

Supporting Success: Learning Assistance for Adult-Arrival Immigrant Students

By Emily K. Suh and Russ Hodges

ABSTRACT: *Generation 1 learners are multilingual, adult-arrival, immigrant students who begin their U.S. education in adult ESL. With their nontraditional academic backgrounds, these learners often require support when beginning postsecondary education; however, postsecondary learning assistance professionals may not understand these learners' unique needs and strengths. This multiple case study explores five learners' experiences accessing learning support during their first term in developmental education courses. Findings indicate that, although the learners were highly motivated to seek help, they remained confused over the roles and expectations of learning support professionals. Furthermore, support staff required additional knowledge and cultural competence to assist these students.*

Despite the frustrating disconnect between his expectations and the center's focus on higher order concerns, Olan returned for assistance.

Generation 1 learners are multilingual, adult-arrival immigrant students who begin their U.S. education in adult ESL (Suh, 2016). With their nontraditional academic backgrounds, these learners often require support when beginning postsecondary education; however, postsecondary learning assistance professionals often lack necessary training and experience to support these diverse learners. Following, the experience of one such student, Olan, illustrates the challenges Generation 1 learners can face when seeking academic support from learning assistance professionals.

Late one afternoon near the end of the Spring 2016 quarter, Olan visited the writing center. He wanted feedback on his paper, which received a C+ overall but included failing marks for "Organization" and "Style/Usage/Mechanics." Olan had enrolled in ENG0960 Integrated Reading and Writing at the local community college shortly after immigrating to the United States under the Special Immigrant Visa program for Yezidi interpreters (i.e., an ethnic group who assisted U.S. forces in Iraq). An Iraqi high school graduate, Olan felt confident in his overall academic abilities, English language skills, and professional goal of becoming an ultrasound technician. On that particular afternoon, Olan had wanted to meet with his intensive advisor to discuss his writing but decided to go to the writing center after misunderstanding his advisor's availability. In the writing

center, the tutor summarized her understanding of the instructor's feedback and showed Olan how to check his organization by color coding the essay's main points. Olan quickly caught on and independently color-coded his entire essay; however, he seemed displeased when the tutor concluded the session. When Olan asked about rewriting the paper to avoid using the first-person pronoun "I," the tutor replied that he should "work on thesis and organization first" before returning to the center to have his additional questions answered. "Actually, I have another two essays, so I don't want to today [sic]," Olan replied. Olan had come to the center specifically for assistance with grammatical and style issues, which were weighted more heavily than organization in the instructor-provided rubric. Despite the frustrating disconnect between his expectations and the center's focus on higher order concerns, Olan returned for assistance with two additional papers during the last week of the term because of his investment in improving his English and his belief that the Writing Center was a valuable resource for achieving that goal despite his communication challenges with the writing tutor.

Many learning support professionals have worked with students like Olan. These adult-arrival immigrants who wish to enter college do so through nontraditional paths which frequently include foreign education and/or adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Recognizing that labels highlight specific group attributes which contribute to positive or pejorative group representations, we, the authors, utilize the term Generation 1 learners (Suh, 2016) to describe multilingual students who are adult immigrants (Rumbaut, 2004) entering the United States after the age of 21 and beginning their U.S. education in adult ESL. We further highlight Generation 1 learners as adult learners, acknowledging how such learners' entry into and success in postsecondary education are influenced by their multiple social roles (Knowles, 1970) and their unique personal, professional, and educational experiences outside of the U.S. public K-12 school system.

The problem is that some Generation 1 learners are well educated professionals, whereas others have interrupted, limited, or no previous formal education. Their demonstrated tenacity in

Emily K. Suh
Assistant Professor
emily.suh@txstate.edu

Russ Hodges
Associate Professor

Doctoral Program in Developmental Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Texas State University
San Marcos, TX 78666

persisting through an oftentimes frustrating ESL sequence is assumed to support their transition to college (Almon, 2015). Many Generation 1 learners begin in adult ESL, which is distinct from K-12 ESL in both learning outcomes and environment (Hagedorn & Li, 2017). Adult ESL meets basic literacy needs and emphasizes workforce readiness; however, funding scarcity for such programs limits their focus on postsecondary preparation (Hagedorn & Li, 2017), and, as a result, some Generation 1 learners transition into college before completing their ESL classes (Suh, 2018). The confluence of Generation 1 learners' unique experiences separates them from Generation 1.5 students who are foreign-born but U.S. K-12 educated (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988) and frequently enter college as traditionally aged students. Differences between these two multilingual, immigrant populations necessitate further exploration of how to support Generation 1 learners in college, particularly given the unique previous educational, professional, and personal experiences these learners bring to college.

The purpose of this article is to investigate how learning support professionals can meet the distinct needs of this subgroup of multilingual, immigrant students. We first establish that andragogy theory (Knowles, 1970) and investment theory (McKay and Wong, 1996) help us distinguish Generation 1 learners from their U.S.-educated Generation 1.5 student counterparts and provide a lens to frame this research. We then summarize relevant literature contributing to the conceptualization of adult immigrant students. Next we present the cases of five Generation 1 learners' experiences with various student support services as they transitioned into credit classes at one community college. Finally, we explore how learning support professionals can assist learners' efforts to apply their lived and educational experiences to their college success. Using a cross case analysis, the study's primary objective is to explore the question, "How do Generation 1 learners experience learning support services on campus?"

Theoretical Framework

To emphasize the strengths Generation 1 learners bring to postsecondary education as adults, we draw from andragogy as a theory of how adults learn (Knowles, 1970). This humanistic theory centralizes learners' individual motivation and self-direction to learn for self-fulfillment (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Adult learners have an intrinsic motivation to connect classroom learning to their desired social roles and previous experiences (Knowles & Associates, 1984), which Knowles (1970) has referred to as "a broadening base to which to relate new learning" (p. 45). Andragogy assumes learners are autonomous and intrinsically motivated, having experienced the need for learning and drawing from their previous experiences in learning. Andragogy

implies that, through a simple change in mindset, learners can overcome all obstacles to their education and that learning is indeed their main goal.

Andragogy has been critiqued for its narrow conceptualization of learners as separate from social and institutional structures (Sandlin, 2005). Lee (2003) critiqued andragogy's inability to account for the powerful influence of dynamic contexts in which the learners engage, "especially when it comes to the experiences of immigrant adult learners" (p. 13). To address these critiques, we turn to the theory of investment, which explores the relationship between identity enactment and language learning among emergent multilingual students (Norton, 2013). Similar to andragogical assumptions that learners' readiness to learn is motivated by their desired social roles, investment theory presents language use and identity choices as "sites of contestation" (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 603) in which individuals engage in language and learning to establish their chosen identities and claim group membership.

Investment theory thus complexifies adult learning theories.

Learners possess agency, or the ability to act upon and impact the world around them (Norton, 2013), and the need to exercise it in order to position themselves within discourses of immigration, English language learning, and postsecondary education. Researchers suggest that that learners' specific needs and goals are "not simply distractions from the proper task of language learning," but, indeed, "they must be regarded as constituting the very fabric of students' lives and as determining their investment in learning the target language" (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 603). Rather than maintaining the andragogical stance, that previous experience and desired social roles inform learning, scholars within the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages assume that learners' experiences and desires influence their investment in learning. Investment theory thus complexifies adult learning theories by exploring the factors influencing Generation 1 learners' desire to learn, or invest in English.

Situating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Postsecondary Education

The majority of the literature on immigrant students focuses on Generation 1.5 students (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015). Generation 1.5 students are child-arrival immigrants (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988) who receive the majority of their formal education in the United States. In U.S. K-12 schools, Generation

1.5 students are legally entitled to instruction facilitating their English language acquisition and are exposed to culturally-specific academic beliefs, including the ownership of ideas (Toohey, 2018) and participation expectations such as hand raising to indicate the desire to speak (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2018). Generation 1.5 students thus have often acquired academic experiences, cultural knowledge, and influential mentoring relationships relevant to U.S. postsecondary contexts (Harklau & McClanahan, 2012).

Unlike Generation 1.5 students, there is limited literature on students who transition from adult ESL into higher education (Suh, 2016). However, available research has posited that immigrant students tend to enroll in community colleges based on cost effectiveness, open admissions, accessible locations, flexible course schedules, ESL offerings, and assistance with labor market options (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2011).

In 2014, state-administered adult ESL classes served a total of 667,515 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), yet the number who transitioned into college courses was not recorded. Not surprisingly, English language learners attending two-year colleges remain an understudied population within higher education research (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Nevertheless, researchers stress the essential role learning support professionals play in assisting Generation 1 learners (Almon, 2015; Suh, 2016).

Supporting Multilingual Students' Postsecondary Success

Most students, especially linguistically diverse students, can benefit from postsecondary learning support. For example, in one urban community college, Conway (2010) found 85% of immigrant students (compared to 55% of native-born students) were referred to developmental education coursework (referred to by Conway as remediation), often as a result of emergent English-language skills. Multilingual students may also benefit from alternatives to adult ESL and stand-alone remediation courses (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Ganga, Mazzariello, & Edgecombe, 2018).

The majority of literature on supporting multilingual students comes from writing center research on second-language writers. In the literature, these writers are commonly referred to as L2 writers, as opposed to first language or L1 writers. L2 writers often need specialized instruction compared to those who have learned to write English before other languages (Babcock & Thonus, 2012; Olson, 2013). Researchers have found positive L2 writer outcomes from tutoring instruction (Chiu, 2011) along with online writing center tutoring (Jones, Garralda, Li, & Lock, 2006). However, Weirick, Davis, and Lawson (2017) have reported in their

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

case study that L2 writers received significantly fewer and shorter comments from the online writing center consultants than L1 writers. Babcock and Thonus (2012) caution that many conventional writing center practices, which utilize nondirective tutoring approaches, may not be effective with L2 writers. Tensions emerge from differing perspectives on the tutoring role: L2 writers often view tutors as authorities rather than peers, which directly contradicts writing center pedagogy.

Multilingual students have also benefitted from academic advising which typically consists of postassessment information, student goal setting, program of study selection for future careers, development of a personalized plan of study, and introduction to institutional academic policies and academic support programs. Researchers reported that advised students of all language and immigration backgrounds were more engaged across all Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) survey benchmarks than their nonadvised peers. Yet, only 62% of entering students surveyed in 2016 indicated meeting with an advisor (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2018).

Although advisors are primarily concerned with helping students achieve their academic and career goals (Krumrei & Newton, 2009), researchers have found other variables that are predictive of student success, including personal factors such as self-efficacy and emotional satisfaction (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010). Academic, personal, and career counseling support is often necessary for immigrant populations (Orozco, Alvarez, & Gutkin, 2010; Scrivener & Weiss, 2009). Immigrant students are particularly at-risk for experiencing self-efficacy and mental health issues (Soria & Stebleton, 2013), along with cultural, personal, family, financial, and/or career challenges, and often need resources for coping with stress and anxiety (Teranishi et al., 2011). Counselors trained to “address the specific psychological needs” of immigrants can be especially helpful with “adjustment, isolation and poor self-efficacy” issues (Teranishi et al., 2011, pp. 163-164).

There is miniscule empirical research on learning support for immigrant populations, particularly those attending two-year colleges (Orozco et al., 2010). What is known is that academic advisors, counselors, and other academic support specialists must be prepared to

address multicultural issues. Reynolds (2009) defined multicultural awareness as “beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions needed to work with students, staff, and faculty who may be culturally different” (pp. 114-115). Learning about one’s own culture, gathering knowledge about others’ culture, understanding the impact of oppression and power, and being knowledgeable about salient cultural constructs (e.g., acculturation and cultural identity) are essential qualities to possess when working with diverse students (Reynolds, 2009).

Although emergent multilingual students are expected to face the same challenges as the mainstream college population, their unique experiences may intensify their academic struggles (DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014). Multilingual students can feel marginalized in a postsecondary setting (Smith, 2013). These feelings can be especially pervasive when institutions, often predominantly white-majority colleges, unconsciously show cultural favoritism, that is, a preference for students who express the dominant group’s cultural attitudes, values, behaviors, and norms (Smith, 2013). Culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly Generation 1 learners, must acquire cultural capital—a term originally conceived by Bourdieu in 1973 to describe differences in educational outcomes obtained by persons of differing socioeconomic status (as cited in Smith, 2013). Cultural capital is both the knowledge individuals have about an institution’s dominant culture and their ability to comprehend its hidden curriculum. Smith defines the hidden curriculum as “a set of implicit rules pertaining to the norms, values, and expectations that unofficially govern how people interact and evaluate one another . . . and indirectly influences an individual’s ability and performance in the formal curriculum” (p. 22). For Generation

1 learners, establishing strong connections and academic social relationships with learning support professionals can be especially effective, as these “inside agents” possess knowledge of the college and its hidden curriculum (Smith, 2013, p. 22). Advisors, counselors, and learning support professionals play an essential role in assisting Generation 1 learners’ transition into and success in higher education (Almon, 2015; Suh, 2016). The following cases further illustrate this important need.

Methodology

The data presented here were part of a larger qualitative study (Suh, 2017) of Generation 1 learners transitioning from adult ESL into developmental education. This research utilized a multiple case study design (Yin, 2014) in order to examine the close relationship between the cases (i.e., Generation 1 learners transitioning into college) and their surrounding context (i.e., the learning support system within the college) as well as facilitate analysis across the cases.

Participants

Following Yin’s (2014) model, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to identify appropriate cases. Inclusion criteria included self-identification as adult-arrival immigrant, attendance in adult ESL classes, and transition to developmental English. Exclusion criteria included self-identification as U.S.-born immigrant-background student, U.S./K-12 educated, international students, or transitioning to college-level courses. Based on these criteria, six students were selected to participate in the case study. All six students were also considered to be nontraditional based upon their age ranging from mid-20s to early 60s (see Table 1, all names are pseudonyms). Based on learners’ observed and self-reported use of learning

Table 1
Participant Backgrounds

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Self-Identified Social Roles	Previous Educational Experience
Labiba	Female	mid 60s	Afghani	College student, Future pharmacist, Refugee, Single mother	Foreign education in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan; college’s ESL program
Mariam	Female	mid 20s	Iraqi	College Student, Mother, Wife	Iraqi high school, college’s Bridging Lab, college’s ESL program
Olan	Male	early 30s	Yazidi (from Iraq)	College student, Father, Former U.S. army interpreter, Husband	Iraqi high school, English language program (in Iraq), college’s ESL program
Rebecca	Female	early 40s	(South) Sudanese	College student, Medication aide, Single mother, Sudanese leader	Refugee camp-run school and camp teacher training program
Qadira	Female	early 30s	(North) Sudanese	College student, Future pharmacist, Mother, Wife	Sudanese school system

support services, one learner was excluded from the present study because he did not report accessing any of the college's learning support services.

Research Site

The study occurred at a mid-sized, urban two-year college located in the midwestern part of the United States. There were 9,392 students enrolled on three campuses when data collection began in Fall 2014. Of these students 7,642 (81.4%) identified as white, 5,021 (53.5%) were female, and 6,447 (68.6%) were 24 years of age or younger (Tableau Public, 2016). The college did not track first language for degree-seeking students or report demographic data by campus; however, the main campus, which enrolled 7,182 students during the study, was widely acknowledged to be the most diverse because of its location in a metropolitan area and the college's ESL program. Participants in this study were enrolled in their

college's Bridging Lab (pseudonym), a specialized program which offered advising and subject area tutoring for students preparing to transition to college. Lab advisors and tutors were available to students at any stage of their college career, and three of the study's participants continued to study with the lab after transitioning to college.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for the five case study participants in the present study included 28 observations and 33 interviews with participants and faculty/staff, totaling 33 hours and 21 minutes (see Table 2). The first author observed students in class and as they met one-on-one with learning assistance professionals (i.e., tutors, advisors) and instructors. Semistructured interview questions based on the case study protocol (Yin, 2014) elicited learners' perceptions of their transition to college and the support they received from faculty

and learning assistance professionals. Interview and observation data were triangulated with document analysis to construct individual case narratives.

Typed observation notes and transcribed interviews were thematically analyzed to uncover points of commonality and interest within and between cases. Thematic analysis, a form of qualitative analysis in which codes, or themes, are generated from the data and/or relevant literature, was used; through thematic organization of the data, patterns and anomalies became visible which illustrated the interaction between the case participant and the context (Clark & Braun, 2014; Yin, 2014). Individual case narratives were constructed to examine the learners' experiences seeking learning support on campus. Comparison across cases allowed the researchers to deepen and generalize understandings of the Generation 1 learner experience receiving learning support at the community college. Subsequent cross-case analysis examined shared themes and experiences between the cases (see Suh, 2017 for individual case analysis).

Table 2
Data Collection Activities

Participant	Number of Interviews	Minutes of Interview	Number of Observations (Tasks)	Minutes of Observation
Labiba	3	80	3 (2x In Class, Studying)	210
Mariam	6	122	3 (2x In Class, 2x Writing Center, Office Hours, Advising)	330
Olan	3	119	4 (2x In Class, Writing Center, Independent Studying)	210
Rebecca	3	118	4 (3x In Class, Tutoring)	150
Qadira	4	141	5 (3x In Class, 2x Independent Studying)	210
Anne (Instructor)	5	130	1 (Observed with learners in her class)	
David (Writing Tutor, Instructor)	1	30	1 (Observed with learners in the Writing Center)	
George (Lab Instructor)	2	15	1 (Observed with learners in the Lab)	
Jack (Writing Tutor)	1	38	1 (Observed with learners in the Writing Center)	
Laura (Lab Advisor)	1	12	1 (Observed with learners in the Lab)	
Lucas (Intensive Advisor, Instructor)	1	30	1 (Observed with learners in the Lab)	
Nick (Instructor)	1	31	1 (Observed with learners in his class)	
Rachel (Lab Advisor)	1	10	1 (Observed with learners in the lab)	
Rob (Instructor)	1	15	1 (Observed with learners in his class)	
Total	33 interviews	891 minutes	28 observations	1110 minutes

Cross Case Findings

Our cross case analysis suggested that the Generation 1 learners in this study were highly eager to seek support but that, at times, miscommunication and differing expectations negatively impacted their perceptions of the assistance they received. Due to space, only the cross case analysis is discussed in detail; however, select individual experiences are highlighted to add depth to the presented findings.

Willingness to Seek Support

The Generation 1 learners in this study were highly motivated to seek support from campus learning professionals. As indicated in Table 3 (page 16), all of the learners studied with the Bridging Lab before taking the college placement exam. The lab offered advising, tutoring and 10-weeks' access to Pearson's MySkillsLab. Labiba, Rebecca, and Mariam described the Bridging Lab as meaningful to their transition experience. Labiba in particular spent a significant amount of time studying with the lab's math tutor: "I just walk by the blackboard, say '[George], what is this?' He love it!" Because of the encouragement Labiba received in these early tutoring sessions, she regularly returned to the lab to visit with the math tutor or talk with advisors about her classes after beginning her developmental coursework. Mariam similarly described how she would "get idea from her [the instructor's] mouth" in order to "go to the writing center, or when I got to the advisor." Labiba and Mariam's cases illustrated not only their willingness to seek support but their efforts to apply their learning across academic contexts within the college.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Learners also demonstrated comfort in visiting the writing center, which some saw as a natural extension of the Bridging Lab’s tutoring. The center director reported that nearly one-quarter of writing center visits were made by multilingual students, although this group made up a much smaller proportion of the college population. In fact, some learners preferred the writing center to office hours. Rebecca sought extensive feedback on grammar and punctuation, preferring to ask writing tutors rather than her instructor: “I don’t know if I can call [the instructor] privately, I don’t know because I just feel like bugging people, I don’t like that way.” Mariam

Qadira, for example, was highly interested in complex English grammar rules. She spent over an hour with her advisor every week discussing items from sample grammar assessments. Her advisor questioned the relevance of these grammatical rules, which he felt were highly sophisticated and often obscure, but he answered Qadira’s questions and encouraged her to bring samples of her own writing so that they could apply the rules they discussed. Meetings between Labiba and her advisor included Labiba’s preparation for college and her understanding of college expectations, such as not interrupting lectures. The learners had clear expectations for their interactions with learning support professionals and expressed their comfort in seeking assistance related

the length of time interactions should last and how feedback should be provided caused friction between learners and staff. Additionally, tensions emerged as learning assistance professionals offered advice which conflated the learners’ positive attitudes and overcoming of previous hardships with their potential academic readiness.

When asked about Labiba’s ability to succeed in college, one advisor glowingly explained, “[Labiba is] here every day at the computer doing you know doing the work, yet despite everything that she’s been through, she is such a happy person wanting to learn.” A math tutor similarly praised Labiba’s habit of interrupting the tutor midexplanation by walking up to the board to ask questions, equating it to her tenacity as a single mother and refugee. However, he did not discuss with her when such behavior would be unacceptable (during a class lecture), and Labiba became hurt and angry when her efforts to participate thusly were rebuked by her instructor and when her intensive advisor tried to discuss these incidents with her. In fact, Labiba appeared unreceptive to the advisor’s suggestions and continued interrupting class but became increasingly distressed by her in-class experiences. She expressed frustration as staff negatively assessed her participation but simultaneously attempted to check in on Labiba’s emotional wellbeing, and she began referring to the staff as “bad men [guys]” and “racist” because of their persistent efforts to engage her in communication beyond what she perceived other White, nonimmigrant-background students received.

We posit that the fact that these interactions were instigated by college staff rather than Labiba herself may have further exacerbated her growing discomfort during a period of extreme emotional distress. In fact, because the college at that time lacked on-site mental health resources, faculty and learning support professionals decided to give Labiba space and not initiate additional contact with her. Labiba remained in a state of high anxiety, but she ultimately passed her English class and moved into the college’s second (and final) developmental reading/writing course. She also maintained her daily prolonged writing center visits and slowly increased contact with both the intensive and lab advisors although she no longer visited daily. Labiba’s case exemplifies the tensions which can arise between Generation 1 learners and learning assistance professionals when they misunderstand each other’s expectations. Examining these areas of misalignment is necessary for the field’s ability to support these unique learners.

Discussion

The Generation 1 learners in this study display specific expectations for learning support professionals. Their learner-directed interactions confirm andragogical assumptions that adult

Table 3
Learning Supports Frequency of Use by Learner

Participant	Bridging Lab (before enrollment in college)	Intensive Advising	Writing Center	Mathematics
Labiba	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Mariam	Weekly	< 5 Visits	Weekly	0
Olan	< 5 Visits	< 5 Visits	< 5 Visits	0
Rebecca	Weekly	0	2-3 Visits/Week	0
Qadira	< 5 Visits	Weekly	< 5 Visits	0

would return to the writing center the following day to work with another tutor if the first failed to provide her with the direct feedback she sought. As Rebecca’s and Mariam’s experiences have revealed, learners were strategic in their help-seeking behaviors.

Rebecca knew she could ask lab advisors for assistance despite their busy schedules: “I know they have a line of people there, and I’m not the only one there, but I talk to them when I need to.” Despite her fear of taking up the advisors’ time, Rebecca continued to seek their assistance because she valued their feedback about potential careers and job training relevant to Rebecca’s long-term goal of returning to Sudan. Mariam similarly continued to seek the assistance of her lab advisor whom she felt had more information about the college than her former ESL instructor, another resource person whom Mariam contacted for support in her U.S. community college.

Additionally, several learners met with intensive advisors. Buyarski and Ross (2002) described intensive advising as purposeful, holistic, and intrusive, involving collaboration with other support programs staff to develop individualized, inclusive student profiles and provide student-specific first-semester interventions. Intensive advising was voluntary and paired students and English faculty members for weekly 30-minute individual meetings. Meeting topics were not mandated, and learners often brought their work and directed advising sessions.

to language acquisition, specific assignments, and the college system in order to meet their goals.

Misaligned Expectations and Resulting Missteps

Unfortunately, learners’ expectations did not always match the support they received. For example, the writing center professionals, who were part-time college employees, participated in director-led training on supporting multilingual students. However, several tutors described themselves as lacking sufficient experience and preparation for tutoring Generation 1 learners, whom they perceived as requesting highly intensive tutoring sessions and struggling with unfamiliar academic expectations, extended reading and writing assignments in English, and inability to work independently.

Olan’s experience discussed earlier illustrated learners’ frustration stemming from their unawareness of tutors’ prioritization of higher order concerns. Similarly, tutors described their frustration with Labiba’s expectation that they sit beside her all afternoon to be available for continuous feedback as she completed all of her assignments for the day. Notably, Labiba’s assumption echoed Qadira’s expectation that her intensive advisor work with her for multiple hours a time. In response to such prolonged visits, the center instituted a daily maximum 45-minute time frame on tutoring appointments. These examples have illustrated how differing expectations regarding

From the

National Center for Developmental Education's DevEd Press



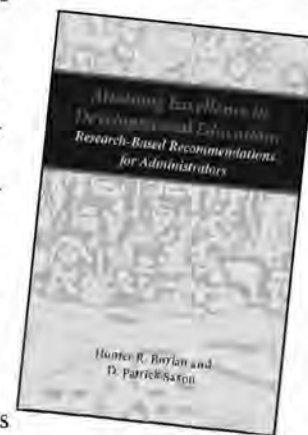
What Works: Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education provides a guide to the best models and techniques available for the professional developmental educator.

The text describes each best practice in detail, along with its supporting research, and includes an example of a college or university applying that practice. Following every example is a list of tips for implementation. The contents focus on research regarding how to design, implement, and evaluate developmental education and learning assistance programs.

Attaining Excellence in Developmental Education: Research-Based Recommendations for Administrators is designed to provide recommendations to administrators that will contribute to excellence in the developmental education classroom.

It is organized into two sections. Section One recommends actions that cost little or nothing to implement. Section Two recommends actions that involve the expenditure of resources and provides justification for doing so. Appendices include noncognitive assessment instruments, recommended readings, and more.

\$33.00 each + shipping/tax
Contact NCDE for international shipping
www.ncde.appstate.edu



learners are intrinsically motivated and self-directed learners (Knowles, 1970). Learners' motivation is further related to their investment in enacting their desired identities as college students, future college graduates, working professionals, and community leaders (Norton, 2013). In fact, focusing on specific academic tasks allows learners to enact the desired identity of college (rather than "ESL") student. However, learners often misunderstand staff and faculty expectations regarding in-class participation, independent task completion, conforming to citation rules, or visiting during office hours to seek assistance from professors.

At times, these Generation 1 learners struggle to receive their desired assistance from learning support professionals. The explicit instruction learners seek may have been similar to teacher-led instruction abroad but contradicts U.S. writing center pedagogy. Although learners might be more likely to receive this type of direct instruction from professors, they often prefer to consult tutors and advisors. The learners also face challenges shared by other nontraditional students and adult immigrant students related to balancing school-home-work demands. Rebecca's fears about bothering her instructor during office hours suggest her misunderstanding of the resource and echo the concerns of other nontraditional students (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Unlike Generation 1.5 students who benefit during the

transition to college from the guidance of academic role models and mentors (Harklau & McClanahan, 2012), these Generation 1 learners come to college with limited resources and experiences traditionally valued by others within the college. Therefore, they establish relationships with college staff by making sense of college expectations and assignments from their previous learning experiences.

Generation 1 learners are relative newcomers to academic English and U.S. educational contexts. In a troubling example of well-meaning but misaligned intentions, tutors in this study have expressed that their training prohibited providing direct grammar instruction to learners who frequently sought explicit language instruction. The learners seem to possess the intrinsic self-motivation and rich previous experiences assumed to guide all adult learners, but at times their self-direction conflicts with tutors' expectations. In addition, Generation 1 learners' previous personal and academic experiences are not always easily transferable to the college setting.

Like many other nontraditional college students, these Generation 1 learners enter postsecondary education while juggling multiple responsibilities (Almon, 2015) in order to prepare for desired community roles and future professions. The learners' investment in their future selves and multiple identities (such as that of parent, employee, and student simultaneously) rather than their sense

of control over their immediate surroundings further differentiates them from Generation 1.5 students. Adult learners' focus on investment enhancement (i.e., supporting and drawing support from multiple identities in the pursuit of presently unavailable resources) differs from Generation 1.5 students' focus on agency enhancement rather than development of multiple identities (McKay & Wong (1996). This distinction is illustrated by Generation 1 learners in the present study willingly limiting their agency by seeking explicit instruction from tutors; they also willingly submit to tutor directives because they believe furthering their mastery of the English language is essential to their larger goals. At the same time, as Labiba's case illustrated, learners can sometimes be unaware of institutional expectations or the rationale for complying with them, despite staff efforts to introduce these expectations.

Limitations

In this article, we present five representative cases from a larger multiple case study of six Generation 1 learners (Suh, 2017). Notably, the study was limited by its monolingual examination of the educational experiences of emergent multilingual learners. Additionally, both the cases presented here and in the larger study represent a convenience sample,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

limited by the learners' status as refugees (or married to a refugee), which strongly impacted many of their immigration experiences, the ways in which the learners perceived themselves, and college staff's responses to the learners. Finally, it bears noting that the study was conducted while the first author was employed by the institution. As a result, the first author was required to negotiate power dynamics in her researcher/developmental educator roles.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

Based on the results of this study, we offer these recommendations for learning support professionals. Generation 1 learners do seek out and are willing to use learning support offerings; however, we have found that Generation 1 learners are sometimes perplexed by and have incorrect expectations of the roles and responsibilities of their advisors, tutors, counselors, and other learning support specialists. All learners, and certainly Generation 1 learners, can become frustrated when their expectations don't align with the support they receive (e.g., assuming their tutor will proof their entire paper). Because Generation 1 learners can become confused by the different roles and approaches of learning support personnel and college faculty members, we suggest that learning support personnel explain their roles and responsibilities to learners and how those differ from faculty members. Additionally, because some students with limited English proficiency struggle to understand oral communication, we also suggest tutoring and other forms of learning support incorporate written, as well as oral, communication (Babcock & Thonus, 2012; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015).

Generation 1 learners may benefit from advising approaches that build a long-term advisor-student relationship guided by the student's personal, career, and ongoing learning goals and other immediate needs. In this approach, sometimes termed advising as coaching (McClellan, 2013), the advisor acquires a greater understanding of the student through assessments and personal interviews and then helps set goals and create and implement an action plan. This practical advising facilitates decision-making and so aligns with andragogy and investment theory.

We recommend that learning support personnel continue engaging in cultural competence professional development. "Cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families" (National Education Association, 2017, para. 3). Support professionals can consider culturally responsive instruction and assistance such as Higbee, Schulz, and Goff's (2010) integrated multicultural instructional design model (IMID) and the National Organization for Student

Success's, Cultural Diversity Committee's *Seven Guiding Principles to Promote Cultural Competence*, inspired by IMID, which relate to student access, social and intellectual development, and culturally relevant pedagogy and techniques (NOSS Equity, Access, and Inclusion Network, 2020).

All new learners typically need to acclimate and adjust to the college context; this is particularly the case for Generation 1 learners who come with diverse life, educational, and professional experiences but who can leave behind cultural and social capital in their home countries when they move to the United States (Kelsay & Zamani-Gallaher, 2014). We encourage institutions to create and foster comprehensive, integrated, contextualized, and long-lasting support incorporating a variety of holistic support services (Casner-Lotto, 2011). These include learning communities that acclimate students to the academy; embedded required support from tutors, mentors, and coaches; and seminar-type support and/or workshops on special topics.

Educators and learning support specialists working together can create the collective power to make improvements for the whole.

Students will likely develop lasting relationships from study groups and other forms of peer interaction (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015). We further support recommendations from Babcock and Thonus (2012) for learning support program directors to hire qualified immigrants and/or immigrant students as part of their strategic initiatives. Together, these recommendations can provide holistic support to lessen the challenges Generation 1 learners may face with alienation, marginalization, and confusion of services, thereby easing their transition to the college experience and enhancing their future success in college and beyond.

Conclusion

The present article explores how learning support professionals at one community college approached meeting the needs of incoming Generation 1 learner students. With their nontraditional academic backgrounds, these learners often require specialized support when beginning postsecondary education; however, learning assistance professionals may not understand these learners' unique needs and strengths. Our findings indicate that learners are highly motivated to seek help, yet remain confused over the roles and expectations of learning support professionals. Additionally, learning assistance

professionals often lack the knowledge and cultural competencies to assist these students. The study opens the way for additional research on Generation 1 learners in higher education. The present dearth of research on immigrant populations in general, and Generation 1 Learners in particular, provides vast possibilities for future researchers to investigate additional students' experiences and their needs in postsecondary education. Community-college-based empirical studies are especially needed to address and enhance these students' academic preparation; to create culturally appropriate pedagogies, advising, and counseling protocols; and to initiate specialized learning support interventions, all of which empower Generation 1 learners. More research is also needed on implementing cultural competence awareness and training for practitioners within the field. This study offers an initial step toward researching and disseminating findings regarding the needs and appropriate support for Generation 1 learners in postsecondary education. Dedicated and impassioned educators and learning support specialists working together can create the collective power to make improvements for the whole.

References

- Almon, C. (2015). College persistence and engagement in light of a mature English language learner (ELL) student's voice. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(5), 461-472.
- Babcock, R. D., & Thonus, T. (2012). *Researching the writing center: Towards evidence-based practice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Bunch, G. C., & Endris, A. K. (2012). Navigating "open access" community colleges. In Y. Kanno & L. Harklau (Eds.), *Linguistic minority students go to college: Preparation, access and persistence* (pp. 165-183). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bunch, G. C., & Kibler, A. K. (2015). Integrating language, literacy, and academic development: Alternatives to traditional English as a second language and remedial English for language minority students in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(1), 20-33. doi:10.1080/10668926.2012.755483
- Buyarski, C., & Ross, F. (2002). Advising collaborations: The key to student success. *Academic Advising Today*, 25(2). Retrieved from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Advising-Collaborations-The-Key-to-Student-Success.aspx>
- Clark, V., & Braun, V. (2014). Thematic analysis. In A. C. Michaels (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 6626-6628). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Casner-Lotto, J. (2011). *Increasing opportunities for immigrant students. Community college strategies for success* [Executive Summary]. Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education. Retrieved from https://www.cccie.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Executive_Summary_Increasing_Opportunities_Immigrant_Students_2011.pdf
- Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2018). *Show me the way: The power of advising in community colleges*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, College of Education. Retrieved from http://www.ccsse.org/nr2018/show_me_the_way.pdf
- Chiu, S. C.-H. (2011). *Negotiating linguistic certainty for ESL writers in the writing center*. (Doctoral dissertation,

Michigan State University). Retrieved from <https://d.lib.msu.edu/etd/237>

Collier, P. J., & Morgan, D. L. (2008). "Is that paper really due today?": Differences in first-generation and traditional college students' understandings of faculty expectations. *Higher Education*, 55(4), 425-446. doi:10.1007/s10734-007-9065-5

Conway, K. (2010). Educational aspirations in an urban community college: Differences between immigrant and native student groups. *Community College Review*, 37(3), 209-242. doi:10.1177/0091552109354626

de Kleine, C., & Lawton, R. (2015). *Meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students at the college level*. (Executive summary and paper). Oak Creek, WI: College Reading and Learning Association. Retrieved from https://www.crla.net/images/whitepaper/Meeting_Needs_of_Diverse_Students.pdf

DiCerbo, P. A., Anstrom, K. A., Baker, L. L., & Rivera, C. (2014). A review of the literature of teaching on teaching academic English to English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 84, 446-482. doi:10.31020034654314532695

Ganga, E., Mazzariello, A., & Edgecombe, N. (2018, February). *Developmental education: An introduction for policymakers*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved from https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Developmental-Education_An-Introduction-for-Policymakers.pdf

Hagedorn, L. S., & Li, R. (2017). English instruction at community colleges: The language bridge to the USA. In L. Tran & K. Dempsey (Eds.), *Internationalization in vocational education and training: Transnational perspectives* (pp. 229-241). New York, NY: Springer.

Harklau, L., & McClanahan, S. (2012). How Paola made it to college. In Y. Kanno & L. Harklau (Eds.), *Linguistic minority students go to college: Preparation, access and persistence* (pp. 74-89). New York, NY: Routledge.

Higbee, J. L., Schultz, J. L., & Goff, E. (2010). Pedagogy of inclusion: Integrated multicultural instructional design. *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 41(1), 49-66. doi: 10.1080/10790195.2010.10850335

Jones, R. H., Garralda, A., Li, D. C., & Lock, G. (2006). Interactional dynamics in on-line and face-to-face peer-tutoring sessions for second language writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15(1), 1-23. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2005.12.001

Kelsay, L. S., & Zamani-Gallaher, E. (2014). *Working with students in community college: Contemporary strategies for bridging, theory, research, and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Kim, E., Newton, F. B., Downey, R. G. Benton, S. L. (2010). Personal factors impacting college student success: Constructing college learning effectiveness inventory (CLEI). *College Student Journal*, 44(1), 112-125.

Knowles, M. S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy*. New York, NY: Cambridge Books.

Knowles, M. S., & Associates. (1984). *Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Krumrei, E. J., & Newton, F. B. (2009). *How counseling and advising fit together*. Retrieved from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/How-counseling-and-advising-fit-together.aspx>

Lee, M. (2003). Andragogy and foreign-born learners. In L. M. Baumgartner, M. Lee, S. Birden, & D. Flowers (Eds.), *Adult learning theory: A primer* (pp. 11-16). Information Series No. 392. Columbus, OH: Center on Education and Training for Employment. Retrieved from ERIC Database (ED 482 337)

McClellan, J. (2013). Advising as coaching. In J. K. Drake, P. Jordan, M. A. Miller (Eds.) *Academic advising approaches: Strategies that teach students to make the most of college* (pp. 159-175). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

McKay, S. L., & Wong, S., L. C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and agency in second-language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 577-608.

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

National Education Association. (2017). *Why cultural competence?* Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/39783.htm>

NOSS Equity, Access, and Inclusion Network, (2020). About. Retrieved from <http://nossdiversity.com/about/>

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Olson, B. (2013). Rethinking our work with multilingual writers: The ethics and responsibility of language teaching in the writing center. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, 10(2), 1-6.

Orozco, G. L., Alvarez, A. N., & Gutkin, T. (2010). Effective advising of diverse students in community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34, 717-737.

Reynolds, A. L. (2009). *Helping college students: Developing essential support skills for student affairs practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2004). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the immigrant first and second generations in the United States. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1160-1205.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Ima, K. (1988). *The adaptation of Southeast Asian refugee youth: A comparative study*. San Diego, CA: San Diego State University Press.

Sandlin, J. (2005). Andragogy and its discontents: An analysis of andragogy from three critical perspectives. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 14(1), 25-42.

Scrivener, S., & Weiss, M. J. (2009). *More guidance, better results? Three-year effects of an enhanced student services program at two community colleges*. New York, NY: MDRC.

Smith, B. (2013). *Mentoring at-risk students through the hidden curriculum of higher education*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Soria, K. M., & Stebleton, M. (2013). Immigrant college students' academic obstacles. *The Learning Assistance Review*, 18(1), 7-24.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (2018). Education: The experience of Latino immigrant adolescents in the United States. In J. Bhabha, J. Kanics, & D. Senovilla Hernández (Eds.), *Research handbook on child migration* (pp. 397-415). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.



Sharing the Best for Student Success!

- CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS
- SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)
- STATES, REGIONS, & CHAPTERS (SRCS)
- AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS
- WHITE PAPERS
- ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- SUMMER INSTITUTE
- JOURNAL OF COLLEGE READING AND LEARNING (JCRL)

JOIN TODAY! www.crla.net

Suh, E. K. (2016). Language minority student transitions. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 40(1), 26-28.

Suh, E. K. (2017). "Off from lost?": Generation 1 learners' transition from adult ESL to developmental education. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context=teachlearnstudent>

Suh, E. K. (2018). Counting backwards toward the future of community college immigrant students: Conceptualizing generation 1 learners. *Basic Writing e-Journal*, 15(1), 1-41.

Tableau Public. (2016). Enrollment. *SCC Fact Book*. Retrieved from <https://public.tableau.com/profile/southeast#!/vizhome/FactbookdisplayEnrollment/Singletermprofile>

Teranishi, R., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (2011). Immigrants in community colleges. *The Future of Children*, 21(1), 153-169.

Toohy, K. (2018). *Learning English at school: Identity, socio-material relations and classroom practice*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2016). *Participants in State-administered Adult Basic Education, Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Programs, by Type of Program and State or Jurisdiction: Selected Fiscal Years, 2000 through 2014*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_507.20.asp?current=yes

Weirick, J., Davis, T., & Lawson, D. (2017). Writer L1/L2 status and asynchronous online writing center feedback: Consultant response patterns. *The Learning Assistance Review*, 22(3), 9-37.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.