



TRENDS AND ISSUES IN ACADEMIC SUPPORT: 2016-2017

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CORI M. BAZEMORE-JAMES, THITAPA SHINAPRAYOON, & JILLIAN MARTIN

High stakes standardized tests are typically required for admittance, midpoint, and exit exams in higher education even though it has been proven that these tests unfairly stereotype minoritized students. In this paper, we will discuss fairness and cultural bias in standardized testing and ways test developers attempt to control for it. Until more fair alternative solutions are offered, we provide implications for higher education institutions in recruiting, admitting, and supporting students who may experience cultural test bias.

12 WHEN LEADERSHIP FAILS: NAVIGATING BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE BY CRAFTING COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT

JAMES D. BRESLIN, ALI CICERCHI, & ANNA SHARPE

While our profession purports to both study and practice effective leadership, we too often hear tales of leadership gone awry. The experiences of practitioners who encounter workplace bullying, inappropriate behavior, and unreasonable demands from leaders on campus are often shrouded in shame and fear. The intent of this article is to bring the realities of workplace bullying in higher education and its impacts to light through narrative and critical analysis, and ultimately to share strategies for navigating these negative experiences. The authors hope this work will provide an entry point for current and incoming professionals to make sense of failed leadership and serve as a signpost that engaging in vulnerability provides a way forward.

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SHAMIKA KARIKARI

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MARTHA E. CASAZZA & SHARON L. SILVERMAN

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JENNIE WELLMAN

Many writing centers function from lenses established by Aristotle and Plato as a means of production and understanding. Often, these lenses contributed to a binary making it difficult to break away from a dichotomous view of writing center theory and functionality. This essay explores opportunities for gaining new perspectives on how to become better anti-racist, anti-xenophobic, and anti-homophobic accomplices as staff members of campus writing centers. Situated within the Navajo trickster tale of How Coyote Lost His Eyes, this narrative examines the very theoretical lenses operationalized in writing center theory to unearth underlying assumptions that might be lost.

30 MANAGING YOUR FIRST 365: START WITH THE CAS STANDARDS

MELISSA THOMAS

The use of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment Guides and the Learning Assistance Program Standards and Guidelines was essential to negotiating my first year as the director of a learning center. This article describes how preparing for, conducting, and responding to the results of a CAS self-assessment can shape a new director’s leadership in the first months.

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TRENDS AND ISSUES IN ACADEMIC SUPPORT: 2016–2017

FOREWORD

The role of academic support remains a contested issue in student affairs. As members of the Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education, rather than debate the merits of our work, we seek to instead: highlight the interdisciplinary nature of academic support, identify and emphasize ways in which leadership failures and office dynamics can inadvertently minimize campus impact and thus student success, and illuminate the ways in which student feedback must remain at the core of our assessment and reflection practices. This monograph stands as a contribution to the literary canon surrounding best practices in academic support.

Students report enduring higher education as a singular experience. Accordingly, we seek to use this monograph as a means of bridging together the seeming divide between the curricular and co-curricular. To underscore the ways in which employment issues and student issues are together part of a larger culture of higher education rather than separate entities. Moreover, we recognize the changing landscape of the college environment due to the growing number of first generation college students and increasing age of current students. For these reasons, we position academic support as a functional area that can see to and through student development, personal development, and retention by ensuring students are able to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally when the totality of these needs and their intersections are met.

This monograph includes a snippet of research detailing the interdisciplinary nature of academic support. From issues of testing bias to reflections on the doctoral student journey in a students' own words, this monograph positions academic support at the crux of student learning and development. We recognize that our students perform best, personally and professionally, when they accomplish their goals in the classroom. Many of the strategies and reflections in this monograph provide a roadmap for better supporting and advocating for students throughout their academic career.

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UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE CULTURAL BIAS IN STANDARDIZED TESTS

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Cultural test bias is well-documented in standardized testing (Health, 1989; Helms, 1992; Veale & Foreman, 1983). At the core of cultural test bias is Eurocentrism, which situates European values as the standard upon which other cultures are compared (Helms, 1989). Thus, many tests have been standardized on predominantly Caucasian samples and give differential favoritism to Caucasian Americans and other groups who naturally use or can develop a similar style of thinking (Helms, 1992; Scarr, 1988). Standardized tests are typically required for admittance, midpoint, and exit exams in higher education and decisions based on these tests unfairly stereotype minoritized students (Helms, 2006). We introduce differential item functioning (DIF) which is used as one statistical tool to detect cultural bias in standardized tests (Camilli, 2013; Clauser & Mazor, 1998; Sackett, Schmitt, Ellingson, & Kabin, 2001; Santelices & Wilson, 2010). In this paper, we will provide an overview of cultural bias, fairness, and methods for controlling these issues in standardized testing. Moreover, we provide implications for higher education institutions in recruiting, admitting, and supporting students who may experience cultural test bias.

Imagine the day you first took your college entrance exam, perhaps the SAT or ACT. Picture yourself as a teenager walking into the exam room and finding your seat with your number 2 pencils and scratch paper in hand. You are nervous, perhaps it is early in the morning so you are still waking up, and there is a chill in the room from the air conditioner. Your heart is pumping because you know the stakes are so high to get into the college of your dreams and you should have spent more time studying. Now imagine looking at all of the other test takers in the room and noticing that no one else looks like you. Your skin color does not match that of the exam proctors either. Now you are unsure if the proctor gave you that stern look because they too are tired or because they do not think you belong there. Suddenly, you feel out of place and not good enough, because somewhere in the back of your mind you believe that people of your skin color are not good at math and are lucky just to get into the local community college. “Time starts now,” the proctor says as your hands tremble and you begin the first exam question.

Depending on the messages that one grows up with about their cultural group they may experience high stakes testing situations differently, resulting in varying

levels of performance. In this paper, we discuss the high stakes situations of taking standardized tests in multiple stages of a student’s educational career. First, we introduce relevant concepts that factor into cultural bias in standardized testing. Next, we review statistical procedures that test developers have used to detect and minimize test bias. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of implications for student affairs practice.

CULTURAL BIAS IN STANDARDIZED TESTS

Standardized tests are those “in which the questions, the scoring procedures, and the interpretation of results are consistent and which are administered and scored in a manner allowing comparisons to be made across individuals and groups” (Benjamin, Miller, Rhodes, Banta, Pike, & Davies, 2012, p. 7). They are implemented throughout a student’s educational career purportedly to assess generic knowledge and skills, quality of faculty teaching, and student learning (Benjamin et al, 2012; Brunn-Bevel & Byrd, 2015). Admissions counselors, academic and/or testing support services, and employers then make predictions of student’s future success based on a myriad of

standardized tests (e.g., IQ tests, statewide tests, college and graduate program entrance and exit exams, job aptitude tests, etc.; McMahan, 2015). Because the predictions from these test scores have a massive impact on students' lives, test developers should minimize any bias and measurement error in standardized tests. Test evaluators determine if and where students are accepted into college and graduate school, whether they must take remedial courses, whether they can remain in or complete current higher education programs, and if and where they will be hired post-graduation.

While an ongoing debate ensues as to whether standardized tests are adequate in making these predictions, there is also an issue of varying subgroup (e.g., groups based on race/ethnicity, culture, language, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) mean scores (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). In this paper, we focus on a particular discrepancy in test outcomes that occurs based on ethnic/racial group membership. For instance, African Americans tend to score one whole standard deviation below Caucasian Americans on standardized cognitive ability tests (Aiken, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Daley, 2001; Rushton & Jensen, 2005). In fact, there is a historical rank order of performance on IQ tests based on racial group membership, in which Asian Americans score the highest at about 3 points above Caucasian Americans, who then score approximately 15 points above African Americans, while Latinos and Native Americans typically fall somewhere in between Caucasian and African Americans (Onwuegbuzie et al, 2001). This discrepancy between test scores are attributed to construct irrelevant factors such as racial group membership (Beutler, Brown, Crothers, Booker, & Seabrook, 1996; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005). This could also indicate that unfairness not only affects the individuals in the lower scoring group but also "that at least some individuals in the higher scoring group benefit from whatever unfairness potentially underlies the racial-group mean differences" (Helms, 2006).

The difference in racial subgroup mean scores mimics the intended outcomes of the original standardized IQ tests, with exception to Asian Americans. Such tests were invented in the 1910s to demonstrate the superiority of rich, U.S.-born, White

men of northern European descent over non-Whites and recent immigrants (Gersh, 1987). By developing an exclusion-inclusion criteria that favored the aforementioned groups, test developers created a norm "intelligent" (Gersh, 1987, p. 166) population "to differentiate subjects of known superiority from subjects of known inferiority" (Terman, 1922, p. 656).

While such blatant racism is less common today, a problematic outcome exists: Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is "a perceptual set in which European and/or European American values, customs, traditions and characteristics are used as exclusive standards against which people and events in the world are evaluated and perceived" (Helms, 1989, p. 643). Although psychometricians are aware of possible cultural biases, tests overwhelmingly favor a Eurocentric cultural way of thinking. White psychometricians, who have been interpersonally and professionally socialized in Eurocentric environments, have created the cognitive ability tests and standardized them on similarly socialized White samples (Helms, 1992). Therefore, such tests would give differential favoritism to Whites and other groups who naturally use or can develop a similar style of thinking (Scarr, 1988). This advantage would not occur because Whites are more intelligent than other groups, but because they created an artificial inflation in their favor and a devaluing of the intelligence of other culturally based ideologies (Helms, 1992, 2006; Prilleltensky, 1989). A rigid adherence to this practice in testing "adversely impacts the groups for whom the norm is foreign... [and] it potentially deprives society of the kinds of diversity in intellectual functioning that might lead to a better society" (Helms, 1992, p. 1091).

Although it is true that psychometricians have procedures to minimize test bias, these procedures may not screen out biased items if test developers use samples that do not reflect culturally diverse groups. For example, say test developers use a mostly Western culture sample to measure job performance in which they remove items that are biased against the majority of test takers in the sample. So while biased items have been removed, how applicable could this test be for measuring job performance in Eastern cultures? Items that contain cultural knowledge or norms may not be

generalizable across cultures.

Therefore, careful review of test fairness is of great importance. Definitions of test fairness generally include giving all test-takers, no matter their group memberships, the exact same test and testing procedure, except for in cases of physical or learning disabilities in which the test-taker can be given reasonable accommodations to ensure equity in the testing process (AERA et al, 1999; Camilli, 2013; Kane, 2010). Testing conditions and content should also be free of stereotyping, culturally offensive material, and other negative implications to ensure that a test measures what it is intended to measure (i.e. content validity) across different racial groups (Camilli, 2013). Thus, Camilli (2013) called for the use of a sensitivity review of new testing programs to avoid statistical bias and faulty interpretation of test scores from the accidental usage of cultural insensitivity. He also suggested that tests should include multiple types of measurement to insure fairness. In the case of classroom assessment, he proposed that testers consider “the strength of the link between assessment and instruction, opportunity to learn, sensitivity of assessment procedures to cultural and religious differences, and the use of multiple measures” (p. 116).

Regardless of attempts to minimize test bias, item bias often takes place. Item bias occurs when some unintended characteristic of a test item gives an unfair advantage to one subgroup of examinees over another (Clauser & Mazor, 1998). Culturally biased test items “have characteristics that are unrelated to the achievement construct being measured but are sensitive for particular cultural groups and affect their performance” (Banks, 2006, p. 115). For example, this occurs when members of racial subgroups interpret response options on a multiple choice test in different ways than anticipated by the test developers (Health, 1989; Veale et al, 1983). An investigation into the fairness of a test would be for the purpose of “sort[ing] out whether the reasons for group differences are due to factors beyond the scope of the test (such as opportunity to learn or level of achievement) or artificially dependent on testing procedures” (Camilli, 2013, p. 108). In the next section, we review a common statistical approach of evaluating test fairness.

METHODS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSES FOR TEST FAIRNESS

To study cultural fairness in standardized testing, item response theory (IRT) allows researchers to examine whether test items measure the underlying trait, or true performance (Camilli, 2013; Penfield & Camilli, 2007). In IRT, differential item functioning (DIF) is an analysis that assumes the same underlying trait and ability among test takers. If test scores differ from extraneous variables (e.g., race, culture, socioeconomic status, etc.) other than the ability that was intended to be measured, the tests are biased. DIF is often used to determine test fairness and can reveal a significant difference of success rates (i.e., the probability that members from different groups answer an item with different success rates) between subgroups (Camilli, 2013; Clauser et al, 1998).

Although DIF can detect a cultural bias, it does not always necessarily indicate a biased test. DIF also allows test developers to identify the biased order of test items (e.g., Çokluk, Gül, & Doğan-Gül, 2016), or the difficulty of items. It is often beneficial to use difficult items to differentiate between people who understand the materials at a deeper level from people who do not. In other words, DIF can occur if the different success rates indicate that people who deeply understand the materials correctly answer difficult items while people who superficially understand the materials incorrectly answer difficult items. However, items are biased if people with the same ability, but from different racial or cultural backgrounds, answer test items at different success rates because it may indicate that the test does not necessarily measure the true ability or performance. Thus, it is necessary for a diverse group of experts to review these items with DIF to ensure the cultural fairness of the test (Camilli, 2013; Clauser et al, 1998; Huang & Han, 2012; Penfield et al, 2007; Perrone, 2006).

Regardless of expert reviews in test development, various tests still show cultural bias. For example, the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was created to screen patients with depression, regardless of culture, language, and gender. However, the BDI showed different responses when it was translated from English

to Spanish. Spanish speakers tended to agree or disagree more strongly to some items than English speakers because of cultural differences (Kerr & Kerr Jr., 2001). A translation can cause the test bias by changing the meaning of words or phrases (Huang et al, 2012).

The SAT also contains culturally biased questions in the verbal section, in particular for sentence completion and reading comprehension sections. Empirical studies have shown that African American and Latino examinees performed better on the sentence completion and reading comprehension sections than Caucasian examinees if the questions contained content relating to their minoritized cultures (Carlton & Harris, 1992; Schmitt & Dorans, 1990). Other research has also showed that African American examinees generally performed worse on difficult verbal and math questions, but performed better on easy verbal and math questions in comparison to Caucasian examinees. This difference in performance may be due to different interpretation of words based on culture and also socioeconomic status (Freedle, 2003). On the contrary, some researchers argued that this cultural bias was found on SAT questions that were used before the ETS implemented their DIF screening procedure to detect any biased SAT questions. Moreover, these researchers argued that the cultural bias was found with a weaker DIF method (Dorans, 2004; Dorans & Zeller, 2004).

To resolve the criticisms toward the previous cultural bias on the SAT, however, a more recent study demonstrated that some cultural bias still occurred even after the use of a stronger DIF statistical method and the use of SAT questions that had been screened by the ETS's DIF screening procedure (Santelices & Wilson, 2010). It was found that Latino and Caucasian test takers performed similarly on the verbal and math tests, and African American and Caucasian test takers performed similarly on the math test. However, African Americans performed better on hard verbal questions, but worse on easy verbal questions in comparison to Caucasians (Santelices et al, 2010). Similar effects of DIF on hard and easy questions are not limited to SAT and GRE, but have also appeared on other tests, such as the Civic Education Study (CES) which assesses basic knowledge about the U.S. government and Constitution

(Scherbaum & Goldstein, 2008). In response to varying performances among subgroups in standardized tests, test developers can utilize some strategies to reduce the subgroup difference without compromising the test validity. The next section discusses the strategies to reduce the subgroup difference and the implications.

DISCUSSION

Cultural bias in standardized testing is an important consideration for access and equity in higher education. By effectively predicting students' educational pathways, these tests affect the social mobility and individual agency for students. By continuing to use testing that is culturally biased, institutions perpetuate inequity in education as these tests remain a barrier for students accessing higher education. We argue that higher education administrators have a moral obligation to adjust their dependence on testing in admissions and placement decisions in their efforts to ensure inclusive excellence (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Student affairs practitioners are uniquely situated to be advocates for these considerations in culturally biased tests in their expertise on students in higher education and whose core competencies include holistic development, student learning, and social justice (ACPA, 1994; ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Additionally, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is "the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs" (About CAS, 2016). CAS is made up of member associations that are part of higher education broadly, and depending on the institution, divisions of student affairs specifically ensure student development and learning through standards of practice for 45 functional areas. In 2014, CAS included the National College Testing Association (NCTA) and National College Learning Center Association (NCLC) in its member associations and included standards of practice for practitioners working in these areas in its ninth edition (CAS Staff, 2014; CAS, 2015). CAS recognizes testing and academic support services as critical to institutional operations in higher education. As such, higher education professionals should be aware of cultural

bias in standardized testing and implement policies and services for affected students. To this aim, we discuss several implications for practice in higher education and student affairs to understanding and addressing the effects of cultural bias in standardized testing.

Implications for Student Affairs Practice

Central to each of these implications for practice is the acknowledgement that cultural bias is present in standardized testing and creates vulnerability for racially minoritized populations (Stewart & Haynes, 2015; Steele & Aronson, 1995). This vulnerability happens when an individual's "performance suffers when the situation redirects attention needed to perform a task onto some other concern -- in the case of stereotype threat, a concern with the significance of one's performance in light of a devaluing stereotype" (Steele et al, 1995, p. 798). As a result, some racially minoritized populations are disadvantaged by standardized testing relative to their Caucasian counterparts in the exact same setting before test administration (Helms, 2006; Steele et al, 1995).

For higher education, there are three important implications for practice that should be considered: professional learning opportunities for administrators regarding cultural bias, consideration of weights and controls for cultural bias in admissions and placement decisions, and implementation of programming to address stereotype threat and provide additional support for affected populations of cultural bias.

Professional learning opportunities about cultural bias. Institutions should provide professional development and learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators that educate about the effects of cultural bias in standardized testing. These professional learning opportunities should be focused on the history of standardized testing, controversies over their use in college admissions and post-graduation decisions, the negative effect of cultural bias in standardized testing for minority students, and how institutions can consider alternatives to standardized testing to control for cultural bias. Further, these opportunities encourage collaborations between divisions of student affairs, offices of human resources, and centers for teaching and learning to create institutional-specific solutions in the

place of standardized testing in admissions decisions.

Admissions and placement decisions: Weights and controls. Some higher education institutions have begun to place less weight on standardized testing in their admissions decisions (i.e. Hampshire College, New York University, etc.; Sanchez, 2015). As discussed above, differential item functioning (DIF) is a statistical tool that enhance the understanding of fairness bias. Further, Stewart and Haynes (2015) encouraged the use of collaborative efforts between students, teachers, and administrators in primary and secondary schools that focused on critical multicultural education. This focus creates a holistic view of education that can be transferred into higher education and used in consideration of admissions decisions.

While controversial, race-conscious admissions policies are attempts by universities to ameliorate the effects of historical oppression and underrepresentation of racially minoritized populations in higher education (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). This has led to several court cases regarding the extent to which race can be considered as part of admissions decisions (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin*, 2016). Similarly, higher education administrators, particularly those who develop admissions decision policies, should implore weights and controls in consideration of standardized testing in admissions decisions. These weights and controls are particularly important for minoritized populations by both race and class. By de-emphasizing standardized testing in higher education admission decisions, institutions can send a message to test developers about the need to reduce cultural bias in standardized tests and create more equitable testing procedures.

Programming and support services. In addition to the above measures, education professionals should ensure that campus-wide programming and support services are available to students who may be adversely affected by cultural bias in standardized testing. By implementing programming throughout the educational pipeline, students are better able to cope with the negative effects of stereotype threat and cultural bias they experience. In addition to programming, support services should be part of the student's' educational career.

Implications for Workplace

Similar strategies from student affairs practice to reduce the cultural bias are also applicable to the workplace context. For instance, employers can include other measures such as personality test, interpersonal skills, motivation, and experience that may be good indicators of the true performance, instead of relying only on the standardized testing. Moreover, coaching and training programs (e.g., tutoring, mock interviews, workshops) can increase employees' familiarity with job seeking procedures (Sackett, Schmitt, Ellingson, & Kabin, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Cultural bias is an ongoing concern in standardized tests, which students must encounter throughout their educational careers. Perhaps the ultimate goal is to find alternative ways to assess student abilities and future performance. In the meantime, as discussed in this paper, there are many ways in which student affairs professionals and institutions of higher education can work to alleviate the problem and support students to create more equitable opportunities.

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WHEN LEADERSHIP FAILS: NAVIGATING BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE BY CRAFTING COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT

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While student affairs purports to both study and practice effective leadership, we too often hear tales of leaders gone awry. The experiences of practitioners who encounter workplace bullying, inappropriate behavior, and unreasonable demands from leaders on campus are shrouded in shame and fear. The intent of this article is to bring the realities of workplace bullying in higher education and its impacts to light through narrative and critical analysis, and ultimately to share strategies for navigating these negative experiences. The authors hope this work will provide an entry point for current and incoming professionals to make sense of failed leadership and serve as a signpost that engaging in vulnerability provides a way forward.

INTRODUCTION

Academic support professionals are known for positivity, student-focused approaches, and willingness to work through almost any challenge. Our field actively studies leadership, producing implications for the students we develop and for ourselves as we advance in our careers. However, we too often we seem to hear jaw-dropping anecdotes and negative experiences resulting from failures of leadership. While we spend considerable time discussing pathways to leadership in our field, we rarely take the time to reflect on how we can navigate negative experiences of leadership.

The concept for this article emanates from a session at the ACPA 2016 convention in Montreal, *When Leadership Fails*. We spoke with more than 50 colleagues in that session who all indicated having personal experiences with failed leadership. Moreover, we spent close to two hours immediately following the formal session having small group and one-on-one conversations with attendees processing their experiences, engaging in mutual support, and sharing our own narratives. Simply put, we could not have been more surprised at such engagement around these issues and how relatively commonplace they seem to be.

Be writing this article, we hope to give voice to these negative experiences, provide frameworks for professionals to make sense of such behavior (Rayner

& Hoel, 1997), and suggest strategies for navigating perilous professional landscapes. We recognize that these discussions are often omitted from formal discourse in the field, thereby relegated to after hours chats with trusted colleagues, friends, and family. We assert that academic support, student affairs, and higher education, more broadly, can improve by acknowledging that these experiences happen on our campuses, creating spaces for sharing and addressing workplace bullying, and supporting professionals in engaging in dialogue around these issues.

We also envision this text as an entry point for professionals into discussions around failures of leadership. We call on our colleagues to consider how critical it is to understand the implications of their words and actions when they are serving in leadership roles. While our personal experiences indicate that we are fortunate in academic support to have a multitude of caring, capable leaders, we do not operate in a vacuum, and we believe that such conversations are critical to providing support for our colleagues.

We have included personal vignettes below, masked to protect individual and institutional identities, that illustrate lived experiences with workplace bullying, inappropriate behavior, and unreasonable demands, all from those in powerful leadership positions. This autophenomenographic approach may be somewhat

uncommon in the literature of higher education, but we firmly believe that we must be willing to share these kinds of deeply personal experiences in a meaningful way and with an initial analysis if we are to overcome the oppressive norms that sometimes coalesce under a heading of “professional” behavior. The analysis focuses on how academic support professionals can make sense of these negative experiences that can seem so dissonant from the typical modes of collegial behavior in the field. Finally, we suggest strategies and encourage academic support professionals to leverage their compassion and ability to build community to create support structures for one another.

A’s Narrative and Analysis

As our two departments came together as part of a division reorganization, I tried to be optimistic, look for opportunities for synergy (a buzzword on our campus at the time), and lend a hand in the merging of programs and operations. In most cases, this would have made me a good colleague, but in my situation—reporting indirectly to a workplace bully—it made me an easy target. My optimism was read as weakness, and to this bully, I became a pawn. When she knew my colleagues would balk at a request or ask hard questions about a proposal that fell within the scope of their responsibilities, she began to invite me to meetings in their place. Going around my supervisor, she would send meeting requests with only a date and time, providing no details or context and forcing me to come to the meetings unprepared. Once, she put me on the spot, asking me to commit the department—and therefore a colleague—to creating a program that was ill-conceived, out of line with best practices, and a deviation from the mission and goals of our department. Though the program would be well beyond the scope of my responsibilities, she knew my colleague would advise against the program, so she invited me to a meeting with several faculty and staff in an attempt to elicit a commitment. I knew then that she had taken my optimism for naiveté and had tried to manipulate me. She had hoped that by blindsiding me in front of colleagues, she would secure the commitment she sought, successfully circumscribing my supervisor and the members of the department she found harder

to manipulate. I quickly learned that in dealing with this bully, my natural impulse to be helpful and accommodating had to take a backseat to protecting my department and colleagues.

This narrative demonstrates, among other things, that workplace harassment need not involve fits of rage, name-calling, or threats to be bullying. Bullying can be, in some ways, sneaky and subtle. It is conceivable, after all, that a last minute invitation to a meeting means a colleague is forgetful, not manipulative. Likewise, being tapped to help with a project can seem flattering, even if it is outside of the scope of one’s duties. However, workplace bullying is defined by power and persistence. Salin (2003) defines workplace bullying as “repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more individual(s), which involve a perceived power imbalance and create a hostile work environment” (p. 1215). The above vignette ticks the boxes Salin presents, even as the power plays and persistent hostility remain visible only to those intimately connected to the bullying.

Rayner and Hoel (1997, p. 183) provide a seminal definition of bullying, suggesting categories to help conceptualize the different ways in which workplace bullying manifests. They write:

Generally, bullying behaviours can be grouped into the following categories: threat to professional status (e.g. belittling opinion, public professional humiliation, accusation regarding lack of effort); threat to personal standing (e.g. name-calling, insults, intimidation, devaluing with reference to age); isolation (e.g. preventing access to opportunities, physical or social isolation, withholding of information); overwork (e.g. undue pressure, impossible deadlines, unnecessary disruptions); and destabilization (e.g. failure to give credit when due, meaningless tasks, removal of responsibility, repeated reminders of blunders, setting up to fail).

This valuable framework can help us unpack our experiences, like the one above, and point to workplace bullying where it exists, even in its subtler forms.

In the above vignette, for example, my professional status and personal standing were indeed threatened. Having been forced to come to meetings unprepared and choose between being publically insubordinate or betraying both colleague and department, my

reputation and job were regularly on the line. Anxiety about being publicly embarrassed, being strong-armed into commitments, or failing to protect my department became part of my daily life.

Beyond these stressful meetings, the bully was working to isolate each member of the department by, among other things, overworking me and withholding information from them. By unevenly distributing information and work, the bully exhausted me with overwork while my colleagues felt out of the loop. This both contributed to the quick decline in office morale and even began to endanger my relationships with my colleagues. By circumventing supervisors, sidestepping colleagues, and choosing to lean disproportionately on me, this bully tried to dismantle one of the department's greatest strengths: the strong personal and professional relationships among staff members.

Finally, in asking me to commit my department to a project doomed to fail, this bully sought to destabilize existing programming. Had I committed to the project and had my colleague been forced to proceed with it, valuable human and fiscal resources would have been diverted away from existing programs and services, endangering their effectiveness. This bully was not concerned with the impossible situation in which she had put me. It mattered little to her that I could only either make myself seem obstinate and unprepared in front of colleagues or commit my department to a doomed project. In these moments I felt scared and hurt and mad, but I had almost no recourse except to retreat to the safe space my colleagues and I created amongst ourselves.

Interactions like this one caused me to reevaluate what I had previously considered a professional strength, my ability to build bridges. I had to come to realize that neither good work nor good intentions would ever be enough to win the respect or fair treatment of this bully. As I worked to process the bullying and the frustration and sadness that came along with it, the community of support we formed became critical to preserving my emotional wellbeing and my relationships with my colleagues.

B's Narrative and Analysis

I naively thought that the merging of my department

with another one was not going to greatly affect my professional life. My role within my department had a lot to do with behind-the-scenes work and programming that largely didn't have anything to do with this new department. In keeping my head down and doing my best to fly under the radar, my actions were interpreted as intentional slights toward this new supervisor (bully) and their department. My daily routine and interactions were being perceived as me being defiant, calculated and negative. My immediate supervisor was informed of my "unwanted" behaviors and was at a loss as to how to guide me any differently knowing that my intentions were good. Eventually, I was publicly stripped of some of my undergraduate staff and responsibilities in a meeting between both departments. This fact was stated over and over, evidently meant to publicly shame and embarrass me, and it had its intended reaction.

The isolation only continued. I watched the bully try to manipulate my coworkers to distance them from me. Information was consistently withheld from me and wielded as a weapon. Problems were perceived with my student staff simply because of who they reported to, and it was repeatedly taken out on them, without them knowing why. There was to be a change in a policy on campus, an area that I was the sole authority on, and I was not invited to a meeting about it. Because I was not someone who would blindly acquiesce, the path of least resistance for the bully was to cut me out of the process. In my professional life, I have never felt so small. It was now obvious to me, no matter what I did or how hard I worked my efforts were not going to be recognized. I felt I had become the "problem child." I complied with what I was told to do and this bully then went to my supervisor, again, and said I hadn't done it in the way that they would have liked.

When I reflect on this experience, I keep thinking "this person never even knew me." It's significant here that bullying behaviors are personal and targeted but these behaviors have much more to do with the kind of person the bully is rather than the kind of person you are. This was difficult for me to realize during this time. I'm the kind of person who is organized, who typically has all of the information and enjoys being depended on by my coworkers. Right off the bat, this bully and I

did not see eye-to-eye and my professional tenure with this person was a complete nightmare from that point forward. Rayner and Hoel (1997) provided me the written words I so desperately needed to be able to digest what happened to me and my colleagues. Their general definition (p. 183) was the first definition of workplace bullying that framed the concept in a way that provided logic to an illogical and irrational situation. The pieces from their definition were all there: withholding of information, isolation, public professional humiliation, and removal of responsibilities.

My responsibilities and my authority were being diminished. I felt completely alone and this was the game the bully was playing the entire time. Extreme isolation can make any sane person begin to feel untethered and that was what happened to me over time. Any time anyone asked me about my day or how work was going, I didn't feel like I could really give an answer. My options were to lie or to potentially unload and break down in tears. In an attempt to avoid shutting down completely, I had to expose my feelings and thoughts to my coworkers in a way I would have never done under any other circumstances. I was completely vulnerable. I had to trust my coworkers would still support me, would shield me when possible, and protect me and my staff because I was no longer given the opportunity to do so.

In their literature review, Rayner and Hoel (1997) cited Brodsky's insight into harassment, "repeated and persistent attempts by one person to torment, wear down, frustrate, or get a reaction from another. It is treatment which persistently provokes, pressures, frightens, intimidates or otherwise discomforts another person" (p. 184). I'm still somewhat appalled that I can identify with this definition. This situation wore me down. One of my colleagues was frightened, another intimidated, another tormented. Bullying has an isolating intent. Thankfully, my coworkers and I were able to turn inward and to each other for comfort. Another approach could have been to turn to others in leadership at our institution. Unfortunately, in our scenario, leadership failed us and that can happen anywhere. Without a clear checks-and-balances system, anyone can be subjected to this kind of bullying spanning the gamut of personal

slights and pressuring to the torment and intimidation described.

C's Narrative and Analysis

My experiences with failed leadership and workplace bullying began when a new administrator was appointed to manage an area that included a department I was running at the time. I had had the privilege of working in that department for some time, beginning at its inception and building it into an academic support unit that had a positive culture, a demonstrated impact on student success, and the respect of colleagues in our field. At first, I noticed relatively minor things that just seemed strange. In one-on-one conversations with my new supervisor, I recognized a pattern that when I would bring up a subject she did not want to discuss, she would let me finish asking my question and then, rather than responding, would just start talking about other issues. No matter how I tried to steer the conversation back to my question, it was never acknowledged or addressed.

These strange behaviors, that I initially dismissed as quirks, soon escalated. I had a vacant position in my department that was a valuable member of my leadership team. Once she realized that she needed a new position, my supervisor worked to reassign that position to her area. Once I realized what was happening, I asked a series of questions about it in a regularly scheduled one-on-one meeting. Her behavior in that meeting was like nothing I had seen before. She could not sit still in her chair, rarely made eye contact with me, and at several points had contorted herself into different, awkward physical positions while we were both seated. Eventually, while still in the middle of a conversation and with more than twenty minutes left in the meeting, she stood up and walked out of the room. We had been meeting in my office that day, and once she left she did not return. She never addressed what happened in that meeting or why she left so abruptly.

In our last eight months or so working together, I was screamed at multiple times, asked if I was lying repeatedly in a public division meeting, belittled in front of my staff, and strategically left out of key meetings. Because of the relationships I had built around campus I learned that things were being said behind my back. Perhaps most frustrating of all was

that my own team was also subjected to this behavior. My supervisor would give them assignments, criticize them to the point of tears, and demean their reputations around campus.

As I have reflected on this behavior since no longer working with this individual, I, too, have found Rayner and Hoel (1997) very useful for making sense of my experiences. I find the notion of destabilization most relevant here. I recognize now that in the first several months working with this new supervisor, I was trying to understand the erratic behavior I was experiencing and attempting to find patterns so that I could understand the direction she wanted our area to go, what was most important to her, and how she liked to communicate with her team. The behavior I describe above stretched out for more than a year, and I had several moments when I thought I had begun to understand some of these questions only to be thrown into disequilibrium again by a new surprising, often threatening or harmful behavior.

In addition, the authors' construct of threats to professional standing encapsulates my experiences relative to what the members of my own team had to endure and to the sully of our collective reputation on campus. By far, the former issue, that my staff were bullied directly by my supervisor, was the most difficult to accept and to attempt to manage. Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of effective leadership is knowing how to share stressful information with your team so that they are able to see the institutional landscape in a way that communicates the realities of the situation while mitigating the emotional stress. For many reasons detailed above, I realized that I could not effectively apply this strategy in this unusual context. As a result, and as discussed more at length below, our team intentionally chose to adopt a policy of radical honesty.

Finally, as destabilizing and threatening as this experience was, it should be noted that a larger implication was the impact it had on the students our department served and supported. My team spent increasing amounts of time trying to cope with the bullying they were experiencing and attempting to produce documents and meet deadlines that were

capricious, all while trying to minimize impact on the academic support services for which they were responsible. The inevitable impact is that our student staff clearly understood something had changed and that the team had less and less time and attention to devote to essential responsibilities.

Crafting Communities of Support

A lesson we all learned working with a bully is that the normal modes of office behavior and professional conduct do not apply. In working with students who are under the influence, many of us have been taught that rational conversations are not effective with someone who is in an irrational state. Similarly, we learned quickly that the modes of communication and protocols we had developed were not sufficient for managing the level/fervor of communication and anxiety that came from engaging with a workplace bully.

As a leadership team, we created safe, private spaces where each individual could share experiences and process what had happened. In order for that to be effective, we first had to adopt an approach that included radical honesty. Even though the team was comprised of individuals at different administrative levels and at different places in their careers, the group acknowledged that this particular bully did not recognize those differences. As such, when it came to matters related to the bully and her position of authority, each team member shared what they experienced, what they heard from others around campus, and what individual strategies they were using to try to cope with the stress.

Being outwardly shamed and embarrassed caused us to reexamine our own supervisory skills. We became better supervisors and colleagues because of this. As a group, we turned our attention inward and did what we could to ensure that every interaction with our own people, every group meeting or professional development session did not have one ounce of the negativity and emotional torment that went on in the other meetings we were unfortunately a part of. Our holiday party comes to mind as a gigantic success, we had several different staffing levels that took the time to meet outside of work and genuinely enjoyed themselves from professional staff to teaching assistants to student supervisors. We were all extremely proud of

our department and culture that day. Collectively, we became more adept at talking as openly as possible about the overall direction of the department, without having to scare or intimidate our staff members in regards to the unknown future.

We all had to allow ourselves the space to talk openly about our feelings with one another. It was comforting to craft our own safe spaces and showed each of us that we were still able to have control in our professional lives and work/life balance. Brown (2012) wrote, “self-compassion is key because when we’re able to be gentle with ourselves in the midst of shame, we’re more likely to reach out, connect and experience empathy” (p. 75). This was not a concept any of us would have connected with previously. Our level of trust with our colleagues grew tremendously during this tumultuous

time. We learned the true meaning of what a collective group could accomplish both in terms of tasks and raw emotional support.

This combination of safe spaces and radical honesty fostered a culture of vulnerability among our team. Members shared how the bully had embarrassed them in front of other people, concerns that their individual team members had shared, and even how the stress and anxiety were impacting them personally, physically, and emotionally. These experiences demonstrate the power that vulnerability has, even in the workplace, to sustain a team and to break the cycle of distrust that is bred in environments where a bully holds a powerful leadership position.

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NOBODY TOLD ME

SHAMIKA KARIKARI
MIAMI UNIVERSITY-OHIO

Nobody told me that it would be lonely.
That the emptiness would drown me like Cheerios being overtaken by the
2% milk in my morning cereal.
That I wouldn't be able to find the words to articulate why I felt so alone.
That being in a cohort didn't make a difference because sometimes I feel
the loneliness even when I'm in a room full of people.
See, loneliness isn't a feeling of people being near, but a condition of the
soul.

Nobody told me we'd pretend all the time.
Wearing a mask would become the norm.
Being on this journey with so many others and knowing they might have
some of the same feelings,
But we don't talk about the struggle.
We ignore the elephant in the room.
Instead of calling it out, we smile, bat our eyes, and go about business as
usual.
I'm still holding on to the hope that one day someone will see me in my
struggle, like really see me.

Nobody told me my Blackness would continue to be center stage.
And not like "here's Mika Karikari, leading actress, who's starring in this
doctoral film.
Instead, it's "here's Mika Karikari,
Rehearsing a script I didn't write,
Continue to face the plight,
Of being Black in the academy that wasn't created for me.
The reminder that completing my Ph.D. means nothing to the folks that
still think my Blackness disqualifies me for this journey.

Nobody told me that instead of being called an angry Black woman,
I'd be referred to as being "fired up",
As if I don't know what that *really* means.
That my passion would be policed,

My voice would be ceased,
Whenever I spoke with conviction.

Nobody told me imposter syndrome was real.
Like as real as the brown skin on my body.
That it would be imbedded into every step I took,
Printed in every word in the books
That didn't speak to my experience.

Nobody told me how hard it would be.
That there would be moments I'd want to quit,
That I'd have to hold on to my faith to make it another day.

Nobody told me the "I'm not good enough" label would be tattooed in my
mind.
That the journey would bring up more questions than answers about my
place in the academy.
That doubt would cripple my heart,
And tear me apart,
In ways that left me in despair.

Nobody told me.
So I commit to share my voice,
So you can have a glimpse into the heart,
Of a sister trying to make a start,
Through the academy that was not created for us.

Nobody told me.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Shamika Karikari is an educator committed to racial justice. She is dedicated to empowering others to use their voice to bring change to the spaces they occupy. Shamika's extensive work in residence life, academic support, and orientation provided her with opportunities to serve students and support them during their collegiate experience. Shamika is currently a doctoral student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program at Miami University and doctoral associate for Career Services. She received her B.A. in History from Bowling Green State University and M.S. in SAHE from Miami University.

STUDENT VOICES: INFORMING OUR PRACTICE

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Using a qualitative grounded theory design, the researchers sought to identify the factors that contribute to college success for students who have overcome significant barriers as they strive to complete their education. Data analysis from the interviews led to the development of an integrated model for practice. The most significant factor in the students' success was having someone demonstrate a strong belief in them.

Using a qualitative research design, we conducted a study to identify the factors contributing to college success for students who have overcome identifiable barriers as they strive to complete their education. Those barriers may include inadequate academic preparation, lack of financial support, misconceptions about college, and being a first generation student among others. We held interviews across three countries (United States, Canada and South Africa) through skype with 15 students who overcame significant barriers to reach their educational goals. Data analysis from the interviews led to the development of an integrated model for practice.

The most significant factor in the students' success is shown at the core and is having someone demonstrate a strong belief in them. This strong belief correlated with several personal attributes that emerged from the interviews. The researchers categorized these attributes as persistence, self-efficacy and emotional awareness. While these individual attributes have been linked to student success in prior studies, the model described here emphasizes the importance of their integration and how practitioners can facilitate the development of this dynamic as they work with students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Persistence

The data analysis showed that the participants all shared a set of common attitudes. This set included grit, resilience, and a growth mindset, all closely related and with overlapping dimensions. We labeled these attitudes "persistence."

Grit

Grit has been defined as a personality trait where one has a "tendency to pursue long-term goals with sustained zeal and hard work" (Von Culin, Tsukayama & Duckworth, 2014). It is related to stamina and the ability to overcome short-term failures or obstacles in order to continue working toward a long-term goal. Research indicates that grit can predict achievement in academic, vocational and avocational domains. High school juniors in Chicago with a high degree of grit were more likely to graduate on time than their peers who displayed less grit (Eskreis-Winkler, Duckworth, Shulman and Beale, 2014).

Resilience

Resilience is closely related to the concept of grit but is most useful when considered not as a fixed trait but "from a process of repeated interactions between a person and favorable features of the surrounding context in a person's life" (Gilligan, 2004, p 94). Research indicates that especially in young people, resilience is "highly dependent on other people and multiple systems of influence" (O'Dougherty, Wright, Masten and Narayan, 2013, p. 31). Once it was considered to be an innate characteristic, but today it is considered a developmental process dependent on the interactions between individuals and their environment. Some researchers (Benard, 1995, Masten, 2001) suggest that everyone has the capacity for "self-righting." Masten refers to it as "ordinary magic" where most individuals who face adversity are able to arrive at "normative" outcomes.

Growth Mindset

Research indicates the concept of mindset to be a reliable predictor of academic performance. Dweck (2006) describes two types of mindset. The first is fixed. Individuals with a fixed mindset believe they have been endowed with an intelligence that does not change over time. They believe that no amount of effort will change what they consider to be innate. The second type is a growth mindset. Those with a growth mindset believe that their behavior can impact their intelligence and ability to achieve. They see intelligence as evolving over time through their efforts and strategic behavior.

Each of the participants in our study displayed a growth mindset. The final component of the interview protocol asked each student to respond to the following four statements taken from Dweck (p. 12):

- Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.
- You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
- No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
- You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

One hundred percent of the participants responded in the affirmative to the last statement. Not one of them demonstrated a tendency toward a fixed mindset. Their comments included the following-- "You can change. It's like a plant; as long as you're feeding it, it's going to grow." "As you learn something, you become more intelligent."

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is one's belief in the likelihood of successfully completing a task (Bandura, 1977). It is the belief that one's actions will affect change. These beliefs are critical to overcoming challenges and succeeding academically.

Albert Bandura's research asserts that self-efficacy is the major determinant of effort, persistence, and goal setting. According to Bandura (1982), there are four determinants of self-efficacy beliefs: personal experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal messages and social persuasion and physiological states.

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Emotions contribute to learning in many ways. They affect one's ability to remain focused and process information, and they can advance or impede learning success. The research on emotions and emotional intelligence lays a foundation for understanding why some students succeed and others do not. The terms emotional intelligence and emotional awareness are used interchangeably in this study.

The literature on emotional intelligence provides insight into understanding the individuals we interviewed. The term "emotional intelligence," first used by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), refers to the ability to manage feelings and relationships. According to Daniel Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills. These are central components of emotional awareness.

Self-aware individuals are able to read and understand emotions and recognize their impact on performance. In addition, self-aware persons have realistic evaluations of their strengths and weaknesses. The ability to control disruptive emotions and impulses and consistently display honesty and integrity are hallmarks of the next component, self-management. Self-management is also characterized by successfully meeting responsibilities, adapting to changing situations, overcoming obstacles and initiative along with a drive to meet an internal standard of excellence.

The socially-aware individual is emphatic and senses others' emotions while taking an interest in their concerns. In addition, being socially aware involves building networks and relationships. Social awareness leads to the development of social skills including effective communication, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration, and the drive to help others. Many of the students in this study expressed the desire to help others and did so through tutoring and mentoring activities.

Adjusting to changes and overcoming obstacles is critical to the development of emotional intelligence. The individuals in this study all displayed an ability to adapt and adjust so their challenges ultimately became opportunities. The connection between emotional

intelligence and learning success is evident throughout this study. Building bonds and cultivating and maintaining relationships is particularly present. All of the students developed and maintained relationships with significant others who recognized their potential and supported them to succeed. These helpers set boundaries within a supportive environment, had high expectations of the students, provided validation of their accomplishments and helped influence positive emotions leading to success.

One of the key components of emotional intelligence is a social skill that includes the drive to help and develop others. The students in this study evidenced this most effectively as they continued past graduation to pursue experiences in teaching and the helping professions.

Since the subjects of this study were all in higher education, it is helpful to look at theories that help describe this population. Emotional awareness is closely tied to the classic theory of Arthur Chickering (1993) whose theory of student development proposed seven vectors of development. The vectors include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward independence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Chickering's work is principally useful in this study as it centers on the psychosocial development of college age students.

The vectors or paths to development are characterized by both degree (strong to mild) and direction (positive or negative). Of the seven vectors, managing emotions is particularly relevant here. Positively managing emotions involves recognizing and accepting them and appropriately expressing and controlling them. The students in this study evidenced this competence as they acknowledged their fears and anxieties and sought resources to address them.

Chickering's student development theory helps explain the success of these students and underscores the importance of identifying emotional awareness as an important ingredient in the "Believe in You" model.

PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICE

Based on our findings, we offer five principles for practice. For each principle, we suggest strategies that

can facilitate their implementation. Although we link the strategies to specific principles for the sake of clarity, the student interviews indicate that they are meaningful as part of a whole rather than as discrete approaches. The data suggest that we view them holistically and integrate them across our practice.

1. Facilitate a growth mindset for each student

What can we do as practitioners to encourage a growth mindset approach? First, we can address the concept of mindset directly with our students. By asking students to respond to the four questions that we asked our interviewees, we are making them aware of the differences. Once they are aware of their own self-beliefs, we can facilitate a discussion around the probable outcomes of the two approaches. By providing examples from our own experiences and also asking other students to share theirs, we can help those with a fixed mindset to reflect and begin to revise their thinking.

Secondly, we can provide feedback that encourages persistence and practice. Based on Dweck's work (2006), we should avoid complimenting students for their intelligence or native ability. This confirms for them that intelligence is fixed and that if they do not have the innate ability, there is little they can do. We need to find ways to assign value to persistence and practice. We can encourage students to persist in their efforts by requiring drafts of projects. For instance, for a first draft we do not assign a grade; rather, we provide comments based on the strengths we find in the work and tell them to continue with a second draft. Once they are ready to submit the final project, we can help them see their improvement and understand that it was the result of hard work, not innate ability.

Third and closely related to the previous strategy, we need to gain the trust of our students through our comments on their work. It is easy to be judgmental when grading papers, but that can contribute to an already fixed mindset (Dweck, 2006). By limiting comments to overall patterns, not each discrete error, and finding strengths throughout a paper we demonstrate that we are not judging; rather, we are working along with them to make it better.

2. Create an emotionally-supportive environment

Creating an emotionally-supportive environment involves a number of very specific, intentional strategies. First among them is being sure to affirm the accomplishments of students without emphasizing competition. Competition can lead to situations where students hesitate to participate. Emotionally-supportive learning environments involve positive interactions that include respect, empathy, and the encouragement for learning without fear of humiliation. Students in emotionally-supportive environments are more likely to be comfortable taking risks without fear of ridicule or embarrassment.

Focused and detailed positive feedback for well-deserved achievements is a critical component for creating emotionally-supportive environments. High expectations along with support and encouragement in noncompetitive ways promote learning success.

Learning situations that emphasize self-awareness are emotionally supportive. Modeling self-reflection and self-awareness is one way to help students become more self-aware, identify their feelings, and gain control over negative thoughts. Discussing both positive and negative feelings helps students become more comfortable in challenging situations so they can use positive thoughts to overcome difficulties.

Promoting honesty and integrity is essential in an emotionally-supportive environment. Explicitly sharing guidelines and expectations is important as is agreement on consequences for lack of integrity. Examples of dishonesty and integrity failures can be helpful to further explain this aspect of an emotionally-supportive environment. Listening actively and communicating in a clear and unambiguous manner is essential. Opportunities to be heard in a non-judgmental way are less threatening and more conducive to learning success (Bond, 2012).

3. Promote realistic self-efficacy beliefs in each student

Realistic self-efficacy beliefs are developed when students are given choices and not required to rigidly adhere to task requirements. For example, students may be allowed to choose among a set of different assignment due dates or to select from a variety of

different ways to complete a requirement. In this way, students gain autonomy leading to self-efficacy in the learning process.

Targeted feedback is feedback that specifically compares current performance to past performance and emphasizes effort and not comparison with others. Frequent and targeted feedback is very helpful in creating realistic self-efficacy beliefs. (Zimmerman and Shrunck, 2013)

The use of peer models is also very effective. When students are faced with a task and view peers successfully performing it, they are more likely to persist. Seeing peers struggle and overcoming obstacles also helps develop realistic self-efficacy beliefs.

Encourage students to try. Give them support by saying, “I know this may seem difficult, but if you proceed in small steps I know you can do it.” “Break up the task into smaller parts, so it won’t seem overwhelming.” These statements go a long way to keeping students motivated with realistic self-efficacy beliefs.

Finally, make the most of students’ interests and tie assignments into them. For example, in a history course, allow students to connect their own family heritage to an era or to research sports as they occurred in that time period. The more interested students are, the more they are likely to persist and have self-efficacy beliefs that lead to successful learning. (Zimmerman and Shrunck, 2013)

4. Develop student grit through alignment of short term and long term goals

One way to begin a discussion with students about grit is to ask them to respond to the “Grit Scale.” This was developed by Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., and Kelly, D.R. (2007) and contains 12 items that will prompt self-reflection and discussion. Items include “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge,” “Setbacks don’t discourage me,” “I become interested in new pursuits every few months.” Once the students have completed it and rated themselves in terms of grittiness, the discussion can begin. This can be one component of a unit on achieving long term goals. Once the students begin sharing their own experiences, it may be helpful to invite others to

the discussion. Alumni of the program, student coaches or staff members can share their own stories. At the conclusion, students can complete an action plan that aligns short term goals with long term goals.

Students become discouraged when a short term goal becomes an obstacle. For instance, if a student wants to become an engineer but fails the first physics course how can we help them overcome this “barrier” without giving up the long term goal? We can certainly recommend working with a tutor or learning center to identify and strengthen the concepts that were particularly challenging. We could also advise the student to take the course at a time when she won’t be taking any other course in order to focus only on physics. These options will cause the student to take additional time to reach the ultimate goal, but may also ensure that she reaches it.

We can help students develop flowcharts that visually show the pathways from short term to long term goals. Flow charts include options if one path doesn’t work; they will need to think about creating alternatives and build them into the chart. By engaging in this activity, they will find themselves forced to create different pathways all leading to the same end.

5. Strengthen protective factors to increase student resiliency

Resiliency theory and research lead us to think about the interaction of the protective factors a student encounters versus the number of risk factors present in the environment. Many of our students come to us with multiple risk factors, so how can we ensure a resiliency-fostering learning environment? What are the protective factors that we can offer?

We heard from all of the students we interviewed that having a close relationship with a teacher or staff member contributed significantly to their successes. These relationships led to their feeling that someone believed in them and held them to high standards.

To facilitate the development of a trusting relationship with students, we recommend making time for them on an individual or small group basis. When we hold office hours at times that are scheduled during student-friendly hours, we increase the likelihood that they will take advantage of them. When they do, it

gives us an opportunity to get to know them beyond the classroom. These are the times when we can best provide advice, demonstrate tough love, and let them know that we believe in them. We listen to their individual stories and gain more insight into their backgrounds, personal interests and long term goals. Once we learn about students’ personal interests and goals, we can design assignments that will seem more relevant to them. If we match those to high standards, we can foster their resilience.

We can encourage the formation of peer group interactions by assigning projects that require collaboration and working as a team. If we know something about our students’ backgrounds and interests, we can construct teams that will embrace a supportive and encouraging dynamic based on its members. For example, one of the students we interviewed talked about how important it was for him to get to know others who shared his values and goals. Together, they can motivate each other.

As we get to know our students and create a climate of trust, we must continue to articulate high standards and expectations. Our courses must be rigorous. A significant element of a difficult course is to provide the scaffolding the students need to succeed. The scaffolding can include tutors dedicated to the course, after-class instructional support or online advice as needed. We must tell them multiple times that we believe in them and find the strengths they bring before identifying their weaknesses; they probably already know what they are.

CONCLUSION

Our work has led us to a model for student success based directly on student voices. Their stories clearly demonstrate how important it is to have someone believe in you at a critical time. In addition, there were three significant attributes at the foundation of all the stories: persistence, self-efficacy and emotional awareness. While these individual attributes have been linked to student success in prior studies, the model described here emphasizes their integration and how practitioners can facilitate the development of this dynamic as they work with students.

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LOOKING AT THE WRITING CENTER THROUGH COYOTE'S EYES

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It is not enough to look through the theoretical lenses we use to think through ways of making and enhancing writing center theory. It leads to assumptions about there being a natural and universal way of thinking about the work we do as tutors as directors as writers. We have long looked through lenses established by Aristotle and Plato; lenses used to produce and understand knowledge. Yet this lens creates a binary and we get stuck in the space of either/or. As a place to start moving beyond the dichotomous, I work towards answering the call made by Victor Villanueva to consider rhetorics outside of the Greco-Roman tradition. Villanueva urges scholars to move toward inhabiting the interstitial to think through new ways of seeing writing praxis. By using the Navajo trickster tale of How Coyote Lost His Eyes, this article explores how we can follow Coyote's lead, to lose our eyes and gain new perspectives on how to become better anti-racist, anti-xenophobic, and anti-homophobic accomplices. I argue that we must look at the very theoretical lenses themselves that obtain in writing center theory to unearth underlying assumptions that might be lost - or even elided- because these tales are twice told.

COYOTE

One day Coyote found Rabbit in the forest. Coyote watched as Rabbit threw his eyes up into the air where they perched on the highest tree branch. "Come back!" Rabbit commanded his eyes and they returned to Rabbit's eye sockets. Coyote thought this trick was the best trick, and begged Rabbit to teach him how to throw his eyes. At first Rabbit told Coyote no, but Coyote continued to beg. Rabbit eventually agreed, but warned Coyote that he is cannot throw eyes up more than three times in one day, otherwise something terrible will happen. Rabbit left, and Coyote practiced by throwing his eyes up. "Come back!" Coyote commanded and his eyes came back to his. Twice more Coyote did this until he realized he should teach humans in a nearby village his new trick. Coyote went to the village and gathered everyone around. He threw his eyes up into the air, and they perched upon a treetop. "Come back!" Coyote commanded, but his eyes stayed put; looking back at him from the treetop. Just then Raven flew by and ate Coyote's eyes, mistaking them for berries. Coyote staggered away from the village, humiliated that he had lost his eyes. Just then Mouse came along and found Coyote crying. Coyote told Mouse his story about losing his eyes, and Mouse consoled Coyote by giving

him one of his eyes. Now a mouse's eye is much smaller than a coyote's, and only let in a small amount of light, making it hard for Coyote to see. Coyote continued on in the forest, and soon he met Buffalo. Coyote told Buffalo how he lost his eyes, and that Mouse helped him, but how it was difficult to see. Buffalo consoled Coyote by giving him one of his eyes. Now a buffalo's eyes are much larger than a coyote's, and let in so much light that Coyote could see too much. Now having two different eyes, Coyote no longer saw things in the same way again.¹

It is easy to dismiss or misread this story as Coyote should have left well enough alone, but Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet (2007) offer this reading from their book *The everyday writing center*: "A new worldview...is Coyote's way of turning his foolishness into ours: 'Coyote is said to trick the learner into the lesson, almost giving one the notion that things are not as they seem'..." (p. 16). This Trickster story could easily be read as a cautionary tale: to be happy with what one already has and to not go poking around where one shouldn't. After all, Coyote has humiliated himself in front of humans: his eyes are eaten, thus forever gone, but Geller et al. have a different set of eyes in which they view this tale: "We live in an either-or world, a world

¹This story of how Coyote loses his eyes is adapted from Navajo Trickster Tale. I condensed the version that appears in this text by taking out some of the dialogue, but staying true to the metaphors in the original. I want to explicitly say that this story is not my own. And I do not treat the responsibility of using this story that is not a part of my culture cavalierly. This tale is used as it is intended: as a method of teaching, not to culturally appropriate another.

that doesn't offer much opportunity to be uncertain, or tickled, or puzzled. How much time do we leave... to be surprised, to try out different eyes..." (p.16). I wonder at how often we invite Coyote to join our work. When those moments of uncertainty crop up- moments where we ask *Are writing consultants ready to be tutors? How much learning is happening in the writing center? Are we doing what we should be doing?* These are moments where bluffing is so tempting. Perhaps you've noticed the moment when someone tries to bluff you. Maybe it was a class you took where the professor didn't know the answer but gave a soliloquy on a completely different topic, which only showed that he didn't have the answer but didn't want to look foolish by admitting it. Whatever the circumstance, when we try to bluff our way through, people pick up on it. By taking up Coyote's story of wonder and curiosity, by *not* heeding Rabbit's warning of throwing our eyes too many times, we too can gain eyes that, although different from the ones we had before, will show us new perspectives on the work we do within higher education.

A MEMORY

*He was a PhD student in one of the hard sciences. I have long forgotten his name, but his story stays with me. "What brings you in today?" I asked; a typical way I would start a writing consultation in those days. "Grammar," he replied, as most of the writers I worked with over the years would say. He had only booked a half-hour appointment, more than enough time to talk about the two abstracts he brought with him. "My adviser sent me here: he says that I have a lot of work to do on grammar." It was true that his paper was slashed with red pen: lines through words, squiggly marks here and there, and esoteric words like *awk* written under certain sentences. All this is to say the paper looked like it had gone to war and came out the loser of the battle. As I read through I couldn't help but notice that many of the adviser's markings didn't make sense to me. "Why did he cross this part out?" I asked the student. "I don't really know," he replied. I was perplexed; I couldn't find any major trouble with grammar. Since his field of study was so different from mine, I asked questions about content and clarity for the audience in which he*

was writing to, but he said that what he had written was appropriate. After I had read over both abstracts, and asked my novice questions, I told him that I couldn't find any issues with his writing. I apologized for not being helpful. He seemed strangely satisfied with our consultation. As he was packing his papers into his bag, he remarked that his adviser was really strict on grammar, and he was under the impression that the adviser didn't like him much. I made some lame comment in commiseration, "Yeah, it must be tough to have to work with someone like that," and he was on his way. It was after he left that I wondered, maybe it was the name attached to the student; maybe it was that he was an international student, a trace of a Korean accent to his English, but undeniably understandable to any who care to listen first and judge based on name later.

The PhD student I worked with years ago is a consultation I have often reflected on. I had one academic years' work of writing center experience, and at the time I worried that this consultation had got awry. The consultation itself only took 15 of the 30 minutes the writer had signed up for, which made me feel like I might have rushed through reading the abstracts. We spent little time going over the abstracts, with more time focused on talking about the writer's adviser. But as I play the memory back in my mind, I can see Coyote lurking in the writing center with me that day. Many tutoring handbooks, grammar and style guides, textbooks, and teachers will tell you that I should have stayed on track by focusing on grammar; to make sure that every definite article was definitely where they should be. It was this consultation that marked the moment where I lost my eyes, where I realized for the first time that sometimes teachers make assumptions about students with names that aren't John Smith. Sometimes teachers read for errors where there are none, because the teacher hasn't found new eyes to look at students' writing. And there are assumptions made when a student has an accent that doesn't sound like the flat Midwest dialect, an accent that is so revered in Northern America due to its lack of regional identifiers. This consultation marked the moment where Coyote came into full focus for me and I followed his

call, making for a richer story to tell about writing centers than the one I could have told about sticking to the adviser's comments, and pretending that grammar was what we should talk about when clearly there were other more insidious issues at play. It made for a moment where I began learning how to be a writing tutor who looks not only at the words on the paper, but also finds ways to help writers navigate conversations with their teachers about writing.

In the book *Peripheral visions for writing centers* (2013), McKinney urges writing center scholars to look at the narratives we tell rather than through the lens themselves: "...many stories could be told of our spaces, yet predominantly, one story is told" (p. 21). The chapter that most captivated me was "Writing Centers Tutor (All Students)." Here, McKinney unpacks underlying assumptions within writing center narratives: that the writer (not the tutor) does all the work; that the tutor is not a teacher, but a guide; that tutorials happen one-with-one (McKinney, 2013, pp. 59-60). In writing center scholarship, phrases such as Higher Order Concerns, Lower Order Concerns, Non-directive tutoring, and minimalist tutoring are terms that we all know: "We say we want all students to come to our centers, to feel 'comfortable' in our 'non-traditional' setting, but when we narrate normal and abnormal tutoring scenarios in tutor training manuals, we reveal our unease with working with a vast array of students" (70). McKinney is noticing how, when we talk about "best practices" in the tutoring of writing,

we are often talking about "best practices" for white, cis gender, straight students. But this vision of student is one that is changing. Remember this quote from the beginning of this article: "We live in an either-or world, a world that doesn't offer much opportunity to be uncertain, or tickled, or puzzled. How much time do we leave... to be surprised, to try out different eyes?" (Geller et al., 2007). Coyote's eyes are one way of looking *at* the value students who don't identify as white, cis, or straight bring to ways of knowing, and how these ways of knowing complicate traditional modes of learning and thinking.

McKinney is not the only one to notice this trend: In "Rethinking writing center work to transform a system of advantage based on race" (2007), Grimm begins to articulate how new narratives need to be explored within writing center work: "the notion that all college students speak a 'privileged variety of English.' This assumption about students leaves untroubled the notion that 'writing well' is the ability to produce English that is unmarked in the eyes of teachers who are custodians of privileged varieties of English" (p. 80). Coyote's story is one that we can carry with us to add to, and counter, traditional ways of knowing and of the work we do within higher education. For many of us, it is easier to bluff our way through difficulties; it is easier to tell, retell, and recycle the stories that pervade intellectual spaces. I could have pulled a grammar manual and used that to look through the PhD student's paper; but at what cost to the student's voice and my tutor practice?

If we are willing to lose

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MANAGING YOUR FIRST 365: START WITH THE CAS STANDARDS

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The use of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment Guides and the Learning Assistance Program Standards and Guidelines was essential to negotiating my first year as the director of a learning center. This article describes how preparing for, conducting, and responding to the results of a CAS self-assessment can shape a new director's leadership in the first months.

As a first-time director of a learning center, I doubted that my new colleagues would grant me much credibility or authority. I found myself suffering from imposter syndrome and thought that no one should have hired me as a “director” of anything. I had limited experience with all the intricacies of managing a learning center. However, my campus showed a willingness to take a chance on me. To lead the center in a new direction, the administrators wanted someone with energy and a love of numbers and technology, and there I was.

How did a woman with a law degree become the director of a learning center? As Frank Christ said, “Like most learning center directors, I migrated to learning assistance” (Landsberger, 2007). I had served as a Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader in my undergraduate days and as a mentor in law school, so education may have been my calling all along. Therefore, once in higher education, I was purposeful in the way that I explored smaller leadership experiences to navigate my way to a management role. I was also fortunate that my supervisors in previous roles gave me the guidance, trust, and leeway to gain those experiences.

Immediately upon arriving at this new center, I gathered all the staff and faculty lab directors and chaired a meeting at which we conducted a quick SWOT analysis. I had chosen to carry a notebook with me at all times that has since enabled me to look back and see the conclusions we drew in that initial meeting. There were three important aspects that were working (great space, good reputation, and dedicated faculty and staff leadership) and many that were not. I saw the strengths of the Center but also the shortcomings, some of which were due to their limited exposure to national standards and expectations in this area. In order to make

my first year a success, I sought to find a way to lead significant change in the Center and utilize authoritative and credible sources. This is where the CAS standards came into play.

Being an administrator or manager means that you have mastery of such things as “setting priorities, delegating tasks, controlling expenditures, and getting things done on time” (Davis, 2003, p. 4). Being a leader is another role entirely. In a leadership relationship, both leaders and followers have a mutual purpose to make real change. Developing relationships and shared purpose take time. They are processes. Trying to drive the process from the top down—or changing things just to give the leader a role to play in the organization—would be useless. The SWOT process indicated areas where making changes could improve the center’s success, and making those changes would require my leadership.

DECIDING TO USE CAS

There are four essential phases to navigating change: discover, decide, do, and discern (Dinwoodie, Pasmore, Quinn, & Rabin, 2015). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Learning Assistance Program Standards and Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Guides developed by CAS provided an excellent way to discover how well the center was accomplishing its mission, decide what changes needed to be made, do what was necessary to adjust our programs for success, and discern how the revisions worked. The authority of the CAS standards gave me the credibility needed to help the Center achieve its potential.

Benchmarking a learning assistance program against criterion-referenced standards is a powerful

way to conduct assessment (Norton & Agee, 2014), and the CAS standards are holistic enough to address all areas of a center, from mission, program, leadership, staff, and financial resources to assessment. And finally, the consensus approach, which CAS uses to develop the standards and which is essential to the self-study process, inspired the approach that the staff and I thought appropriate for improvement of our programs and services.

DISCOVER THROUGH A PROCESS

CAS Self-Assessment Guides are meant to be used by those internal to an area (program leaders, staff, and stakeholders) to assess what is working and what is not, based on criterion-referenced standards and guidelines for practice. This process does not advocate for an external evaluator but instead values the inside voices and lived experiences of those in the center. Stakeholders from across campus may be invited to assess the program using the evidence amassed by program personnel, but the first step is to conduct the internal outcomes and program measurements. We operationalized this effort over the course of an academic year. The faculty directors and administrative staff of our learning center (at a mid-sized public four-year institution) assessed our programs and services using the CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education (2012a): Learning Assistance Programs (LAP).¹

First, we educated ourselves about the CAS standards (“must” statements), guidelines (“should” and “may” statement), and the CAS LAP Self-Assessment Guide. Then we established how we would conduct the self-study process and who would serve on the review team. This work included monthly individual reviews of the criterion items followed by team meetings to discuss discrepancies in scoring, current strengths, and needed improvements. We sorted the twelve sections of the standards into five manageable groups:

1. Mission; Program; Organization and Leadership
2. Human Resources; Ethics; Law, Policy, and Governance

3. Diversity, Equity, and Access; Institutional and External Relations
4. Financial Resources; Technology; Facilities and Equipment
5. Assessment and Evaluation

We deliberated over the five groups at monthly meetings over the course of five months. During this period the learning center was under new direction, with new leaders in the Director and Associate Director positions; therefore, as changes were made (such as even having monthly Directors Meetings) they were acknowledged as “current strengths,” because those changes were assumed to be permanent and positive.

DECIDE WHAT TO TACKLE

At each monthly meeting every person on our team contributed what he or she viewed as strengths and weaknesses of the Center. Discrepancies among the team members’ assessments led to interesting discussions that showed the varying perspectives of staff, who dealt with the day-to-day operations of the Center, and the faculty lab directors, who were more in tune with academic or discipline-specific issues. For instance, some of the scoring discrepancies in the Law, Policy, and Governance portion of the CAS self-assessment were due to some personnel’s not understanding that the Center is bound by the same law, policy, and governance as the College. Therefore, many of these items did not need to be addressed by the LAP beyond a general awareness of the College’s guidelines. At the end of each meeting, we asked all participants to turn in their documentary evidence, and we compiled them in a large notebook.

At the end of the self-assessment process, a staff member was tasked with reviewing each person’s evidence and completing the self-assessment guide report by providing the Part and Part Number, Discrepancies, Strengths, and Needed Improvements. This provided me with some distance from the individual assessment packets and made the process more impartial. Then, as the Director, I went back and wrote narratives to

¹ A ninth edition of the standards was published in 2015, and revised LAP standards have been approved by the CAS Board of Directors in November 2016, but the 2012 LAP standards were current at the time of our self-assessment.

accompany each of the twelve sections, therefore distilling the assessments and judgments of each section to the essentials: these were the issues that needed to be addressed. The final document was reviewed by all team members and sent to upper administration for their comments and feedback.

DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The final step we took involved summarizing our goals at the end of the document and matching them with strategies for implementation. This enabled us to make decisions about task allocation and timelines for goal completion as organized by year. Another dimension that emerged from this process was the necessary addition of task items on an annual calendar of tasks that would be edited each spring.

Some of the changes instituted were small and unanimous, such as needing to include the words learning and development in our Center's mission. Other changes took more time and discussion, such as revising our Tutor Manual. The Manual was eventually transformed into a Student Employee Manual to encompass all of our student employees, rather than singling out tutors. We narrowed potential areas of confusion, such as deciding to include only one code of ethics rather than the two that were originally in the document. Another needed improvement was to "make assessments more available to multiple constituencies," which we did by creating a Data & Reports portion to our website and posting our annual reports there. A final example of a needed improvement was that our facility was not adequately equipped for students with disabilities. The front door to the Center was unnecessarily heavy and had no automatic door opener. Although this piece of equipment was necessary, it was difficult to obtain, even after filing a complaint with the College. A simpler solution was to install a doorbell by the front door with a sign next to it and to plug in the chime feature into an outlet in our front office. That worked and highlighted the ingenuity that it would take to do what needed to be done.

At the time of this publication, there are issues that remain ongoing. Although the CAS self-study indicated that the Center needs more financial resources to accomplish its mission, this is a concern that the Center continues to contend with. Figuring out how to create a stable funding base while usage increases beyond the current budget or deciding where to make budgetary cuts and expansions as service demands change--these are still works in progress. Many of these issues are dependent upon forces and authorities outside our department, where we had no control; however, we used the power of persuasion to discuss our budget concerns at every opportunity and did see a substantial shift in the budget. After more than a decade of severe underfunding, the Center at last broke even several years in a row.

DISCERN IF THE PROCESS WORKED

So, how did we do? Of the 13 items we had listed as goals, we completed 10 within four years. Given the fact that many of our accomplishments began with a SWOT analysis in the first week of work, we consider this to be a rather successful outcome. One of our greatest accomplishments was aligning the CRLA International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) of the different tutoring labs (Writing, Math, Speaking, Science, Foreign Language, Accounting, and Individual) by engaging in a three year process of coordinating all tutor applications, tutor observations, tutor hours tracking, and training topics so that all tutors in the Center would have the opportunity to seek Levels I, II, and III certification.

For the purpose of establishing credibility for the new leadership team, I believe the CAS Self-Assessment process worked well. I was able to solidify myself as an authority on campus and construct a strong vision and plan for success for the Center. I believe that the self-assessment process elevated the learning center and provided us with a mutual purpose: faculty, staff, and students working together to create peer education opportunities that make a difference.

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AFTERWORD

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