Qualitative Methods Narrative:
Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS) Project

Pullias Center for Higher Education

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About the Pullias Center for Higher Education

One of the world's leading research centers on higher education, the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the USC Rossier School of Education advances innovative, scalable solutions to improve college outcomes for underserved students and to enhance the performance of postsecondary institutions.

Since 1995, the mission of the Pullias Center for Higher Education is to bring a multidisciplinary perspective to complex social, political, and economic issues in higher education. Our work is devoted to the key issues of college access, retention, and accountability for underserved students—and the effectiveness of the colleges and universities that serve them. Both directly and through our research, we engage with institutional leaders, policymakers and the community at large to address the major challenges in educational equity today.

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Introduction

A team of researchers from the Pullias Center for Higher Education conducted the Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS) project – a six-year longitudinal mixed methods study of the Thompson Scholar Learning Community (TSLC) programs at three University of Nebraska campuses. The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation (STBF) funds the TSLC programs as well as the research study conducted by researchers in the Pullias Center. Throughout the design, data collection and analysis stages, we had both research and evaluation aims. In this monograph, we focus on the qualitative design aspects of the study. For a more information about the full mixed methods study, we provide an overview of the research goals, design and findings on our website (https://pullias.usc.edu/tslc/).

The purpose of this monograph is to provide a more in-depth explanation of the qualitative elements of the PASS project. We begin with a discussion of the study design and how the qualitative aspects of the study were situated within the mixed methods study. We then provide a detailed discussion of the multiple data collection strategies utilized by the team of researchers. The final sections explain our approach to data analysis and trustworthiness that have guided our sense-making.

Frameworks and Research Questions

We drew from multiple theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide the study design and analysis – including social and academic self-efficacy, career and major efficacy, social and cultural capital, resiliency, belonging, mattering and college knowledge. As the qualitative team analyzed the data, we recognized that validation and ecological systems also helped explain the TSLC program. The qualitative study design primarily focused on the following research questions:

1. How do the key program components shared across the three campuses facilitate engagement, the development of academic self-efficacy, mattering/ sense of belonging and the other outcomes?
2. How do differences in the programs across the three campuses facilitate engagement, shape the development of academic self-efficacy, mattering/sense of belonging and the other outcomes?
3. How do differences by location—as rural, urban, commuter and more traditional suburban campuses—shape students' program experience and outcomes?
4. How does the TSLC experience affect particular subgroups, including minority students and students with different levels of academic preparation?

5. How do TSLC scholars experience the transition out of the program, and how might this experience affect their continued educational success (retention and graduation), academic self-efficacy and mattering/sense of belonging?

6. How do faculty and classroom experiences shape students' program engagement and outcomes?
7. How do different students engage with the TSLC program, and how does this engagement appear to shape their experience and outcomes?

Study Design

In this section, we provide an overview of the mixed methods design, case study methodology, and structure of the qualitative team.

Mixed Methods

The mixed method study design also included quantitative sub-teams that focused on both formative and summative data collection and analysis. Each of these sub-teams had a co-principal investigator who coordinated team members who focused on these aspects of the study. The qualitative and quantitative sub-teams met collectively twice a month to ensure that data strategies, analysis and findings were aligned across the sub-teams. In addition, the team came together twice a year for full day research retreats that focused on more in-depth discussions across the sub-teams.

Qualitative Team Structure

The co-principal investigator for the qualitative team organized the qualitative data collection and analysis. Each university campus-based program was assigned a lead who coordinated the data collection at that site, including gathering the majority of the data for each site. During the initial design of the research project, we had anticipated having the qualitative leads regularly visit all three campuses and assist with data collection. We soon realized the importance of relational development and embedding a researcher within each site. As a result, we shifted to having a campus lead with a graduate assistant to collect data for each campus. The campus lead collected the majority of the data with the graduate assistant providing support with the digital diary and social media data collection. During the first two years of the study, we had a postdoctoral scholar and project specialist who assisted with the mixed methods processes. In the final two years when we focused on analysis and dissemination, the team brought in two postdoctoral scholars who focused on mixed methods analysis and findings. The qualitative team met weekly to discuss design, data collection, analysis and findings.

Data Collection Methods

The qualitative study design included multiple forms of data in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the TSLC programs as well as the student, instructor and staff member experiences. The design avoided privileging one form of data collection over another. The qualitative data collection process spanned four academic years (Summer 2015 to Spring 2019) with continued analysis for two years (Summer 2019 to Summer 2021).

Document Analysis

Document analysis proved to be an important aspect of our initial development of the campus case studies. Early in the study, we gathered a series of documents that helped us understand the history of the program. STBF requires each campus to submit an annual report that includes information about the program design, goals, accomplishments, and challenges. The reports provided a significant amount of information related to how the programs developed and evolved. Other documents we received included mentor and instructor training materials, lists of shared academic courses, and syllabi. The documents differed on each campus depending upon what documents were available.

Observations

Early in the project, we conducted intensive observations of the programs—over 200 hours of observation at each campus the first two years for a total of approximately 600 hours. We coordinated with the campus directors and staff to identify key events that they felt we should see the first year. During the second year, we continued to use staff recommendations as well as identifying events that emerged as important in the student reflections. We observed staff meetings, program events, classrooms, program spaces (e.g., study café and program lounges), and staff, instructor and mentor training. The observations reflected the program structure at each campus.

The observations were primarily done by the lead researcher at each campus. Since relationships were such a central part of the TSLC programs, we felt it would be important for the staff, instructors and students to see a consistent member of the research team. During the first year of the program, the site lead visited their campus at least once a month for several days. This enabled us to make connections with the program staff and students, which reduced the awkwardness of our presence. At times, we would hear from staff and students that they missed seeing us at some of the events that we could not attend.

The site leads employed different strategies to collect data depending upon the context of the event. Most often, we wrote notes by hand in journals that were later transcribed into more complete field notes. On occasion, the situation made note-taking difficult – for example, students sharing emotional experiences during mentor training or a social event where the students wanted to engage with us informally. In these situations, we intentionally dedicated time right after the event to capture our reflections from the event.

The observational data enabled us to capture aspects of the program that may have been taken for granted by the program staff, instructors and students. For example, the role of physical space became evident during our observations; however, this was rarely discussed in the interviews. Once we observed the importance of the social and academic spaces, we were able to incorporate questions into our interviews to unpack this idea further. In addition, the observational data allowed us to gain a better understanding of the culture and values of the programs.

Digital Diaries

We wanted to understand students' experiences as they were navigating college and the program. We did not think one interview a year or semester would allow us to fully understand how the program influenced their time in college. As a result, we decided to employ a longitudinal design that included multiple touch points across the first three years of college attendance. The timeframe of three years allowed us to focus on the two years students were in the TSLC program as well as getting their reflections on transitioning out of the formal programming.

Digital diaries allowed for a combination of video entries and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the diaries was to develop a deep and holistic understanding of the student experience in the program as well as college more broadly. Student digital diaries (self-created videos) allowed us to obtain data continuously over time (as opposed to snapshots in interviews) and from the students' perspective (as opposed to interviews where researchers lead the questioning).

We recruited students in the TSLC first-year seminar courses. After giving a brief overview of the study and expectations for the digital diaries, we passed out a sign-up sheet. About 20-35% of first year students in the program at each campus expressed interest. We then conducted 20-30-minute screening interviews with students in order to select the final participant group. We had one cohort begin in 2015 and another in 2016. After students were confirmed, we ensured they had the appropriate technology. Almost all students had a smartphone or computer that they used to make the videos. A couple of students did not have access to technology. We loaned these students a tablet to use throughout their time in the study.

We had 83 students complete the digital diaries for a total of 938 interviews and 958 video entries. Students identified in the following ways:

- 55 women, 26 men, and 2 trans/nonbinary
- 10 African American/Black, 5 Asian/Pacific Islander, 27 Latinx/Chicanx, 32 White, 7 multiracial, 2 students did not disclose racial identity

- A wide range of academic majors were represented, including those who began college undeclared and those who changed majors
- All of the students graduated from a Nebraska high school—some attended small rural schools with graduating classes of less than 20 while other attended large urban schools in Omaha
- 23 students identified a language other than English as their primary language
- Parent education level ranged from never attending college (26), attending college without graduating (15), earning an associate's degree (16), and earning a bachelor's degree or higher (25), 1 student did not provide parent education level

Students received an Amazon gift card each year they completed the digital diaries (year one – $150; year two – $200; and, year three – $250). We initially designed the incentive structure to both recruit participation as well as increasing incentives in order to encourage continued participation. We found that the incentives helped a bit at the early stage of the study; however, the relationships we established with the students were key to retaining students in the study. In addition, the majority of students spoke about the importance of the scholarship and TSLC program in supporting their ability to attend college. As a result, they wanted to participate in the study in order to provide their honest opinions about what was working and areas that could be improved.

The specific data collection design varied a bit depending upon the students' year in college. The first two years, students participated in three interviews a semester (i.e., once per month) and submitted about two videos in between each interview. We conducted detailed follow-up interviews to explore questions generated by the videos. In the students' third year, we recognized that the videos were no longer as valuable. The students were not participating in formal TSLC programming, so we did not need to connect with them as frequently. In addition, the students' schedules got much busier with their major courses, internships, jobs and other personal or academic issues. Completing the videos became a burden and we removed the requirement in order to avoid losing participants. We also reduced the number of interviews to twice a semester.

A few students were academically dismissed from college during the study. In these situations, we did a final interview with the student and thanked them for participating in the study. We considered them as completing the study since they participated in data collection throughout their time in college. These students provided an important perspective concerning personal and academic challenges that the TSLC programs were unable to overcome. In particular, most of these students experienced significant personal or family crises that required mental health support.

Most video entries were approximately 3-5 minutes, although some students submitted videos that were significantly longer. We initially planned to leave most of the video entries open-ended. We quickly realized that students preferred to have prompts. We included the prompts on Blackboard as well as emailing the students a reminder of each video submission date with the prompt attached. We generally started with a general question that was some iteration of "tell me about your last two weeks." We then asked a couple of questions related to what was happening in the program (e.g., "tell me about your mid-semester meeting) or other things occurring in the students' lives (e.g., "tell me about your winter break.) The prompts were developed collaboratively by the lead researchers for all three campuses in order to have parallel information; however, the questions were adjusted to reflect the specific campus context. Students recorded these videos using their own technology and uploaded it to a Blackboard account we had set up at the University of Southern California.

Interviews were conducted in-person and from a distance (i.e., phone and video). We prioritized doing the first interview and final interview of the study in-person. The remaining interviews depended upon the students' and researchers' schedules. Some students were unavailable to meet face-to-face when we were on campus collecting data. And, as the study progressed, we visited campus less frequently. The interviews at a distance were conducted via video or phone, depending upon the student's preference. The majority were done via video in order to build a stronger connection with the student as well as to observe social cues that would not be evident on a phone call.

The interviews were approximately 30-60 minutes in length. We began most interviews with an open-ended question that was basically, "tell me about how things have been since the last time we spoke." We created a general protocol of 5-8 questions that related to program elements across the three campuses and our emerging understanding of the program. The shared questions generally fell into two categories – personal and academic experiences related to where they were in the college process and questions that emerged from our analysis of staff, instructor, stakeholder and observational data. We frequently asked students to reflect on the program elements in either a video diary or formal interview soon after the event happened. We also incorporated questions about the shared courses, staff interactions, and aspirations for the future. The remaining portion of the interview was specifically designed for each student based upon our analysis of their video diaries that had been submitted. In the interviews, we asked questions related to the students' backgrounds (e.g., commuter student status), their perceptions of the program (e.g., relationship with mentors), and other themes that the qualitative team identified during initial analysis of the video diary data. We digitally recorded each interview and submitted it for professional transcription.

As we progressed through the study, we attempted to create some variety in our interview design. Not only was the variety useful in making the interviews more interesting for the students, but the interviews generally reflected both our theoretical framing for the study and our emerging evaluative understandings of the programs. An example related to theory involved us giving students a chart reminiscent of Bronfenbrenner's (1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) ecological approach. We asked the students to place the program elements and people on a chart from most influential to least influential (for further explanation and the interview protocol, see Kitchen et al., 2019). Then students were asked to explain why they placed each person where they did and provide a story to illustrate their response. This approach enabled us to understand the ecology of each student. In terms of the evaluative aspect, we gave students a chart to fill out with three columns: definitely keep, maybe keep with changes, and do not keep. The students were then asked to create what would be their ideal TSLC program and list all current program elements in one of the three columns. They could also identify program elements that did not currently exist, but would have been helpful if they were added. The students were then asked to provide a justification for why each element got placed into each column. This approach gave us a good understanding of how students experienced the program and we acquired valuable information related to the program evaluation component of our study.

Staff Interviews

Program staff and director interviews were conducted during our campus visits (n = 26). Some staff were interviewed more than once for a total of 42 interviews. We provided each individual with information about the study and pursued interviews with all staff members who completed the informed consent process. The program evaluation portion of the study led staff members to be highly motivated to participate, which means all of the staff and directors participated in an interview.

We completed multiple formal and informal interviews with staff members and directors. We formally interviewed most of the staff members one time to understand their role and perceptions of the program. Additionally, we formally interviewed the directors at least once a semester the first two years. As our understanding of the program grew, we had more nuanced questions. In addition, we utilized the interviews to share emerging findings and get feedback. The informal interviews often occurred while we were interacting with the staff and directors during our data collection visits. For example, after observing an event we might follow up with the director to understand how the specific event fit within the overall program. The formal interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. The informal interviews involved one of the site leads taking notes while asking a staff member or director questions.

Table 1. Participant Demographics—TSLC Staff Members

	# of People	# of Interviews	Man	Woman	Trans or Nonbinary	White	Racially Minoritized	Unsure
UNK	4	9	2	2	0	3	1	0
UNL	9	15	2	7	0	5	4	0
UNO	13	18	4	8	1	7	6	0
Total	26	42	8	17	1	15	11	0

Instructor Interviews

The instructor interviews involved two groups: faculty coordinators for the program and instructors assigned to the TSLC shared academic courses (SACs). The TSLC program required students to take 5-6 SACs that were primarily general education courses that the STBF paid academic departments to offer. The class size was capped at 20-25 and instructors who were selected to teach a SAC were provided additional training. Each campus identified a faculty coordinator who was a full-time faculty member. The faculty coordinator assisted with identifying classes and instructors for the program. They provided training for the instructors and served as a point of contact for instructors in the SACs. If a student experienced challenges in a course, the coordinator would collaborate with TSLC staff to create a holistic approach to support the student. The TSLC faculty coordinators worked closely with the program director and had a broader view of the program. These individuals were formally interviewed multiple times at each campus. The interviews with the faculty coordinators focused on their role in coordinating the classes, training the faculty, and collaborating with the director and staff members.

A subgroup of instructors was interviewed on each campus to understand their experiences teaching in the program. We intentionally recruited instructors from a range of backgrounds, disciplines and professional positions (e.g., adjunct, non-tenure track, and tenured/tenure track). We conducted 29 interviews lasting approximately 30-45 minutes with instructors across the three campuses, which was when we reached data saturation. The instructors were selected based upon recommendations provided by the staff, students, and faculty coordinators. We requested a list of instructors from varied disciplines with differing length of time teaching in the program as well as a diversity of opinions about the success of the program. We were also most interested in speaking with individuals who were teaching a TSLC course during the same semester that the interview took place so they could speak specifically about what they were doing. Interviews with faculty coordinators and instructors were conducted in person. All interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed.

Table 2. Participant Demographics—Instructors

	# of People	# of Interviews	Man	Woman	Trans or Nonbinary	White	Racially Minoritized	Unsure
UNK	8	9	5	3	0	8	0	0
UNL	10	10	2	8	0	8	2	0
UNO	10	10	6	4	0	7	2	1
Total	28	29	13	15	0	23	4	1

Stakeholder Interviews

The TSLC programs collaborate with multiple offices and programs across the campuses. In order to more fully understand the embedded nature of the TSLC programs, we conducted interviews with some of the professionals across the campuses who worked with the program. These individuals included representatives from financial aid, housing, counseling, multicultural and identity centers, study abroad, career center, and involvement. The composition of those interviewed differed on each campus based upon the relationships that had been established by each program and the availability of the stakeholders to participate in an interview.

We worked with the program directors to identify individuals whom they partnered with across campus. A site lead met with the program directors at each campus to get recommendations of stakeholders who they collaborate with in serving students. The site lead then emailed the individuals on this list to schedule an interview. We also looked at student interviews to see if additional people were mentioned. We then emailed individuals on this list with information about the study and a request to meet for an interview. Interviews with stakeholders lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. The focus of the interviews for each stakeholder varied depending upon their position and how they collaborated with TSLC instructors, staff and/or students. We conducted in-person interviews with 28 campus stakeholders, with a few individuals being interviewed more than once, for a total of 32 interviews. These interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed.

Each campus-based program had an administrator on the campus who oversaw the program and served as a point of contact for STBF. This individual was formally and informally interviewed several times on each campus. We also conducted two interviews with the provost for the university system.

Table 3. Participant Demographics—Stakeholders

	# of People	# of Interviews	Man	Woman	Trans or Nonbinary	White	Racially Minoritized	Unsure
UNK	12	14	8	4	0	9	3	0
UNL	9	9	3	6	0	8	1	0
UNO	7	7	4	3	0	5	2	0
NU	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	29	32	15	14	0	23	6	0

Social Media and Online Data

Each of the programs utilized social media and websites to engage with students. During the first year, the graduate student assigned to each campus observed its social media site. Most of the programs utilized Facebook and a website on the university website. One campus used multiple social media platforms. We did not collect information from the personal accounts of either the students or staff members. We focused on what got posted on the official program social media accounts by staff and students, but did not open personal accounts.

The social media and online data were used to confirm our findings emerging from other data sources because the program staff and students did not engage with each other regularly in these spaces. Rather, the social media and program websites were primarily used to provide announcements from the staff members to the students. Data from social media and websites were collected via screen shots, numeric tracking (e.g., number of likes) and field notes.

Trustworthiness

We employed multiple strategies to establish trustworthiness. Drawing from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1986), we primarily utilized member checking, prolonged engagement, triangulation, and inter-rater reliability.

Member Checking

We conducted member checking with multiple groups of participants and stakeholders. The process of member-checking involved sharing initial insights to get feedback. We did not distribute transcripts for review since that process can be cumbersome and create undue burden or stress on participants (Hallett, 2012). In addition, our goal in doing member checking was to get assistance during the sense-making stage instead of fact checking. All of the information we gathered from the member checking process was included as data.

As aforementioned, we included member-checking in some of the digital diary interviews in order to get the students' feedback on our emerging insights. We also did this with the program directors, staff and faculty coordinators. Once a year, we also presented at a campus meeting to give updates on our research progress and solicit feedback from the program staff and stakeholders.

Prolonged Engagement

The study design enabled us to observe the program and engage with participants over several years. Each cohort of digital diary students was followed for three years and we interacted with program staff for five years. The long-term engagement allowed us to build relationships with the participants, which encouraged them to provide honest feedback concerning challenges with the program. We were also able to observe how the program evolved over time, which would have been more difficult to understand with a short-term study design. One of the most important benefits of our prolonged engagement was that we could observe the taken for-granted aspects of the program.

Triangulation of Methods, Participant Perspectives and Theoretical Frameworks

We employed multiple forms of triangulation: methodological, participant perspectives, and theoretical (Mathison, 1988). The comprehensive design involved multiple different qualitative methods (e.g., observation, interviews, social media and document analysis). We also triangulated the qualitative data with the quantitative survey and institutional data.

In addition, we gathered data from participants with differing positions within the TSLC program (e.g., students, instructors, staff and stakeholders). We began the analysis process by focusing on the participant groups separately. For example, we pulled all of the observations and interviews related to the stakeholders in order to understand their perspectives of the program. In doing this analysis, we compared our observations to the interviews. Instead of privileging one form of data over another, we tried to figure out why a discrepancy existed. The longitudinal design also meant that we could gather additional data to aid in the sense making process. Most often, we would take the issue to the program staff and/or students to get their assistance. Once we had summaries of all the participant groups, we looked for themes across the data to develop to finalize our findings and recommendations.

Finally, we employed multiple theoretical frameworks to assist with the sense-making process. The multiple frameworks allowed us to compare the findings that emerged from these different lenses. We also came to understand how many of the theoretical frameworks informed each other, which provide further nuance to our findings.

Inter-rater Reliability

Multiple Researchers

We had a team of qualitative researchers who have different backgrounds and gathered differing data for the project. We leveraged the size of our team to review and challenge how we were individually making sense of the data. In addition, we used the quantitative team to review and challenge our initial insights. Having multiple perspectives reduced the likelihood of becoming too narrowly focused on one idea or allowing our assumptions to drive our analysis.

Advisory Board

We had an advisory board who assisted in our project design, implementation and analysis processes. When we reached the sense-making stage, the advisory board provided feedback as well as pushing us to justify and clarify our claims.

STBF Meetings

We met monthly with the STBF to discuss design and emerging findings. The STBF staff provided feedback on initial drafts of papers and presentations.

Peer Debriefing

We frequently shared findings with the mixed methods team to get feedback and to share emerging findings. At least twice a month, we met as an entire team to share insights and challenges. And at least twice a year, we had a full day retreat with the entire mixed methods team.

Training

Participating in training is an essential aspect of creating a shared understanding of the data. In addition to training new team members on the project, we also engaged in training related to both methodology and theory. We invited scholars who were unaffiliated with the project to provide feedback on both our design and understanding of theoretical frameworks.

Data Analysis

The overarching data analysis strategy involved constructing case studies of each campus program and then constructing a cross-case analysis of the campus documents. To support that effort, we also conducted narrative analysis of the digital diaries, constant comparative analysis of the institutional agent data (e.g., staff, stakeholders and instructors), and descriptive analysis of the remaining data. As we moved toward publishing our findings, more focused analysis strategies were developed to address the specific questions guiding individual papers.

Case Study

Case studies of the three campuses were conducted via observations of various program components, interviews with instructors and staff, and documentation of social and print media analysis (see discussion of data collection methods). After the site-based case studies were developed, the team developed a cross-campus case study that focused on themes across the campuses as well as unique aspects of the specific campus approaches.

The case studies served two main purposes: to better understand the program elements at the three different campuses, and to document the ways the program operates to shape student experiences. By spending extensive time observing the program, participating in events, understanding the history of programs, and viewing the ways that groups and individuals interact, we were able to better capture how and why the program works.

Narrative Analysis (Digital Diaries)

The digital diaries required an analysis strategy that focused on how the students experienced college and the TSLC program over a three-year period. We employed a narrative analysis strategy that focused on capturing the students' stories. We divided the videos and interviews by semester. We created a template that began with inductive analysis. What did the student speak about that semester? These inductive summaries were approximately one page single spaced. Then we did deductive analysis. What did students say about each of the program elements (e.g., shared classes, proactive advising, events)? How did each of the theoretical constructs connect with the student's story? This portion of the summary was approximately two pages single spaced. And then we identified any questions or recommendations that emerged from this student's story.

Once all of the individual summaries were completed, we did cluster analysis using a similar template. We grouped students into smaller groups to identify themes emerging from the student narratives. After the clusters were completed, we then created a campus-based summary using a similar template. We focused on the key themes emerging from the analysis. At this stage, we also explored if subgroups of students were having different experiences. The final stage involved conducting a cross-campus analysis to understand how students had similar and different experiences in the programs situated on different campuses. We also explored if subgroups of students had differing experiences. At this stage, we begin to identify key research and evaluation findings emerging from the digital diaries.

Constant Comparative Analysis (Staff, Instructor, and Stakeholder Data)

The staff, instructor, and stakeholder data did not require a narrative approach. We employed a constant comparative method of analysis to understand how these interviews informed the development of campus-based case studies. We did initial reflexive analysis of interviews soon after they were conducted in order to explore how each interview framed our understanding of the program. We used this reflexive process to continue refining our data collection approach and to determine when we had reached data saturation.

Once all the data were collected, we conducted more in-depth analysis. We began by separating the interviews into categories: staff member, instructor, and stakeholder. Given that each group had differing engagement with the program, it made sense to conduct analysis in these groupings. We created a template that guided us through the analysis process for each group. We created a campus-based summary for all three groups and then moved toward creating a cross-campus summary that incorporated the data analysis from all three campuses. At this point, we identified key research and evaluation findings emerging from the staff, instructor, and stakeholder interviews.

Descriptive Analysis (Social Media, Documents and Observations)

The social media, documents, and observational data were used to frame the case study. We employed a descriptive analysis approach that focused on pulling important information from these data sources in order to construct the case study. The documents were particularly useful in providing a historical context for the case study. In particular, we drew from the annual reports that program directors created each year to explore how the programs had evolved over time.

Individual Analysis for Publications

The three data analysis approaches listed above explain how we identified key themes that framed both our research and evaluation findings. As we developed publications for research journals, we developed more detailed analytical approaches related to the theoretical framework and research question guiding the specific publication.

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