 1996 and 1998, such as the Designs for Learning Project which "funds faculty, both individually and in teams, to design innovative instructional strategies and alternative pedagogies appropriate to the college's learners and its learning programs" (Smith & Meyer, 2003, p. 5). The OATSS team in 1998 assumed responsibility for developing a significant campus-wide initiative in the assessment of learning outcomes. Also in 1998, the college started the Online Learning Academy, with financial support behind it, to encourage faculty to develop learning opportunities using an online delivery methodology. The college's first learning community of students began during this time and included developmental reading, developmental English, and sociology courses. In addition, the college developed a new flexible faculty job description that allowed faculty members to meet their teaching load requirements in a variety of ways, including noncredit and contract training teaching assignments, reemphasizing the "learning is learning is learning" philosophy.

In early 1999, the second major realignment took place, primarily reorganizing the academic departments to "simplify and streamline the organization of academic affairs and provide the means to be responsive to emerging needs. . . the need for local autonomy. . . and the importance of flexibility, responsiveness and accessibility" (Anne Arundel Community College, 1999a, p. 2).

Following this realignment, the college embarked on several major projects and initiatives clearly directed at a learning-focused approach. Perhaps the most significant was the creation of the Learning Response Team (LRT) to replace the President's Cabinet. According to Smith and Meyer (2003), the LRT

> places focus on administrative and management structures and systems that enable the college to meet the new and emerging learning needs in a timely and effective manner. . . set the tone that everyone is responsible for the success of our learners. (p. 3)

This team, comprised of key administrators representing every functional area of the institution, considers and addresses new ideas, initiatives, and other major college issues from the perspective of the entire institution, with a careful eye on the impact of any decision upon student learning and student success.

The concept of Learning Design Teams (LDT) was a component of the focus on learning and the Learning Response Team's responsibilities. The LRT appointed Learning Design Teams to develop plans and implement new initiatives that the LRT had approved. Team members included faculty, staff, administrators, and even stakeholders external to the college. The first LDT was established in February 1999 principally because Maryland's hospitality and tourism industry repeatedly approached the college asking for a comprehensive solution for the industry's growing needs. This design team

researched, planned, created, recommended, and implemented a new way for Anne

Arundel Community College to meet its community needs, i.e., the "institute model"

(Anne Arundel Community College, 1999b). The Hospitality, Culinary Arts, and

Tourism (HCAT) Institute was the first institute formed at Anne Arundel, and it fully

embraced the "learning is learning is learning" philosophy of the college by putting the

needs of the students first, whether they were seeking degrees, skills enhancement,

employee training, apprenticeships, credit, or noncredit classes. The institute offered a

one-stop point for every student or business in the hospitality industry that might want to

access college courses, programs, and services. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation

of the Anne Arundel Community College institute model.
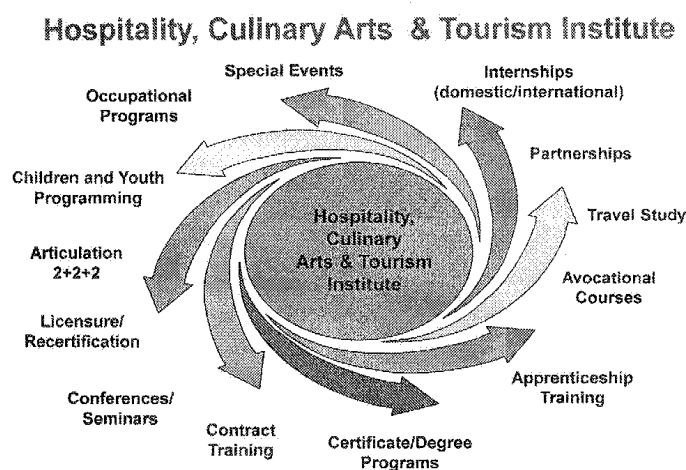
Figure 1. Graphic representation of the Anne Arundel Community College institute model. Designed by Anne Arundel Community College. Used with permission.

A Different Institution

Concurrent with these initiatives, the college began its 1999 Periodic Review

Report for the Middle States Accreditation, preparing a report that noted numerous

notable changes since the accreditation study five years previously. One of the most

significant changes was in the college's mission statement, changing from "With teaching

as its central mission" to "With learning as its central mission" (Anne Arundel

Community College, 1999a, p. 4). This report noted many other changes, including (a) a

transformation from a traditional teaching-centered organization to a learning-centered

organization; (b) an increase in the use of instructional technology; (c) more and varied

learning assessment techniques; (d) reinforcement of the three guiding principles

(students are first, always seek to improve, and we are a learning community); (e) a

reflection of the goal of meeting learning needs for all sectors of the community; (f) a

college-wide commitment to learning no matter what form it takes; (g) the

implementation of a student success course; (h) a completely revamped strategic and

budget planning process with learning at the center; and finally, (i) consideration of the

Baldridge criteria as a systematic assessment template for the college.

The third major realignment of the college's structure cemented the institution's

focus on learning. In the fall of 2000, Dr. Smith announced the realignment of the college

into three major divisions and changed the titles of the vice presidents to reflect the

college's central vision and mission of learning. Going forward, the college would have a

vice president for learning, a vice president for learner support services, and a vice

president for learner resources. By merging the credit and the non-credit divisions into

one Division of Learning, Dr. Smith reinforced further the idea that learning is

everyone's responsibility and sent a strong message to all college stakeholders, both

internal and external, that Anne Arundel was serious about learning and meeting the

needs of all of its learners (Martha A. Smith, PhD, personal communication, August 9, 2007). These numerous systemic changes, along with several others, signaled Anne Arundel Community College's transformation into a college with a learning-centered approach.

Becoming a Learning College

Anne Arundel Community College's journey did not end in 2000 with the setting of a learning focus, but rather continued inexorably toward becoming a Learning College. In 2001 at a Learning Response Team retreat, the college leadership began to discuss moving forward to become a Learning College by asking, "What is the single most important thing we should do to advance AACC as a Learning College?" (Anne Arundel Community College, 2001a). The response was to take the assessment and documentation of learning outcomes to an institutional level, adopting one of O'Banion's key principles of a Learning College. The college established a full-time senior administrative position, director of learning outcomes assessment, to institutionalize the learning outcomes movement and make it part of the college's daily operations (Anne Arundel Community College, 2001b). In conjunction with this, the LRT established the Systems and Structure Improvement Workgroup (SSIW) to address college governance and operating systems to streamline processes, systems, work, and communication (Anne Arundel Community College, 2001c).

A year later at a second retreat, the Learning Response Team reviewed various Learning College assessment instruments and established a goal to come to consensus on what characteristics of Anne Arundel Community College are Learning College

characteristics, based on Krakauer's (2000) *Criteria for a Learning College.* This goal

was to be an area of focus for two to three years. Later in the spring of 2002, the Strategic

Planning Council (SPC) benchmarked the college against Krakauer's 100 criteria,

evaluating Anne Arundel on a scale of "no evidence" to "fully implemented." By

applying gap analysis techniques, the SPC identified where the college's existing

strategic plan needed to realign with the criteria for a Learning College (Smith & Meyer,

2003). The college leadership encouraged the entire college community to participate in a

survey to evaluate how well the college's strategic goals and priorities related to

Krakauer's Learning College criteria (see Appendix K for survey questions and results).

The LRT held another retreat in June 2002 to prioritize the characteristics of a

Learning College for Anne Arundel Community College. The team arrived at a

consensus and presented the Learning College concept to the college community at the

fall orientation in August 2002. Mark Milliron, then president of the League for

Innovation and a well-known advocate of the Learning College concept, was the keynote

speaker at this orientation. Additionally, the college offered five facilitated workshops

during the orientation days to discuss and formalize the Learning College concept with

the college community. Two months later, the vice president for learning made a special

presentation about the Learning College to the members of the college's Professional and

Support Staff Organization (PSSO) at one of the group's general membership meetings.

That same month the college distributed to all employees the *AACC Work Tenets*, a

booklet stressing the spirit of community and the college's vision, mission, values, and

focus on learning in everything the college does.

Ongoing Developments

Once again, Anne Arundel Community College did not stop forging ahead when it became a Learning College. The college was one of the League for Innovation in the Community College's Champion Colleges in its Learning College Project and now holds one of the 20 highly selective positions as a member of the Board of Directors of the League for Innovation in the Community College. In 2004, Anne Arundel was the first community college to go through the intensive self-study for accreditation after the implementation of the Middle States Association's new standards stressing learning outcomes (Anne Arundel Community College, 2004). Additionally, in 2004, Anne Arundel Community College became one of only 14 colleges working with Alfred and Carter and the Consortium for Community College Development in the Strategic Horizon Project designed to enhance community college development. The college now has five fully functional institutes, built on the original HCAT model. In 2008, the college is in the process of reassessing for currency and relevancy the core learning competencies embedded in the college's programming. At the same time, the Strategic Planning Council has undertaken the challenge of evaluating the college's institutional assessment measures to ensure that learning is being measured and reported at the class, program, and institutional level (Smith, 2008).

Throughout this journey of more than 14 years, Anne Arundel Community College has moved forward toward its vision of providing the best-prepared citizens and workers of the world by placing learning at the center and core of all that it does. This vision and learning-centered approach is widely known among faculty and administrators

as they serve on the Learning Response Team, Learning Design Teams, governance committees, and outcomes task forces, and as they evaluate student learning. The questions this study asked center on whether the remaining college staff, specifically the support staff, are as well-informed and active in placing learning first in their daily work as are the faculty and administration.

Data Collection Process

Data collection in this study followed the design described in chapter 3. This design consisted of an initial questionnaire of all Anne Arundel Community College support staff to determine their basic knowledge of the Learning College concept and to gather information about their daily work tasks. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the support staff experiences, attitudes, and beliefs, the researcher followed the questionnaire with in-depth interviews of selected respondents based on an evaluation of their questionnaire responses. This design allowed the researcher to collect both breadth and depth of data on the support staff experience in a Learning College.

The initial questionnaire took place between March 19, 2008, and April 21, 2008, followed by an analysis and coding of the questionnaire responses to identify potential interview participants. The questionnaire invitation (see Appendix D), informed consent (see Appendix E), and subsequent questionnaire (see Appendix A for a copy of questionnaire questions) were sent electronically using Zoomerang® to the population of 224 potential respondents at the college, excluding only those groups indicated in chapter 3 with potential conflict of interest or perceived coercion. One employee requested the pen and paper version of the questionnaire. The researcher sent two electronic reminders

to the respondents during the four-week period the questionnaire was active (see

Appendix L). The researcher had originally planned for the questionnaire to remain open

for two weeks but decided to extend the duration by two weeks to increase participation

and to make up for the college's spring break, which occurred during the time the

questionnaire was in distribution. At the closing date for the questionnaire, 82 complete

responses were received, a response rate of 37%. Partially completed questionnaires were

not included in the study data as the respondents did not necessarily answer all of the

questions related to the study's research questions. Though numerous individuals did not

respond at all to the questionnaire, only two individuals officially declined after reading

the informed consent document. The researcher sent a transcript of individual

questionnaire responses to all participants who requested it (see Appendix F). After the

closing date of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a random drawing, and one

participating employee received a $25 gift certificate to a local establishment, as

prescribed in the study design documents.

Using the criteria for interview participant selection outlined in chapter 3, and to

achieve the interview sample size between 10 and 15, the researcher identified 15

questionnaire respondents and sent invitations to participate in interviews (see Appendix

H). Initially 11 individuals agreed to participate in interviews conducted in May and June

2008. To strengthen the data, the researcher invited an additional five individuals to

participate in interviews. Fourteen support staff employees actually participated in the

interviews, representing a positive response rate of 70% of those invited to be

interviewed. The researcher assigned interview participants random pseudonyms and

used those names throughout the interview and transcript process to ensure anonymity and confidentiality regarding their responses. The interviews were transcribed by a professional court reporter and sent to the participants to review, edit, and approve prior to inclusion in the study (see Appendix I). After each participant returned an approved interview transcript, the researcher sent him or her $10 gift card to the college dining services as a thank you for participating in the interviews.

Data Analysis

The researcher followed a typological methodology described by Hatch (2002) to analyze the data collected in both the questionnaires and the interviews. The nine steps in this methodology are as follows:

> Identify typologies to be analyzed; read the data, marking entries related to your typologies; read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in entries on a summary sheet; look for patterns, relationships, themes within typologies; read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of the patterns; decide if your patterns are supported by the data, and search the data for nonexamples of your patterns; look for relationships among the patterns identified; write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations; and select data excerpts that support your generalizations. (p. 153)

The researcher first identified typologies, organized by research question, that would most likely occur within the data for the questionnaire and the interviews. These typologies built upon three main sources of theory about the Learning College, O'Banion (1997), Krakauer (2001), and Harvey-Smith (2005), as identified in chapter 2. Additionally, the researcher included other typologies found to be common perceptions

about the Learning College to determine whether these perceptions appeared in the study

data (see Appendix M for typology lists).

To begin the data sorting, the researcher designed an Excel workbook for the

questionnaires and one for the interviews. Both workbooks featured separate worksheets

for each of the three research questions. Columns were labeled with the typologies as

identified in step one. The researcher first read and sorted the data into the appropriate

typologies by highlighting data according to each research question. During a subsequent

reading, the researcher copied and pasted individual responses into the worksheets,

organized by typology and research question. A sample section of the typology

spreadsheets for the questionnaire and interviews is included in Appendix N.

Once all of the data were recorded by typology, the researcher reread and

analyzed these data to identify the main ideas within each typology, creating a summary

sheet of all the main points of the data. Using these main points as a starting point, the

researcher then reread the data searching for patterns and themes within each typology,

with the data still separated by their relationship to the research questions. The researcher

then assessed these patterns and themes against the data to identify which were supported

by the data. Data entries were coded according to the patterns and themes by entering

unique identifying codes for each pattern or theme (see Appendix O). Patterns and

themes not supported by the data were set aside as nonconforming data and are discussed

later in this chapter.

Once the researcher had identified the patterns and themes with sufficient support,

she analyzed the data again to determine if there were any relationships among them.

Identified relationships are discussed in the sections of this chapter addressing each specific research question. The final steps in the analysis following the typological methodology required stating each generalization about the data in a single statement (see Appendix P). This comprehensive method of analysis required the researcher to reread, review, and analyze the data numerous times, resulting in a thorough understanding of both the details and the main points supported, and those not supported, by the data.

The following sections report the findings, patterns, and themes in two parts. The first section includes some supporting demographic data as well as general findings, patterns, and themes that are not specific to any single research question. Following the demographics and general findings are the study findings, patterns, and themes related specifically to each research question.

<div align="center">General Findings, Patterns, and Themes</div>

The term support staff covers a wide variety of positions within a community college environment, even though the researcher defined the term more narrowly for this study. It is important, therefore, to understand the composition of the respondents in this questionnaire to further the understanding of the implications of the data.

Participant Demographics

Of the 82 questionnaire respondents, 85% were female and 15% male (Question 4). Ages ranged from 22 to over 65, with 44% between 51 and 64 and 39% between 35 and 50 (Question 5). Fifty percent of the respondents worked for the college between 6 and 15 years, the period during which Anne Arundel Community College became a Learning College (Question 3).

Though the researcher selected interview participants based on their questionnaire responses and not on demographics, it is interesting to note that the interview participant demographics were similar, though not exact, to those of the questionnaire. Thus, of the 14 interviewees, 13 were female and 1 male. Eight of the interview participants ranged in age between 35 and 50, while five were between 51 and 64. Seventy-one percent of all interviewees worked for the college between 6 and 15 years

Two factors of note indicate the distribution of participants in the study was representative of the breadth of support staff functions at the college. First, the questionnaire respondents were fairly well distributed on the continuum regarding the time they spend interacting with students; 41% reported they spend less than 25% of their time interacting with students, while 28% reported they spend over 75% of their time interacting with students. This range in experience was similar in the interview respondents. Second, the respondents were fairly evenly distributed within the eight job categories established at the college as indicated in Table 2 (questionnaire question 7). Every job category was well represented in both the questionnaire respondents and interview participants.

Table 2

Distribution of Questionnaire Respondents by Job Category

Support Staff Job Category	Questionnaire Respondents	Interview Participants
Instructional department support, program assistants	10	3
Library, distance, testing, bookstore, dining services	12	1
Facilities, grounds, maintenance, plant	7	1
Business office, accounting, mail, printing	9	2

Tech support (IS), technology, off-site, media	3	1
Student services, ISC, response center	9	5
Administrative assistants for 1-2 executives	15	1
Other	15	1

First General Finding: Everyone Plays a Role

The first finding and theme of significance in both the questionnaire and interview data was a significant number of respondents believe everyone in the college plays a role in supporting and enhancing student learning. Ninety-three percent of the questionnaire respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Every AACC employee plays a role in helping our students learn, no matter what the job is" (Question 11). Interviewees also made comments indicating they believed this statement to be true. Responses such as "every person that works on our campus and works towards making our campus what it is has a direct role in helping students learn" (Amy) and "every staff member plays a role in a student's learning whether directly or indirectly" (Anna) demonstrate this belief among the participants.

At first glance, this commonly held belief among support staff employees reflects the literature that called for campus-wide involvement in a successful Learning College (Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2005; Krakauer, 2000; McPhail, I, Heacock, & Linck, 2001; O'Banion, 1997). However, as will be shown in the findings for research question two, further probing of the participants' comments indicated that they were equating learning with the college's well-known commitment to the concepts of *students first* and *student success*. As Alex stated, "I would not normally think of my job in that way [supporting learning], but in general I help students (and faculty) with computer,

website, or password trouble and that helps them be successful." Amy strongly agreed that support staff play an important role in helping students learn, and she espoused a strong commitment to student success. However, when queried about what this meant in detail, she noted that she did not see how any of her work affected student learning. Numerous respondents seemed to interchange the use of the phrases *student learning* with students first or student success, possibly indicating confusion with the explicit meanings and applications of these phrases in the college. While student success is sometimes considered a component or indicator of student learning*,* and thus the interchanging of terms might be appropriate, further probing with the interview participants found that they generally perceived students first as a customer service quality, meaning taking care of the student comes before other tasks. This concept is discussed further in the discrepant findings section of this chapter and led the researcher to conclude that support staff, and perhaps others at the college, may be unclear on the precise focus of the college.

Indeed, the commonly held statement that everyone plays a role in student learning is more indicative of the diffusion throughout the college community of the importance of every job and every individual to the success of the students. This study's data clearly showed that the support staff employees of the institution have adopted the importance of widespread involvement in student success as part of the organizational culture of Anne Arundel Community College.

Second General Finding: Knowledge of Concepts

The commitment to students first and student success is well known by the college community at Anne Arundel Community College and, as noted above, seems to be infused into the organizational culture. However, this study uncovered some uncertainty about how or where employees learned about such a commitment, along with a desire to know more about the college's commitment to learning. Some respondents reported seeing the phrases students first and student success in publications or hearing them at meetings. The more common responses took the form of "we take it for granted" (Anna), "I've heard it around" (Wendy), or "I honestly don't know" (Nan). The questionnaire responses clearly indicated the desire among support staff to know more about the Learning College concept at Anne Arundel Community College, as evidenced by 67% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, "I would like to know more about the Learning College and how my job fits into that concept at Anne Arundel Community College" (Question 29).

Third General Finding: Professional Development

Another general finding of this study is the concept of ongoing professional development for staff and all employees. Respondents discussed this concept at length, including what Anne Arundel offers as well as numerous suggestions for improving and enhancing the institution's professional development program. Many statements were complimentary of the college's commitment to professional development as evidenced by the fully functioning Institutional Professional Development (IPD) department, offering a wide range of topics and classes that help support staff, as well as other employees,

support student learning and do their jobs more effectively. Respondents believed that the proactive and positive approach the college takes toward professional development for all staff is reflective of the commitment to continuous learning for everyone.

Fourth General Finding: Feelings of Pride

Finally, though the study was not investigating respondent feelings about how their work at the college supported and enhanced learning, all but one of the interviewees expressed feeling good or proud that their work helps students succeed. Regardless of the position of the individual, from van driver to counter clerk, program assistant, receptionist, student services assistant, and data clerk, these individuals made statements such as, "It makes me feel very good when I know that after a student has left, they're not uneasy or frustrated from the visit. Anything I can do to help somebody else have the same [positive] perspective on education" (Anna), or "It means a lot to me to be able to help these students. You are talking about their lives" (Jennifer), or "I'm not somewhere where students are learning, but I still feel a part of it. I take pride in what I'm doing to help them" (Joan).

Though these four themes based on the findings are not related specifically to the three research questions, they do indicate the pervasiveness of certain feelings and attitudes among the participating members of the support staff constituency group. chapter 5 will discuss the implications of these findings and themes in conjunction with the findings on the research questions presented below.

Findings, Patterns, and Themes for the First Research Question

What are support staff employees' understandings of the concepts and principles

of a Learning College in a large mid-Atlantic community college that is well-known

nationally as a Learning College and reflects learning centeredness in its vision and

mission and philosophy. The data for this first research question showed a wide diversity

of understanding among support staff employees at the college. The original data from

both the questionnaire and the interviews were sorted into 10 initial typologies related to

the first question (see Appendix M for a complete listing). These typologies related to

question one represent various definitions and meanings applied to the term Learning

College, such as "a college that helps students prepare for a career" or "a college where

everyone learns all the time." After the initial coding of the data into these 10 typologies,

the researcher reviewed the typologies to clarify and look for patterns and themes. She

eliminated one typology with no responses ("teaches the practical application of

learning"), leaving nine summary typologies. Table 3 shows the remaining typologies

and the numbers of questionnaire and interview responses coded into each typology,

supporting the three findings for the first research question.

Table 3

Questionnaire and Interview Responses by Typology

Patterns and Themes in RQ1 Typologies	Questionnaire	Interviews
Learning is a focus	13	7
The faculty and staff are learning new things to help students.	6	6
It's like every other college; all colleges are Learning Colleges.	12	1
Faculty and staff learn from the students too.	6	2
Everyone learns all the time.	16	6

It helps students prepare for a job or career.	5	2
It provides all the resources to ensure students learn.	7	7
It gives an opportunity for everyone to go to college no matter who they are.	11	6
It teaches students to apply in real life what they learn in class.	3	0
Other responses	7	2

Note. The total number of responses on the table exceeds the number of respondents. This is reflective of some respondents who mentioned more than one concept as part of their definitions of the Learning College.

Interview participants discussed their understandings of the meaning in detail and sometimes at more than one point in the interview. Several made comments such as "uncertain" (Nan), "just guessing" (Robin), or "I don't really know, but I have heard it around" (Wendy), indicating conjecture in their responses. Anna commented that she believed "we just take it for granted we're a Learning College." Wendy stated that she had become more interested in it after completing the questionnaire and had done an Internet search to learn more about the meaning of the term.

Deeper analysis of the data in these nine typologies found support for three major findings and themes regarding the support staff employees' understanding of the Learning College.

A Learning College Makes Lifelong Learning Available to Everyone

By far the most common response from both questionnaire and interview respondents to the question "What does the term Learning College mean to you?" was to describe the Learning College as an institution where everyone is learning. Common responses included statements such as "not just the students are learning" (Louise), "everybody is learning something one way or the other" (Pam), "you're always learning something new every day" (Allison), and "it's a two-way street; we all have to learn"

(Sandy). In addition to the direct responses to this question defining a Learning College as a place where everyone learns, respondents interspersed throughout their comments various beliefs about lifelong learning, the importance of staff learning in addition to students, and the need for everyone to learn. That the importance of continuous learning is a strongly held belief was obvious from the questionnaire responses. It was even clearer as several of the interview participants expressed a strong passion for working in and being part of an organization that is so clearly committed to learning for everyone.

The data reflected three key components of the concept that a Learning College is one that supports learning for everyone. The first component is that learning is important for everyone, regardless of age, economic background, gender, educational background, or even past successes or failures in education. As Carla phrased it, "it's not just for the average student that's 18 to 30 . . . it's pretty much the whole diverse environment." Staff described learning opportunities for specific groups such as senior citizens, businesses, young people who do not know what they want to do with their lives, people trying to get new jobs, citizens trying to better their lives, and the whole community of Anne Arundel County.

The second component of the importance of continuous learning was college employees need to learn all the time. Though numerous respondents addressed this concept, perhaps the best summary statements of this concept were made by Jennifer and Elizabeth: "The Learning College means that everyone involved with the college, students, staff, instructors, administrators are all continuously learning and progressing with education" (Jennifer) and "We are all learners. We are all learning at every level,

student, staff, faculty, seniors, [and] administrators" (Elizabeth). Several respondents

discussed how college employees could learn from students as well as how students

could learn from them. Other respondents commented on the need for the college to learn

from the students so the institution could better serve student needs. This belief supports

both O'Banion's (1997) and Krakauer's (2000) theories of the Learning College in that

the students' needs are central to how the college operates and that students are active

participants in their own learning.

Coupled with the importance of learning, these first two components revealed the

third concept of universal accessibility. Study participants clearly believed a Learning

College is accessible to everyone in the community as evidenced in statements such as

"anybody through [sic] the community can come to Anne Arundel and earn an

education" (Hannah), "it's an all-inclusive concept" (Joan), "a college that provides

learning to all types of students—diversity" (Judy), and "not only for white collar but

blue collar workers as well" (Oliver). This accessibility of learning to everyone seemed to

be a critical part of the respondents' understandings of a Learning College.

Though this first theme around support staff understanding of a Learning College

does not represent one of the key components of the Learning College theoretical

framework for this study, it shows that support staff employees see their college as

making learning available and accessible for everyone, including employees.

Learning Is a Priority and a Focus in a Learning College

The second major finding in this study ties closely to the first. Indeed, not only

did support staff believe that a Learning College makes learning available and accessible

for everyone, but they believe that learning is the primary focus of a Learning College. As Amy so clearly stated, "We are in a college where learning is our primary goal, rather than degrees." This theme fits within the theoretical framework for Learning College theory in that student learning is at the core of all institutional decisions and activities (Harvey-Smith, 2005; Krakauer, 2000; McPhail, I, Heacock, & Linck, 2001; O'Banion, 1997).

This theme was particularly interesting as almost every interview respondent stated in some way that learning is a priority at Anne Arundel Community College, but only two were aware of how they knew that learning was indeed a priority. As several respondents commented, the belief is well known, but they did not have any recollection of being told or directly hearing about it. Such a widespread understanding indicates that learning as a priority has become a part of the organizational culture of the college. More importantly, it supports Harvey-Smith's (2005) seventh principle of the Learning College, i.e., an organizational culture that is both open and responsive to change and learning.

A Learning College Provides Many Resources to Support Learning

A third common thread in the support staff understanding of the Learning College concept was that of providing resources to support learning. The data sorted into two primary groups on resources. One group saw resources as services such as admissions, advising, financial aid, library, and other more traditional services colleges generally have available for their students. The other approach was to see the support staff employees themselves, across the board, as resources that support and enhance learning.

The concept of providing resources for learning is clearly part of Learning College theory, specifically included in Krakauer's (2000) criteria. She noted in her seventh criterion two sub-criteria that addressed resources. Interestingly, Krakauer's first criterion addresses the availability of resources as do the primary responses among the study participants. The second set of responses from the participants supports her second criterion—providing accurate information to learners.

Traditional resources to support learning. Though the questionnaire did not directly address what resources the college provides to support and facilitate student learning, several respondents defined the Learning College as "a place where students have access to various services and options, in combination with excellent support, in order to achieve success" (Robin) or a college that "provides students with resources to aid in learning" (Evelyn).

The interview respondents clearly spoke to the subject of resources as well. Several respondents referred to traditional college student services as examples of resources. This response reflects that support staff across the campus are knowledgeable about how to get students the help they need, whether it is being admitted, tested, registered as new students or getting tutorial services, library assistance, or administrative assistance should problems arise later in their time at Anne Arundel.

A common thread among the responses was the availability of resources at all college locations and via distance learning, referencing new initiatives such as Weekend College and increased accessibility of online services through the Virtual Campus,

supporting the Learning College definition of learning "anyway, any place, anytime"

(O'Banion, 1997, p.47)

Though most respondents both to the questionnaire and in interviews stated a

general knowledge of the college's resources, many expressed a desire to learn more

about all of the different options at the college so they could help students more

effectively.

Support staff as resources to support learning. The second way that numerous

respondents described resources was specific to their role as providers of information. As

previously noted, the study participants believed everyone has a role in supporting

learning. Also noteworthy is that 88% of the questionnaire respondents, and all but one of

the interview participants, believe that support staff employees specifically play a major

role in supporting student learning (Question 13). The data behind this concept are

discussed as part of the findings for the second research question.

Findings, Patterns, and Themes for the Second Research Question

How do these support staff employees perceive their roles and actions as

supporting and enhancing student learning in a Learning College?

Questionnaire respondents were asked to identify the three most common tasks

they undertook in their regular job duties that they believed supported and enhanced

student learning (Question 33). This yielded over 200 specific tasks that the researcher

sorted and coded into 10 different typologies. A complete list of the initial typologies for

research question two is in Appendix M. As with the first research question, the

researcher reread and re-categorized the typologies into seven categories. The typologies

"I do not do anything that supports or enhances learning" and "Other" were eliminated in the second reading as the data were considered discrepant. A third typology, "It's everyone's role to support and enhance learning," was discussed as a general finding and not specific to this research question. Table 4 provides a listing of the summary typologies questionnaire respondents identified as supporting learning, showing the prevalence of activities in providing information, answering questions, and solving problems as well as ensuring students have access to resources they need.

Table 4

Summary of Support Staff Activities That Support Learning

Summary of Activities	Questionnaire Responses
Help students learn to do things for themselves, act independently, take care of themselves.	17
Serve as a role model so students learn to behave and act in an appropriate and professional manner.	9
Create a positive impression and picture of AACC so that students will keep coming and not give up or leave unhappy.	5
Assist students to find the information, solving problems, and answering questions throughout the college so they can be successful.	81
Listen to students to provide support, advice, and counseling they want or need in either academic or personal matters.	13
Provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for students so they can learn.	9
Provide resources that support learning for students including staff support, library, technology, distance learning, etc.	36

Once categorized, the data showed two themes related to research question two. As noted in the previous section, respondents did perceive that they play a role in

supporting student learning, and these two findings reflect the pattern of this role taking

two forms.

Support Staff Role Is Critical to Student Success in a Learning College

Pervasive throughout the data was the theme of support staff being the first point

of contact for most students coupled with an emphasis on how important that first contact

is for student success. This theme centered on four different aspects of how the study

participants felt they could have a positive impact on student success.

A positive impression of the college. Numerous questionnaire and interview

participants commented on the importance of the first impression the college makes on

students. Remarks such as Wendy's, "I'm going to make it easier for them and it's going

to make them come back . . . if the staff at the college do it the right way the first time,

then the student will want to come back" reflected the beliefs of participants. Support

staff stated repeatedly that ensuring students receive a positive first impression

encouraged them to come back and continue their education. These employees felt it was

their responsibility as the front lines and first points of contact to represent the college in

a positive way to students. Respondents did not see this responsibility as supporting

learning, but instead as providing students with something they needed. For example,

Amy said,

> How I treat them and respond to their needs makes and impression on
> them and that impression can make them feel either that this is a good
> college with caring employees or this is not a caring place, and it would be
> hard to learn in a place where you are not comfortable.

Wendy noted, "If things are made difficult for a student, they may never want to come

back and learn anything." Joan summarized it quite well:

Anybody that wears this gold name badge with Anne Arundel and your name on it is a representative of the college no matter what level. So you've always got to be on your best to be ready to represent it and give the students a great first experience.

Encouragement to build confidence. Several respondents noted part of the first impression, as well as later interactions with students, was to help those students feel and believe that they could succeed. Some were quick to assert that they are not advisors or counselors, indicating that they have been directed, as support staff, not to advise students about their academic courses and programs. However, the study participants clearly believed that part of their role was to encourage students, build their confidence, ease their concerns, and alleviate their fears.

They're afraid. It's new to them. They're not comfortable. They're not sure if they can even do it. . . .They're a little apprehensive. You can always encourage them and let them know that it's something that, you know, you can do it. It can be done. It's not that difficult. (Kim)

Others used phrases such as "help them get through the day" (Allison), "calm these students down . . . you have to have a more nurturing attitude when you are dealing with students" (Kim), "encouraged and supported them and listened to their anxieties and fears and frustrations" (Robin), and "mentoring a student" (Donna). Support staff saw themselves as individuals to whom students could come to for information, comfort, and encouragement, both when they first came to the college and whenever they were having problems during their time at Anne Arundel. Indeed, Joan stated that she has "formed relationships with students that have lasted to this day."

Provide information and access to resources. As noted in the findings for research question one, study participants perceived the role of support staff as one of

providing information to students, prospective students, parents, outside organizations, and the entire community. While this seems logical for receptionists, call center attendants, and others whose job is providing information, respondents clearly saw this as everyone's role. Louise, even though her job entails very little direct student contact, stated that support staff employees are the "building blocks of the entire learning process" and their primary responsibility, regardless of their job descriptions, was to "listen to them [students] and point them in the right direction." The idea of this widespread responsibility was reported by respondents from virtually every job category including groundskeepers, childcare providers, maintenance workers, records and registration support, program assistants, and executive assistants.

In conjunction with providing information was the theme of helping students find resources they needed or that could help them. Support staff members see themselves as the main conduit for students when they need help. Almost as frequently mentioned as providing information were answering questions and helping students solve problems and find what they need. Comments such as "helping them learn how to find exactly what they need on the web" (Cindy), "students get frustrated because they do not know who to contact for tutoring, testing, grade discrepancy" (Donna), and "helping them make sure they're meeting their requirements for their programs and classes" (Jennifer).

Provide a clean, safe environment for learning. Study participants also saw the support staff role as including the assurance of a positive learning environment for students. Several individuals noted specific components of the environment as support staff responsibilities including, "students don't want to see a bunch of trashy old carts or

stuff running around" (Jeff), "They make sure the bathrooms are clean . . . make sure that they [students] have the proper lighting . . . and they make sure that faculty have the proper AV equipment for teaching students" (Kim), and "students wouldn't want to come to a campus if it wasn't clean and bright and in good working order" (Jennifer). Interestingly, many of these statements came from support staff employees whose individual job descriptions have nothing to do with the physical environment of the college. An executive assistant noted that support staff members' primary role is "creating an environment where students can learn" (Elizabeth) and a support staff employee who works in a cubicle behind the scenes with virtually no student contact summed it up nicely: "If the grounds aren't safe, you can't learn. Your environment affects your learning experience. If the toilets don't flush, you can't learn because you won't want to be there" (Josie).

These four themes that ran across the participant responses (a positive impression, support and encouragement, a source of information, and a safe and clean environment) demonstrate a comprehensive role for support staff employees as the first point of contact for students and the community. The respondents clearly saw these roles as the responsibility of support staff and as critical to student success at Anne Arundel Community College.

Support Staff Help Students Learn But Do Not See It as Teaching

As previously noted, at least some study participants seemed to be interchanging the phrases student learning, students first, and student success. This was particularly evident as the participants reported that they supported student success but that they were

not really teaching students or helping them learn, yet then they gave very specific examples of students learning from them. This pattern may be related to the fact that these are support staff employees in an organization where teaching is done by faculty, a completely different job category generally held in much higher esteem than support staff within the institution. However, when the researcher probed deeper into how the support staff helped students, teaching students to do specific tasks, behave in certain ways, and become independent were clearly seen as part of the support staff roles.

Role models for real life. A clear theme reported by support staff in this study was their responsibility to serve as role models for students. This theme appeared repeatedly, including among support staff whose only contact with students might be in the dining hall, walking across campus, or coincidental meetings on campus. Much of the description of this role centered on phrases such as " how we treat students can teach them how to treat others and how to behave as an adult" (Amy), "my job is a lot of leading by example" (Joan), "something like modeling, so they can see how people work" (Cindy), " the most prominent way that I help students learn is by example and to be a good role model" (Joan), and "students learn how to treat others by watching how I treated them" (Louise).

Anna further explained this theme as being learning that takes place outside the classroom, an important concept in Learning College theory (Ewell, 1997; Flynn, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2005; O'Banion, 1997). Anna stated, "I believe they [students] learn from my actions dealing with them every day. My attitude, my work ethic, my daily responsibilities and obligations . . . lessons don't always come from a book." These

specific examples clearly show a pattern that respondents believe students learn from them, despite the oft-repeated theme that these support staff employees do not think they are teaching.

Becoming independent. Another common theme in these findings was one of helping students to become more independent and more capable of handling things on their own. The data related to this theme were closely tied to the themes of role modeling and providing information, but there were sufficient statements about helping students learn to do something on their own to support a separate finding. Support staff respondents believed that helping students gain independence "really makes them be a little more in control of their own futures" (Anna), "gives them the power to do things for themselves" (Wendy), and "might help them learn how to do that in the future and plan for their budget and everything that they need" (Louise).

The kinds of independence support staff believed they help students gain covered a wide variety of skills, many of which students would need as they continued their education. However, in addition were life skills students would need outside of and after college, such as "learn not to break the law" (Lucy), "paying bills on their own" (Louise), "checking on the web" (Wendy), and "manage their money" (Nan).

Supporting faculty. Though not as widely mentioned or discussed as the other roles, several questionnaire respondents believed that a significant role they play in supporting and enhancing student learning is played out through the support they provide faculty. Donna expressed it as "helping faculty helps students . . . if I am more supportive of faculty in that role, then I guess it helps students in some way." Several respondents

mentioned specific tasks such as putting classes into the system; preparing rosters; and

assisting with grades, student referrals, student opinion forms, and other administrative

tasks that they take care of so that faculty can have more time to help students. Indeed, as

Tiffany put it, "anything you do in the office helps the teacher do their job, or the

instructor, better, quicker, easier . . . and that helps students too."

Findings, Patterns, and Themes for the Third Research Question

Which, if any, aspects of a Learning College do these support staff employees

apply in their daily work at a community college?

The researcher designed the third research question to build upon the second and

to see if support staff employees contributed to the Learning College concepts at Anne

Arundel Community College, regardless of whether or not they understood or even knew

the meaning of the term Learning College. Research question three is primarily a further

refinement and elaboration upon question two, and as such, the same typologies were

used to organize data for question three. The typologies were further identified for

question three by their relationship to Learning College theory (see Appendix M for

complete listing). The data were coded into the same list of 24 typologies as in question

two. After reading through the data the second time, the researcher eliminated 13 of the

typologies, as there were no data to support those categories. Table 5 provides a summary

of the 11 revised data categories related to Learning College theory, showing the types of

the tasks support staff undertake in their daily jobs.

The findings for this question mirror the findings in research question two, since

the same data reflect both questions, i.e., the specific tasks that support staff undertake in

their jobs. The primary tasks these employees undertake that support learning from question two are linked to the tasks they undertake that are part of Learning College theory. Therefore, the remainder of the discussion on the study findings explores the relationships between the themes and Learning College theory.

Table 5

Support Staff Activities Coded by Learning College Concepts

Questionnaire Responses	Type of Activities	Learning College Concepts
8	Provide advice and counseling on learning options, choices, planning for lifelong learning, career, academic and personal goals	Krakauer 1.3, 1.4
62	Offer access to all learner services.	Krakauer 7.1
19	Provide assistance for learners in becoming self-directed and lifelong learners.	Krakauer 6.6 O'Banion Second Principle
1	Create substantive changes in learners	O'Banion First Principle
30	Provide accurate information on learning options, costs, etc.	Krakauer 7.2
12	Provide a safe, attractive, clean learning environment	Krakauer 7.9
1	Engage learners as full partners in the learning process	O'Banion Second Principle
8	Create and nurture an organizational culture that is both open and responsive to change and learning	Harvey-Smith Seventh Principle
3	Involve staff in streamlining and designing administrative systems	Krakauer 7.14

| 2 | Provide access to tutoring, remediation, special support services | Krakauer 2.8 |
| 8 | Provide technology to support learning | Krakauer 1.5 |

Relationship of Themes and Patterns to Study Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study relied on three theoretical foundations, Learning College theory, organizational culture, and change theory. The findings and themes gleaned from the data, demonstrate that the practices and activities are grounded in theories. Clearly, the strongest relationship lies with Learning College theory.

Relationship to Learning College Theory

The data as reported in the findings for the first research question showed that support staff employees have many different understandings of the Learning College concept, many of which touched on parts of the theory. However, none of the respondents was able to fully define or explain what a Learning College is as defined by the theorists forming the framework for this study.

Nonetheless, the data also showed that support staff employees do hold several basic beliefs and principles that are part of the Learning College concept as fundamental to how they do their jobs.

Two other themes supported by Learning College theory were shown in the data for research question two. First, the belief among support staff that a significant role they play is to provide accurate information to students is supported primarily by Krakauer's (2000) first criterion, the learning process, and her seventh criterion, organization. In both cases, the support staff role is but one component of the complete criteria. However,

support staff roles, as reported by the study participants, clearly fall into these two criteria. The second theme is the belief among support staff that a part of their role is to help students become independent. This concept is supported by Krakauer's sixth criterion, learners.

Though staff professional development is not listed as one of O'Banion's (1997) six principles; Krakauer's (2000) nine criteria, or Harvey-Smith's (2005) seventh principle of the Learning College, all three theorists contend that all employees, and even external constituencies, at a Learning College need to fully understand the Learning College concept to best support student learning. Staff development programs are a common response colleges take to help employees understand concepts and practices in the institution, including an understanding of a major concept like the Learning College.

Organizational Culture and Change Theory

First, as Craig (2004) noted, organizational culture represents assumptions, beliefs, and values that the members of the organization hold in common. The data showed that the concepts of student success and students first are certainly widely held beliefs and values among the support staff at Anne Arundel Community College. Harvey-Smith's (2005) seventh Learning College principle also supports this theme of organizational culture.

Secondly, professional development for all staff is an important concept in both organizational culture theory and change theory. Harvey-Smith (2005) discussed the inclusion of professional development as an essential component for an organization that seeks to manage change effectively throughout the organization. Additionally, as

discussed in the theoretical framework section of chapter 1, change theory as applied in the community college, requires common vision, stakeholder involvement, strategic planning, effective communication, and strong leadership roles. The findings from the data, as well as the document review behind framing the context for this study, clearly demonstrate that Anne Arundel Community College incorporated all of these components in its transition to becoming a Learning College.

<div align="center">Discrepant and Unexpected Findings</div>

Discrepant Findings

In any qualitative study such as this one, there may be data that do not make sense or in cases contradict other data, often provided by the same participant. It is important for the researcher to note this kind of discrepant data to ensure her reporting is thorough and accurate. In this study, the researcher uncovered several instances of discrepant findings.

Though the questionnaire specifically stated that individuals should not look up the term Learning College before recording their own perceptions, one person admitted doing that, and it appeared from the responses that at least one other individual did the same.

Numerous participants reported a sense of pride in working at Anne Arundel Community College because it is a Learning College. The same participants later reported being unsure of the meaning of a Learning College, leading the researcher to conclude that their perceptions were based more on the college's reputation and their own

pride or positive feelings about their individual jobs than on the fact they are working in a Learning College as they had stated earlier.

As previously mentioned, there seemed to be confusion among some respondents around terminology. Phrases such as students first, student success, and student learning were used interchangeably in some instances. However, within the same interview, participants used the same terms to mean different things. For example, Kim noted she believed the college in general and she herself in particular supported student learning by rearranging her office so she was facing students when they walked in the door, putting "students first" by giving them "good customer service." Later in the interview, she defined students first as "having good interpersonal skills," differentiating this behavior from supporting and encouraging students and helping them learn.

The researcher noted further confusion in other interviews when she specifically asked participants if they perceived any difference in the phrases students first and learning first. Nearly half of the interview participants said there was no difference. The remaining participants defined the two concepts in many different ways. Primarily, students first was seen as a customer service approach to helping students. Several employees expressed concern that this approach of students first actually permits and even encourages students to become abusive and demanding in a negative way. Learning first was relegated to what takes place in the classroom between the student and instructor. This clearly contradicts the data in which these same interview participants described the various ways they help students learn. One participant, Allison, had

reported, "I think we put students first and then I think we, as the college, put learning as second." When probed about this, Allison indicated that learning was the student's job.

As previously noted, when the researcher analyzed data for the third research question, she found 11 summary typologies of tasks that related to the theoretical framework for the Learning College. As she coded the separate tasks into those typologies, 12 responses did not fit into any of the categories and were unrelated to each other. Therefore, these were identified as discrepant data. Some of the responses included the following: "I smile at them," "I schedule appointments for my boss," and "Always be helpful and courteous."

Unexpected Findings

When embarking upon this study, the researcher expected that newer employees (those hired after 2001) would be less informed and knowledgeable about the Learning College concept, as they would not have been at Anne Arundel Community College during the time the college transitioned to a Learning College. Instead, the data showed the newer employees as a whole have adopted the concept into their daily tasks, without going through the meetings, discussions, and information sessions in which other employees had taken part. These newer employees were less well informed on the terminology but more thoroughly living the concept as they did their jobs. Though the researcher anticipated that numerous support staff employees would express skepticism about the Learning College concept, only two employees expressed such skepticism. A long time maintenance worker, Jack, commented that the Learning College was "just

another slogan" and another long time employee, Teresa, described it as "a buzz word or fad."

Another unexpected finding was the widespread distribution of common themes and patterns of belief among the support staff. The researcher thought in advance that individuals who did not have significant direct student contact would feel that their jobs were not as connected to supporting and enhancing student learning. However, the diversity of respondents and the strength of the common themes throughout both the questionnaire and interview data showed that support staff employees in every category of job believed their role supported and enhanced student learning.

Several respondents discussed at great length their unhappiness with and concerns about the "student attitude" (Jennifer) and how that impacts the way college employees do their daily work. This portion of the discussion had no relevance to the study.

Finally, the researcher expected that support staff might report that they sometimes feel excluded from important briefings and information sessions in which the college discusses major changes and new initiatives. Instead, support staff in this study, with only a few exceptions, believed they knew what was occurring at the college and what impact it would have on their jobs. Some, such as Anna, noted that information "trickles down" a little later than it should and is sometimes "disjointed," but, as the questionnaire showed, 78% of the support staff employees who responded felt they were given the information they needed to do their job. As will be discussed in chapter 5, however, 69% believed they could do more to help students learn if they had more training themselves.

Evidence of Quality of Data

Throughout this study, it was important that the researcher set aside her natural

predisposition to support the Learning College to ensure the quality of the data. The

researcher did this by bracketing her thoughts in the margins of both the notes taken

during the interviews and in the individual data sheets coded by summary. This step was

important, as the researcher did not want to lead or guide interview participants toward

certain answers or responses. These handwritten notes jotted throughout the process from

start to finish served as constant reminders to the researcher that she was gathering the

real and perceived experiences of support staff members, not building a case to support

either the Learning College theory or Anne Arundel Community College as a Learning

College.

As was discussed in chapter 3, the researcher put numerous safeguards in place to

ensure the quality of the data in this study, including advanced approval from Anne

Arundel Community College's president and vice presidents. She also alerted the

members of the Learning Response Team that their support staff employees would be

participating in the study and found these high level administrators very supportive of the

study and interested in the results.

Safeguards included the exclusion of any support staff employee who works at the

same campus location where the researcher works and any employees that either directly

or indirectly report to her. She did this to eliminate any perception of coercion to

participate, not participate, or answer in any particular manner. No external group

sponsored the study. No other college employees were involved in the collection,

analysis, or interpretation of data, nor did any other college employee have knowledge of who responded to the questionnaire or participated in the interviews. All participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any point with no consequences. In addition to the usual informed consent requirements for human study, the researcher gave participants additional opportunities to question her about the study in advance or at any time during the process.

Questionnaire participants had the opportunity to request a copy of their responses simply by clicking a single button at the end of the questionnaire. At that time, they could make edits and changes to their responses if they wished prior to having their responses included in the study. Twelve questionnaire respondents wanted to review their responses. All interview participants received a transcript of their interview, prepared by an outside professional court reporter and transcriptionist, requesting that they make any changes or edits they wished prior to approving the transcript. Several of these participants made some changes to their responses, primarily language and style rather than content.

Both the questionnaire respondents and the interview participants were called by an external consultant to check with them to determine if they felt any coercion to participate in the study or to respond in any particular manner. External member checking results showed that none of the participants called regarding both the questionnaire and the interviews felt any pressure to respond to the questionnaire or participate in the interviews. None felt any coercion or pressure to respond in a certain way. Two participants noted that they "hoped not" when asked if they thought their participation

would have any impact on their relationship with the researcher. Two participants could

not remember if they had the option of receiving their responses to check. A full report of

the member checking responses can be found in Appendix Q.

As soon as the researcher received final questionnaire responses, she assigned

every participant a pseudonym, a male or female first name only, and that name was used

from that point forward and throughout the data analysis process, including the reporting

in this dissertation.

All of these various methods and external checks, as well as the opportunities for

participants to confirm the accuracy of the recording of their responses, combine to

ensure quality data collection and data analysis processes, as well as accurate data, in this

adapted phenomenological study.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Collecting and analyzing the data is a critical component of a qualitative study. In

this study, 82 questionnaire responses and 14 interviews netted over 500 pages of text

documents. By following the very logical and methodical process of typology analysis

(Hatch, 2002), the researcher was able to organize and code the initial data into two Excel

workbooks, for the questionnaire and interviews respectively, each consisting of 12

separate worksheets, followed by a master Excel workbook reflecting the patterns,

themes, and relationships among the data.

Once the data were organized, the themes and patterns found in the data and the

relationships among them resulted in the conclusions reported in this chapter. In

summary, the primary findings from this study show that support staff in a Learning

College believe that (a) everyone in the college plays a role in supporting and enhancing student learning; (b) the commitment to students first and student success is well-known by the college community at Anne Arundel Community College and seems to be infused into the organizational culture; (c) most support staff employees feel good or proud that their work is helping students succeed; (d) a Learning College makes lifelong learning available to everyone; (e) learning is a priority and a focus in a Learning College; (f) a Learning College provides many resources to support learning; (g) the support staff role is critical to student success in a Learning College; (h) support staff help students learn, but these employees do not see it as teaching; and (i) a Learning College provides ongoing professional development for staff and all employees.

Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the importance of these data themes and relationships, as well as their implications for other community colleges. These findings indicated a unique opportunity for community colleges to tap into a ready resource for enhancing student learning. Recommendations for action include additional professional development for support staff to increase their understanding of the Learning College concept and their own role in supporting and enhancing student learning.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Study

The purpose of this research was investigate how support staff employees in a Learning College understand their roles in facilitating student learning and the extent to which they exhibit attitudes and behaviors in their work that demonstrate how they participate in supporting and enhancing student learning. Numerous studies appear in the literature regarding employee groups in the community college, including faculty, administrators, and student services personnel, but very little research exists that examines the role of support staff as an employee group in a Learning College. Besides the gap in the literature, this researcher decided to examine this specific employee group because, as support staff employees are generally the first point of contact for students, their interactions with students are critical components of the college's work. If a college purports to be a Learning College, the active involvement of the support staff employees would be an important factor in the institution's success.

The researcher conducted this qualitative study using an adapted phenomenological approach, seeking to understand and describe the experiences of the targeted population, support staff in a Learning College. The theoretical framework for the study centered on Learning College, organizational culture, and change theories. She conducted the study at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland, a nationally known Learning College. Data collection consisted first of sending a questionnaire to the population of 224 support staff at the institution. The researcher coded questionnaires from a sample of 82 respondents, identified individuals that met selection criteria, and

conducted in-depth interviews of a sample of 14 employees. Participants discussed in

detail their perceptions of a Learning College, their own daily work, as well as their

perceptions about how their work supports and enhances student learning. The researcher

analyzed the data using the typological method (Hatch, 2002), which resulted in nine

findings and themes. These findings showed support staff employees believe: (a)

everyone in a Learning College plays a role in supporting and enhancing student

learning; (b) a Learning College makes lifelong learning available to everyone; (c)

learning is a priority and a focus in a Learning College; (d) a Learning College provides

many resources to support learning; (e) a Learning College provides ongoing professional

development for staff and all employees; (f) the support staff role is critical to student

success in a Learning College; (g) support staff help students learn but these employees

do not see it as teaching; (h) most support staff feel good or proud that their work helps

students succeed; and (i) the commitment to students first and student success is part of

the organizational culture at Anne Arundel Community College.

<div align="center">Interpretation of the Findings</div>

These findings lead the researcher to several conclusions. Following is a

discussion of these conclusions based on the findings for each research question.

Conclusions Supporting the First Research Question

The first research question asked about support staff employee understanding of

the term Learning College. The findings showed that these employees did not completely

understand the full concept of a Learning College. However, they did grasp several

aspects of what a Learning College is including (a) the importance of learning as the

central focus of everything the college does; (b) the availability of resources to support student learning; and (c) the accessibility of continuous learning for students, staff, faculty, and the community at large. Each of these concepts contributes to the larger picture of a Learning College.

By describing their understanding of some aspects of a Learning College, support staff employees at Anne Arundel Community College ascribed some meaning to their own understanding of whyAnne Arundel is considered a Learning College. The respondents clearly were interested in and concerned about students' success in their learning experiences. It appears that with more information and a greater depth of understanding of the Learning College concept, support staff employees believe they could increase the impact they personally can have on student learning.

Learning College theory, particularly as espoused by O'Banion (1997) and Krakauer (2000), places learning at the core of everything a college does, just as these findings saw support staff describing learning as a focus, priority, or goal for the institution. Likewise, both Krakauer and O'Banion call for a Learning College to focus resources on supporting student learning. As the findings showed, support staff not only commented on the breadth and depth of Anne Arundel's resources for students but also described themselves as facilitators and conduits between students and those resources. Indeed, respondents demonstrated eagerness and excitement around helping students tap into the array of resources the college has available to support learning.

Conclusions Supporting the Second Research Question

The second research question asked in what ways support staff employees perceived their daily tasks as supporting and enhancing student learning. The data and findings described in chapter 4 lead to the conclusion that the support staff at Anne Arundel Community College believe their role is important in supporting and enhancing student learning, though these participants do not necessarily believe they are teaching students. This conclusion may seem contradictory, but the data showed support staff stated they were not supporting learning, but then using different terms described in detail the ways that they indeed did support learning. Respondents seemed to make a distinction between *helping students* and *helping students learn*. This fine distinction perhaps indicates a lack of awareness among support staff of how their work connects to learning directly, coupled with a deeper understanding that their work does indeed support learning. A number of respondents seemed to understand better and make the connection when the researcher probed more about what they do on the job and made statements such as Alex's "I would not normally look at my job that way" or Carla's "I haven't really thought about it, no." Comments such as these, coupled with explanations of tasks that they believed were indeed helping students learn, lead this researcher to conclude support staff desire a greater awareness of how their daily work connects to student learning. Clearly, they are already doing the work; and this fact, coupled with the unrelated finding that in general, support staff employees at Anne Arundel reported feelings of pride that they are helping students succeed, indicates that greater

understanding of how their roles support learning could offer more meaning to employees in the support staff role.

Harvey-Smith's (2005) seventh principle of the Learning College supports this conclusion. This principle calls for an institution to develop and cultivate an organizational culture that embraces and supports learning and change. The widespread belief among the support staff of the importance of the support staff role is an indicator of how the support of learning has been infused into the culture at Anne Arundel Community College.

Conclusions Supporting the Third Research Question

The third research question asked what specific aspects of a Learning College support staff employees demonstrated, consciously or unconsciously, in their daily work. The findings showed 11 types of tasks or actions supported by Learning College theory that these employees undertake in their daily work. These types of tasks primarily fit Krakauer's (2000) criteria, which makes sense as Anne Arundel Community College initially assessed its Learning College profile against Krakauer's criteria. The findings demonstrated a widespread diversity of activities that these non-instructional employees do to support and enhance student learning in their daily work. It is important for the leadership of a Learning College to recognize and tap into the support staff employee strengths to enhance student learning at the institution.

<center>Implications for Social Change</center>

This study contributes to social change by providing insights based in research on support staff employees in a community college, an employee group sometimes

overlooked when an institution is implementing change. The study clearly shows that the support staff employees who participated play a significant role and hold very strong feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about their role in helping students learn.

The findings have the potential for impacting social change on two levels. First, the study shows that support staff employees do not have a full understanding of the Learning College concept and are interested in learning more about it in order to better help students. Staff development could provide greater knowledge and understanding for support staff employee, in turn helping them feel more valued, and, therefore, more likely to perform more effectively. Secondly, increasing support staff understanding of student learning may give greater meaning to their work as expressed in their individual pride and positive feelings about helping students. The support staff employees represent a significant constituency in the college community and increasing their support and participation in institutional change, particularly change that enhances student learning, can help both the institution and the individuals. This employee group demonstrated a strong interest and desire to help students do well. Tapping into this employee group's readiness offers an opportunity to change lives of both the employees and the students, with the ultimate result of a better prepared and more effective workforce and citizenry.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Action</div>

The researcher is directing the strongest recommendation for action toward community college leaders. Whether community college leaders are considering transitioning traditional colleges to Learning Colleges, are already leading their institutions in this journey, or are in fact, like Anne Arundel Community College, already

well-established as Learning Colleges, this study provides data to help. It is imperative

for the leadership in a community college to consider the support staff role. As an

employee group, support staff is likely to be one of the largest groups. These are the

frontline workers, often the first point of contact with the student or potential student.

They are sometimes the most visible resource to the student—in the buildings, at

receptionist desks, on the grounds, in the dining hall, etc. They are the individuals that

members of the public meet first when they come to the campus. This study has shown

that this group of employees demonstrates a readiness and interest in helping students

learn, in doing whatever they can or need to do to enhance the students' learning

experience at the college. They have shown as a group that they are already applying

some of the Learning College principles in their daily work, though they are not

necessarily aware that their actions support the LC concept. They have expressed an

interest (67% of the respondents) in learning more about the LC concept. Tapping into

the resource of the support staff employees would aid a community college greatly in

improving and enhancing student learning and, in turn, would enhance the effectiveness

of the institution as a Learning College. Support staff, a somewhat neglected resource in a

Learning College, can help demonstrate to students the college's commitment to learning,

can better guide students to learning resources and options, and can help streamline and

design more effective administrative systems.

Some of the respondents suggested specific ways that community college

leadership could help support staff do more to support and enhance student learning.

Several respondents suggested cross-training from one department to the next so that

support staff would better understand how other departments work. Others suggested job-swapping for short periods of time to learn more about college operations. A third suggestion included enhancing existing offerings in staff professional development to include more about the Learning College, how the college supports learning, and what each area of the college does.

Based on the findings of this study, including the relatively untapped support staff resource, the researcher also recommends a significant increase in the college's professional development offerings to include more information about the Learning College. She also recommends holding special information sessions specifically for support staff employees, regarding the Learning College concept and how it is applied in a 21st century community college. These sessions should go beyond the initial information sessions when the Learning College concept is introduced and should include time for leadership to hear support staff suggestions and recommendations for how their roles could more effectively support and enhance student learning.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Study</div>

This study opens up numerous opportunities for further study related to this topic. Since so little research has been done on support staff and their role in a Learning College, much more research needs to be done. This study examined a group in a single Mid-Atlantic community college. The study could be replicated in other locations, other size colleges, or universities that are considered Learning Colleges. More important might be research that compared support staff groups in more than one Learning College,

or to compare employees in a Learning College with those in a more traditional community college.

It would also be useful to compare the understanding and roles of support staff regarding the Learning College with those of faculty and administrators in the same college to identify potential inconsistencies. Likewise, examining how administrators and faculty perceive the support staff role in a Learning College might offer some rich data.

More in-depth study is needed in specific support staff employee job categories, seeking depth rather than breadth, of data. It would be interesting to study whether working in a union environment, compared to a nonunion environment, has any impact on how support staff employees see their role in supporting learning, and perhaps how leadership, or management, see that role. Finally, one group whose voice needs to be heard is that of students. Research could be done to examine how community college students perceive support staff roles as part of their learning experience.

Any of these recommended studies would serve to enrich the literature and build upon the foundation this study has begun.

<center>Reflections on the Researcher's Experience</center>

As discussed in chapter 4, the researcher entered into this research project with a predisposition to support the Learning College concept. While in and of itself, this would not necessarily lead to bias, there was potential for the researcher to read into or look for data that supported the Learning College as a positive concept and that showed widespread support for it. The researcher was careful to use bracketing and marginal notes in her research to remind herself, and catch herself, making assumptions, guiding

respondents, or in any way biasing the results. Because she was aware of this possibility going into the study, she also consciously worked to resist allowing bias to enter her work. A second area of concern related to the study being conducted at her own institution and whether those circumstances would impact her results. Again, the researcher addressed this issue head on before beginning the study, both with the university and with the leadership at Anne Arundel Community College. She implemented sufficient safeguards to meet Walden University's requirements. She discussed potential negative outcomes with Anne Arundel's president, who encouraged the researcher to "bring them on" if any were discovered so that the college could make changes. Participant anonymity was guaranteed to the entire population of support staff employees in the invitation to participate. In addition, the researcher met with the president of the support staff organization in advance of the study and, on her recommendation, made a presentation at the general membership meeting of the organization, again ensuring anonymity. Pseudonyms were used during the interviews and then changed to new random names as a second level of anonymity. These comprehensive measures assure the data and findings are accurate and free of bias.

This research process presented the researcher with a unique opportunity to examine her own thinking while exploring the attitudes and beliefs of an employee group with which she has no personal experience. The researcher has worked in faculty, professional staff, and administrative positions at two different community colleges but has never worked as support staff in a community college. This study allowed her to delve into the experiences of this group to understand better how support staff think and

feel about their work, particularly with how it helps students. It was affirming and reassuring to find such high levels of commitment and caring among employees who, in general, are not specially trained to work with students in a learning situation. The researcher also discovered a depth of understanding and skills among support staff that perhaps college administrators and faculty do not realize. The researcher believes that the recommendations for action discussed previously will yield significant positive impact, not only on the institution and the support staff, but also on the perceptions and attitudes of administrators and faculty. Because of this study, this community college administrator will certainly increase her personal commitment to be as inclusive as possible of college support staff when initiating, planning, discussing, implementing, evaluating, and refining change.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This study has demonstrated that support staff employees in a Learning College believe they play a significant role in supporting and enhancing student learning. Indeed, this employee group regularly undertakes activities that help students succeed in their learning experiences, demonstrating a great deal of pride and positive feelings about their work. A Learning College, or for that matter any community college that wants to enhance student learning, has a potential resource available in this employee group. These individuals, working in positions with significant student contact, coupled with a stated desire to help students, could be mobilized to bring about greater student learning and success. Additionally, these employees expressed strong commitment to professional development. By providing additional professional development to this employee group

and engaging them in the Learning College concept, a community college has potential to

gain significant benefits. Fully involving support staff in learning about and

understanding the Learning College concept can strengthen an institution's effectiveness

as a Learning College.

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Directions: Read each question or statement in the left column. Circle or highlight the response that best reflects your answer. If you have additional comments or would like to say more about the statement, you can use the third column or another sheet of paper.

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
1	I have read the consent document in the email I received. I understand the terms in the consent document. I understand my participation is voluntary and my responses are confidential. I agree to participate in this study.	Circle or highlight one: YES NO	NA
2	In what year did you begin working at Anne Arundel Community College?	Please write the year here:	NA
3	How long have you been in your current position at Anne Arundel Community College?	Circle or highlight one: 2 years or less 3-5 years 6-9 years 10 –15 years 16 or more years	NA
4	What is your gender?	Circle or highlight one: male female	NA
5	What is your age?	Circle or highlight one: Below 21 22 - 34 35 – 50 51 – 64 65 or more	NA
6	In which Anne Arundel Community College	Circle or highlight one:	NA

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
	division do you work?	Learning, Andrew Meyer, VP Learner Support, Lenny Mancini, Interim VP Learner Resources Management, Mark Behm, Interim VP	
7	Which of the following job categories best describes your job?	<u>Circle or highlight one:</u> Instructional Department Support(program/lab asst) Library, distance, testing, bookstore, dining services Facilities, grounds, maintenance, plant Business office, accounting, mail, printing Tech Support(IS), technology, off-site, media Student services, ISC, Response Center Administrative Assistant for 1-2 executives Other	8. If you chose other, please tell me what your job is:
9	Approximately what percentage of your job involves interaction with students? These interactions could be face-to-face, email, telephone, informal, or formal interactions.	<u>Circle or highlight one:</u> 0 - 25% 26% - 50% 51% - 75% 76% - 100%	NA
The next few questions will allow you to tell me a little more about your work at Anne Arundel Community College			
10	Let's start with the question, what does the term "Learning College" mean to you? Don't look it up. Just tell me what you think.	<u>Please write your response here:</u>	NA

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
For questions 11 – 32, please respond by circling or highlighting the response in each box that best reflects your answer to the question or statement. Feel free to add any comments or additional thoughts you have after each question.			
11	Every AACC employee plays a role in helping our students learn, no matter what the job is.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	12. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
13	Support staff play an important role at AACC in helping students learn.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	14. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
15	My role as a support staff employee at AACC is important in helping students learn.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	16. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
17	AACC leadership understands the importance of the role	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree	18. If you wish, describe your thoughts about

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
	of support staff in helping students learn.	Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	this statement:
19	I know what I need to know to help students learn.	<u>Circle or highlight one:</u> Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	20. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
21	The college should do more to help support staff know how they can better help students learn.	<u>Circle or highlight one:</u> Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	22. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
23	In my position as a support staff employee, I could do more to help students learn if I had the opportunity and additional training.	<u>Circle or highlight one:</u> Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree	24. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
		Strongly Agree	
25	Most support staff employees choose to work at AACC because they are committed to helping students.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	26. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
27	Prior to this questionnaire, I was aware that Anne Arundel Community College is considered to be a Learning College.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	28. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
29	I would like to know more about the Learning College and how my job fits into that concept at Anne Arundel Community College.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	30. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:
31	It is important for me to understand new ideas the college adopts in order for me to better help students learn.	Circle or highlight one: Strongly disagree Disagree	32. If you wish, describe your thoughts about this statement:

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
		Neutral	
		Agree	
		Strongly Agree	
Finally, please write your thoughts in answer to the last few questions…			
33	List three of the most important things YOU do to help students learn. Be as specific as you can. For example, instead of saying answer phones, please describe the kinds of questions you answer. If you wish, you may list more than three. If you do not think you do anything in your job to help students learn, write NONE.	Please write your response here:	NA
34	I choose to work at AACC because…	Please write your response here:	NA
35	If you could suggest one thing that AACC could do to further enhance and support student learning, what would it be?	Please write your response here:	NA
36	Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your job at AACC?	Please write your response here:	NA
37	Any other comments or thoughts you would like to share with me?	Please write your response here:	NA

#	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	COMMENTS
38	I would like to review a hard copy of my responses. Please send a copy to me at the address noted. I understand that if I want to change or add to my responses to the questionnaire at that point, I can write any changes on the hard copy and return it to Laura Weidner.	Circle or highlight one: Yes No	Address:

APPENDIX B. COLLEGE VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision:

Anne Arundel Community College is a premier learning community whose students and graduates are among the best-prepared citizens and workers of the world.

Mission Statement:

With learning as its central mission, Anne Arundel Community College strives to embody the basic convictions of the American democratic ideal: that participants be given full opportunity to discover and develop their talents, energy and interests, to pursue their unique potentials and to achieve an intellectually, culturally and economically satisfying relationship with society. Such opportunity should be easily available and readily accessible to all Anne Arundel County residents.

Students enrolling in associate degree transfer or career programs, certificate career programs or participating in continuing education offerings can be assured that the college, as an accredited, public, comprehensive, open-admission institution of higher learning with affordable tuition, is, within the limits of its resources, vigorously committed to:

- Fostering excellence of teaching and learning for students, faculty and staff;
- Offering credit programs and continuing education courses in a variety of formats responsive to a multiplicity of community needs;
- Providing for learners at various preparation points, from pre-college to postgraduate, a range of integrated credentialing opportunities;
- Providing appropriate services in support of academic success and student development;

- Affording Anne Arundel County residents an opportunity to pursue higher education and lifelong learning;
- Providing a campus climate which invites the diversity of the community's population;
- Upholding rigorous and fair standards of student achievement;
- Promoting lifelong learning;
- Providing a source for intellectual, cultural and physical vitality in the community;
- Planning for efficient allocation of college resources and for institutional effectiveness;
- Maintaining a spirit of collegiality among the various sectors of the college; and
- Promoting county and state economic development by providing a variety of educational services and training programs to business and industry in both the private and not-for-profit sectors and to national, state and local government agencies.

Guiding Principles:

1. Students are first.

2. Always seek to improve and get better.

3. We are a learning community.

APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Only main questions are included here. Follow-up and probe questions will vary with each interview, depending upon interviewee individual responses to the main questions.

Main questions

1. In your responses to my questionnaire, you indicated that you believe every employee at a Learning College plays a role in helping students learn. Please tell me more about what that means to you as a support staff employee in a Learning College.

2. Take me on a virtual tour of your typical workday and help me understand the kinds of things you do in your job that help enhance and support student learning.

3. You have been here since INSERT YEAR. Has your job changed in the past seven years (since 2000)? Please describe some of those changes.

4. Do you think there is a difference in the phrases "students first" and "learning first"? If so, will you please describe the differences? How do you see each of these phrases "lived" by AACC employees? Do you see it played out in your own job and among other support staff roles? If so, please describe.

5. AACC's vision states that the college is a "premier learning community." What does that mean to you as you conduct the day-to-day tasks in your job?

6. Does the knowledge that you are helping students learn impact the way you feel about your job in the college? If so, please describe how.

7. In the questionnaire I asked about the term "Learning College" and you indicated
    you knew it or at least had heard it before at AACC. Please tell me what you
    know about it, when and how you heard about it.

8. Have you had other support jobs at AACC? Did any of those roles help support
    and enhance student learning? If so, please describe the kinds of things you did in
    those jobs that did help students learn.

APPENDIX D. INVITATION TO EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear AACC Support Staff Employee:

My name is Laura Weidner, an AACC employee at the Glen Burnie Town Center and a doctoral student at Walden University. I am preparing to conduct my dissertation research and I need your help. I am interested in learning about your job and the kinds of things you do that help our students.

In order for me to learn about this, I am asking you to complete a short questionnaire (about 15 - 20 minutes) either online or on paper answering questions about the kinds of work you do. I will send you an email in the next few days that will explain how to complete the questionnaire and will include more details about your participation. If you prefer that I send you a paper questionnaire and communicate via regular mail, please call or email and let me know.

All responses and information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and no one at AACC except me will know whether you participate or not. Of course, this is voluntary and you are not in any way obligated to participate in this study. There will be more details about this in a form accompanying the questionnaire information I send you.

I would really appreciate your participation. As a way to thank you for your time and effort, I will enter your name in a random drawing of participants for a $25 gift certificate to a place you choose.

I am looking forward to learning more about your work. Watch for questionnaire information in the next few days. If you have any questions, you may call me at my office at X2371 or on my private cell phone at 410.991.1230 or via my personal email address lweid001@waldenu.edu.

Kindest regards,
Laura E. Weidner

APPENDIX E. QUESTIONNAIRE DIRECTIONS AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear AACC Support Staff Person:

I am inviting you to participate in a study I am conducting. This study will examine the role of support staff at Anne Arundel Community College. This study is part of my doctoral dissertation at Walden University. The college leadership supports my doing this study at AACC.

This is a chance for your voice to be heard--but confidentially. I will not share any personal or other identifying information with anyone else when I report results.

If you complete the questionnaire, I will enter your name in a random drawing consisting of just the respondents for a $25.00 gift certificate.

After reading this complete email, and being sure you understand the information on the Informed Consent document below, you may click on the link to begin the questionnaire.

I would really appreciate your help with this. This is your opportunity to let your voice be heard.

You can call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or email me at lweid001@waldenu.edu if you have any questions or if you would like me to send you a pencil and paper version of this questionnaire instead of the electronic one.

Thank you,
Laura Weidner

CONSENT FORM—Doctoral Study
Understanding and Application of the Learning College Concept
Among Community College Support Staff Employees

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating how well community college support staff understand and apply the Learning College concepts in their day-to-day work. You were selected as a possible participant due to your job classification and duties at a Learning College. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Laura E. Weidner, a doctoral candidate at Walden University and Executive Director of the Center for Workforce Solutions at the Glen Burnie Town Center. If you report to Laura E. Weidner, work at the Glen Burnie Town Center where she works, or report to anyone she directly supervises, you may not participate in this study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to
1. Examine how well the Learning College concept is understood and applied in daily work responsibilities and activities by support employees in a community college;
2. Examine how well support employees believe their actions support and promote learning;

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:
1. Complete an online questionnaire asking you about your understanding of the Learning College concept and about your day-to-day work at the community college. This questionnaire should take approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete. If you prefer, the questionnaire can also be completed using pen and paper.

2. If selected based on your responses to the questionnaire, participate in a private 1-1 in-depth interview with the researcher to gather more details about your experiences. This interview should take approximately 1-2 hours to complete and can be completed at your preference either before or after work hours, during lunch hour, or during work hours with your supervisor's approval.

3. You will have an opportunity to review your questionnaire responses and a transcript of your interview prior to their inclusion in the study. At that time, you may make corrections or provide further explanation to your answers if you wish.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The college president has approved and supports this study being conducted at your college. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Anne Arundel Community College or with the researcher. If you initially decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are no risks associated with participating in this study and there are no individual short or long-term benefits to you for participating in this study. The overall benefits to participation are that you will be helping community college leaders better understand the role of the support staff employee in enhancing the community college experience for students.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, if you complete the questionnaire and include your name, you will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift certificate to a business of your choice as a thank-you for your time and effort. If you are selected for, and participate in an in-depth interview, you will receive a $10 gift certificate for the college bookstore or dining services in appreciation for your time.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. The questionnaire responses, interview audio tapes, and all data collected in this research will be kept confidential by the researcher, stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home for 5 years, away from the campus, after which time they will be destroyed. Responses and identities will be coded so that individuals cannot be identified. Only coded information will be used in any verbal or written reports or documents including this data. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Laura E. Weidner. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Terry O'Banion. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact either of them via phone or email at:

Laura E. Weidner (xxx.xxx.xxxx or lweid001@waldenu.edu)
Dr. Terry O'Banion (xxx.xxx.xxxx or obanion@league.org)

The Research Participant Advocate at Walden University is Leilani Endicott, you may contact her at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210, if you have questions about your participation in this study.

You may print a copy of this form if you wish or the researcher will mail one to you at your request.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. If I had any questions, I have asked them and received answers.

I consent to participate in the study. I will confirm my agreement to participate by responding "YES" to the first question in the electronic questionnaire.

If I am taking a pencil and paper questionnaire, I will sign this document and return to Laura E. Weidner indicating my consent to participate.

Name (printed) _____

Signature_____

Date_____

APPENDIX F. LETTER TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSCRIPTS

Dear [NAME]:

Thank you for completing my questionnaire and assisting with my research. Enclosed is a copy of your responses to the questions, as you requested. Please feel free to edit or change your responses in any way so that they accurately reflect your thoughts and opinions. You may write directly on this copy. Please return the edited version to me in one of the following ways:

- ♦ Inter-office mail marked confidential, addressed to me at GBTC506
- ♦ U.S. mail at HOME ADDRESS

I have entered your name in the drawing for a $25 gift certificate. Once the questionnaire is completed, I will have an outside party draw a name, and I will notify everyone who participated as to who is the winner.

Again, thank you very much for your participation.

Regards,

Laura E. Weidner

APPENDIX G. MEMBER CHECK QUESTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I have been hired to ask you about your recent participation in a questionnaire conducted by Laura Weidner at Anne Arundel Community College. It is my job to check and be sure you participated voluntarily and understood the directions. Do you have a few minutes to answer five short questions?

1. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to participate in Laura's questionnaire? If so, please explain.
2. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to respond in a certain way to any of the questions Laura asked you?
3. Did you feel or believe that your responses to the questionnaire will have any impact on your relationship with the researcher (Laura) or on your job at AACC?
4. Did you have the option of receiving a copy of your responses and making changes, even if you did not take advantage of this option?
5. Do you have any comments or questions?

APPENDIX H. INVITATION PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEWS

Dear [NAME]:

I have completed the questionnaire portion of my study and once again I thank you for your participation. I have analyzed the responses from everyone and completed the next step, which is to identify some specific individuals to interview and obtain more in-depth details about your job, how you see your work at AACC, and your thoughts about student learning at AACC.

Would you be willing to spend an hour with me in an interview, discussing those topics in greater detail? As with the questionnaire, your responses are confidential and will not be shared with anyone at AACC. In addition, you will again have the opportunity to review and revise your responses after the interview before I include them in my research.

I am willing to meet with you before or after work, or during your lunch hour if you are interested. We could also conduct the interview during the workday, if you check with your supervisor in advance and he/she approves. I will reserve a private room on campus where we can meet, you can come to my office in Glen Burnie, or we can meet off-campus, whichever you prefer.

I would really appreciate it if you are willing to participate in this interview with me. If you agree to meet with me, as a token of my appreciation, I will present you with a $10 gift card to the college dining services. (no drawing this time!)

Please let me know by return email or by calling me if you are willing to be interviewed. I will call you next week to schedule a time and place if you are.

If you have any questions prior to responding, feel free to call me on my cell phone at xxx.xxx.xxxx.

Thanks,
Laura E. Weidner

APPENDIX I. LETTER TO ACCOMPANY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Dear [NAME]:

Thank you for taking the time and agreeing to be interviewed by me as a part of my research. Enclosed is an exact transcript of the interview. Please feel free to edit or change your responses in any way so that they accurately reflect your thoughts and opinions. You may write directly on this copy. Please return the edited version to me in one of the following ways:

- ♦ Inter-office mail marked confidential, addressed to me at GBTC506
- ♦ U.S. mail at HOME ADDRESS

Once I received your approval to use the responses as they are written or your revised transcript, I will send you a ten-dollar gift card to the college store or to college dining services.

Again, thank you very much for your participation.

Regards,

Laura E. Weidner

APPENDIX J. MEMBER CHECK QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I have been hired to ask you about your recent interview with Laura Weidner at Anne Arundel Community College. It is my job to check and be sure you participated voluntarily and understood the directions. Do you have a few minutes to answer five short questions?

1. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to participate in this interview? If so, please explain.
2. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to respond in a certain way to any of the questions Laura asked you?
3. Did you feel or believe that your responses to the interview questions will have any impact on your relationship with the researcher (Laura) or on your job at AACC?
4. Did you have the option of receiving a copy of your responses and making changes, even if you did not take advantage of this option?
5. Do you have any comments or questions?

APPENDIX K. AACC SURVEY RELATING KRAKAUER CRITERIA TO AACC

Criteria	Description	Degree of Importance (Mean 1-5)	Degree of Implementation (Mean 1-5)
1.01	The college offers many learning options, activities and methodologies to learners for their selection to meet their learning objectives.	4.61	3.61
1.02	Learning options are offered in varying lengths, at graduated levels of complexity, and can be clustered in different configurations.	4.44	2.94
1.03	The college offers academic advising to learners in preparing their learning plans, and in coordinating appropriate learning options to meet their long-term career, academic, and personal goals.	4.72	3.22
1.04	The college offers counseling/coaching to learners in selecting appropriate learning options, activities, and methodologies to meet their individual learning needs, learning styles, learning rates, aptitudes, and prior knowledge.	4.33	2.78
1.05	The college makes available advanced communication and information technology to facilitate learning as an appropriate learning tool in learning options.	4.44	3.33
1.06	Learner social and cultural differences are respected in materials, resources and methodologies used for learning options and activities.	4.06	3.12
1.07	A wide range of learning options is provided to students in distance learning format with no appreciable difference in access to content from on-site learning opportunities.	4.17	2.82
1.08	Learning options are provided to learners with the opportunity to become actively involved in the design of their own learning activities.	2.94	2.13
1.09	Learning options provide learners with the opportunity for individual study and/or participation in a cohort progression.	3.67	2.24
1.10	A variety of collaborative learning experiences is available to learners such as team learning, problem-based learning, learning communities, etc.	4.22	2.76
2.01	Learning content is presented in a way that develops critical thinking skills, higher levels of comprehension and evaluation, analytical skills, and the use of judgment.	4.83	3.00
2.02	Prerequisites and learning objectives are clearly articulated for all learning options. Content is well constructed and coherent. Competencies are established for entry and exit.	4.83	2.75

2.03	AACC has a system for regular review and updating of learning content, which incorporates feedback from stakeholders, including employers and learners, on relevance and currency.	4.72	2.76
2.04	Disciplines are integrated, both within learning options and across disciplines, allowing learners to experience integrated learning and to select learning options across disciplinary boundaries.	3.83	2.29
2.05	Learning content is based upon competency objectives related to external standards wherever possible, and to learning outcomes identified by the college.	4.61	2.65
2.06	Learning content is based in a real world context. Learners have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding in work and life during their studies and upon completion.	4.50	2.94
2.07	Learning content accommodates and demonstrates sensitivity to learners' life experience and prior knowledge as well as social, cultural and gender differences.	3.83	2.82
2.08	AACC offers access to subject tutoring, remediation, and transitional services for applicants and learners who are underprepared or need additional assistance to succeed.	4.61	3.59
3.01	The college has a systematic recruitment and selection process for hiring new learning facilitators who are committed to the principles of the learning college.	4.56	3.24
3.02	The college demonstrates a commitment to professional development for learning facilitators to help them maintain and renew their skills and their commitment to learning-centered education.	4.44	3.83
3.03	Learning facilitators have relevant educational, employment related, technical, and other expertise in designing and creating learning options that meet the learning needs of learners and contribute to learning outcomes.	4.61	3.35
3.04	Learning facilitators demonstrate well-developed interpersonal skills in mutually respectful relationships with learners. They create supportive, collaborative environments for learning.	4.83	3.50
3.05	Learning facilitators are available to guide, coach, and mentor individual learners throughout the learning process, to assist them in preparing learning contracts and to negotiate appropriate assessment, as well as for remediation when necessary.	3.78	2.88
3.06	Learning facilitators demonstrate their understanding of learning theories and innovative practices, and apply their expertise appropriately in designing learning options, activities, experiences, and methodologies.	4.33	2.94

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3.07	Learning facilitators maintain and continuously update the relevancy of their content/discipline expertise.	4.89	3.35
3.08	Learning facilitators participate in a developmental process of performance appraisal, which includes self-assessment and feedback from learners, peers, and supervisors. Criteria include commitment to learning-centered education as demonstrated through implementation of learning options, creation of supportive learning environments, relationship to learners, and participation in professional development activities.	4.11	2.65
4.01	The process and objectives of assessment are clearly explained to learners at the beginning of every learning option.	4.72	3.24
4.02	Assessment is related to learning objectives and competencies established for each learning option, and supports learning as defined in the college's values. Assessment measurements are not confined to numerical or letter scores.	4.67	2.65
4.03	A variety of formative and summative assessment tools are used to assess learning outcomes in relation to learning objectives and external competency-based standards.	4.56	2.82
4.04	Assessment is conducted by a variety of assessors appropriate to the objective, e.g., learning facilitators assessment specialists, learner peers, and employers.	3.44	2.18
4.05	AACC solicits feedback from learners on their learning outcomes and changes in behavior as a result of the learning process, and makes appropriate changes in learning options and assessment procedures if required.	4.17	2.28
4.06	Learning facilitators provide appropriate opportunities for learners to negotiate how they will be assessed.	2.56	1.76
4.07	Each learner has a portfolio documenting his/her learning outcomes, achievements, and assessments at various stages in the learning process.	3.44	1.56
4.08	AACC conducts appropriate and objective assessments of learner competencies upon entry and exit for each learning option*. There is evidence of flexibility in application and the availability of remediation, tutoring, and transitional services. (*define learning options; add a glossary of terms including learning options).	4.18	2.19
4.09	AACC has a system for early identification of learners experiencing problems based upon assessment results. It supplies remediation, tutoring and other supports for completion wherever possible.	4.50	3.12

4.10	Assessment and recognition of prior learning is available to learners for knowledge and skills gained at other colleges and/or through work experience.	4.44	2.53
4.11	AACC maintains a comprehensive institutional system to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving the goals that it has established for learning outcomes.	4.50	2.44
4.12	AACC collects data on learning outcomes related to recognized standards of competency, such as those established by accrediting bodies or state/national standards.	4.56	2.94
4.13	The analysis of outcomes data is undertaken regularly to identify strengths and areas for improvement.	4.61	2.33
4.14	Information on key performance indicators such as aggregate student learning outcomes, completion rates, retention rates, student/graduate satisfaction, employment rates, and employer satisfaction is collected and used as feedback for improvement.	4.72	3.17
4.15	The frequency of data collection and analysis is established to permit timely response to any problem areas and incorporation into future planning.	4.44	2.28
4.16	Letter grades reflect or are based on demonstrations of defined student learning outcomes.	4.39	3.00
5.01	Learners can access earner services, such as application, registration, payment of fees, and financial aid, and can view their own records, transcripts, and portfolios, at their convenience any time from any location.	4.28	3.41
5.02	AACC provides prospective students with accurate information on learning options, costs, completion rates, admission policies and procedures, requirements, and educational philosophy.	4.72	3.72
5.03	AACC provides learners with accurate information in clear and easily accessible language, and in a variety of formats. All materials reflect priorities placed on learning. This includes information on registration procedures, academic policies, learner services, financial assistance, learner responsibilities and any other pertinent information that will impact on their learning experience while at the college.	4.39	3.22
5.04	A comprehensive orientation process is available, which takes as much time as required to meet the needs of individual learners. Learners can engage in this process individually, in groups, in person, or via the Internet.	4.22	2.67
5.05	AACC has a learning resource center, which provides access to a full range of information sources both on site and electronically to support	4.11	3.50

	learning.		
5.06	Learner services are designed to accommodate learner differences and special needs and staff in the learner services area are trained to deal support learning.	4.22	3.11
5.07	AACC maintains a safe, attractive and clean learning environment for staff and learners.	4.72	4.17
5.08	A full range of academic advising and personal and career counseling services is available to learners.	4.56	3.44
5.09	AACC affords learners a formal, objective appeals process for dealing with academic concerns that cannot be resolved directly with their learning facilitators.	4.33	4.06
5.10	AACC maintains all learner records accurately and updates them regularly. Confidentiality is protected. Learners may have access to their records* and update them. (*come back to this)	4.71	3.93
5.11	Administrative procedures are clear and simplified, and support learning. Technology is used to streamline and reduce bureaucratic processes and duplication, and to coordinate systems and services.	4.56	3.28
5.12	Scheduling of learning options and activities is flexible, with year-round operation, frequent entry points and flexible exit, and on-site and distance delivery.	4.61	2.83
5.13	The process of new course/program/learning option approval is streamlined to maximize timeliness and relevance.	4.28	3.06
5.14	Staff is involved in designing and streamlining administrative systems and procedures that impact on student learning.	4.28	3.00
5.15	AACC engages in partnerships, consortia, and learning networks to enhance learning opportunities for learners and expand the range of learning options available to them.	4.33	3.78
5.16	AACC maintains a computerized updated inventory of networks to enhance learning opportunities for learners and expand the range of learning options available to them.	3.72	2.39
5.17	AACC has an advanced information system for monitoring and tracking individual and institution-wide learning outcomes; and for maintaining comprehensive learner information databases. Information is readily available to learning facilitators, support services, and learners on and off site.	4.33	2.11
5.18	AACC provides an adequate level of administrative and technical support to learning facilitators, permitting them to focus on responsibilities related	4.61	3.35

	directly to student learning.		
5.19	The organizational structure of the college is relatively flat, with a minimum number of management layers, pushing decision-making down through the organization to those most involved in learning. There is evidence of teamwork and cross-disciplinary cooperation and collaboration.	4.39	3.17
5.20	Employees at all levels of the college are involved and understand their role in facilitating learning, as demonstrated through regular performance appraisals and involvement in learning improvement projects.	4.56	3.00
5.21	AACC has an active professional development program based upon a clearly enunciated policy committed to learning-centered education. All employees prepare their own development plans, incorporating a focus on learning-centered principles, as part of their performance expectations.	4.50	3.33

APPENDIX L. ELECTRONIC REMINDERS TO COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE

First Reminder to Complete Questionnaire

From: Laura Weidner [mailto:lweid001@waldenu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2008 2:30 PM
Subject: Reminder--You still have time to complete the questionnaire!

Dear AACC Support Staff Person:
I hope you had a great spring break and have had time to dig out of the pile up that always happens when we are out. I am also hoping that you have just been busy and have not had time yet to participate in my questionnaire of all AACC full time support staff.

Never fear--you still have time. Please take a few (about 15 minutes) to complete this questionnaire and let your voice and opinions be heard--anonymously.

Again, I do appreciate your time and effort--and I sincerely hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire for me, for AACC, and to help the important, but sometimes quiet, voice of support staff be heard.

Below is the original message detailing the questionnaire background for you.

Thank you again,
Laura Weidner
_____

Second Reminder to Complete Questionnaire

From: Laura Weidner [mailto:lweid001@WALDENU.EDU]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 7:30 PM
Subject: Reminder--I still want to hear from you!

Time is getting short and I still do not have YOUR opinions and thoughts to include in my study. Please take a few minutes and complete the questionnaire I sent you so YOUR voice is heard. Remember your responses remain anonymous and confidential. Plus, when you complete the questionnaire, I will enter your name in the drawing for a $25.00 gift card.

So, I hope you will take a few minutes and answer the quick questions on my questionnaire. If you have any technical problems or wish me to send you either a hard copy or a MS Word version to complete, just let me know. You may call at xxx.xxxx.xxxx or email lweid001@waldenu.edu.

Your opinions are important--please take advantage of this opportunity to share them.

Thank you very much
Laura Weidner

Below is the original message I sent and the link to begin the questionnaire.
_____

APPENDIX M. CODED TYPOLOGIES BY RESEARCH QUESTION

CODE	TYPOLOGIES FOR RESPONSES: RESEARCH QUESTION 1
LF	A college that has a focus on learning
LHS	The faculty and staff are always learning new and better ways to help students
S	There is no difference in a Learning College and a traditional college: all colleges are learning
LEO	Staff, faculty and students learn from each other
EL	Everyone in the college, students, faculty, and staff are learning all the time
CP	A college that prepares students for career or job
RL	A college that makes sure there are resources to ensure everyone learns
EO	A college that provides opportunity for everyone to learn
PAL	A college that teaches the practical application of learning
O	Miscellaneous other answers

CODE	TYPOLOGIES FOR RESPONSES: RESEARCH QUESTION 2
LI	Help students learn to do things for themselves, act independently, take care of themselves
RM	Serve as a role model so students learn to behave and act in an appropriate and professional manner
GE	Create a good experience and positive impression of AACC so that students will keep coming and not give up or leave unhappy
FH	Assist students to find the information, resources, assistance they need throughout the college so they can be successful
SC	Listen to students to provide support, advice, and counseling they want or need in either academic or personal matters
LE	Provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for students so they can learn
PRL	Provide resources that support learning for students including staff support, library, technology, distance learning, etc.
NR	Nothing that I do really supports and enhances learning
ER	Everyone's role and responsibility

CODE	TYPOLOGIES FOR RESPONSES: RESEARCH QUESTION 3
DLO	Learning in different options, formats, venues RK 1.2
AC	Advice and counseling on learning options, choices, planning for lifelong learning, career, academic and personal goals RK 1.3, 1.4
T	Technology to support learning RK 1.5
LDO	Learners design own learning plans, options, with support RK 1.8
SS	Access to tutoring, remediation, special support RK 2.8
RLD	Learners differences are respected, treated with respect as adudlts RK 6.4
ASD	Learners assisted in becoming self-directed and lifelong learners RK 6.6
ILO	Provide accurate information on learning options, costs, etc. RK 7.2
AS	Access to all learner services RK 7.1
LD	Services accommodate learner differences RK 7.6
LE	Safe, attractive, clean learning environment RK 7.9
SI	Staff involved in streamlining and designing admin systems RK 7.14
SE	Staff are empowered to make decisions in support of learning RK 7.19
EI	All level of employees understand and involved in supporting learning RK 7.20
PD	Participate in professional development program
MV	Mission and Vision communicated to all employees RK 8.1
AL	Senior Management listens to staff and learner concerns 8.9
WK	Commitment to learning widely publicized and known by all RK 9.1
CL	Creates substantive changes in learners TOB 1
LEP	Engages learners as full partners in learning process TOB 2
OLO	Creates and offers as many options for learning as possible TOB 3
CLO	Assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities TOB 4
DR	Defines roles of learning facilitators by the needs of the learners.TOB 5
DL	College and learning facilitators succeed only when learning can be documented TOB 6
OC	Create and nurture an organizational culture that is both open and responsive to change and learning AHS 7

APPENDIX N. QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW SPREADSHEETS WITH

CODED DATA

Sample questionnaire data research question 1:

LF	LHS	S	LEO	EL
focus on learning	faculty and staff learning to help students	traditional definition: all colleges are learning	learn from each other	everyone learns all the time
learning is the top priority Catherine 63	personnel are always learning new techneques Jack 34	A college where learning takes place. Isn't that the definition of ALL colleges? Mary 10	a college that not only teaches students, but learns from the students to adjust to their needs and wants as well Helen 22	Look at other options to make my job more efficiant. Tom 6
we are a school where learning is our primary goal, rather than degrees Amy 107	by learning we are able to give better information to better serve.Charlotte 50	if you are interested in a certain subject you can come here to learn about it Peter 67	making sure that my job involves helping all AACC community keep learning which reflects not only their own improvement but reflects on AACC in their learning role on the Anne Arundel County community. Mickie 46	A population of continual learners.Susan 30
college designed to promote and make learning a priority for students, faculty, and staff. Kim 111	AACC is open to learning new things, as well as being a place for students to learn? Denise 75	first thought is that all colleges are learning colleges-that's what they are for Jessica 70	here to learn from each other Charlotte 50	while we are provide teaching to public we also learning what is going around us in whole aspects of life and situations and going forward with new changes Lynn 42
A college whose focus and mission is about the success of the student. Madeline 118	college is learning how to better serve its students Mike 87		everyone learns from everyone (students from teachers, teachers from staff, etc). Christina 54	continual "learning" mindset. Learning doesn't stop with your high school diploma or your doctorate, it is a mindset where you are open to new ideas, discussion, exploration, and continual improvement on all levels such as emotional, educational, interpersonal, work experience, and whole life experience. Josie 38
an institution that stresses learning in all areas as most important Doug 130	means that the college learns from the students Nan 99	one goes to college to learn- I'm confused?-Fran 96	we all gather knowledge by our interactions with each other. It is a learning experience Heather 305	staff as well as students are encouraged to learn. The college offers free tuition to full-timers; the IPD department continuously
Students main priority here is to learn and no matter what are job description we're here to teach them in some way. Whether if its being a professor or teaching them how to register or enroll. Kathy 146	A college that continues to learn new and innovative ways to teach Donna 166	All colleges are learning colleges, aren't they? Otherwise, why would a college exist in the first place if not for learning? Shannon 104	To me learning is the desired outcome from any educational institution, so a "Learning College" indicates a place where learning is gained by the target audience--the student and by those who facilitate learning--the faculty and staff. The faculty and staff learn from the student by ascertaining how best to deliver the learning product. So a "Learning College" is where the learning takes place in both directions. Louise 126	we are all learning all of the time, every day of the week. To me, the term "Learning College" means that no matter what the experience, we will each one of us learn something new and different from each situation we experience on a daily basis. Learning should not be set in stone and each of us learns in a different way. It is a nice feeling that an institution is open to all different ways of learning and different things that are being taught. Hannah 79
where staff and faculty focus on providing a wide range of real learning experiences - i.e., not only a focus on the area of study chosen by a student but providing opportunities to enhance the students' learning within the chosen program. Mixon 170		A college that is focused on teaching students in different diciplines. Deborah 158		means that not only the students are learning. The entire college community is involved in the learning process Elaine 83
A learning colelge is one tht emphasizes learning Ingrid 202		A higher education institution where you can learn anything and everything from recieving a degree/certification to just taking basket weaving! Barbara194		goal of everyone, students, staff and faculty are here to learn and to provide learning opportunities Shannon 102

Interview data research question 2

LI	RM	GE	FH
Teaching students how to do things themselves	**Serving as a role model**	**Provide a positive impression of AACC so they come back**	**Helping students find what they need**
really makes them be a little more in control of their own futures. Everything is written in the syllabus 210	show them respect and they can learn that that's part of life, to be respectful and hopefully that's how they will treat others. 1297	If you can take one little piece of stress out of a person's life, it makes their life easier 27	a lot of students see me or my staff first, before they even register for a class. And if they have problems registering, they're usually here first. Or if they have problems understanding what class to take, in what order, then they are here first. And we kind of facilitate them to the right people to talk to if they need to, or the right direction to go. 14
It teaches them that they're not going to be told everything, that maybe they need to read the book, read the instructions. When we get new students, they don't know information -- I don't know when this is. Well, it's all in the schedule of classes. 214	how we treat students can teach them how to treat others how to behave as an adult. 1307 Being a people person, I think it's real important to treat people the way I'd like to be treated. 1313	she was having an issue with the bookstore. She had mentioned it to me. Well the bookstore is not really my problem 441 I wanted to try and get it straight, so when she comes back for other classes, number one, she understands the process better, and number two, she doesn't sort of have like a black cloud over her head 452	You walk through the plan and what they owe and basically answer any questions that they ask. Or try and find out who they can speak with, whether it be an adviser or financial aid or records and registration 578
So I take the time to explain exactly how it works and what's expected of them. So for the future, which I would hope that they would come back as a continuing student, they understand how the process works. 355	molding students to do the right things 1490 Be a little bit better and cleaner and take care of the stuff a little bit better but I would say it was mostly the teaching, the model role that they see how we Act around students. 1492 Just act like you want to act to you. 1502	if you provide a good customer service to students, that leaves a lasting impression on them. They want to come back. 624 things are made difficult for a student they may never want to come back again. 627	provide information they need, like registration information. 633 Information on on-line classes, providing them with the resources, the web address, the orientation process, everything that is involved in taking an on-line class. Sometimes they don't read the schedule. They register for a class on-line. It doesn't tell them anything about completing an on-line orientation before you can begin your on-line class. 635
I think it helps them to understand how to manage their money and just the general process. I mean, I've never been outside of this college, but I'd assume they generally work the same way 375	But I think that my job, it's a lot of leading by example, I think. And I think the interaction that I do have with students, I think that sometimes they're angry. The bookstore is usually not their favorite place to come. And it's usually being able to defuse the situation and hope that they can take something away with how they were treated and remember that and maybe pass that on, and treat somebody else kindly the next time 3589	if the staff at the college it the right way the first time, then the student will want to come back 747	I think that providing the information to the students is the first thing. It's their first step they take so that they can go on to become successful and want to learn 746
I can have them understand how it works here, then maybe when they go to a four-year college, if they do, that can help them. And maybe it will help them to know what questions to ask as well. 379	Just getting them started maybe in like a business aspect of the field, like education. Because a lot of people, a lot of the kids that just come right out of high school, maybe they haven't even had a job before or anything like that. So they can see how people are working in any kind of work atmosphere 4009	. It's going to make it easier for them -- it's going to want to make them come back. 895	being as helpful as you can to assist someone seeking to take a class at AACC. 761
Also, providing them other means as to calling us -- telling them that they can check on the web for capacities and so forth. This gives them the power to do things for themselves. Just by giving them other methods to use so they can get the information they would need to become successful is just a small part in helping a students learn 684	something like modeling, or they can see how people work? Right 4013	I will run into students who have questions or need help. How I treat them and respond to their needs makes an impression on them. And that impression can make them feel either that this is a good college with caring employees or this is not a caring place to be in which case they would not feel comfortable being here and it would be hard to learn in a place where you are not comfortable. 1291	Providing information to students. Also, working very closely with clients and organizations and staff 863

APPENDIX O. SAMPLE CODING FOR GENERALIZATIONS FROM DATA SETS

Level 1 Code	Level 2 Code	Description of Code Meanings
LLL		The college makes lifelong learning available to everyone.
	LLL-all	Lifelong learning is important for everyone.
	LLL-emp	Lifelong learning is not just for students, but all employees.
	LLL-acc	Access to lifelong learning is available to entire diverse community.
LP		Learning is a focus and priority for the college.
	LP-know	It is well known that learning is a college priority.
	LP-mtg	Support staff learned about this in meetings.
	LP-pub	Support staff learned about this by seeing it in publications.
	LP-all	Members of the college community keep learning a priority in their job.
LR		The college provides many resources to support student learning.
	LR-equip	The college supplies equipment, materials, supplies to support learning.
	LR-supp	Many support services are available to students (advising, child care center, payment plans, financial aid, testing, tutoring, etc.)
	LR-meth	Many different learning modes are available to students (classroom, lab, online, hybrid, weekend, etc.)
	LR-qual	The college checks and assures the quality of the learning experiences.
SS		Support staff are the first point of contact for most students, a critical role in success.
	SS-imp	Support staff can provide a positive first experience for students.
	SS-enc	Support staff support and encourage students so they build confidence.
	SS-env	Support staff provide a safe, clean environment conducive to learning.
	SS-inf	Support staff provide information, answer questions, solve problems about resources and systems students need.
	SS-dir	Support staff help students find direction in their lives and education.
IL		Support staff do not see themselves as teaching but do help students learn indirectly.

IL-fac   Supporting faculty allows faculty to spend more time in teaching.

IL-modl   Support staff are role models to show students real life work world.

IL-ind   Support staff show students how to do things independently for future.

APPENDIX P. SAMPLE PATTERNS, THEMES, AND RELATIONSHIPS LIST

RQ	RELATED FINDINGS AND SUB-FINDINGS	Theory
na	**The college makes lifelong or continuous learning available to everyone**	AHS-OC
	it is important for everyone	
	other college employees--faculty, staff, administration are engaged in LLL	
1	**Learning is a priority, goal, focus, of the college**	TOB definition
	everyone seems to know it, not sure how	Org. culture
1	**The college provides many different resources to support student learning.**	
	support services such as advising, financial aid, payment plans, child care center, etc.	RK-4.3, 4.4, 7.1, 7.2
	a variety of different methods of learning (classroom, online, hybrid,	TOB-3; RK-1.1
2 & 3	**As the first point of contact for most students, support staff play a critical role in student success**	
	provide a positive first impression and experience for students so they will return	
	offer support and encouragement to students helping to build confidence to	
	a safe, clean, pleasant environment conducive to learning	RK-7.7
	provide information, answer questions, solve problems about resources	RK-7.1,7.2,7.3
2 & 3	**Though not directly involved in teaching students, support staff help students learn indirectly**	
	supporting faculty so they can be more involved with students directly	RK-7.18
	serve as role models in student interactions to demonstrate real life interactions	
	teach students to do things independently and for themselves now and in future	RK-6.6
2	**Everyone in a Learning College plays a role in supporting and enhancing learning.**	Org culture, LC--TOB, AHS,
na	**A Learning College provides ongoing professional development for all employees.**	change, org culture
na	**Most support staff feel good or proud that their work helps students succeed.**	na
na	**The commitment to students first and student success is part of the organizational culture at AACC**	na

APPENDIX Q. EXTERNAL MEMBER CHECKING SUMMARY

1. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to participate in this interview? If so, please explain.
2. Did you feel or perceive any pressure or coercion to respond in a certain way to any of the questions Laura asked you?
3. Did you feel or believe that your responses to the interview questions will have any impact on your relationship with the researcher (Laura) or on your job at AACC?
4. Did you have the option of receiving a copy of your responses and making changes, even if you did not take advantage of this option?
5. Do you have any comments or questions?

Questionnaire & Interview Participant Number	Question 1: Coercion to participate?	Question 2: Coercion to respond certain way	Question 3: Expect any impact on your job or relationship with researcher	Question 4: Option to receive a copy of responses or interview transcript?	Comments or Questions
1	No	No	No	Yes	
2	No	No	No	Yes	
3	No	No	It could	Yes	
4	No	No	No	Yes	
5	No	No	No	Don't remember	
6	No	No	No	Yes	
7	No	No	No	Yes	
8	No	No	No	Yes	Asked the same questions
9	No	No	No	Yes	
10	No	No	No	Yes	It was interesting to do
11	No	No	No	Yes	
12	No	No	No	Yes	
13	No	No	No	Yes	
14	No	No	Hope not	Don't remember	It was not anonymous— had email address
15	No	No	No	Yes	
16	No	No	Hope not	Don't remember	Hope you are successful
17	No	No	No	Yes	
18	No	No	No	Yes	
19	No	No	No	Yes	
20	No	No	No	Yes	
21	No	No	No	Yes	
22	No	No	No	Yes	
23	No	No	No	Yes	
24	No	No	No	Yes	It was nice to be part of

					this
25	No	No	No	Yes	
26	No	No	No	Yes	Hope she can use the information
27	No	No	No	Yes	Fun to do, enjoyed participating

CURRICULUM VITAE

Laura Ellen Weidner

39 Cedar Road
Severna Park, Maryland 21146
leweidner@aacc.edu

AREAS OF	**Project Management**	**Leadership**
EXPERTISE	**Proposal & Report Writing**	**Computer Proficiency**
	Marketing Programs	**Conference Planning**
	Creative Problem-Solving	**Teaching & Presenting**
	Effective Communications	**Volunteer Leadership**
	Contract Training	**Strategic Planning**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided direction and executive leadership for the college's workforce development, contract training, and outreach to business and industry;

- Served as consultant for operationalizing start up business activity for network of colleges providing training solutions for national and international business;

- Managed and provided educational leadership for School at Work, nationally recognized distance learning program for over 4500 entry level hospital workers in 320 hospitals in 39 states;

- Developed new developmental reading department and revised curriculum to be outcomes-based instructional and assessment program;

- Managed over $1 million in annual budgets including operating, grants, contracts and entrepreneurial accounts;

- Oversaw all college initiatives to serve under- prepared students including credit and non-credit programs in developmental reading, basic skills, GED, and English as a Second Language;

- Served on college team working in national colloquium on college development, Strategic Horizons, in partnership with Consortium for Community College Development;

- Initiated, negotiated, and delivered customized contractual training to business, industry, agencies, and organizations in Maryland;

- Oversaw multiple programs at remote sites including correctional facilities, customer service training center and mobile learning center;

- Recruited, hired, supervised and managed 30+ staff at 4 locations countywide, administrative, professional and support staff, full and part-time, plus an additional 100+/- part-time faculty;

- ♦ Managed all aspects of ESL, literacy and technical education programs for continuing education, including planning, design, marketing, staffing, curricula, delivery and enrollment management;

- ♦ Served as liaison between community college credit and non-credit divisions, developing and delivering educational programs for agencies, businesses and the general public;

- ♦ Participated in college-wide "Student Success Initiative" including design team leadership, committee membership, and presentations at two colleges;

- ♦ Represented continuing education on numerous college-wide committees including Educational Programs, WWW, Educational Policies Committee; Middle States Accreditation Team

- ♦ Certified trainer in Worldwide Instructional Design Systems instructional design software for performance-based learning curriculum development

- ♦ Directed two ED National Workplace Literacy Projects; second project included two states and three counties;

- ♦ Represented colleges on local, state, regional, business, industry, educational, and government organizations, boards and committees;

- ♦ Secured over $500,000 in various grant funded monies annually;

- ♦ Provided work-based education train-the-trainer sessions to Delaware adult education professionals;

- ♦ Planned and directed statewide adult education conference for over 400 attendees; major responsibilities other national and statewide conferences;

- ♦ Elected as Secretary, Vice-President, and then President of Administrative Staff Organization

- ♦ Coordinated two community adult literacy computer centers and a mobile adult literacy lab;

- ♦ Presented over 50 workshops and presentations at state, regional, national, and international conferences;

- ♦ Planned and conducted various staff development activities for community colleges in Maryland;

- ♦ Published adult literacy curricula, reports; authored bi-monthly column of software reviews in literature review magazine; various other publications;

EMPLOYMENT

Anne Arundel Community College   Arnold, Maryland
    Executive Director, Center for Workforce Solutions   2/1/06 - present

Executive Director, Community & Professional Programs 7/1/05 - 1/31/06
Director, Integrated Reading & ESL   4/00 - 6/30/05
Director, ESL and Basic Skills   6/98 - 4/00

Community Colleges of Baltimore County   Baltimore, Maryland
Director, Applied Technology/Apprenticeship   3/95 - 5/98
Project Director, Work-Based Education (CCC)   4/9 - 3/95
Adjunct Instructor, Reading (CCC)   9/96 - 5/98

Anne Arundel Community College   Arnold, Maryland
Curriculum Coordinator, Literacy   9/89 - 3/91
Adjunct Instructor   1/84 -12/89
    Reading and Study Skills
    Teacher Education

Workplace Learning Services (Self-Employed Consultant)
Workplace Literacy Training   1/94 - 12/94
Curriculum Review, Glencoe Publishers   8/95 - 6/98
External Evaluation Data Management   1/95 - 6/98

Educational Consultant (Self-Employed)
Tutoring for adults and children   1/80 - 9/89

Anne Arundel County Literacy Council (Volunteer
Student Assessor, Office Manager, Tutor   9/79 - 9/89

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Teacher, Junior High School   8/73 - 6/78

EDUCATION
Master of Science, Reading   Johns Hopkins University
                                                Baltimore, Maryland

Bachelor of Arts, History   Frostburg State University
                                                Frostburg, Maryland

AFFILIATIONS
Chesapeake Regional Technology Council, Board Member   2006 - present
National Council for Continuing Education and Training 1992 - present
Ft. Meade Alliance   2006 - present
National Association of Developmental Educators   2000 - 2005
Worldwide Instructional Design Systems, Advisory Board 2001 - 2004
Maryland Association of Adult, Continuing & Community Education

Vice President, Community College Division	1997 - 1999
President	1995 - 1996
President-Elect, Conference Chairperson	1994 - 1995
Secretary, Board of Directors	1992 - 1994
Member	1990 - 2005

NETWORK National Consortium of Community Colleges for Workforce Development, Board of Directors	1997 -1999
Anne Arundel County Literacy Council	1979 - 2001

AWARDS

National Council of Instructional Administrators, Workforce Development Award, School at Work	2006
Tribute to Women in Industry Award Winner	2005
National Council for Continuing Education and Training, Distance Learning Award, School at Work	2003
Board of Trustees Professional Development Award	2001
President's Award MAACCE	1999

INTERESTS Travel, theater, reading, sewing

PUBLICATIONS Attached

PRESENTATIONS Attached

PERSONAL Married 34 years; two children Allison and Jeff; two grandchildren

WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Partnering in Curricula: Transportation, Logistics, and Cargo Security," co-presenter at National Council for Continuing Education and Training annual conference, Cleveland, Ohio, October, 2008.

"Operations, Logistics, and the Standards of Good Practice," workshop at Global Corporate College annual member retreat, Tucson, Arizona, June 2008.

"Preparing Leaders for the 21st Century," co-presenter at League for Innovation in the Community College Innovations Conference, Denver, Colorado, March 2008.

"Leading Change in a Changing Environment," co-presenter at National Council for Continuing Education and Training Annual Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, October 2007.

"A New Tool for Considering and Evaluating Vendor Products," co-presenter at National Council for Continuing Education and Training Annual Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, October 2007.

"Student Satisfaction in Contract Training Credit Courses," workshop at League for Innovation in the Community College Innovations Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 2007.

"You're Not Alone Out There: Student Support Resources in the Doctoral Program," workshop at League for Innovation in the Community College Innovations Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 2007.

"The Cereal-zation of Job Training: Re-packaging and Re-branding Workforce Development Initiatives," co-presenter at National Council for Continuing Education and Training annual conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October, 2006.

"Career Ladders for Entry Level Healthcare Workers," workshop, National Council of Instructional Administrators, Long Beach, California, April 2006.

"**Community College Leadership Program,"** panel presentation at League for Innovation in the Community College Innovations Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, March, 2006.

"The Profitability Puzzle: Ten Key Factors for Running a Profitable Business," co-presenter at National Council for Continuing Education and Training Annual Conference, Jacksonville, Florida, October 2006.

"Innovative Approaches that Address the National Health Care Worker Shortage,"
forum, League for Innovation in the Community College, Innovations
Conference, New York, New York, March 2005.

"**Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare,"** workshop, National Council for
Continuing Education and Training, annual national conference, Portland,
Oregon, November 2004.

"**Abdication and Succession: Mentoring as it was Meant to Be,"** workshop co-
presenter, Maryland Community College Association for Continuing Education
and Training, annual statewide conference, Ocean City, Maryland, May 2004.

"Working with the Adult Learner," training workshop at School at Work Hospital
Coach Training, Baltimore, Maryland, December 2003.

"Motivating Adults to Learn," training workshop at School at Work Hospital Coach
Training, Baltimore, Maryland, December 2003.

"Students Finish First," keynote speaker, New Mexico Professional and Career
Educators Association, statewide conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico,
November 2003.

"**Abdication and Succession: Building a College Mentoring Program,"** workshop co-
presenter, workshop co-presenter, National Council for Continuing Education and
Training, annual national conference, St. Louis, Missouri, October 2003.

"Structuring Performance-Based Learning," workshop co-presenter, Assessment and
Learning statewide conference, Annapolis, Maryland, September 2003.

**"Implementing a Performance-Based Learning Program in Developmental
Reading,"** workshop co-presenter, National Association for Developmental
Education, annual national conference, Austin, Texas, February 2003.

"Find 'Em, Get 'Em, Keep 'Em," workshop co-presenter, National Council for
Continuing Education and Training, national conference, annual conference,
Richmond, Virginia, October 2002.

"**School at Work: Meeting Employers on Their Own Turf,"** workshop co-presenter,
Workforce Innovations Conference, San Diego, CA. July 2002.

"**Front-line Implementation of Performance-Based Learning Using WIDS,"**
workshop, Maryland Learning Outcomes Assessment Conference, Annapolis,
Maryland, March 2002.

"What is an Instructional Specialist?", workshop co-presenter, Association of Faculty for the Advancement of Community College Teaching annual statewide conference, Belair, Maryland, January 2002.

"Implementing Performance-Based Learning and Assessment in Credit and Continuing Education Programs," National Council for Continuing Education and Training, annual national conference, Austin, Texas, October 2001.

"**Using WIDS to Develop Performance-Based Learning Programs in the Community College,"** Maryland Community College Association for Continuing Education and Training, statewide conference, Ocean City, Maryland, May 2001.

"A House United: Credit and Continuing Education," workshop co-presenter, National Coalition for Continuing Education and Training, annual national conference, Jacksonville, Florida, October 2000.

"What Is A Developmental Reading Student?" presentation at Fall Faculty Convocation and Orientation, Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, Maryland, August 2000.

"www.communicate.how?" presenter at New Faculty Orientation, Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, Maryland, August 2000.

"Integrated ESL Services in a Community College," workshop, Maryland Community College Association for Continuing Education and Training, statewide conference, Ocean City, Maryland, May 2000.

"www.communicate.how?" workshop co-presenter, National Coalition for Continuing Education and Training, national conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October, 1999.

"Reducing Management Skepticism and Worker Anxiety: Promoting Workplace Literacy Programs," Pre-conference workshop, Workplace Learning Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 1999.

"www.communicate.how?" workshop co-presenter, Maryland Community College Association for Continuing Education and Training, statewide conference, Rocky Gap, Maryland, May 1999.

"www.communicate.how?" workshop co-presenter, Maryland Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education, statewide conference, Baltimore, Maryland, May 1999.

"From Low End to High End: Integrating Basic Skills into Technical Training," workshop, National Coalition for Continuing Education and Training, national conference, Portland, Oregon, October 1998.

"From Low End to High End: Integrating Basic Skills into Technical Training," workshop, National Coalition for Advanced Technology Centers, national conference, Pueblo, Colorado, June 1997.

"Internet for Novices," workshop co-presenter, Maryland Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education, statewide conference, Baltimore, Maryland, May 1997.

"Effective Partnerships Between Credit and Non-Credit Programs in the Community College," workshop, Maryland Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education, statewide conference, Baltimore, Maryland, May, 1997.

"Enhancing and Expanding Credit and Non-Credit Partnerships During Times of Change," workshop, National Coalition of Continuing Education and Training, national conference, Phoenix, Arizona, October 1996.

"Best Practices in Workplace Education in Industry," panel presentation, Workforce Education and Development: Preparing Labor, Business, and Education for the New Millennium statewide conference, Baltimore, Maryland, June 1996.

"Addressing Change in Community Colleges Through Credit/Non-Credit Partnerships," workshop, Maryland Association of Deans and Directors annual conference, Ocean City, Maryland, June 1996.

"Look-Alike Leadership," seminar, Maryland Association of Deans and Directors annual conference, Ocean City, Maryland, June 1996.

"Implementing Successful Work-Based Education Programs," half-day, pre-conference workshop, Network annual Workforce Development Conference, Nashville, Tennessee, April 1995.

"Creating Job-Specific Curriculum for Work-Based Education Programs," workshop, Delaware Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education, Dewey Beach, Delaware, March 1995.

"Developing Effective Credit/Non-Credit Partnerships in Community Colleges," round table, League for Innovation in Community Colleges Workforce Development Conference, San Diego, California, February, 1995.

"Customized Assessment in Work-Based Education Programs," seminar, National Coalition for Community Services and Continuing Education annual conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 1994.

"Skills Today for Tomorrow: Implementing a Workplace Literacy Program," seminar, Maryland Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1994.

 "Integrating Workplace Literacy Programs into Existing Adult Education Programs," workshop, Delaware Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Dewey Beach, Delaware, March 1994.

"Skills Today for Tomorrow: Implementing a Workplace Literacy Education-Business Partnership," seminar, International Reading Association North American Conference on Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Washington, D.C., February, 1994.

"Creating Job-Specific Curriculum for Work-Based Education Programs," workshop, American Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Dallas, Texas, November, 1993.

"Making Work-Based Education Work for Continuing Education," seminar, National Council for Community Services and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado, October 1993.

"Leadership in Work-Based Education," round table, League for Innovation in Community Colleges Conference on Leadership Development in Community Colleges, Washington, D.C., July 1993.

"Skills Today for Tomorrow: Implementing a Workplace Literacy Program," seminar, American Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Anaheim, California, November 1992.

"Workforce 2000: Planning and Implementing a Basic Skills Enhancement Program in the Graphic Arts Industry," seminar, Printing Industries of America Human Relations Symposium, Tucson, Arizona, October 1992.

"Workplace Documents to Workplace Learning: Job-Specific Curriculum Development," workshop, Literacy Works Professional Development Institute, Baltimore, Maryland, October 1992.

"Skills Today for Tomorrow: A Workplace Literacy Program Model," seminar, National Council on Community Services and Continuing Education Annual Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, October 1992.

"Workplace Literacy for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses," panel discussion, National Alliance of Business Annual Conference, Miami, Florida, September 1992.

"Implementing a Workplace Literacy Program for Graphic Arts Companies," seminar, Graphic Arts Institute of America annual meeting, Denver, Colorado, June 1992.

"Implementing a Workplace Literacy Program: A Model for Business and Education Partnerships," seminar, Maryland Association of Adult, Community and Continuing Education Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1992.

"Reducing Management Skepticism and Worker Anxiety: Promoting Workplace Literacy Programs, seminar, Maryland Association of Adult, Community and Continuing Education Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1992.

"Workplace Literacy: The Community College Role," workshop, Association of Faculty for Advancement of Community College Teaching, Essex, Maryland, January, 1992.

"Skills Today for Tomorrow, A Program That's Working," lecture, "BC 2001," sponsored by the Executive Advisory Board on Higher Education, Towson, Maryland, October 1991.

"How to Evaluate and Select Software for Adult Literacy Programs," workshop, Maryland Department of Education Professional Development Institute, Columbia, Maryland, October 1991.

"Workplace Literacy Program Models," panel, Maryland State Department of Education Professional Development Institute, Columbia, Maryland, October 1991.

"Integrating Computers into an Adult Literacy Program," workshop, Literacy Exchange, Junior League of Baltimore and Baltimore Reads, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, April 1991.

"Technology and Adult Literacy," seminar, Metropolitan Washington Association of Adult, Continuing, and Community Education Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., April 1991.

"Effective Use of Technology in an Adult Literacy Program," seminar, Maryland Association of Adult, Continuing, and Community Education Annual Conference, Ellicott City, Maryland, April 1991.

"How to Integrate Computers into an Adult Literacy Program," workshop, International Reading Association North American Conference on Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Banff, Alberta, Canada, March 1991.

"Computers and the Adult Education Program," half-day workshop, Maryland State Department of Education Literacy Works Professional Development Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, October 1990.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Free-Lance Pieces

Instructional Design: Easier with WIDS, *Campus Technology/Syllabus Magazine*
January 2003.

Printing Training at CCC--Better Than Ever!, *Final Copy, M*ay 1996.

Developing Creative Work-Based Curricula, *Tradewinds*, December 1992.

Selecting Software for Holiday Gifts, *Computer Access Magazine,* December
1989.

Making Holiday Gifts Using the Computer, *Instructor,* December 1989.

Using Computers to Teach Critical Thinking, *Instructor,* October 1989.

How to Choose Quality Educational Software for Children, *Computer Access
Magazine,* September 1989.

Using One Computer with Thirty Students, *Instructor,* September 1989.

Regular Column

"The Electronic Edge," bi-monthly column featuring reviews of educational
software in *The Reading Edge*, May 1988-January 1990.

Features

Interview with Shari Lewis, author and ventriloquist, *The Reading Edge*
July 1988.

Curricular Oversight

Introduction to Healthcare. Course workbook, DVD and online learning activities
for entry-level healthcare workers, December 2004.

Becoming a Healthcare Professional. Course workbook, DVD and online
learning activities for second course in healthcare career ladder program,
April 2005.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving. A five step model for individual and group problem solving in the workplace, designed for printing industry May 1995.

Effective Communications in the Workplace. Basic skills curriculum for effective verbal, written, and non-verbal communication in the workplace, May 1995.

Foundation Skills for Manufacturing: A Work-Based Curriculum. Two volumes, basic math and reading/writing skills activities for manufacturing, June 1993.

Skills Today for Tomorrow: A Basic Skills Curriculum for the Graphic Arts Industry. Basic reading, writing, and math work-based learning activities, November 1992.

Other Publications

Promoting Adult, Community & Continuing Education (MAACCE Publication re-named to *MAACCE Matters)*Editorial Consultant, July 1996 – June 1999.

Severna Gardens Community Newsletter,Editor, Writer, Designer, 1987-1991.

Severna Park Elementary School PTA Newsletter,Editor, Writer, Designer, 1988-1990.