"The Learning Paradigm"

Chapter 1 in O'Banion *13 Ideas That Are Transforming the Community College World*

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In 1991, a revolutionary concept emerged from a community college in California. It was a new way of thinking about the mission of community colleges. The concept became a movement that continues to influence all of higher education—how it is held accountable, how it is organized, and how it is funded. It was a shift away from identification with processes to identification with results or outcomes, and its consequences are still debated.

Because it was a new way of thinking about the world of higher education, the leaders of the movement called it the learning paradigm and differentiated it from the instruction paradigm that was dominant at the time and, to a great extent, still exists. The language in the foreword to the Palomar College Vision Statement that was released in 1991 provides the basis for understanding the transformation.

> Readers of these statements will note that they reflect perhaps a subtle but nonetheless profound shift in how we think of the college and what we do. We have shifted from an identification with process to an identification with results. We are no longer content with merely providing quality instruction. We will judge ourselves henceforth on the quality of student learning we produce. And further, we will judge ourselves by our ability to produce ever greater and more sophisticated student learning and meaningful educational success with each

passing year, each exiting student, and each graduating class. To do this we must ourselves continually experiment, discover, grow, and learn. Consequently, we see ourselves as a learning institution in both our object and our method (Boggs, 1991).

The learning paradigm as it was proposed by Palomar College identified four tenets:

- The mission of colleges and universities should be student learning rather than teaching or instruction.
- Institutions should accept responsibility for student learning.
- Supporting and promoting student learning should be everyone's job and should guide institutional decisions.
- Institutions should judge their effectiveness and be evaluated on student learning outcomes rather than on resources or processes (Boggs, 1999a, 1999b)

Terry O'Banion began to call the institutions that were pioneering the learning paradigm, learning colleges; and his 1997 book, *A Learning College for the 21st Century,* served as a guide for college leaders who embraced a mission based on student learning (O'Banion, 1997a). O'Banion defined the learning college as an institution that "places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, and anytime" (1997a, p. 47). He outlined six principles on which the learning college is based:

- The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.
- The learning college engages learners as full partners in the learning process, with learners assuming responsibility for their own choices.
- The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as possible.
- The learning college assists learners to form and participate on collaborative learning activities.
- The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the needs of the learners.
- The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for its learners (O'Banion, 1997a, p. 47).

Challenges to Mission

From the beginning, community colleges have focused on increasing access to higher education and training. This mission has been reinforced many times over the years, perhaps most notably in the 1947 and 1948 reports of the President's Commission on Higher Education, also known as the Truman Commission. The rapid expansion of open-admission community colleges has provided opportunities for many millions of students to go to college. Today, community colleges are located within commuting distance of over 90% of the population of the United States, and the colleges have further

increased access through distance education. Today more than 12 million students, or about 41% of all college students, are enrolled in community colleges.

In the early 1900s, many proponents of what were then called junior colleges were university leaders who wanted to limit access to their institutions to students who had demonstrated their academic abilities. They saw junior colleges as the way to provide an opportunity for high school graduates to complete their first two years of college. Only the best of the junior college students would be able to enter the selective "senior college" at the university. That way, the universities could focus on research and related scholarly activities.

The junior college mission expanded over the years from just screening students and preparing some to transfer to include workforce, developmental, adult, and community education, and most are identified today as community colleges. Because of the influences of intercollegiate athletics and fraternities and sororities, most universities chose not to limit their curricula to upper-division coursework. However, most four-year institutions became even more focused on the missions of research and scholarly publication; service and teaching were lower priority functions.

Community colleges were not established as centers for research or the creation of knowledge. Because teaching loads are much higher in community colleges, most faculty members are not engaged in research or scholarly publication. Instead, they focus on teaching. Most community college faculty members constantly strive to improve their teaching. They get the greatest reward when their students learn and when their former students are successful. However, institutional barriers often act as obstacles to their ideas and innovations to help students learn.

The problem is that the institutions that employ them were designed to provide access to instruction, not necessarily to promote and support student learning and success. A common philosophy in the 1960s was "students have a right to fail," meaning colleges should give students a chance, but institutions have no responsibility for their success or failure—that is up to the student. To make up for the loss of students who drop out, colleges work to recruit others. As late as 1992, Robert Barr, Director of Research and Planning at Palomar College, found no focus on learning in any of the mission statements of California's 107 community colleges (Barr, 1995). In the few instances where the word "learning" was even mentioned, it was almost always bundled in the phrase "teaching and learning."

The colleges were organized to recruit and admit students and then to provide them instruction. Classroom design had not changed much in 100 years. Processes for scheduling classes and registering students were inflexible. Budget allocations were often not aligned with any thought about student learning and success. Faculty who wanted to increase student interaction, to start a learning community, or to experiment with self-paced classes were usually discouraged by institutional architecture and bureaucracy.

The world is very different from the one in which colleges and universities evolved. Technology has transformed the way people do business and the way they live. The college students of the 1900s do not have a lot in common with today's students, yet classroom practices are not much different. Every year, the student population is becoming more diverse, bringing into question whether traditional instructional methods work—if they ever did.

Many students have part-time or even full-time jobs. Many have family responsibilities, often as single heads of households, and are trying to improve their lives through education. Many of our students are returning to study after some time away from an academic environment and may feel ill at ease attending classes with younger students. Unfortunately, many community college students are not academically prepared to succeed in college-level classes.

It is not just the fact that the student population has changed; social and political pressures are also mounting. State legislators and governors across the nation have responded to fiscal exigency by reducing funding support to higher education. There is a constant call for our institutions to "do more with less," to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and to be more accountable. Employers complain that the country's workforce is inadequately trained, and corporations spend billions of dollars on employee training.

In its 1993 report, *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education,* The Wingspread Group (1993) pointed to a disturbing and dangerous mismatch that exists between what American society needs of higher education and what it is receiving. Nowhere was the mismatch more obvious than in the quality of undergraduate education provided on many campuses. The report declared that institutional efforts that should be focused on the needs of students are instead channeled toward other institutional interests, often for the convenience or special interest of educators.

The Vision Comes Into Focus

The pressures on the mission of community colleges were becoming clear by the mid-1980s. The President of Palomar College, George Boggs, served as Chair of the Commission on Research for the California Association of Community Colleges (CACC) from 1987 through 1989. Serving with him as staff was his Director of Institutional Research and Planing, Robert Barr. Institutional effectiveness was a major focus of the Commission in those years. In 1988, CACC published a report of the Commission, *Indicators and Measures of Successful Community Colleges;* and in 1989, CACC published *Criteria and Measures of Institutional Effectiveness.* Although the Commission members were determined to develop methods to document college effectiveness, they did not focus on learning outcomes.

At the national level, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges had just issued, in 1988, the report of its Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, *Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century* (1998*).* The report called on colleges to expand access, to improve retention of students, to form new partnerships and alliances, to develop a core of common learning, and to build a climate of community. The report labeled community colleges the nation's premier teaching institution, and declared that quality instruction is the hallmark of the movement.

It was in this environment that the President of Palomar College convened and chaired the Vision Task Force. The charge of the group was to develop a proposed vision statement for the college and to envision what the college should be fifteen years into the future. As the research and discussions progressed, the Task Force began to see a link between the success of the college and the success of its students. The members decided

that the college needed to take responsibility for the learning of its students. Teaching was seen as an essential process, but it was not the desired outcome. And student learning was not just the responsibility of the teachers; it was everyone's responsibility. Everyone, from the groundskeeper to the teacher to the librarian to the president to the student, is there for one purpose—student learning.

As a result of the work of the Vision Task Force, the college had a new Mission Statement that defined its purpose as student learning. Catalogs, publications, hiring criteria, employee orientations, and job descriptions were changed. For example, the job description of the instructional deans was revised to include responsibility for creating effective learning environments for students. Student service deans were now expected to develop and evaluate the performance of assigned personnel in terms of their contributions to student learning and success. By 1991-92, Palomar College had aligned its Educational Master Plan and college goals with the new vision statement.

Sharing the Vision

Starting in 1993, Palomar College staff members began to write about the learning paradigm and to present their ideas at conferences. In May of 1993, George Boggs made the first national presentation contrasting the learning and instruction paradigms at the annual conference of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) (Boggs, 1993). Robert Barr and George Boggs made presentations at several state and national conferences, including two national videoconferences between 1993 and 1995.

As Chair of the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges in 1993-94 and past Chair in 1994-95, Boggs wrote and spoke extensively about the need to focus on student learning and student success (Boggs, 1993-94, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). In 1995, John Tagg, a member of the English faculty and fellow member of the Vision Task Force, joined Barr in writing what would become the most widely cited article in the history of *Change Magazine*, titled "From Teaching to Learning—A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education" (1995). In 1997, the Association of Community College Trustees released a special issue of its *Trustee Quarterly* devoted entirely to "The Learning Revolution: A Guide for Community College Trustees" (O'Banion & Wilson, 2011, p. 4). In 1996, Palomar College hosted the first of five annual national conferences on the learning paradigm. Also in 1996, Walter Bumphus, then Chair of the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges, published an interview of O'Banion and Boggs that focused on student learning and institutional transformation (1996). In 1997, Boggs served as one of the authors of the National Academy of Science's publication, *Science Teaching Reconsidered,* which included a chapter titled, "Linking Teaching with Learning" (National Research Council, 1997).

Terry O'Banion provided a significant boost to the tenets of the learning paradigm when he began to write and speak about the concepts after discussions with Robert Barr and George Boggs. In 1997, Diana Oblinger, former CEO of EDUCAUSE, and Sean Rush edited a book titled, *The Learning Revolution: The Challenge of Information Technology in the Academy,* that included O'Banion's chapter, "Transforming the Community College from a Teaching to a Learning Institution" (1997). That same year, The League for Innovation in the Community College published his *Leadership Abstracts*

article titled, “The Purpose, Process, and Prospect of the Learning Revolution in the Community College” (1997c). His 1997 book, *A Learning College for the 21st Century* and 1997 monograph, *Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges,* became guidebooks for colleges to become more learning-focused (O’Banion, 1997a).

In 1997 and 1998, the League for Innovation in the Community College and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) sponsored three national teleconferences on the Learning Revolution and the Learning College (O’Banion, T. & Wilson, C, 2011, p. 4). A 1998 survey by the League for Innovation in the Community College revealed that 73 percent of the nation’s community college presidents indicated they had initiatives underway for their institutions to become more learning-centered (O’Banion, T. & Wilson, C, 2011, p. 4). Just seven years after the publication of the Palomar College Vision Statement and just five years after leaders and scholars began writing and speaking about learning paradigm concepts, most of the nation’s community college leaders had embraced the vision and were engaged in transformation.

In 2000, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT) published the report of their New Expeditions Initiative, *The Knowledge Net* (New Expeditions, 2000). It was the first major report of the associations since the 1988 *Building Communities* report. Its chapter, titled “Learner Connections,” referenced the Palomar College Vision and Mission statements. In 2001, AACC unveiled a new mission statement, “Building a Nation of Learners by Advancing America’s Community Colleges.”

Today, all seven of the higher education regional accrediting agencies require institutions to document student-learning outcomes (SLOs). In 2001, the largest of the

regional accreditors officially changed its name from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to the Higher Learning Commission. In 2005, Christine McPhail published her book, *Establishing and Sustaining Learning Centered Community Colleges.* A Proqest search revealed that 58 doctoral dissertations and master's theses have been written since 1993 on the learning college or the learning paradigm.

The Learning College Project

In January 2000, the League for Innovation in the Community College launched The Learning College Project to assist community colleges around the world to become more learning-centered institutions. Twelve Vanguard Learning Colleges (VLCs) were selected by an international advisory committee to help develop model programs and best practices in learning-centered education, with a specific focus on five key areas: organizational culture, staff recruitment and development, technology, learning outcomes, and underprepared students. The twelve Vanguard Learning Colleges were Cascadia Community College, The Community College of Baltimore County, Community College of Denver, Humber College, Kirkwood Community College, Lane Community College, Madison Area Technical College, Moraine Valley Community College, Palomar College, Richland College, Sinclair Community College, and Valencia Community College.

Kay McClenney served as the evaluator for the project. Her observations remain valuable for college leaders interested in becoming more outcome-focused. She noted that the transformation to a learning college is long, arduous, and exciting as colleges realign institutional priorities, policies, practices, and personnel to focus on learning as

the primary business of the college. College representatives struggled with ways to bring innovations to scale and to sustain them. Colleges faced resistance to change and "reform fatigue" from engagement in too many initiatives. There was some confusion between the terms learner-centered and learning-centered (McClenney, 2001). Colleges need to be concerned about learners (students), but the outcome is learning. Terry O'Banion addressed this confusion with his article, "The Learning College: Both Learner and Learning Centered" (O'Banion, 1999).

The project participants quickly found the need for the colleges to become more data-informed. The desire to develop a culture of evidence was driven by questions like, "How do I know that students are learning what I think I am teaching?" The colleges began to collect more data, to use the data to make decisions, and to demonstrate more commitment to a philosophy of continuous improvement (McClenney, 2003a). The participants committed to asking the questions posed by Terry O'Banion in his 1997 monograph, *Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges*:

- Does this action improve and expand learning?
- How do we know this action improves and expands learning (O'Banion, 1997b, p.9)?

McClenney noted several positive outcomes for the Learning College Project. The college teams learned from each other about the importance of strategic planning, aligning organizational structure to support learning, learning strategies, learning assessment, programs and services to support underprepared students, tracking student progress, and the use of technology to support and enhance learning. Many, many

participants spoke of a new level of honesty and rigor in institutional self-examination. Participants began to ask whether institutional resource allocations matched rhetoric about learning. Another important outcome was the belief that people were taking collective responsibility for student learning. The project's cross-functional teams helped to break down institutional silos (McClenney, 2003a, 2003b).

Defining Student Success

In 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges published the report, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012). It is the third major report from the association, following *Building Communities* in 1988 and *The Knowledge Net* in 2000. The report presented a compelling argument for community colleges to change. Although the report recommends a change from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, the major emphases of the report are on the needs to improve student completion and to close achievement gaps. Reflecting an outcome of the Learning College Project, the report calls on colleges to move from a culture of anecdote to a culture of evidence.

The focus on completion is one component of the learning paradigm. In the 1993 NISOD presentation, George Boggs pointed out:

> Our criteria for success will be different. Under the old paradigm, we measured success by looking at enrollment growth, revenue growth, program additions, quantity and quality of resources, and quality of entering students.

> Under the new paradigm, we will be concerned about quality of learning, learning growth and efficiency, increasing the graduation rate, increasing the transfer rate, and increasing the retention rate (Boggs, 1993).

In response to increasing national interest in college completion, the American Association of Community Colleges convened the six major national community college associations (The American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the League for Innovation in the Community College, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, and Phi Theta Kappa) in April 2010 to issue a joint call to action to improve student completion rates.

The Vanguard Colleges in the Learning College Project had earlier focused many of their efforts on completion. In her program evaluation comments, McClenney reported that a new seminar requirement at the Community College of Denver had improved first semester completion rates from 60-70% to 90% or higher. A new orientation course at Moraine Valley Community College improved retention rates, and its students ended the semester with a significantly higher percent of credits earned and significantly higher GPAs. Similar efforts at the other participating colleges also increased student success (McClenney, 2003b).

The focus on completion is important because we need a more educated citizenry and workforce. It is also understandable for educators to concentrate on completion because it is more easily measured and perhaps less controversial than measuring student learning outcomes. However, we should not lose sight of the overall objectives of the

learning paradigm. In the March 1, 2018, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, in an article titled, "How to Make Sure Students Graduate With More Than a Diploma," George Kuh, the founding director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, is quoted as saying, "Yes, it's important that students finish what they start. But graduating isn't enough: Students should be different when they complete college than they were at the outset" (Kuh, 2018). Educators must be careful that a single-minded goal to improve completion rates does not blind them to the need to improve and expand student learning.

Thirty-five states have or are considering some form of outcomes-based funding (also called performance-based funding) for higher education. Policy makers in these states have come to believe that public colleges and universities need to be incentivized to improve certain performance measures, such as graduation or transfer rates. Advocates claim that funding colleges based upon student enrollment doesn't motivate institutions to help students to complete. However, outcomes-based funding is controversial. A 2016 report of the Century Foundation declared that performance-based funding rarely works to increase outcomes (Hillman, 2016). There is also that danger that institutions may limit access for students who are less likely to complete or to lower academic standards in order to increase completion rates. It is important for educators to be actively involved in developing the outcomes-based funding formulas to be sure that both access and quality are protected.

Resistance to the Learning Paradigm

In her March 2001 Learning College Project evaluation report, Kay McClenney mentioned that "on some campuses, there is a notable resistance to the language of the learning college among at least some faculty and staff" (McClenney, 2001). George Boggs, Robert Barr, John Tagg, and Terry O'Banion encountered some of the opposition to the language in their talks. The objections centered on the language that seemed to pit teaching against learning. Faculty often didn't see anything new in the learning college concepts. They thought that student learning was always their goal. Many did not see something as significant as a paradigm shift.

In a November 28, 1995, nine-page unpublished memorandum to Irving McPhail, then President of St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, Brian Gordon, Chairman of the History Department, stated that "Robert Barr and John Tagg appear to be either snake-oil hucksters looking for work on the staff development circuit…or else they are simply ignorant of contemporary community college instructional practice….There isn't a paradigm's worth of difference between the two opposing models of education they try to describe."

Manual Gonzales, a Social Science professor at Diablo Valley College (DVC) in California, wrote in an article in a campus newsletter on September 25, 1998, "adopting the Barr-Tagg model…will only result in a further blurring of the distinction between high school and college, the final step in the transformation of DVC from an institution of higher learning into Tinker Toy Tech."

In response to the false dichotomy between teaching and learning, Terry O'Banion, in an unpublished paper prepared in 2011 for the AACC 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, declared, "The purpose of teaching is improved and expanded learning. Improved and expanded learning is the outcome of effective teaching."

In a January 1999 article in the *American Association For Higher Education Bulletin* titled, "What the Learning Paradigm Means for Faculty," George Boggs addressed the concerns that faculty often raise. The article was republished later that year in Learning Abstracts by the League for Innovation in the Community College.

> Some faculty members are concerned about the loss of teacher control advocated by proponents of the learning paradigm. In the traditional "instruction paradigm," teachers are subject-matter experts who dispense and explain information to students, primarily via lectures. In the learning paradigm, students are more in control of their own learning, often learning from peers in small groups. Information is more widely available.
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> Other faculty members equate a focus on learning with becoming so student centered that academic standards drop. They believe that there is a danger of becoming overly concerned about maintaining student self-esteem to the detriment of preparing students for a "real world" that is complex and not always fair.
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> Faculty members who question the ideas of the learning paradigm do not understand that its primary focus is at the institutional level rather than at the

> individual faculty member level. In fact, their attention to effective teaching in an environment that is sometimes hostile to their ideas was one of the major factors that led to the proposition that a paradigm shift was needed. It is not an accident that the ideas of the learning paradigm that are getting the most attention at institutions that have teaching and learning as primary missions (Boggs, 1999a, 1999b).

Under the learning paradigm, the most important people in the institution are the learners. The faculty members are key to student goal achievement; they are the designers, managers, promoters, and facilitators of student learning. However, it is not only the faculty who are responsible for the success of the students; everyone at the college has an important role in creating the student-learning environment and supporting the mission of student learning.

Student Learning Outcome Assessment

Kay McClenney's evaluation of the Learning College Project revealed that the Vanguard Learning Colleges discovered that the most essential task of defining, assessing, and documenting student learning outcomes (SLOs) was the most challenging (McClenney, 2001). The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment defines student learning outcomes as statements that clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education.

In response to the interest in student learning generated by the learning paradigm, all of the regional accrediting agencies have adopted standards requiring colleges and universities to measure SLOs. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), which accredits community colleges in California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands, mentions SLOs liberally throughout its standards. For example, its standard on student learning and support programs states:

> The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved current course outlines that include student-learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline (ACCJC, Standard II, A 3).

SLOs remain controversial, however. In a February 23, 2018, article in *The New York Times* titled, "The Misguided Drive to Measure 'Learning Outcomes.'" Molly Worthen, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, describes what she calls a bureaucratic behemoth known as learning outcomes assessment. She claims that the "movement's focus on quantifying classroom experience makes it easy to shift blame for student failure wholly onto universities, ignoring deeper socio-economic reasons that cause many students to struggle with college-level work" (2018).

In a March 1, 2018, rebuttal to the Worthen article, Kate Drezek McConnell, the Director for Research and Assessment at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), wrote an article published by *Inside Higher Ed,* titled, "What

Assessment Is Really About." McConnell refers to the important role that faculty play in assessment, pointing out that AAC&U engaged interdisciplinary teams of faculty members from across the country to author the rubrics for its Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE). McConnell goes on to say, "Worthen's opposition to assessing student learning reads as but a strawman for a much more harmful argument: protecting the life of the mind by writing off entire segments of our society from the intellectual and, yes, economically transformative power of education" (McConnell, 2018).

As the discussions about learning outcomes continue, educators should be careful not to fall into the trap of making the purpose of SLOs just about a report to satisfy an accrediting commission or a state agency. If it becomes the bureaucratic behemoth that Molly Worthen complained about, it will have no real impact on student learning. On the other hand, if faculty members conduct meaningful discussions about what students should be learning and how to measure, it, the effect will be positive.

How Students Learn

Historically, college educators have relied upon lectures, reading assignments, writing assignments, problem sets, laboratory work, and field work to promote student learning. Today, educators have come to realize that students must be more actively engaged in their learning. For example, evidence from a number of disciplines suggests that oral presentations to large groups of passive students contribute very little to learning (National Research Council, 1997). Learners do not just absorb new information as if

their brains were blank slates. According to the National Academy of Sciences, learning organizes and reorganizes the brain. Learners use their current knowledge to construct new knowledge, and what they know at the moment affects how they interpret new information. Sometimes learners' current knowledge supports new learning; sometimes it hampers learning (National Research Council, 1999, p. XVI). Teachers who build upon what students already know and who challenge misconceptions can promote learning.

Students also learn in different ways, sometimes called learning styles or preferences. Some students are auditory learners and can learn from hearing a description; others are visual learners and must read a description or see a demonstration; still others need to physically do something related to what they are trying to learn. Terry O'Banion talks about learning styles and how they differ by gender and culture in *A Learning College for the 21st Century* (1997, pp. 87-88).

Students must be actively involved in their own learning. Eric Mazur, a professor of Physics at Harvard University, has found that he has been able to improve student test scores by engaging his students in discussions of problems. He asks his students to consider a conceptual question individually for a minute and then asks them to turn to their neighbors and convince them of their logic. He says that chaos erupts in his lecture hall as students engage in lively and usually uninhibited discussions of the question. After one or two minutes, he calls time and asks the students to record an answer and a confidence level. Mazur claims that the students have taught him how best to teach them. Nothing clarifies students' ideas as much as explaining them to others (National Research Council, 1997, p. 22).

There are many forms of collaborative or group learning. Terry O'Banion points out the evidence that learning communities, in which students take several courses together with a group of faculty members, improve learning. Students not only master subject matter better in cooperative settings than they do working in isolation, but they also develop better social skills and self-esteem (1997, p. 55).

When he was a faculty member at the University of California at Berkeley in 1985, Uri Treisman conducted a groundbreaking study that demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative learning. Treisman studied the behavior of the Asian-American students, who received the highest grades in his calculus classes and found that they naturally formed study groups and collaborated in helping each other to learn. Treisman suspected that this same type of collaboration might assist other students to become successful learners and was able to demonstrate improvements in learning for his African-American students (O'Banion, 1997, p. 55).

The lack of educational success for men of color is a growing national concern. In 2014, Phi Theta Kappa and the Center for Community College Student Engagement conducted focus group interviews that included men of color who were members of the honor society. They expected that these successful students might have come from different backgrounds than the men of color who were not successful. The surprising finding was that the backgrounds were identical.

Both successful and unsuccessful men of color came from single parent households, grew up in poverty and in high crime areas. What made the difference was that the successful students broke ties with negative acquaintances and instead developed strong relationships with people on campus and in the community who motivated them to

learn and become successful (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014, p. 10). The report documented the importance of personal connections, of a sense of belonging, of people who believe in them, of high expectations, and instructors who showed an interest in them and a commitment to help them learn (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014, p. 8).

Educational technology can be used in powerful ways to support and enhance student learning both in and out of the classroom. It can improve access to education; in many ways, it almost forces a greater engagement between faculty and students while also enabling a greater degree of student collaboration. However, classes that are mostly remote can be a challenge for students who would benefit from the structure and motivation experienced in a physical classroom with an instructor and other students. For that reason, instructors need to regularly interact electronically with online students and to find ways to encourage student-to-student interaction (Boggs, 2018, p. 2).

The Achieving the Dream initiative has demonstrated the effectiveness of several strategies that help students to be successful. The Knowledge Center on the Achieving the Dream website provides information on many of these efforts to improve student success. Examples of effective practices include referring students to tutoring, enrolling students in college success skill or Freshman Experience courses, and use of a math lab.

Unfinished Business

In a relatively short time, the learning paradigm and the subsequent learning college principles significantly impacted all of higher education in the United States and

beyond. Current initiatives are centered on a narrower objective of shifting from an emphasis on access to education to both access and success, where student success is defined by completion of a certificate or a degree. Outcome-based funding formulas for public higher education institutions are spreading across the country, but they are generally based on student progress or completion and not on learning. The emphasis on completion is an important component of the learning paradigm, but not the only one.

Accrediting agencies now require student-learning outcomes; however, they remain controversial—and they are not easy to measure. There is some encouraging work being done by organizations such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development continues to link effective teaching with student learning, and the Center for Community College Student Engagement continues its work to help colleges improve student engagement, an important strategy for student success. The League for Innovation in the Community College continues to host an annual Learning Summit and to publish *Learning Abstracts*, giving educators opportunities to demonstrate and share best practices to promote learning.

Perhaps the most visible of the changes to-date from the Learning Paradigm are that institutions have become more outcome-focused and data-informed, and they have accepted responsibility for student success. Students, of course, are the most responsible for their learning and success, but there is a great deal that institutions can do to promote and support student learning. In order for that to happen, college leadership must make it a priority, and everyone in the institution must be relentless in developing a culture of evidence and advocating for student learning.

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