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Researching SoTL-Inspired Peer Mentoring as We Are Living It

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Researching SoTL–Inspired Peer Mentoring as We Are Living It

The SoTL Commons Conference
Georgia Southern University
March 7, 2012

John Cordes * Lisa Ratmansky * Courtney Smith
Why might we want to know more about peer mentoring on our campuses?

Think about the most significant instances of giving or receiving mentoring you have experienced.

What does peer mentoring mean to you?
How can we know more about peer mentoring on our campuses?
Our College’s Profile

- Cabrini College is a faith-based liberal arts college located in suburban Philadelphia educating approximately 1360 undergraduates and 1900 graduate students.

- One key campus resource for students, staff, and faculty alike is the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL).
Our College’s Mission Statement: An Education of the Heart

“Cabrini College is a Catholic institution of higher education dedicated to academic excellence, leadership development, and a commitment to social justice. The College welcomes learners of all faiths, cultures, and backgrounds and prepares them to become engaged citizens of the world.”

- The Center for Teaching & Learning strives to align with our school’s mission and motto (Service Beyond One’s Self)
  - To this end, the CTL follows Ashman’s and Colvin’s exhortation in their article “Peer Mentoring Roles” (2011): Give learners greater responsibility for their own and others’ educations.
Our CTL’s Premise: Learning collaborations create measurable value-added significance
Our Promise: Creating a Learning Commons

- Building a Learning Commons (CTL) in which peer mentoring/collaborative learning is the pedagogical hub for students and faculty is critical to crafting a culture of scholarship.

- Why? Because we believe linking learning together to collaborative inquiry – that is, tying together what one knows with how one knows is not only foundational for teaching critical inquiry, but also fundamental for participation in all forms of scholarship.
Learning Together: Learning From & Learning With

- Peer Mentor (PM) definitions vary—this key point is the very focus of the research of John Cordes. Yet, one basic premise is often shared: a PM is a learner who has developed knowledge and skills helpful in guiding others.
  - What if this notion included a more collaborative focus: learning from as well as learning with?
  - And, then how might a focus on SoTL help foster “with-ness”?
Why a SoTL–Inspired focus on Peer Mentoring helps foster “Witnessing With–ness”

- Provides a more structured examination of teaching and learning (Savory et al. 2007)
- Invites a method of inquiry that values discipline-specific and interdisciplinary ways of knowing
- Encourages reflection on the process of inquiry
- Requires a discourse community in which one references SoTL literature

Savory, Paul, Amy Nelson Burnett & Amy Goodburn: *Inquiry into the College Classroom: A Journey Towards Scholarly Teaching*
Three characteristics of SoTL valuing inquiry into teaching

- Work must be (Shulman 1998):
  - Public
  - Susceptible to critical review
  - Accessible for exchange and use by others in one’s own scholarly community

Shulman, L.S. (1998) Course Anatomy: The Dissection and Analysis of Knowledge through Teaching in P. Hutchings (Ed.), *The Course Portfolio: How Faculty Can Examine Their Teaching to Advance Practice and Improve Student Learning*
Aims of Our College’s Learning Commons/CTL

- Promote active student learning within and beyond the classroom
- Offer one–on–one coaching across all fields of study
- Enhance all students’ abilities to be confident, highly competent learners
- Educate the whole person
- Partner with faculty and staff from across the College

This double lens (learning with and from peers & learning in community for students and faculty alike) helps to focus on how SoTL can grow and sustain a campus–wide commitment to all its community’s members.
Our Center’s Opportunities

- Within our CRLA–certified peer tutoring program, students train for and serve as:
  - Subject–Area Tutors
  - Classroom Coaches
  - Master Learners

- Within our Center we link many services: Writing Center, Math Resource Center, Academic Counseling, Peer Tutoring Program, Probationary Support Network
  - The professional staff hold weekly learning circles to share pedagogies and praxis.

- Within our faculty–formed SoTL Learning Community (CSoTL), one key purpose is sustained mutual mentoring: collaborating on research as well as responding to each others’ research.
Creating an ever more inclusive set of resources for students, staff, and faculty, we believe that effective teaching and learning comes from making things matter: the content of a course to the world around it; the field of study to the betterment of the world; the learners to each other as a group of dedicated life-long learners, scholars, and committed citizens.

All these levels of engagement matter—from how well to how deeply we each gain knowledge in the pursuit of “doing something extraordinary.”
Working in Solidarity

- Peer Tutors and Classroom Coaches: 60 per term
- Student Learning Communities: 7 (approx. 140)
- Faculty Learning Communities: 3
  - First-Year Faculty Round Tables: 4–12 members
  - CSoTL: 8 members
  - Interdisciplinarity: 8 members
All of these groups interchangeably use the term “mentor” and “mentorship” to describe activities, aims, and roles. Many of these individuals seem to deploy the term mentor in multiple ways. Some of these groups and individuals are invested in revamping our College’s efforts as regards First-Year Student Initiatives (College Success Seminars).
Our Session’s Goals

- Present our emerging model for review and application
- Share our preliminary research on two student peer mentoring communities
- Invite members of the audience to think about building on their own campus’s SoTL efforts
Meanings of Peer Mentorship

The SoTL Commons Conference
Georgia Southern University
March 7th, 2012
John W. Cordes Ph.D.
Department of Communication
Cabrini College
Peer Mentorship

- Mentoring -- a widely accepted practice in multiple arenas

- Reviews of literature indicate multiple benefits

- But these reviews also indicate varied definitions across studies
Peer Mentorship

- Nora and Crisp (2007) identified four major latent mentoring variables after reviews of mentoring literature in education, psychology and business:
  - Psychological and Emotional Support
  - Degree and Career Support
  - Academic Subject Knowledge Support
  - Existence of a Role Model

Crisp (2009) developed and validated a College Student Mentoring Scale (CSMS)

- Tested at a community college in south-central region of the country
- Found these four constructs were valid with a second-order construct of Mentoring

Utilizing Crisp’ CSMS scale with additional closed and open-ended questions, our pilot CSoTL study reported here examined indicators of mentorship among students and faculty.
Peer Mentorship

The overarching question:
What does peer mentorship mean?
Peer Mentorship

The CSoTL study focused on these research questions:

- Do students working as Subject–Area Tutors, Classroom Coaches, and Master Learners, through the CTL, consider themselves to be mentors?
- Do students not working in one of these capacities in the CTL consider themselves to be mentors?
- Have CSoTL faculty had similar mentorship experiences when they, themselves, were undergraduates?
Peer Mentorship

Methodology:

- Three convenience samples were identified:
  - A sample of CTL student Subject–Area Tutors, Classroom Coaches, and Master Learners
  - Non–CTL sample of students
  - The faculty in the CSoTL learning community
Peer Mentorship

- A survey was administered:
  - To each group utilizing Crisp’s CSMS Likert scale measures (a five point Strongly Agree (5)/Strongly Disagree (1) scale)
  - With two open-ended questions specifically asking the respondents their understandings and embodiments of mentorship
  - Collecting basic demographics of the survey’s respondents
  - Done at two points in time:
    - CTL sample in September 2011 at CTL training
    - Non-CTL sample and faculty in February 2012
Methodology (continued):

- Means for each of the CSMS mentoring statements were calculated and compared across groups using SPSS
  - Likert scale: $1 = $ Strongly Disagree through $5 = $ Strongly Agree

- Open-ended questions were coded and compared

- The final sample consisted of:
  - 45 CTL students (out of approximately 65 total)
  - 45 non-CTL students (excluding 12 freshmen, N = 33)
  - 4 CSoTL faculty (out of 8 CSoTL members, out of 70 full-time faculty)
Limitations of the study include:

- Small Ns; available class selection
- Administration in two different time frames
- College level varied: Crisp study was among community college students (in essence freshmen and sophomores), whereas Cabrini study was over four years, but its CTL sample did not include freshmen
- Open-ended responses were coded only by the researcher
Demographic Data

- Generally representative race & gender
- Non-CTL Sample: Freshmen removed to match CTL Sample
While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  ◦ **...expresses confidence in my ability to succeed academically**
  ◦ **...makes me feel that I belong in college**
  ◦ **...encourages me to use him or her as a sounding board to explore what I want**
  ◦ **...recognizes my academic accomplishments**
  ◦ * ...I can talk with openly about social issues related to being in college
  ◦ ...gives me emotional support
  ◦ ...encourages me to talk about problems I am having in my social life
  ◦ ...I can talk openly about personal issues relating to being in college

Level of significance: CTL vs. Non-CTL
  ** p < .01
  * p < .05

CTL Sample comprised of sophomores, juniors, seniors.
Non CTL Sample excludes freshmen
Crisp data are freshmen and sophomores
While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
- **...helps me realistically examine my degree or certificate options**
- **...encourages me to consider educational opportunities beyond my current plans**
- **...discusses the implications of my career choice**
- **...helps me carefully examine my degree or certificate options**
- **...questions my assumptions by guiding me through a realistic appraisal of my skills**
- * ...helps me to consider the sacrifices associated with my chosen degree

Level of significance: CTL vs. Non-CTL
- ** p < .01     * p < .05

CTL Sample comprised of sophomores, juniors, seniors.
Non CTL Sample excludes freshmen.
Crisp data are freshmen and sophomores.
While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

- **...helps me work toward achieving my academic aspirations**
- **...helps me to perform to the best of my abilities in my classes**
- **...provides ongoing support about the work I do in my classes**
- **...encourages me to discuss problems I am having with my coursework**
- **...provides practical suggestions for improving my academic performance**

**Level of significance: CTL vs. Non-CTL**

** p < .01  * p < .05

CTL Sample comprised of sophomores, juniors, seniors.
Non CTL Sample excludes freshmen
Crisp data are freshmen and sophomores
While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

- I look up to regarding college-related issues
- I admire
- sets a good example about how to relate to other people
- serves as a role model for how to be successful in college
- I want to copy their behaviors as they relate to college-going
- shares personal examples of difficulties they have had to overcome to accomplish academic goals

Level of significance: CTL vs. Non-CTL

** p < .01     * p < .05

CTL Sample comprised of sophomores, juniors, seniors.
Non CTL Sample excludes freshmen
Crisp data are freshmen and sophomores
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...gives me emotional support

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No significant difference
**Excludes Freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...encourages me to talk about problems I am having in my social life

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No significant difference
**Excludes freshmen
Psychological and Emotional Support

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who…

…expresses confidence in my ability to succeed academically

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant difference p < .05
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...makes me feel that I belong in college

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant difference p< .05
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...encourages me to use him or her as a sounding board to explore what I want

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant difference p < .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

Psychological and Emotional Support

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...I can talk with openly about social issues related to being in college

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant difference p< .05
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...recognizes my academic accomplishments

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

Degree and Career Support

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who…

...helps me realistically examine my degree or certificate options

Means**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01  
**Excludes freshmen
Degree and Career Support

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...encourages me to consider educational opportunities beyond my current plans

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Degree and Career Support**
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...helps me to consider the sacrifices associated with my chosen degree

  **Means**:  
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .04  
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Degree and Career Support**

  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...discusses the implications of my career choice

**Means***:

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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*Statistically significant p< .01  
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Degree and Career Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...helps me carefully examine my degree or certificate options

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<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>3.41</td>
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</table>

*Statistically significant p< .005
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Degree and Career Support**
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...questions my assumptions by guiding me through a realistic appraisal of my skills

**Means***:

<table>
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<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Academic Subject and Knowledge Support**
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...helps me work toward achieving my academic aspirations

**Means**: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p < .01  
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Academic Subject and Knowledge Support**
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...helps me to perform to the best of my abilities in my classes

**Means***:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant $p < .01$

**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Academic Subject and Knowledge Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
    - ...provides ongoing support about the work I do in my classes

Means*:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .05
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Academic Subject and Knowledge Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who…
  - …encourages me to discuss problems I am having with my coursework

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<tr>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Academic Subject and Knowledge Support
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...provides practical suggestions for improving my academic performance

Means*:

- CTL Student Sample: 4.18
- Non CTL Student Sample**: 3.53

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Existence of a Role Model**
- While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
- ...I look up to regarding college-related issues

**Means***:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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*Statistically significant $p < .02$

**Excludes freshmen
Existence of a Role Model

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...I admire

Means*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.09</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Existence of a Role Model**
  - While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...
  - ...I want to copy their behaviors as they relate to college-going

**Means***:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*No significant difference
**Excludes freshmen
Existence of a Role Model

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...sets a good example about how to relate to other people

Means*:

<table>
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<td>3.65</td>
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*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Existence of a Role Model

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...serves as a role model for how to be successful in college

Means*:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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</table>

*Statistically significant p< .01
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

Existence of a Role Model

While at Cabrini College, I have had someone in my life who...

...shares personal examples of difficulties they have had to overcome to accomplish academic goals

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<th>Non CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No significant difference
**Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Psychological and Emotional Support – Overall Means

- CTL Students  Non-CTL Students*  Crisp

  4.23  3.75  3.82

*Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Degree and Career Support – Overall Means**
  - CTL Students  Non-CTL Students*  Crisp
    - 4.06  3.37  3.63

- *Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- Academic Subject & Knowledge Support – Overall Means

- CTL Students  Non-CTL Students*  Crisp
  - 4.29  3.58  3.75

- *Excludes freshmen
Existence of a Role Model – Overall Means

CTL Students  Non-CTL Students*  Crisp

- 4.2  3.65  3.74

*Excludes freshmen
Overall Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>CTL Sample</th>
<th>Non-CTL Sample</th>
<th>Crisp Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Emotional Support</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree and Career Support</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Subject Knowledge Support</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of a Role Model</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

average score (on a scale of 1 to 5)
Peer Mentorship

Q. Do you consider yourself to be a peer mentor to other students on campus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Student Sample</th>
<th>Non-CTL Student Sample**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer –</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- CTL Student Sample
  - Majority voice is positive

- Why do you consider yourself to be a peer mentor to other students?
  - To this open-ended question, students responded:
    - Help others – 35%
    - Guide
    - Be there for them/reach out to them
    - Care for others
    - Build relationships
    - Listen
    - Role model
Peer Mentorship

- Non CTL Student Sample
- Plurality voice is negative

Why do you consider yourself to be a peer mentor to other students?

- To this open-ended question, students responded:
  - Don’t take the time
  - I usually help people when they need it, but I don’t think of myself as a mentor
  - Support friends if they need help
  - Only help once in a while
  - No one looks at me like that
  - I don’t feel I need to be involved
  - I give advice, but don’t consider myself a mentor, just a friend
Peer Mentorship

- Do you *now have or have you had* at Cabrini College someone whom you consider to be your mentor?

  - **CTL Student Sample**
    - 82% of those who have/had a mentor believe they themselves are mentors

  - **Non–CTL Student Sample –**
    - 58% of those who have/had a mentor believe they themselves are mentors
Why do you consider (___) to be a mentor?

To this open-ended question, students responded:

- He shows he cares
- Supportive with everything in my life and wants me to do well
- I look up to them
- They push me to the best of my abilities
- Guided me in my courses and always a positive influence in my decision making
- Help me and encourage me
- They have experience where students have been
**Peer Mentorship**

- **Psychological & Emotional Support – Overall Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTL Students</th>
<th>Non-CTL Students*</th>
<th>CSoTL Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.97</td>
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- *Excludes freshmen
Degree and Career Support – Overall Means

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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</table>

*Excludes freshmen
# Peer Mentorship

- **Academic Subject & Knowledge Support** – Overall Means

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<th>CSoTL Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.25</td>
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*Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentorship

- **Existence of a Role Model – Overall Means**

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<th>Non-CTL Students*</th>
<th>CSoTL Faculty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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</table>

*Excludes freshmen
Peer Mentor

Revisiting the overarching question: What does peer mentorship mean?

And, in what ways do the varying perceptions matter?
Peer Mentorship and the College Success Seminar at Cabrini College

SoTL Commons Conference
Georgia Southern University
March 7, 2012
Courtney Michelle Smith, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, History & Political Science
College Success Seminar (COL 101)

- Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model
  - Better Model for Delivering the COL 101 Learning Outcomes?
  - Better Model for Creating More Engaged Undergraduate Students?
  - How Can the Model Inform Scholarship on Undergraduate Peer Mentor Programs?
College Success Seminar (COL 101)

- Course Description
  - The COL 101 College Success Seminar (1 credit, first year) is designed to guide first-year students in the transition to their college experience

- Course Design
  - One Faculty Member/Academic Advisor
  - Visits to On-campus Offices
  - Classroom Presentations from Staff Members
Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate key skills necessary for college success (time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies) and lifelong learning (information literacy and career planning)
- Know how to utilize key campus resources (Academic Support Services, Financial Aid, Health and Wellness, Information Technology and Resources, Holy Spirit Library, and the Registrar's Office)
- Demonstrate knowledge of relevant College policies (Code of Conduct, Academic Honesty, degree requirements, and FERPA)
- Demonstrate knowledge of Cabrini's heritage and traditions (St. Frances Cabrini, Core Values, Cabrini Day, and history of the College)
Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model

- Engagement with the Cabrini College Community
  - Help facilitate the transition from high school
  - Help undergraduate students understand, connect with and engage in Cabrini’s institutional culture
Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model

- Knowledge of Cabrini’s History and Values
  - Help undergraduate students find a personal space within an institution that treasures its history, core values, and traditions
Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model

• **Course Design**
  • Four Sections
  • One Peer Mentor
    • Facilitate classroom discussions
    • Organize the scavenger hunt
    • Provide advice on the students’ classroom presentations
  • One Staff Member
    • Provide an additional layer of advice and support
  • One Faculty Member/Academic Advisor
Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model

- **Course Design**
  - Start-of-the-Semester Reflection Questions
    - What do I want to do/experience/get out of my four years at Cabrini College?
  - End-of-the-Semester Reflection Questions
    - What will you do in the following semesters to build upon your accomplishments this semester?
- **My Vision for College Success**
  - How do I want others to see me during my time at Cabrini and after I leave Cabrini?
  - What contributions will I make to Cabrini during my four years of college?
Peer Mentoring COL 101 Model

- **Methodology**
  - Lickert-Scale Survey
    - (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree
  - Same Question Set
  - Sample Size
    - Forty-six (n=46) for the Peer Mentor students
    - Fifty-seven (n=57) for the non-Peer Mentor students
- **Limitations**
  - Small sample size
  - Self-reported surveys
Preliminary Results

• “I know how key campus resources can help me engage in learning opportunities offered by Cabrini:”
  • Wolfington Center & Campus Ministry
    • Peer Mentor Students, 60.9% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
    • Non-Peer Mentor Students, 58.7% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
Preliminary Results

• Engagement
  • “As a result of this course, I have become an engaged member of Cabrini's Community”
    • Peer Mentor Students, 54.4% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
    • Non-Peer Mentor Students, 50% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
Preliminary Results

- Academics
  - “I understand the Justice Matters core curriculum”
    - Peer Mentor Students, 63% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
    - Non-Peer Mentor Students, 58.7% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
Preliminary Results

- **History & Traditions**
  - “As a result of this course, I have knowledge of Cabrini's history and traditions of the college”
    - Peer Mentor Students, 60.9% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
    - Non-Peer Mentor Students, 58.7% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
Preliminary Results

- Peer Mentors
  - “As a result of this course, I feel comfortable approaching my College Success Peer Mentor with academic issues”
    - 80.4% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
  - “As a result of this course, I feel comfortable approaching my College Success Peer Mentor with personal issues”
    - 58.7% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
  - “I feel that having a connection with my peer mentor helped facilitate my transition to Cabrini College”
    - 69.6% (Strongly Agree & Agree)
Preliminary Results

- Quotes from My Vision for College Success
  - “With all that Cabrini has to offer I will seek help from my peers, teachers, advisors, and most of all God in achieving these goals.”
  - “Four years from now I would like to look at this and have achieved my goals as a person, for my career, and know that I am heading in the right direction for a successful future.”
  - “At Cabrini, I want to get involved with different clubs and organizations within the school. I want to experience them so I can make a difference in the community.”
Moving Forward

• **Other Survey Results**
  • Better Knowledge of On-Campus Offices
    • Co-Op & Career Services: Peer Mentors (65.3%), Non-Peer Mentors (80.7%)
    • Health & Wellness/Counseling: Peer Mentors (67.4%), Non-Peer Mentors (77.2%)

• **Refined Method for Measuring Results**

• **Composition of Next Peer Mentor COL 101 Pilot**
Taking Stock: How might our findings enhance participants’ own SoTL efforts?

- What sorts of collaborative learning are happening on your campus?
- What groups are involved?
- What does your campus do to support learning communities?
- What types of resources (financial, personnel, facilities) have your campus already committed/might commit to collaborative learning?