

FRESHMEN ORIENTATION PROGRAM
LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION
AT THE
CHARTER SCHOOL OF WILMINGTON

by

Eileen Voltz

An education leadership portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Preparing students to be successful in their high school begins with their freshmen orientation program. Incoming Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) freshmen struggle to adjust to the demands of the curricula, learn the various technologies, establish new social relationships and navigate around their new school building. The CSW Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) is implemented in the Fall of every school year.

This ELP provides recommendations for improving the FOP. Through continued analysis of the program via input from stakeholders, the FOP has the potential to assist CSW freshmen during their transition to high school thereby increasing their success in high school.

This portfolio examines the evolution of the CSW FOP and the rationale for any changes that were made. In 2016-2017, I did a problem analysis for the existing FOP, used literature to revise the FOP curriculum, created and implemented a pilot FOP and did a program review of the new FOP. In 2018, I conducted a needs assessment of incoming freshmen and used the data to update the FOP. I surveyed local school administrators to learn what they do to help their freshmen students, identified practices that might help CSW freshmen, and then provided recommendations in a presentation for CSW school administrators. I created online

mentor training modules, using the platform of Schoology, for the senior mentors. I created a FOP website for stakeholders.

I used a number of instruments to determine if my improvement strategies were successful. In 2016, I conducted surveys and focus groups of stakeholders regarding the initial FOP. In 2017, after the implementation of the pilot FOP, I surveyed participants to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. In 2018, I collected data from incoming freshmen, created an infographic of their needs, and shared findings with CSW staff. In 2018, I surveyed local school administrators to identify practices and conducted a presentation of findings and recommendations for CSW administrators. In 2018, I used pre-survey and post-survey questions in conjunction with a pilot mentoring program to judge the efficacy of the training modules.

The data analysis of the freshmen needs assessment showed that there were common concerns among the incoming freshmen. This information was used to redesign the FOP. My analysis of the administrator data indicated that CSW is doing many of the same things as local schools but that there are additional things that we can implement to help the freshmen transition to our school. Overall, the analyses from the online mentoring module showed that training can help mentors be more successful.

My recommendations to CSW are as follows:

(1) Update the FOP workshops by (a) increasing opportunities for freshmen to explore the building, network, and engage in team-building; (b) offering technology

sessions that are differentiated based on the students' prior knowledge; and (c) reducing the amount of time for workshops involving school policies.

(2) Investigate the interest/feasibility of adding class photos and/or cap & gown pictures.

(3) Modify the mentor training program to include (a) online training that is administered in person and (b) higher interest videos for the participants.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

General Approach

I began studying high school freshmen orientation programs three years ago. The curriculum for the Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) was developed by a colleague and implemented for many years. Since it had not been reviewed or modified in nearly twenty years, my administration asked me to learn about the importance of such programs and update the program in order to better help our students transition to our high school. The problem freshmen have with transitioning to high school can be attributed to several different factors. For my ELP, I chose to focus the FOP around helping them adjust to their new facilities, technologies and peer groups. I went into the teaching profession to help students, and so working on this program was a natural extension of why I went into education.

The current FOP is a result of many years of hard work, data collection, and continual reflection on the data. First, I gathered data on student and teacher perceptions about the original FOP as well as their perceptions about the necessities of an effective and useful FOP. Concurrently, I conducted research on high school freshmen orientation programs so that I could fully understand the magnitude of the problem. I used literature reviews to identify best practice for high school orientation programs to determine what would work well with our students. I then used all of this information to revise the curriculum which resulted in the implementation of a pilot

FOP in the fall of 2016. At the end of the pilot FOP, I did a program review by gathering data from stakeholders and used this evaluation to modify the program.

Additionally, I decided to gather data from the rising freshmen so that the FOP would be designed with their needs in mind. In spring of 2018, I administered a needs assessment to the incoming freshmen class and used the data to drive the planning of the 2018 FOP. Concurrently, I surveyed local school administrators to see if we could identify other areas where I could improve our FOP. Data was used to make recommendations for the CSW FOP and some were implemented in the 2018-2019 school year. As a direct result of my reviews of scholarly literature, in 2016, I implemented a mentoring component to the FOP. In the fall of 2018, I designed a mentor training program and piloted the program with rising mentors. This program will be implemented officially in the 2019-2020 installation of the CSW FOP.

Portfolio Organization

The remainder of my portfolio is organized into six chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter 2 describes in detail the problem I addressed for my ELP, the educational context in which the problem was situated and my organizational role as a problem-solver. Chapter 3 describes the various improvement strategies used to address the problem at CSW. Chapter 4 shows the results and efficacy of the improvement strategies as well as the rationale behind any changes that were made to the FOP. Chapter 5 is a reflection on the efficacy of the improvement efforts for the FOP. Chapter 6 is a reflection on my own leadership development during this process. Following these chapters, in the appendices, I present the nine artifacts that represent my efforts to develop the FOP at CSW. These artifacts include all of the data

collection instruments, the analyses of the collected data, informational products and communications for stakeholders, and my ELP proposal.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Problem Statement

The following was my problem statement: *Incoming CSW freshmen struggle with the following four aspects of their transition from middle school to CSW: (a) keeping up with the rigorous demands of the CSW curricula, (b) learning and adjusting to the learning management system needed to navigate their high school experience, (c) leaving behind their middle school friends and establishing new social relationships and peer groups, and (d) navigating the new school building and environment.*

Freshmen were not adequately prepared to handle the logistics of CSW which meant that they had a difficult time focusing on the academic demands of the school. The longer it takes freshmen to adjust to CSW, the harder it is for the school to fulfill its mission.. This situation is consistent with Clark and Hunley's (2007) assertion that regardless of where they live, incoming freshmen face the same problems nationwide, such as feeling anxiety about entering a new school, social pressure, and increased academic pressure and responsibility.

Demographics

As a result of school choice in the state of Delaware, CSW students live in a wide variety of areas in New Castle and Kent Counties. Although it varies from year to year, CSW enrolls students from roughly 25 different public, private and parochial

middle schools. Any eighth-grade student whose primary residence is in Delaware may apply for enrollment to CSW. The maximum enrollment is 970 students and the freshmen class size is determined by the difference between 970 and number of returning students for grades ten through twelve.

Table 1 Demographics for Freshman Enrollment School Year 2014-2016

Year of Enrollment	% Male	% Female	% Caucasian	% Other
2016-2017	53.4	46.6	50.2	49.8
2015-2016	53.9	46.1	52.7	47.3
2014-2015	51.9	48.1	60.9	39.1

The demographics of the students are displayed above in Table 1. The highest race percentage of pupils is Caucasian, with Asian being the second highest. There are nearly sixty members that make up the instructional staff and all but one of the fifty teachers is classified as a *highly qualified teacher* (HQT). There is a low turnover rate of employees and 80% of the teaching staff has over ten years of experience and 65% have a Master's degree or better.

Performance Data

Traditionally, CSW students perform well above average on state assessments. The 2015 SAT scores yielded averages that were roughly 200 points higher than peers throughout the state of Delaware for math, critical reading and writing. In 2015, CSW student took over 1,000 AP exams and more than 90% achieved a qualifying score.

Governance and Leadership

In 1996, a consortium of six local companies (DuPont, Ashland [Hercules], AstraZeneca, Christiana Care, Delmarva Power, and Verizon), founded The Charter School of Wilmington. The Board of Directors (BOD) is the governing body of CSW and is comprised of members of the six founding companies, as well as two parent representatives, one teacher representative and other stakeholders from the community.

Based on the way the original charter law was written, the original BOD envisioned that the school would be run as a business. Therefore, in keeping with the titles of the business world, they determined that the school would be led by a President. The President is charged with overseeing everything at the school, which makes this position similar to that of a District Superintendent. The current President is in his fifth year and is the fifth president in school history. The Vice President (VP) is tasked with overseeing the academics and teaching staff. The current VP is also in his fifth year.

History of CSW FOP

For the past two decades, The Charter School of Wilmington hosted the same FOP every August. Obviously, educational approaches have changed tremendously over this same time period, yet the FOP was not been updated until the 2016-2017 school year. The original FOP allowed students to meet administrators and their classroom teachers, participate in team-building activities with their new classmates and attend a luncheon hosted by the parent association. The day was an understated affair and for many years it was well received by all stakeholders.

CSW has had several major changes over the past few years including the 2014 implementation of electronic mathematics and English textbooks that align with the Common Core State Curriculum (CCSC), the addition of *Schoology*, a new Learning Management System (LMS) in 2015, and the *Chrome One-One* initiative in 2017 (i.e., an initiative to supply each student with a Chromebook computer). As a result of these and other technological changes, the FOP needed to be updated and expanded. The original FOP was a half-day program. In 2016, a pilot FOP was implemented and the program was doubled to two half days and in 2017, it was doubled again and went to two full days. I played a major role in developing and implementing the updated FOP.

Organizational Role

As an instructor at CSW, I have a significant sphere of influence within the school. Also as stated above, I played a major role in updating the FOP. I will describe my role in CSW and in the FOP.

Role in CSW

I have been employed by the Charter School of Wilmington since August 2001. Prior to teaching at CSW, I taught both middle and high school for the Christina School District for nine years. Over the past seventeen years, I have taught a variety of mathematics classes including AP Statistics, Probability and Statistics, Research Statistics, Discrete Mathematics and Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III. My teaching schedule allowed me to teach students in ninth through twelfth grade, which provided ample opportunities to engage with students over the course of their high school careers. All juniors are required to do a research project that utilizes statistics. I am one of two instructors responsible for helping all the eleventh graders perform the

statistical tests for their projects. Under our supervision and tutelage, many of these students compete in Science Fairs at the state and the national level.

In addition to the instructional responsibilities, I have many other roles in this organization and also at the state level. I have been the varsity basketball coach since 2001 and varsity softball coach since 2004. As a head coach, I am in charge of overseeing all aspects of the program including instruction, personnel, finances and addressing issues with the athletes and/or their parents. Additionally, twelve years ago I was selected to serve on the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) committees for both sports, where I work collaboratively with other committee members to organize and oversee the state tournaments for both sports.

In addition to athletics, I am in charge of several service groups. First, I am a co-advisor for the CSW National Honor Society. My role includes ensuring that the application/selection process aligns with national guidelines, planning/running the induction ceremony, organizing/planning service projects, and dissemination of information to pertinent stakeholders. Secondly, for the past twelve years, I have been the moderator of a buddy program that pairs CSW upperclassmen with elementary students with special needs. I coordinate and chaperone monthly field trips for roughly 120 students and work alongside the administrative team to secure grant money for this program.

Role in FOP

Three years ago, I was accepted into the Ed.D. program at the University of Delaware. The Vice President of CSW also enrolled in the program and we took most courses together. This provided us with opportunities to discuss problems in education, as well as specific issues at CSW. Despite the high performance of our

students on standardized tests, like any school we have things that need to be improved. We both agreed that the academic rigor at CSW creates a high stress environment for all students, but in particular for freshman. I had a meeting with the administrative team to examine issues at CSW that I could address as part of my graduate program. Ultimately, they asked me if I would revamp the FOP at CSW starting with a pilot program in the fall of 2016.

My various instructional and leadership positions at CSW made me uniquely qualified to address this problem. First, I have had the privilege of teaching students in all grades and typically about half of my students are freshman. Secondly, I am involved with athletes at CSW and throughout the state from November to June every school year. Coaching allows me to hear about students' concerns and struggles as student-athletes. And as an advisor of the National Honor Society and the buddy program, I engage with students outside of the school setting and learn even more about our student population.

Responsibilities

I am the lead teacher for the FOP and in charge of all aspects of the program. In the spring of 2016, I conducted research to identify and review scholarly literature on high school freshman orientation programs. I gathered data from teachers and students, both formally and informally, to identify what was working well and what could be changed to suit the needs of the current freshman. In the summer of 2016, I synthesized the research with the feedback from stakeholders to create a new curriculum for the FOP. In August of 2016, our staff implemented the pilot FOP over the course of two half days. I was responsible for all aspects of the program, including

creating the schedule, allocating human resources, and communicating with all stakeholders. After the initial pilot program, I performed a program review.

In the summer of 2017, I did an internship through the University of Delaware, where the bulk of my time was spent on the logistics of the FOP. In an effort to continue to aide with the transition from middle to high school, the administrative team decided they wanted to enhance the FOP so the program was extended from two half days to two full days. To accommodate this change, I used data from the program review and scholarly literature to expand the curriculum and revamp the program where needed.

Improvement Goals

In this section, I will identify the action strategies I used to address the problem statement of this ELP. The freshman orientation program had made some improvements, but it was important to keep refining the program. The purpose of this project was to enhance the current FOP in order to decrease the amount of time it takes for freshman to adjust to the logistical and psychological challenges of high school. The project had three goals: assess the needs of the incoming students and communicate this information to school personnel, identify practices of local high schools to determine new strategies and/or interventions that could be utilized in the FOP, and create two online resources to supplement and enhance the effectiveness of the FOP.

Goal 1: Assessment of Freshmen Needs Communicated to CSW

In order to be successful at CSW, students have at least three immediate things to which they need to attend. First, students need to use a variety of technologies,

including Schoology, school email, and online mathematics and English textbooks. Additionally, since students come from so many different schools, incoming CSW freshmen students must be given time to meet their new classmates, mentors and teachers. Finally, navigating around the building is important so that they can be in class on time to focus on the academic demands. This first improvement goal addressed the first three parts of my problem statement about technology, making new friends and navigating around the school building.

The first goal was to assess the needs of the freshmen and help my organization have a better understanding of those specific needs with respect to technology, networking and facilities. These three areas are consistently issues for our new students but we are currently not sure of the degree to which each student will struggle with those issues until after they arrive. The sessions for the 2018 FOP were designed to target the specific needs of the incoming class and make their transition easier than for previous freshmen classes.

Goal 2: Identify Freshmen Orientation Practices

My second goal was to survey administrators from other high schools in order to learn about their freshman orientation programs. I used this data to identify the best strategies and interventions that area schools are using to help their freshmen adjust to high school. Ultimately, I wanted to see if I could use or adapt elements for our program. This second part of my improvement goals addressed all four parts of my problem statement, namely the curricula, technology, making new friends and navigating in the school building.

Goal 3: Creation of Online Supplements to FOP

Transitioning to high school is a highly complex process during an already tumultuous time period in adolescence. A two-day orientation program may suffice for some of the students but a majority of students benefit from additional resources. All students benefit from some resources prior to the FOP, as well as online resources that they can access while they are adjusting to life as a high school student. In order to provide additional supports for our students, the orientation includes resources in addition to the two-day orientation program. My third goal was to create two online resources to aid freshmen with their transition to CSW.

The first online resource was a website for the FOP. A website is a powerful tool for communicating information to all stakeholders including students, mentors, parents and staff. Incoming freshmen will be able to access the website prior to the two-day freshman orientation program. Students and mentors can submit information, see the schedules for the FOP and also be able to ask questions before they arrive. Hopefully, this will help alleviate anxiety which would increase the efficacy of the orientation program. Parents of freshmen will know what the first few days will be like for their children, ask questions and be able to volunteer to be a part of the FOP. And finally, the website is a means of communicating with the staff, although private emails can be used as well.

The second online resource that was needed was a formal training program for mentors that will make the mentoring program even more successful. According to Roybal, Thorton, and Usinger (2014), several factors are needed for a successful transition from middle school to high school including freshmen feeling a sense of belonging or connection to school, which is directly related to their academic success. One way we helped facilitate this connection was to provide every new student a

mentor. Mentoring helped the freshmen network at their new school. However, in order to help the incoming students effectively, the mentors needed to be provided with training. Therefore, I created a Schoology module that provides training for the mentors so that they can more effectively help the incoming students connect with CSW. This final part of my improvement goal addresses making new friends, but ultimately the mentors will be able to provide assistance with all areas of the problem statement.

In summary, I had three improvement main goals for the FOP, to assess the needs of freshmen, to identify practices for strategies to help freshmen adjust to high school, and to create online resources that further enhance the FOP at CSW.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Rationale

Below I outline my rationale for the program I used for my portfolio, which area of the program I decided to focus on, and the means by which I carried out my project. Each area has a different rationale, with the ultimate, long-term goal of helping CSW freshmen transition to their new high school.

Rationale for focus on facilities, technology, and networking

When I began this process, my goal was to update the existing FOP. After gathering preliminary data, I realized there were multiple ways to improve the program for our freshmen students. Ultimately, I narrowed the focus of the improvement efforts to include helping freshmen adjust to their new school building, providing instruction on the various technologies they would experience at CSW and engaging them in opportunities to network with other stakeholders at CSW. I believe that there are many ways to help freshmen transition to high school but that an emphasis in these areas would facilitate a quicker transition to our high school. I decided to focus on three areas, (a) background and support artifacts, (b) program development, and (c) online resources. I explain each in turn next.

Background and Support Artifacts

My efforts to understand the background and to create support artifact produced Artifacts 1-4.

Artifact 1

In order to solve a problem, I had to start by understanding the problem with the FOP at CSW. My rationale behind the first artifact was to learn about the problem and identify gaps between what was occurring and what should be occurring.

I began by analyzing the CSW FOP. I learned about the origins of the program, talked to the CSW administration so that I could understand what they envisioned and I spoke with teachers and students to learn what they thought would be important for the CSW FOP (Appendix A). I also tried to identify the gaps between what had been occurring with the FOP compared to what stakeholders wanted in future freshmen orientation programs. This problem analysis explained why my project was needed at CSW.

Artifact 2

Once I had a better understanding of the problem with the FOP at CSW, I conducted substantial research on all aspects of high school freshmen orientation programs. Over the course of many months, I searched multiple data bases for articles, books, and research studies about the importance of transition programs. I learned why the transition is difficult for teenagers and the various ways that different schools have tried to ease the transition to high school for their students. During my research, I learned that schools use mentor programs to help their freshmen. As a result, I developed and implemented a mentor program at CSW in 2016. I used this background research to inform the decision making throughout this entire process.

Once I understood what the research said about the critical importance of a helping freshmen adjust to high school, I examined our current FOP, gathered data from stakeholders and then revised the program accordingly (Appendix B). My rationale behind this second artifact was to act upon what I learned from the research regarding transitioning to high school and to revise the curriculum accordingly. The original curriculum for the orientation program at CSW was established 16 years beforehand. Transitioning to high school was far more complex than it was nearly two decades ago and the FOP needed to be updated to respond to these changes.

I identified the learning needs of the target population and the student outcomes for the FOP. I used a constructivist approach where all stakeholders were involved in the process of updating the FOP curriculum. The FOP was developed using principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) so that all freshmen can engage effectively with the FOP curriculum. During this revision, the mentor program was added to provide another layer of support for the new students.

Artifact 3

I used the curriculum revision to develop a Pilot FOP for CSW (Appendix C). My rationale behind this third artifact was to create the schedules and workshops that would align with the revisions I made. The Pilot FOP provided general information, schedules, and implementation tools that I used to modify the original FOP.

In order to run the Pilot FOP efficiently, I created an implementation plan and acted on each item. I had meetings in the summer with the administrative team and parent association representatives. I filled out the necessary paperwork to secure the facilities and found the funding needed to run the program. I created the various workshops and elicited the help of colleagues to run the workshops. I used teacher in-

service time to conduct a brief presentation about the Pilot FOP for staff. During this presentation, I highlighted the research surrounding the importance of freshmen transition programs, shared the data that I gathered, and unveiled the new program to the faculty. I spent hours creating a schedule for the FOP and communicated all information with the freshmen families, staff, and parent association. I created data collection tools and gathered data at the end of the Pilot FOP.

Artifact 4

After the implementation of the Pilot FOP, I evaluated the pilot program (Appendix D). My rationale behind this fourth artifact was that I wanted to determine if the Pilot FOP met its goals. This evaluation allowed me to understand the degree to which this Pilot FOP was meeting the outcome and process goals that I had developed and the results from the evaluation were used to make further adjustments and improvements to the program. Data gathered through this program review was then used to make changes to the FOP for 2017.

Program Development

My efforts towards program development produced Artifacts 6 and 7 (note that Artifact 5 is discussed later on in this chapter).

Artifact 6

In an effort to identify the needs of students in the freshmen class of 2018, I created and administered a needs assessment (Appendix F). My rationale behind this sixth artifact was to identify the specific needs of the incoming freshmen class and then create the workshops and schedules that would align with their needs. I analyzed the data and created an infographic to show the areas of transitioning to high school

that incoming CSW ninth graders deemed the most important. I used this data to determine workshops for the 2018 FOP and shared the infographic with the staff so they better understood the needs of the incoming freshmen class.

To assess the needs of the next freshman class, in March 2018, all incoming students were invited via email to participate in an online, anonymous survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine their self-efficacy regarding the various technologies that they would be required to use at CSW, to better understand their fears and concerns with networking in their new school and to gauge their ability to navigate at CSW. The survey was intended to take the participants no longer than 10 minutes to complete and included closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale, as well as multiple-choice questions.

There were separate questions pertaining to Schoology, using school email, and online textbooks, which was the second element of the problem statement. There have always been students who come in with no experience in one or more of these areas. Since the surveys were anonymous, students were not identifiable. Regardless, it allowed the staff to know what they were going to be working with so that they could meet students' needs more quickly than in the past.

I analyzed the survey results to identify general patterns across the responses, as well as unique responses that provided new insights into the incoming freshmen class. I used this analysis to determine the workshops that would be needed for the 2018 FOP.

The rising freshmen were asked about their fears and concerns with networking and getting to know people at CSW, which was the third element of the problem statement. Teenagers are typically very social but can also be very shy,

especially when they are in a new environment such as a new high school. Information from these surveys was used to assign students to social groups over the course of the FOP. Traditionally, students travel with their homerooms throughout the FOP. But survey results from the 2017 FOP indicated that a majority of the participants wanted more time to socialize with students outside of their homerooms. Information from this needs assessment will allow us to group students based on data in an effort to maximize their networking opportunities over the course of the first two days.

Finally, the eighth graders were surveyed about their familiarity with the school building, which was the fourth element of the problem statement. Some students had older siblings who attended CSW while others attended middle school in the same building. On the other end of the spectrum, some students have never been in the building before the FOP. The former group may not need a tour at all and the latter would benefit from a longer tour in a smaller group setting.

Artifact 7

In addition to learning what our freshmen needed, I was curious what other schools were doing to help their students. My rationale behind this seventh artifact was to identify what local schools were doing to support their freshmen. I surveyed local school administrators to learn about their freshmen orientation programs and the supports provided for their freshmen. Based on the survey results, I created a 10-15 minute PowerPoint Presentation for my school administration (Appendix G).

In March 2018, I sent cold-call emails to thirty local school administrators and asked them to participate in an online survey. The sample size was thirteen and included a combination of charter, public, vocational and private schools from

Delaware. Although I teach at a charter school, I wanted to identify common criteria that would apply to our population from different types of institutions.

The survey was intended to take the participants no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete and included three closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale, as well as nine open-ended questions. Since I knew school administrators are very short on time, I created a brief survey with minimal open-ended questions.

I qualitatively analyzed the survey results and looked for general patterns across the responses, as well as unique responses and I coded the open-ended questions. I used this analysis to determine if we could offer different workshops for the 2019 FOP. I identified additional strategies that area schools used to help their freshmen transition to high school to see if anything might help the freshmen at CSW for the 2019 FOP.

Online Resources

My efforts toward creating online resources for freshmen and other stakeholders produced Artifacts 5, 8 and 9.

Rationale for online resources

Transitioning to high school is a highly complex process during an already tumultuous time period in adolescence. As a result, a majority of students benefit from additional resources on top of the two-day orientation program. All students benefit from resources prior to the two-day FOP, including online resources that they can access outside of school. In order to provide additional supports for our students, the orientation now includes online resources.

Artifact 5

I created a website for the CSW FOP (Appendix E). My rationale behind this fifth artifact was to provide all stakeholders with a tool for communicating important information. Students, parents, staff and mentors were able to access important documents and schedules. In the hopes of minimizing anxiety before their first day, incoming freshmen were able to access the website prior to their first day of school. Students and mentors were also able to submit information, view the schedules for the first two days and ask questions before they arrived. Additionally, parents of freshmen were able to learn about the program, ask questions and had the chance to volunteer to be a part of the FOP.

Artifacts 8 and 9

The second online resource I created was a formal training program for mentors. My rationale behind this eighth artifact was to create a training program for the mentors so that they would be better equipped to help the freshmen adjust to high school. According to Roybal, Thorton, and Usinger (2014), several factors are needed for a successful transition from middle school to high school including a sense of belonging or connection to school, which is directly related to academic success. One way we helped facilitate this connection was to provide every new student a senior mentor. Mentoring helped to facilitate the networking for the incoming freshmen. In order to help the incoming students, the mentors needed training on how to be an effective mentor.

In an effort to supplement what was already done to address the networking issues for our freshmen, I developed a Schoology module to train the mentors. This was an improvement over the current mentoring program, which had minimal training.

The advantage of this online training is that the upperclassmen were able to complete this training on their own schedules. Additionally, completion of the training served as a way of vetting the mentors and helped to ensure that they understood their roles.

After I created the Schoology module, I piloted the program with ten students to assess it. In March 2018, I held a meeting for rising sophomores or juniors who were interested in mentoring. I asked for volunteers to participate in the pilot program and then selected the students for the pilot study from this list.

The students in the pilot study were invited, both before and after the training, via email to participate in an online pre and post survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine if the Schoology module helped mentors understand the purpose of the mentoring program and their role as a mentor. The survey was intended to take the participants no longer than 10 minutes to complete. There were closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale, as well as multiple-choice questions.

I compared the results of the pre- and post-surveys to determine if the Schoology module helped to prepare these students for the mentoring program. I quantitatively analyzed the results and identified changes that needed to be made to the module. Finally, I wrote a white paper (Artifact 10) on the mentor training module with recommendations to the CSW administrative team for the 2019 FOP (see Appendix I), which included recommendations for modifications of the module so that they can be implemented in the 2019 FOP.

Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS

The results of the improvement strategies developed for the FOP to help ease the transition for freshmen at CSW are promising. There is evidence that indicates the program was successful, that the freshmen were grateful for the orientation program and their senior mentors, and that the mentors benefited from the training program. Since the implementation of the Pilot FOP in 2016, there have been logical and incremental changes made each year to improve upon the original FOP. In this chapter, I will discuss the results of my efforts with the background and support artifacts and with respect to each improvement goal.

Background and Support Artifacts

In this section I outline my improvement strategy results for the background Artifacts 1-4.

Artifact 1

Based on the findings from the problem analysis, which was Artifact 1 (Appendix A), I was able to learn about the perceived efficacy of the program. I gathered data through surveys and focus groups. The data indicated what was important to the students and staff at CSW and I used this information to design the Pilot FOP. Due to changes in technology demands, data from stakeholders indicated that although the FOP was well received for many years, it was no longer meeting the needs of our freshmen.

Artifacts 2 and 3

Utilizing the data that I gathered for Artifact 1, I revised the FOP curriculum, and the revised curriculum became Artifact 2 (Appendix B). I connected the goals of the FOP program to the CSW mission statement and focused on what the stakeholders thought would be beneficial for incoming students. Additionally, I aligned all decisions to the supporting research. When I developed the Pilot FOP (Artifact 3), I used the Understanding By Design (UBD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) frameworks. I ensured that the workshops and the mentor program took into account equity, social justice through the use of the UDL framework and differentiated instruction. When I revised the curriculum and created the Pilot FOP (Appendix C), I used a constructivist approach since it was an opportunity for people to be involved in a community of practice with other stakeholders. This was a team effort with all participants focused on the goal of helping the freshmen with their transition to high school.

Artifact 4

For Artifact 4, I evaluated the efficacy of the Pilot FOP by assessing freshmen perceptions about the effectiveness of the Pilot mentoring program (Appendix D). The survey results indicated that the Pilot FOP had an impact on roughly half of the new students. Additionally, I assessed the freshmen perceptions about the various activities that were a part of the 2-day orientation program. I was pleased that 80% of the participants felt that the activities from the FOP helped them to prepare for their freshman year at CSW.

Improvement Strategy Results

Goal 1: Assessment of Freshmen Needs Communicated to CSW (Artifact 6)

To assess freshmen needs, rising eighth graders from the class of 2022 were asked questions to determine what they were most concerned about regarding their transition to CSW (Appendix F). Previously, the FOP was the same each year regardless of what the new students actually needed or wanted. Understanding their needs was important since I used this data to make changes to their FOP. Personalizing their orientation program was a marked improvement for the CSW FOP. After analyzing the data from the freshmen needs assessment, I created an infographic (see Figure 1) for Artifact 6 and did a formal presentation with CSW faculty and staff.

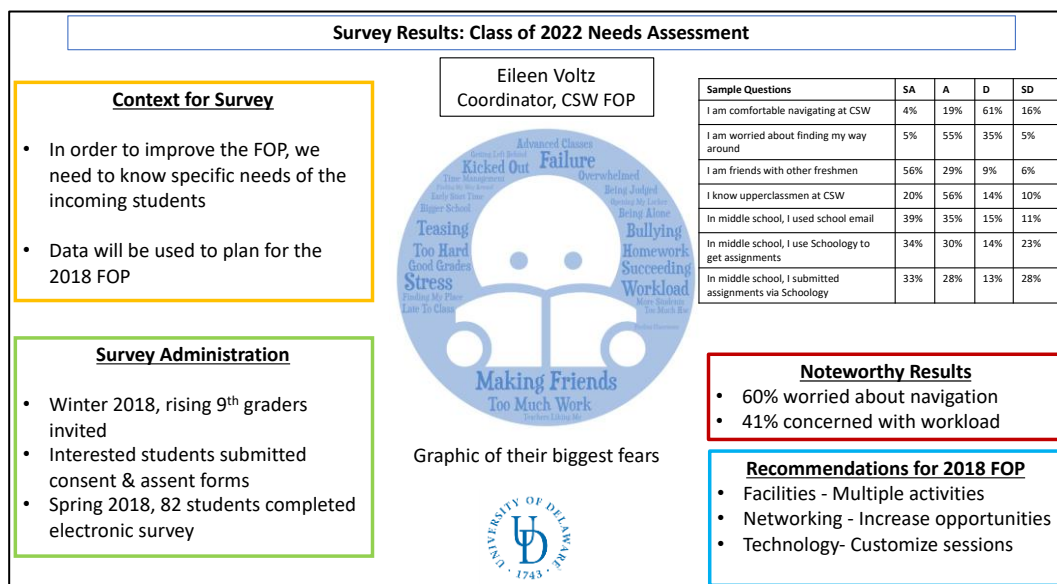


Figure 1 Infographic for Artifact 6.

A few interesting results from the freshmen survey, which informed my other artifacts were the following. Over half of the incoming freshmen expressed concerns

with navigating the building, so I developed multiple freshmen orientation sessions that had them actively engaging with their new facilities. It was interesting that their concerns navigating around the building was tied in with their fears of being late to classes and in turn falling behind in their classwork. I was somewhat surprised by the number of students who were concerned with making friends and being bullied or teased. I knew that the senior mentors could help them to feel more comfortable at CSW so this was the impetus for expanding the mentor program to include formal training.

Goal 2: Identify FOP Practices for Strategies (Artifact 7)

To identify practices, area school administrators were surveyed regarding their freshmen orientation programs (Appendix G) and I used this data to identify specific strategies that could be employed at CSW. The CSW FOP had many similarities to area programs. As a result of this project, there were many more supports in place for our freshmen. However, I was able to identify ways that we can improve upon our FOP and some will be implemented for the 2019 FOP.

Among the highlights of the administrator survey, were the following observations. It was interesting to know that the CSW FOP is doing some of the same things as area schools and reinforced that some components are non-negotiable. For years, I had wanted to decrease the amount of time the freshmen spent in workshops on rules and procedures. The data I gathered confirmed that this would be one way to enhance our existing program. Most importantly, the survey showed me that parents can take an even bigger role in helping the freshmen adjust to high school.

Goal 3: Creation of Online Supplements to FOP (Artifacts 5, 8 and 9)

I developed a website for the FOP (Appendix E). The intended outcome was to create an online resource solely for the CSW FOP. There are several benefits to this resource. First, stakeholders were able to know exactly what was happening with the FOP. Second, it was a mechanism for people to ask questions and get responses in a timely manner. Parents were able to use the website to volunteer for various components of the FOP and there were increased levels of parent participation this past year due to the sign up forms that were located on the FOP website. And finally, the website serves as a receptacle of the history of the FOP. I have been immersed in working on this problem for several years, but will eventually be turning the program over to various colleagues. The website can help guide them in planning and implementing their FOP.

The Schoology mentor training module was the second online resource I developed to enhance the FOP at CSW (Appendix H). Based on the data from this study, the training module was successful in helping mentors feel more prepared to work with the freshmen (Appendix I). Since this was a pilot program for the mentor training module, it can be improved for next year. Comments from the students directly to me indicated the module was effective and valuable for them. For example, nearly half of those that participated in the training module felt more prepared to be a mentor. This was encouraging to see since the goal is to better prepare them to help their mentees. Additionally, after engaging with the training module, most of the participants recognized the benefits of regular meetings with their mentees. This is encouraging since it will hopefully provide sustained support for the freshmen over the course of their first school year.

Improvement Strategies Implementation Successes

I feel confident that the improvement strategies for the CSW FOP were implemented successfully. The freshmen needs assessment was administered using the email addresses that were given to CSW. Although every student did not participate, they all had the chance to provide the feedback that was used to design their FOP. There were no technical issues with the Schoology training module and all of the participants were able to access the assessment, readings, videos, and discussion boards. I saw so much positive growth from the freshmen over the course of their two day orientation program. I also saw confidence in the mentors after the completion of their training module and an increase in their comfort with being a mentor.

Outcomes

I believe that the improvement strategies had the intended outcomes of helping the freshmen transition to CSW. Once I analyzed the problem at CSW, I was able to collect data and used it to design a Pilot FOP. The program evaluation of this Pilot FOP showed improvement and data has been used to make incremental changes each year. At every stage of this process, I utilized information from scholarly research on high school transition programs as well as practices for curriculum development. I have personalized the program by assessing the needs of the incoming students and using their needs to drive the planning of the FOP. Feedback from local schools was used to update the FOP even further. I increased supports for the new students by creating a FOP website and providing mentors for the freshmen. The pilot mentor training program was well received and the participants seem to have increased efficacy with their ability to be an effective mentor. The FOP website is an important online resource that helps with communication amongst all stakeholders.

Chapter 5

REFLECTION ON IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Success of Overall Approach

Upon reflecting on the improvement efforts, I am appreciative for all of the people involved in the improvement of the CSW FOP. There have been many students, parents, faculty and staff at CSW who were vested in this project along side of me. For example, I was continually engaged in regular and honest discussions about the program with my cohort at the University of Delaware. Throughout the process, I constantly referred back to the research on freshmen orientation programs so that I could develop the best program that would benefit the CSW freshmen. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to study this problem in such great depth and was afforded the chance to make significant changes for the betterment of CSW.

I learned so much about the importance of freshmen transition programs and enjoyed using this information to expand upon the original program. I am proud of the current FOP that is a result of years of reflection and data analysis. I am pleased with the website that I created for the FOP and I am grateful for the opportunities to discuss this program with my colleagues at CSW. This process has helped me to learn more about being open to suggestions, having patience when dealing with frustrating situations, and engaging in effective management and communication practices.

Successes and Challenges

The first goal was to assess the needs of the freshmen and to use the data to drive decision-making for the FOP. It was important to know precisely what the freshmen were most worried about so that I could design a program that would address their needs. I felt that I was successful in gathering data and used it to help the current freshmen class. The 2018 FOP was extremely well received by all stakeholders and it was exciting to see the fruition of years of work on this program. I was disappointed in the response rate and would prefer to have had a census of the incoming freshmen class. I believe that this is possible with the proper timing. Moving forward, I recommend that the surveys be given in person in March when the new students and families attend their first meeting at CSW. This would likely increase the participation rate and decrease the non-response rate that occurred with my study.

The second goal was to identify practices at area schools in order to find strategies that we could implement at CSW. After surveying school administrators, I feel confident that our program has a solid foundation and is continually improving. I will use the data that I gathered to improve upon our program. It was fun to engage with other schools on this topic and share information with each other and I hope that other schools will look to this research to guide their endeavors.

The third goal was to create online supplements for the CSW FOP. The website is informative, but I am unsure how often it is really used. Since it takes time to update a website, I hope to find a way to determine how many people are visiting the site and to encourage greater use. The mentor training module was the other online supplement. The participants learned from engaging with the module and are excited to be mentors next school year. Thus, I feel that both online approaches were

beneficial for CSW and that for at least the website, additional benefits could be realized in the future.

Changes and Factors Affecting Improvement Goals

Thankfully there were few changes in my role or at CSW over the duration of my improvement efforts. The CSW FOP has undergone various changes based on years of research, data collection, and reflection. It was helpful that I was the lead teacher of the FOP for the duration of this study since I was aware of all of the changes and the rationale for these changes. Additionally, there was one personnel change in the administrative team but it did not impact my role or the stability of the improvement efforts. Often times in education, new leadership brings about wholesale changes so I feel fortunate that I was allowed to continue developing the FOP at CSW.

One factor that did impact my improvement goal was the change in administrators at area schools. There were people that agreed to participate in my study and then changed jobs. I was unprepared for this and therefore the size of the administrator data was smaller than I had anticipated.

Although there were some changes that occurred during my study, overall I think the impact of these changes were minimal.

Suggestions

I have several suggestions for organizations who are trying to tackle a similar problem of freshman orientation at their school. First, I would recommend that they survey, annually, all freshmen to conduct a “needs assessment.” This way, their orientation program can be focused on their needs. Additionally, their teachers would be able to use this data over the course of the first few months so that they can better

assist in the transition to their school. Another change I would make is to collect data from the freshmen throughout the course of their first year. If data could be gathered throughout the entire school year, it may indicate other times where support is needed.

I would suggest the organizations monitor the traffic on their website and analyze this data to make sure that the website is being utilized. Since it will take time and manpower to maintain and update a website, it is important to know if it is being used. And finally, depending on the length of time someone has for a similar study, I would suggest having a larger number of participants for the mentoring training module.

Next Steps and Recommendations

The CSW FOP has made substantial improvements but there are next steps and recommendations that would help the organization to continue along this path. First, there need to be other people at CSW working on the FOP. It is time intensive and cannot be sustained by one person. I recommend the formation of a FOP committee where various stakeholders take on different leadership roles so that it does not fall solely on one individual. Also, getting more stakeholders involved will help to bring fresh ideas for improving the FOP.

Secondly, the freshmen needs assessment would have to be administered each year. Consequently, the administration will have to allocate time for staff to collect and analyze the data and substantial time for the committee to plan for the upcoming FOP. This would also help to disseminate the information to more stakeholders.

My third recommendation is that the mentors be selected in May of their junior year and that the mentor training program be given as a group in May. This would allow the mentors time to network with the other mentors and hopefully increase their

effectiveness for the August FOP. I also recommend either eliminating the survey of school administrators or only doing it every three to five years. Many schools use the same program for several years so it would be a waste of time and resources to gather that data each year.

I will be overseeing the CSW FOP for next school year and look forward to implementing all of these recommendations. I believe that these changes will improve the current orientation program and enhance the school's ability to aid the freshmen in their transition to CSW.

Chapter 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Development as a Scholar

My Ed.D. coursework, and in particular working on my ELP, allowed me to develop as a scholar. I earned my Masters of Instruction at The University of Delaware almost twenty years ago. Consequently, the way that research is accessed has changed significantly. Over the course of the past four years, I learned how use online data bases to access the exact research that I needed. Furthermore, I learned how to properly review the literature and how to synthesize it so that I could act on it.

As a classroom teacher, I was accustomed to using data for decision-making. But this dissertation provided me with opportunities to use data analysis on a much larger scale. As a statistics teacher, I was already comfortable with data analysis but never was able to examine larger data sets across multiple stakeholder groups. I feel extremely comfortable and competent with producing data. I learned how to create and fine tune data collection tools and now incorporate these topics into my statistics curriculum.

My development as a scholar is exemplified by the artifacts in this ELP. I created a website for the CSW FOP and developed an online training module with the knowledge I acquired over the course of my Ed.D. classes (Appendices D & G). My initial four artifacts show how I developed over time as a doctoral student (Appendices A-D). I analyzed the problem with the CSW FOP, revised the existing curriculum, located pertinent research to create and pilot a new FOP and then conduct a program

analysis. As I reflect on those four artifacts, I can see that I have improved over the past several years.

Initially, I looked at the problem with the CSW FOP from the vantage point of the lead teacher of the program. The longer I spent researching and identifying the gaps in our program, the more I knew that I needed to examine everything through the lens of all of the stakeholders. As a result, I found strategies for solving the problem that were empathetic to the needs and interests of the students, and their families. This was one of the primary reasons that I conducted a needs assessment.

As I review some of my earlier work as a doctoral student compared to my most recent work, it is abundantly clear to me that I have made significant strides in developing as a scholar. First, although I always felt comfortable with statistical inference, I have become much more confident in creating instruments for data collection. Some of my earlier instruments were rudimentary compared to the ones that I have created more recently. Secondly, I had little to no experience with gathering and analyzing qualitative data. My later artifacts show significant improvement with analyzing qualitative data. I am comfortable coding data and then creating tables that describe the findings. These are all skills that I developed over the course of my doctoral studies.

Development as a Problem Solver

As a math teacher, I pride myself on teaching students various problem-solving strategies. I have always considered myself a problem solver but my time as an Ed.D. student has afforded me a plethora of opportunities to improve upon my skills. Previously, when tackling problems within my classroom, I only considered the issue from the lens of the student and teacher. Now, I make sure to look at all issues through

the lens of the various stakeholders and I also recognize that there are multiple ways to solve any problem. There were several approaches that I could have used to improve the CSW FOP. It was important to me that the problem, potential solutions, and improvement efforts were continually examined from the vantage points of the freshmen, mentors, teachers, administrators, and parents.

As a classroom teacher, I formally and informally collect and analyze data to drive decision making. As I developed as a problem solver, I learned the importance of regular, formal data collection and the usefulness of data analysis for making decisions and I subsequently used these skills to make recommendations to my administrative team. The CSW FOP has improved as a result of my ability to synthesize the various skills I learned in my Ed.D. courses.

When I reflect on my ELP, I see clear evidence that my problem-solving capabilities are more advanced than when I started this journey and that I now have the necessary tools for solving school wide or district wide issues.

Development as a Partner

Throughout my Ed.D. coursework, I developed as a partner in multiple ways. First, I was fortunate to take classes with a small cohort of people. We have gotten to know each other through the years and I am still in touch with many of them professionally in other areas. For example, I met with board members and teachers at a charter school in southern Delaware and advised them on mentoring programs for freshmen. Since I teach statistics, I have spent time with these classmates helping them with the data analysis for their ELP's. This has been a wonderful partnership since I have been able to learn about what is going on at area schools. It has been fun to have a small role in their research.

As I reflect on my development as a scholar, problem solver, and partner I am incredibly grateful for all of the experiences that allowed me to grow in these areas. Going back to school after so many years has been invigorating to me as an educator. I truly feel that I have the tools that I need to tackle any educational problem in an organized and productive manner. Although I will continue to be the lead teacher for the FOP, I am excited to examine other areas at CSW that I can impact.

Final Thoughts

As a teacher, I am committed to attending to my students' academic, social and emotional learning. In fact, that is precisely why I tackled the issue with the CSW FOP. I believe that all students can learn as long as they are afforded an environment that is conducive to learning. The program focused on the social and emotional aspects of transitioning to high school so that the students would better be able to attend to the academics. My goal was to design a program that not only eased the transition to CSW but that also promoted equity and equality. As I reflect on the development of the CSW FOP, I am confident that the program has improved significantly and has helped the freshmen adjust to their new school. I look forward to continuing to improve upon the program for the upcoming freshmen class.

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Appendix A

ARTIFACT 1: PROBLEM ANALYSIS OF FOP AT CSW

Title of Paper: Freshmen Orientation: Laying the Foundation for a Smooth Transition

Problem: Freshmen students need an orientation program to assist them during the transition from middle school to high school

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Organizational Role: Freshmen Orientation Leader, The Charter School of Wilmington

Course Project: EDUC 846

Date: December 1, 2015

Introduction and Problem Statement

According to the school's website, the mission of the Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) is to "engage highly motivated high school students with an interest in math and science by providing a challenging college-preparatory curriculum in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment that integrates practical learning opportunities, sets high expectations, develops social responsibility and promotes a global perspective." (Retrieved from <http://charterschool.org/mission-statement/>). CSW is a highly competitive and rigorous comprehensive high school for grades 9-12 located in Wilmington, Delaware. As a result of school choice in the State of Delaware, students live in a wide variety of areas throughout New Castle and Kent Counties.

Although it varies from year to year, CSW gets students from roughly 25 different middle schools including public, private and parochial. Almost all research

provides overwhelming evidence that indicate that the transition from middle to high school can be a daunting one for all students. Clark and Hunley (2007) assert that regardless of where they live, incoming freshmen face the same problems nationwide, such as anxiety about entering a new school, social pressure, and increased academic pressure and responsibility.

CSW has the distinction of being the first Charter School in the State of Delaware. They opened their doors 16 years ago and have hosted the same Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) every August. The current FOP allows student to take a tour of the building, meet their classroom teachers, participate in team-building with their new classmates and attend a luncheon hosted by the parent association. The day is very low key and for many years it was received well by all the stakeholders. However, over the past several years, feedback regarding the FOP has been negative. End of the year parent, teacher and student survey results indicate that all stakeholders feel it does very little to prepare the students for the rigor of student life at CSW.

This shift from positive to negative is likely a direct result of the variety of new technological platforms that have entered the school over the past several years including online mathematics and English textbooks as well as the implementation of Schoology last year. According to the creators of Schoology, it is “a learning management system (LMS) that has all the tools (CSW) needs to create engaging content, design lessons, and assess student understanding.” Rivero (2015) indicates that the past 20 years have been a “tech infused education era”. Technological advances have drastically changed the ways schools are run in a positive manner but

there is a learning curve for all stakeholders. Freshmen have a difficult time adjusting to these technological demands since they are also experiencing a variety of other things including more rigorous academics and establishment of new peer groups.

With online textbooks and a LMS, the students are responsible for managing many aspects of their education. It requires increased responsibility, knowledge of the different platforms, while they balance the personal upheaval of adolescence. The bottom line is that transitioning to high school is far more complex than it was 16 years ago and the FOP needs to respond to these changes.

As exciting as entering high school is for most students, it is also a transition period that is often characterized by declining academic performance, increased absences, increased behavioral disturbances, and less participation in extracurricular activities (Fritzer & Hurst, 1996). There is a need to develop and maintain supportive relationships within schools and create a caring school community for all students, especially incoming ninth-grade students (Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010). A well thought out FOP could provide such a foundation for the students at CSW.

In the Fall of 2015, several teachers who have freshmen participated in an in-service to discuss the current freshmen class. At this meeting, an ample amount of anecdotal evidence was provided that further substantiates the fact that a vast majority of students are unprepared for our curriculum and the current LMS. Many teachers reported that students are struggling to find assignments online while others do not understand how to submit assignments via the LMS for grading. All of the information indicates that most of the freshmen are not prepared for managing all of their work.

This study will explore the current freshmen orientation program and identify ways to help students during this crucial yet difficult transition period.

A freshmen transition program provides students with an understanding of the expectations and opportunities of high school. This transition period is a milestone for adolescents and requires students to learn more independently than in middle school. As a result, it is imperative that proper support programs in place throughout high school to address both academic and social needs (Galloway & Gallenberger, 2000). One of the first is the Freshmen Orientation Program.

Purposes and Goals

The purpose is to create a freshmen orientation program that will provide for an easier transition at the beginning of their high school careers. This will be a multi-year process of identifying (1) Student and teacher perceptions about the current FOP, (2) Student and Teacher perceptions about the necessities of an effective and useful FOP, (3) Researching best practice for high school orientation programs, (4) Designing and implementing a pilot FOP in the Fall of 2016 and (5) Gathering data from stakeholders after the pilot FOP and modifying in future years as needed. Within 3 years, survey results regarding the efficacy of the new FOP will have more than 50% of all stakeholders indicating that the program did indeed ease some of the stressors of entering high school.

Key Questions and Tasks (KQT)

1. How do students and staff feel about the current FOP?

To answer this question, we will conduct a survey of the current freshmen class. We selected this group since they recently experienced the FOP. We will also survey the teaching staff since they have first-hand knowledge of the deficiencies that the new students are having as they transition to high school. Additionally, we will conduct focus groups with the same set of teachers as well as current sophomore and junior students. We selected these older students since they are well past the transition period but also know what it takes to be successful at this competitive, comprehensive high school. This stakeholder analysis will indicate what is important to the people at CSW. Survey questions are Attachment 1 and Focus Group Questions are Attachment 2. This information may indicate activities that need to be eliminated or continued with the new FOP. Patterns may indicate that students and teachers see things either differently or similarly. The data could be correlated to see if there is a relationship between these two groups of stakeholders.

2. What do students and staff feel are important components of an effective FOP?

These questions will also be answered via the student and teacher surveys as well as the student and teacher focus groups. We felt it was important to assess the thoughts regarding the current FOP and also to solicit the opinions of the people who are learning and teaching at CSW. There may be information they provide that is not found in the research but would work well given the culture and student

body of the school. Through our research for this study, it appears the research on transitioning to high school is a lot more sparse than the studies pertaining to transitioning the college. As a result, we felt it was important to gain input from the people at CSW.

3. What does current research say about the needs of high school transitioning to high school?

Decision-oriented research is needed to solve the problem with the CSW FOP. Although we will collect data from the shareholders, it is extremely important to review both professional and scholarly literature on effective high school FOP in order to know how organizations similar to CSW handle their FOP. Archbald (2014) states that surveys, interviews, internal stakeholders, as well as professional and scholarly literature are all legitimate sources for a problem such as this. We can also use research to clarify the desired state which is to ease the transition for freshmen at CSW high school. Although research is sparse pertaining to creating effective FOP, there is one overwhelming thing that is clear: Transitioning to high school is a highly complex process that occurs during an already difficult developmental time period. Lampert (2005) states that this transition can be perilous for adolescents. It is clear that helping CSW students deal with transitioning to high school more efficiently would be beneficial since they have many other difficult things occurring during this time period.

4. How do we design and implement an effective FOP?

We will take all of the stakeholder data and couple it with research to design a FOP for CSW students remembering that the ultimate goal is to ease their transition into our school. “All educators are concerned about ninth grade students who enter high school lacking the skills necessary for success” (Campbell, 2001). This well documented fact makes the design and implementation critical. At this point, we would also research the practices for designing and implantation of new programs. It is imperative that these steps are done with fidelity; otherwise the new FOP may not have the staying power it would need to last at CSW.

5. How can we assess the new FOP?

This is a critical part of this process. In order to see if the stakeholders have observed increased efficacy of the FOP, with respect to easing the transition of freshmen, we need to be able to measure this. A survey and focus groups or interviews could be used to quantify this. We are hoping that more than half of the stakeholders find the new program efficient, but we would need to design tools for gathering this data. Once again, research could be used to help with this task.

Attachment 1 – Student Survey

Below is the survey created on Google Docs that can be administered to participants via our school email or via the school website. The actual survey has circles to the left for the fixed response questions. The respondent would either circle the answer if it was given with a pencil or shade it in with the mouse if it was given on the computer. The Open Ended Questions have text boxes the where the respondents can type their answers. The survey could be given to current freshmen but also to other grade levels. Depending on the number of groups it is given to, data could be analyzed across these strata or collectively.

Freshmen Orientation Survey

Dear Student,

This survey seeks to understand your perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding our Freshmen Orientation. The data collected will be used to analyze our current program and, if necessary, will be used to improve our program for future students. This survey is anonymous and we thank you for taking the time to help us evaluating the current Freshmen Orientation Program.

Sincerely,

Eileen Voltz

Freshmen Orientation Leader

Directions: Shade in one circle for each question.

Were the teachers and volunteers helpful with explaining how things will work here at CSW?

Yes, very helpful

Yes, kind of helpful

Neutral

No, not really helpful

No, not helpful at all

Now that you have completed your freshmen year, in your opinion, how helpful was Freshmen Orientation?

Extremely Helpful

Helpful

Neutral

Not Helpful

Extremely Unhelpful

Do you feel it is more important to learn about your peers or the school as a whole?

My peers

The school

Both are just as important

Which one would you rather have?

More time to learn about the building, the school website, schoology, etc.

More time to socialize and get to know the students and teachers

A little of both

What was your favorite thing from freshmen orientation?

Spaghetti Tower

Ice Breaker Bingo

Assembly

Pizza Party

Do you believe the technological resources we use here at CSW(schoology, online textbooks, ect.) are easier to use than traditional resources?

Yes

Somewhat

No

Would a four year outline with descriptions of various courses be helpful with planning your high school career?

Yes

Somewhat

No not at all

Did freshmen orientation broaden your knowledge of the school and your peers?

Yes, very much

Yes, a little
No, not really
No, not at all

What two things did you learn about most during freshmen orientation?

Your answer

What two things would you change to make freshmen orientation better?

Your answer

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of The Charter School of Wilmington. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Additional Terms](#)

Attachment 2 - Focus Group Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate! We would like to understand your perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding our Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP). Since it is voluntary, you do not need to answer all of the questions unless you wish, all answers will be reported anonymously. There are no right or wrong answers. This will take under 30 minutes and the data collected will be used to analyze our current program. We will also use your input to improve our program for future students. In addition to teachers, current Sophomores and Juniors are the best candidates for this focus group since you have long term experience in observing life here at CSW.

Teacher Questions

1. What do you think the purpose *is* of our current FOP?
2. What do you think the purpose *should be* of a FOP?
3. What parts, if any, of our current FOP should we keep?
4. What would you like to see, if anything, added to our FOP?
5. Would you be willing to lead any particular activities for future FOP? If so, please explain.

Student Questions (Current Sophomore and Junior Students)

1. What part of your FOP did you find the *most* helpful?
2. What part of your FOP did you find the least helpful?
3. What would you like to see, if anything, added to our FOP?
4. Would you be willing to lead any particular activities for future FOP? If so, please explain.

Appendix B

ARTIFACT 2: FOP CURRICULUM REVISION

Curriculum Unit Revision

FOP at The Charter School of Wilmington

Eileen Voltz

EDUC 897-010

University of Delaware, Spring 2016

Framing of Curriculum Problem

According to the school's website, the mission of the Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) is to "engage highly motivated high school students with an interest in math and science by providing a challenging college-preparatory curriculum in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment that integrates practical learning opportunities, sets high expectations, develops social responsibility and promotes a global perspective." (Retrieved from <http://charterschool.org/mission-statement/>). CSW is a highly competitive and rigorous comprehensive high school for grades 9-12 located in Wilmington, Delaware. As a result of school choice in the State of Delaware, students live in a wide variety of areas throughout New Castle and Kent Counties.

Although it varies from year to year, CSW enrolls students from roughly 25 different middle schools including public, private and parochial. Almost all research provides overwhelming evidence that indicate that the transition from middle to high school can be a daunting one for all students. Clark and Hunley (2007), assert that regardless of where they live, incoming freshmen face the same problems nationwide, such as anxiety about entering a new school, social pressure, and increased academic pressure and responsibility.

CSW has the distinction of being the first Charter School in the State of Delaware. They opened their doors 20 years ago and have hosted the same FOP every August. The current FOP allows student to take a tour of the building, meet their

classroom teachers, participate in team-building with their new classmates and attend a luncheon hosted by the parent association. The day is very low key for the new students and for many years it was received well by all the stakeholders. However, over the past several years, feedback regarding the FOP has been negative. End of the year parent, teacher and student survey results indicate that all stakeholders feel it does very little to prepare the students for the rigor of student life at CSW. This data makes it clear that the current curriculum for the FOP needs to be revised. My goal is to fix current gaps and upgrade this dated FOP. Jacobs (2010) would likely argue that this is happening since “our students are in the 21st century, and they are waiting for the (FOP) to catch up.”

This shift from positive to negative is a direct result of the variety of new technological platforms that have entered the school over the past several years including online mathematics and English textbooks as well as the implementation of Schoology last year. According to the creators of Schoology, it is “a learning management system (LMS) that has all the tools (CSW) needs to create engaging content, design lessons, and assess student understanding.” Rivero (2015) indicates that the past 20 years have been a “tech infused education era”. Technological advances have drastically changed the ways schools are run in a positive manner but there is a learning curve for all stakeholders. Freshmen have a difficult time adjusting to these technological demands since they are also experiencing a variety of other things including more rigorous academics and establishment of new peer groups.

With online textbooks and a LMS, the students are responsible for managing many aspects of their education. It requires increased responsibility and knowledge of the different platforms, while they balance the personal upheaval of adolescence. The bottom line is that transitioning to high school is far more complex than it was two decades ago and the FOP needs to respond to these changes. Jacobs (2010), states that “we need to overhaul, update, and inject life into our curriculum and dramatically alter the format of what schools look like to match the times in which we live.” I believe this is a major problem of the FOP at CSW since it has not been changed since the start of the school despite the fact that the landscape for the students has changed dramatically. Jacobs (2010), describes this as running on a habit.

The *learning needs* of the incoming freshmen vary widely based on the middle school that they attended. I gathered some informal survey data from two current freshmen classes regarding their middle school experience. Public school students are accustomed to some sort of LMS. Even if it is different than the one we use, they have had some exposure and therefore have an easier time adjusting. On the other side of the spectrum are the private parochial students who rarely use a LMS. The following are direct quotes from this part of the target population when asked about how they felt during the start of the school year: “extremely stressful”, “terrible”, “confused” and “awful”.

Another *learning need* of this target audience is adjusting to a larger school building. All middle schools are smaller and often students are grouped together on teams. In our high school not only are students not grouped in teams, but they are in

classes with students in different grades. At CSW, students have the opportunity to interact with over 1,000 different students throughout the course of the year and another 500 students who share the same facilities with CSW (Cab Calloway School of the Arts). When current freshmen were asked for three things CSW could do to improve the FOP, more than 70% of them suggested giving a tour of the school. It seems so obvious that we should have been doing this but we never have! One freshman told me he spent his first semester using the same bathroom since he did not know where the other bathrooms were. Clearly, this is undue stress that can be eliminated with a well thought out tour on the very first day. Another suggestion was teaching students how to use their cafeteria number to pay for their meals. Again, this is a seemingly easy thing to do but for our incoming students it appears that it is an undo source of stress and easily remedied with appropriate training during the FOP.

There are several *student outcomes* that I hope to improve. First, one goal is to familiarize the new students with the physical layout of the school so that they feel comfortable more quickly in the new setting. By doing so, it would allow them to focus more on academics. Secondly, we hope to reduce student stress level by providing appropriate instruction for managing the technologies for our LMS, online textbooks and lunch procedures.

The one overarching *student interest* that binds the freshmen together is their love of math and science so it would be important to incorporate this into their freshmen experience! As a part of our current FOP, the new students are involved in team-building activities. It is important for these students, who are coming from so

many different schools to begin to get to know their peers. In fact, based on data I obtained from a school counselor, each year we have roughly 10-20 students who do not know any students at CSW. It would be helpful if we centered our team-building activities on math and science since it is an interest of every single student.

In the fall of 2015, I was asked by my school administration to tackle this curriculum problem and create and implement an updated FOP beginning in the fall of 2016. The *target audience* is the freshmen class at CSW. Thus far, I have *collaborated* with a variety of the stakeholders at CSW and at the University of Delaware. First, I met with the administration to hear exactly what they wanted so that I could design something that suits their needs. For example, one thing that is important to my two administrators is a class meeting where they can welcome them and discuss some important school policies. In previous years, this assembly was done a week later but it will be incorporated into the very first day of our program. Second, I informally surveyed two current freshmen classes and one sophomore class asking them for feedback on the current FOP and suggestions for an updated FOP. Their responses were done individually and anonymously. Ultimately, we will need to collect data from the students, teachers and parents. Archbald (2014) states that surveys, interviews, internal stakeholders, as well as professional and scholarly literature are all legitimate sources for a problem such as this. We can also use research to clarify the desired state which is to ease the transition for freshmen at CSW high school.

Next, I have been working closely with the head school counselor and the school nurse and we have met several times to discuss the information I gathered from

the administration and the students. I elected to keep this group small but strategically chose people that would be looking at the needs of students from different points of view. We identified common themes and also tried to organize the information better so we could use it to design the new FOP. Through our interactions and discussions, we have decided that the FOP would be expanded beyond the usual one day affair. We will have one and a half days of a new FOP followed by bimonthly freshmen seminars. The yearlong program will be called classMATES where MATES stands for Mentoring and Transitioning Experience for Students.

There is a larger committee comprised of six teachers who are willing to implement the MATES program in the Fall of 2016. Since I am teaching a Research Statistics course this semester, I have involved my class with creating surveys that we can use at the end of next year to evaluate the new program. They created one for the FOP and another to be used at the end of the school year. We will use this data to continue to make modifications. I expect this program to be fluid and ever changing since the needs of our incoming freshmen classes vary from year to year.

There are several *student outcomes* the new freshmen experience program would impact. First, we hope to ease their transition to a larger school by providing a support system in the form of peer mentoring or ambassadors. Junior and Senior students will mentor 5-6 freshmen starting on the very first day and continuing throughout the entire year.

“Not all students are alike. Based on this knowledge, differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning that gives students multiple options for

taking in information and making sense of ideas” (Hall, Strangman & Meyer, 2003). It is important that the MATES program allows for differentiation since we have students coming in from a variety of settings with multiple learning styles and needs. One way I hope to differentiate instruction (DI) will be by creating flexible seminars as a part of the FOP. For example, there will be some seminars that all students will attend such as the school tour and meeting the administrative team. However, there will be some that they can elect to attend based on their needs. There will be a seminar on Schoology, our LMS, and another on the use of the graphing calculator. Ideally, we could have beginner and advanced seminars for each so students will be able to get the level of instruction that they need. The entire experience should be an opportunity to engage students where they are and allow opportunities for them to form their own meaning of the information.

The “Universal Design for Learning is a theoretical framework developed by CAST to guide the development of curricula that are flexible and supportive of all students” (Hall, Strangman & Meyer, 2003). I believe designing the MATES program within this framework would ensure that the program is accessible to all students. Not only do I want to offer choices of content, but I also want to allow students opportunities to practice with supports. For example, students can practice working on the computers or their devices to access the LMS or visit the cafeteria to get something to eat by using their lunch number. Also, the seminars throughout the FOP will utilize different multimedia formats in order to meet the diverse needs of the incoming freshmen class. I believe that if the MATES program utilizes components of both DI

and UDL, the faculty and students at CSW will see that the program was designed to promote trust, equity and fairness. All seminars will be recorded and posted in the event that students are absent or if they would like to see it again.

Evidence Centered Research

As exciting as entering high school is for most students, it is also a transition period that is often characterized by declining academic performance, increased absences, increased behavioral disturbances, and less participation in extracurricular activities (Fritzer & Hurst, 1996). There is a need to develop and maintain supportive relationships within schools and create a caring school community for all students, especially incoming ninth-grade students (Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010). A well thought out FOP could provide such a foundation for the students at CSW.

In the fall of 2015, I worked collaboratively with several mathematics teachers in our PLC to discuss the current freshmen class. At this meeting, an ample amount of anecdotal evidence was provided that further substantiates the fact that a vast majority of students are unprepared for our curriculum and the current LMS. Many teachers reported that students are struggling to find assignments online while others do not understand how to submit assignments via the LMS for grading. All of the information indicates that most of the freshmen are not prepared for managing all of their work.

The MATES program will provide students with an understanding of the expectations and opportunities of high school as well as provide opportunities to get help on non-academic issues. This transition period is a milestone for adolescents and requires students to learn more independently than in middle school. As a result, it is

imperative that proper support programs in place throughout high school to address both academic and social needs (Galloway & Gallenberger, 2000). Research also indicates that a one day orientation program will not meet the needs of incoming freshmen. Studies indicate that “students’ needs are long-term and comprehensive” (Dedmond, Brown, & LaFauci, 2006). This is one of the reasons CSW will be expanding to a yearlong curriculum.

“As educators, our challenge is to match the needs of our learners to a world that is changing with great rapidity” (Jacobs, 2010). The goal is to have a FOP that is both engaging for our new students but also meets the needs of the students in this time period which is not happening since it was created 20 years ago.

Transitioning to high school is a highly complex process that occurs during an already difficult developmental time period. Lampert (2005), states that this transition can be perilous for adolescents. It is clear that helping CSW students deal with transitioning to high school more efficiently would be beneficial since they have many other difficult things occurring during this time period. As I considered different content standards and their relationship with the MATES program, the first that came to mind was Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Although this is not a curriculum like NCTM or the Next Generation Science Standards, without consideration of the psychological needs of humans, our students will never reach self-actualization and reach their true academic and personal potential. My hope is that the FOP lays the foundation for the lower end of the hierarchy (biological and physiological) and that the bimonthly seminars will include material that moves up the pyramid. After

considering UbD Essential Questions, the essential questions for comprehensive health and wellness, specifically strands 2.1-2.4, are the foundation for this program.

As part of the MATES program, upperclassmen will mentor the freshmen. The purpose of the mentors is twofold. First, ideally, these interactions will continue to help the new students work up the ladder on Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and lay the foundations for the next two levels of love/belonging and self-esteem. And it is important to note that these levels are not indicating that one is more important than the other but rather that one is a stepping stone to the next level on the pyramid. And secondly, research indicates that peer leaders can provide a supportive environment for incoming freshmen. They are able to provide social emotional intervention and even have the potential to influence graduation levels (Johnson, Simon & Mun, 2014). Benson et al. (1994) states that there are a variety of psychological changes for teenagers during their transition period such as low self-esteem and external locus of control. These issues must be addressed within the school curriculum so that students will be able to thrive in the classroom and beyond. But what subject would tackle these important issues? Given the current landscape of high stakes testing, there are very few subject teachers that would be willing to give up instructional time even though they would agree that these are all important things to address. Although I cannot find a specific curriculum to frame our program around, my goal is to combine many of the things that I learned in this class to create a curriculum that other schools could use as well.

When designing the curriculum for this new program, I am trying to use a constructivist approach since that is what I have done in my classroom for over twenty five years! I believe that all people involved in this program should engage in dialogue with each other before, during and after the program is in motion. Social discourse will be the mainstay of the bimonthly seminars and they will be student run under the guidance of a supervising teacher. Most activities for the FOP and the MATES program will be interactive. All workshops and seminars will be done in a manner that is participatory and active as opposed to traditional and passive (Jacobs, 2010). All aspects of the curriculum need to consider the whole child's academic, emotional, physical and mental needs as opposed to just the logistics of transitioning to high school. I am a learner centered educator and believe that self-actualization will not occur unless we attend to all of these components both in and out of the classroom.

The use of seniors as peer leaders in the MATES program utilizes a community of practice. "Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor" (Wegner, 2011). She also states that communities of practice are groups of people who share a passion for something. At CSW, our students are passionate about learning and helping others. The MATES program is an opportunity for them to help new students assimilate into the community but also a chance for them to hone their leadership skills. Both the freshmen and seniors would be engaging in joint discussions and helping each other. They will be able to build relationships with people they otherwise may not have met. This would allow students to develop social responsibility which is

part of our school mission statement. The cultural competencies and sense of community that the MATES program could provide would also ensure a safe and productive school environment which is another part of the mission statement for CSW.

Strategies

Many of the design principles used when working on redesigning the FOP have been mentioned previously in this paper. This program aligns with the CSW mission statement since there are no district or school assessments for our FOP. The program has addressed at least two parts of our mission statement: (1) creating safe, friendly, and nurturing environment via the student mentoring program (2) develops social responsibility via the student mentoring program and (3) promotes a global perspective via the integration of the previously developed cultural diversity curriculum. Moving forward, I would like to create some sort of assessment or data gathering tool to see if this program is meeting the needs of the students. I was interested in observing current data regarding stress levels of freshmen. After meeting with the school nurse and members of the wellness center, I learned they do not track data in this manner. Similarly, I met with the guidance department and they also do not have any data. We are trying to design a mechanism for tracking such things so that we can objectively see if there is a reduction in stress levels of freshmen as a result of this new curriculum. All of our meetings are another example of communities of practice. It is very exciting to be a part of developing this program with so many other people who are equally invested in this important task!

Once this program is rolled out to the staff, all teachers will work in their PLC's to make sure that the program is being implemented with fidelity and integrity. All teachers are mandated to work in professional learning committees weekly so we will use some of this time to help improve on the program while it is being created as well as during implementation. I mentioned previously that the program will be fluid and flexible and teacher input based on both individual and group reflections will be paramount to the success of the new program.

The freshmen orientation day activities and the MATES program take into account equity, social justice through the use of the UDL framework and differentiated instruction. The goal is to allow for multiple means of representation to meet the needs of a wide range of students. The bimonthly seminars will incorporate opportunities for the freshmen and their mentors to explore racial, ethnic and social differences (Gay, 2013). This past year the current sophomore class was involved in monthly seminars on cultural diversity but with the implementation of the MATES program, that program will be phased out during the 2017-2018 school year. The cultural diversity leadership team will be delivering the curriculum they developed within the framework of this new freshmen experience program, specifically in the seminars in March and April.

Outcomes and Evaluation

Attachment 1 is the revised FOP. It is very much a work in progress. I have tried to involve many others in this process since this is something we plan to implement in the fall of 2016. In order for people to buy in to this, they must feel that

their thoughts and opinions have been heard. Although I have spent many hours integrated the content of this course to this process, I felt it is important to show you what has been created to date but do anticipate it will change!

I am in the process of creating modules (this is no small task!) for each month that will explain exactly what should be covered and alignment with the Health Standards. Additionally, I am creating training for the mentors that will be given this summer. It is my desire to implement this next school year so I have been working chronologically on the modules. It is possible that the actual curriculum modules for the bimonthly seminars will be developed right before implementation. At this time, I am asking for colleagues to volunteer to create a module. I believe this would be advantageous since our teaching staff is quite diverse. I think the content would be richer if it were developed by more than one person.

I believe this new freshmen experience program, which includes the FOPs as well as the MATES program, has a tremendous amount of added value. First of all, through UDL and differentiation, it is accessible to all students and attempts to meet them where they are. Secondly, the constructivist design will allow student interests to drive what they select to do and how they elect to learn and grow. For example, the session on learning styles will be offered throughout the school in different manners. Students will be able to elect small group discussions, video clips, or computer based applications. And finally, the whole process embodies the art of transformative teaching. It is meant to be creative, caring, collegial, collaborative and critical. And this is the very early stages of what I believe is a powerful program. It is forcing the

teachers to reflect on teaching and learning outside of their primary content area. And ultimately, I believe it will transform the way students see themselves as part of the CSW community.

Moving forward, my goal is to involve alumni in this program giving this program even more depth. It would be wonderful to have alumni mentor new students and also provide seminars throughout the school year. Collaboration will be ongoing in the PLC's as well as in committee meetings and weekly administrative team meetings that occur every Thursday morning. The head guidance counselor has agreed to both inform and seek input and advice from the administrative team throughout the development, implementation and evaluation of this program.

Interpretation and Reflective Practice

After teaching for twenty five years, I have come to learn that I am a conglomeration of many different ideologies. If I had to select two that I utilized throughout this whole process, the first would be the Learner Center Ideology. I think all things should be fun and enjoyable for the student and focused on the needs of each individual. The Learner Centered Ideology states the goal of education is "growth of individuals" based on their own sociological, educational and emotional needs. One advantage of this program is that it will encourage growth in both the freshmen and senior students. As I reflect on the parts of the program I have developed, I feel confident that this is extremely learner centered: the activities are intended to be fun, hands on and interactive. The second ideology that I can see in this program is Social Efficiency. The "purpose of schooling is to efficiently meet the needs of society by

training youth to function as contributing members of society" (Schiro, 2012). One advantage of this freshmen experience program is that we are training the peer leaders to contribute to the CSW "society" and give back to their community. In doing so, it is ideally fostering a safe caring environment that allows students of all different cultures to interact in a positive manner.

As I continue to receive feedback from the stakeholders at CSW as well as from colleagues in my UD classes, I am able to eliminate some things and build upon the suggestions of others. One example of a success came from the night of my oral presentation of my project. Thus far, I received several interesting ideas. One was to hold a pep rally on the very first day of orientation. I later discovered a school in Kansas that hosts a pep rally. "The purpose of the pep rally is twofold: to allow the freshmen to feel the pride that the upper classmen have and, more important, to convince them they are now part of the...family" (Lundblad & Tappan, 2008). I spoke with my Principal and he wants to try it this fall so has already asked the AD to organize this event as part of our FOP! In my opinion, another success of this process is that a variety of staff members from different disciplines are interacting in positive ways to build something that will benefit our students in their freshmen year and hopefully beyond.

All projects have limitations and this one is no different. I believe at times I have too many irons in the fire! But since we are in the development stage, I would rather have too much than too little. One roadblock is that when we offer students a choice for seminars, it may lead to logistical issues. If most of the students want the same

session, we may not be able to accommodate them all at one. At this juncture, the scheduling person at CSW is seeing if there is a way for students to register online for the preferences so that we know how to organize the supervision and instructors so we can avoid overflow issues. Another issue is that I have used informal, anecdotal data that I gathered to begin this process. I will need to use the data we will receive in a few weeks in the student and parent surveys to tweak the plan for this program.

There are many things I will need to do in the future in order for this to come to fruition. First, I need to create an implementation plan and identify who will be responsible for what for the FOP and for the MATES portion of the program. At this point, I have done the majority of the work but it will be impossible for this to continue. If I were an administrator it may be easier but as a classroom teacher, I have many other responsibilities. Second, and I mentioned this previously, I need to create a solid training program for the mentors. They are teenagers and will need some help learning how to work with freshmen in an encouraging, positive and productive manner.

Attachment 1

There will be 1.5 days of freshmen orientation.

All students will engage in the following workshops:

- **Administrative welcome and meeting-** The purpose is for students to meet the administrative team and to learn about student expectations and consequences for good or poor behavior.
- **Team-building** (with homeroom around math and/or science topic)- The purpose is for HR students to get to know their peers.
- **Mini-tours of the high school** (Student-led tours of the building by the student mentors.)- The purpose of this session is for students to learn where everything is in the building.
- **Freshmen curriculum** – The purpose of this session is to inform students about the freshmen curriculum and provide each student with his/her schedule.
- **Shortened bell schedule** –The purpose of this session is to provide students the opportunity to navigate themselves from class to class and to meet their teachers.
- **Student Connections-** The purpose of this session is for students to take part in a scavenger hunt to search for clues regarding the clubs and sports programs at CSW.
- **Meet and greet with the Wellness Center Staff-**The purpose of this session is for students to meet the staff and to learn of the opportunities available at the Wellness Center.
- **Meet and greet with the Cafeteria Staff-** The purpose of this session is for students to receive instruction on cafeteria procedures including hands on opportunities for using student pin numbers to pay for food.

Students will select 4 workshops to attend:

(All workshops will be taped and posted online)

- **Introduction to Schoology-**The purpose of this session is to introduce the LMS used by CSW and to provide opportunities for new students to experiment with the LMS.
- **Advanced Schoology-** The purpose of this session is for incoming students to practice basic Schoology techniques but also learn and practice more advanced features of our LMS.
- **Private, parochial and home school transition** –The purpose of this session is to have a conversation to address the questions and concerns of families

whose children who have been educated in a private, parochial, or home school setting.

- **Connecting to CSW**-The purpose is for students to have opportunities to utilize their login and password procedures for email, Schoology and the HAC. (Home Access Center)
- **Introduction to online textbooks and support**-The purpose of this session is to experiment with online textbook login procedure and for students to identify resources for technological support during the school year.
- **Introduction to the graphing calculator**-The purpose of this session is to expose new students to the basics of the TI-84 graphing calculator through hands on session. (*No experience necessary*)
- **Advanced graphing calculator**- The purpose of this session is for students to learn and experiment with more advanced techniques on the TI-84 calculator through hands on sessions. (*Some experience preferred*)
- **Learning Styles Inventory**- The purpose of this session is for students to learn something about their learning styles. (Students may select this to be computer based or paper and pencil based)
- **Basic Study Skills**-The purpose of this session is for students to learn the basics of notetaking and strategies for reading high school textbooks.
- **CSW Mission Statement**- The purpose of this session is to learn about the mission statement
- **Club and Activity Fair** (Student led in the gymnasium)- The purpose of this session is to provide additional time for students to talk to current CSW students to ask questions or learn more about clubs, activities, and the high school experience.
- **Parent to Parent Conversations** (parents only; prior to pizza party on day 1) The purpose of this session is for parents to meet current CSW parents/guardians to ask questions or learn more about clubs, activities, and the high school experience.

The MATES Program (Mentoring and Transitioning Experience for Students)

The bi-monthly workshops, facilitated by trained peer mentors and overseen by a faculty member will include some of the following topics but will be revised based on the needs of the students. We plan on giving short monthly needs assessments to

the freshmen to see what they feel that they need. A majority of the topics are aligned with UbD Essential Questions for comprehensive health and wellness, strands 2.1-2.4.

September

- Learning Styles: student will learn more about how they learn best
- Learning Styles continued: team-building with students with same learning style

October

- Study strategies based on learning styles
- Team-building activity with another homeroom

November

- Nutrition and wellness
- Making healthy choices

December

- Understanding midterm exam schedule & tips for preparing for exams
- Stress relief strategies

January (no seminars due to midterm exam schedule and winter break)

February

- Scheduling for next year with guidance counselors
- Drug & Alcohol topics

March-April: Cultural Diversity Curriculum (Already established and use at CSW)

May

- How are character and health related?
- End of year feedback and final team-building activity centered on math and/or science topic

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Appendix C

ARTIFACT 3: PILOT FOP

Freshmen Orientation Schedule: Monday August 28, 2017

7:15-7:35	Check-in	Gymnasium
7:35-8:15	Opening Assembly	Theater
8:15-8:35	Panel with the mentors	Theater
8:35-8:45	Introduction to mentors	Theater
8:45--10:40	Workshops	See back

10:45-11:55	Meet your A-B-C-D teachers!	Classrooms
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10:45-11	A block
11-11:05	Transition
11:05--11:20	B Block
11:20-11:25	Transition
11:25-11:40	C Block
11:40-11:45	Transition
11:45-11:55	D Block
11:55-12	D Block Teachers bring class to courtyard

12-12:35	Lunch	Courtyard
12:45-1:45	Scavenger Hunt	HR/Building
1:45	HR transition to FB Field	
2-2:25	Mini-Pep Rally	Stadium
2:25	Dismissal from Stadium	

Freshmen Orientation Schedule: Tuesday August 29, 2017

7:35 Homeroom HR

7:45-9 Meet your E-F-G-H teachers! Classrooms

7:45-8	E block
8-8:05	Transition
8:05-8:20	F Block
8:20-8:25	Transition
8:25-8:40	G Block
8:40-8:45	Transition
8:45-9	H Block

9-11:07 Workshops (Schedule on back) Classrooms

11:07-11:37 Lunch Cafeteria

11:40-12 Homeroom

12:05-1:20 Workshops (Schedule on back) Classrooms

Final workshop transition to the Gym

1:20-2:20 Freshmen Social Gymnasium

2:25 Dismissal from Gym

Notes for all staff

- Please wear any CSW shirt (sports team, spirit wear etc.) on both days
- Please do not give any work or textbooks out on either day
- No need to take attendance during the mini-schedule
- Please be in the hallways to help the freshmen during the change of classes for the mini-schedule on both days

- Everyone is asked to be at the mini-pep rally at the end of the day Tuesday
- And most importantly...have fun :)

Notes for staff who have Freshmen during C & G blocks

- Please hang a sign on your door indicating if you eat first or second lunch
- When you meet with your freshmen on Monday or Tuesday, explain to them how first and second lunches are handled at CSW

Notes for freshmen HR teachers

Attendance

- Monday attendance will be taken by your HR's guidance counselor when they check in outside of auditorium
- You need to take paper attendance on Tuesday and hand in to Linda

Mentors

- You will have senior mentors assigned to your HR for the two orientation days and for approximately two Mondays a month
- Please assign mentors to your HR students
- Each mentor was selected since they are in established leadership and/or mentoring programs at CSW
- If you have any concerns with mentors, please let me know ASAP

Freshmen Orientation Days

- Please be in the auditorium on Monday by 7:15 to meet your HR students and for the freshmen assembly
- On Monday, the mentors will take your HR students on short tours of building, attend all of the workshops with their mentees and will walk them from one activity to the next
- Please do at least one icebreaker/getting to know you activity on Monday with your HR and mentors. You can also try one on Tuesday if you have time. There are 3 examples attached but please do whatever you want for this
- Please tell your HR students to report directly to your HR on Tuesday

- On Tuesday, hand out the name tags to your students when they arrive (Each name tag should have a number on it that will be used for lunch on Tuesday)
- On Tuesday, after the morning pledge, please bring your HR down to the auditorium for a brief assembly

Mentors

Freshmen Orientation Days

- Please be in the auditorium on Monday by 7:00 to help check the freshmen in and bring them to their HR teacher
- You should be in dress code
- On Monday, you will take your mentees on short tours of the building. Please follow your tour route to avoid congestion
- You will attend all of the workshops and will walk with your HR from one event to the next
- Please participate in the ice breaker/getting to know you activity on Monday with your HR teacher, freshmen and other mentors.
- Remind your mentees to report directly to HR on Tuesday
- On Tuesday, mentors will be stationed throughout building to help freshmen find their HR
- Be upbeat and positive ~ you are a role model
- You are trying to build relationships with your mentees
- Share your personal experiences but please no negative talk about the school/staff
- Avoid topics like HW load, tests, grades and scheduling advice
- If you ever hear a freshmen say something that seems odd or something that you cannot handle, please see Mrs. Voltz immediately
- No profanity
- No social media posts regarding anything to do with your mentees

Tours ~ You will have different routes to avoid congestion

3rd floor HR will start their tours directly from assembly

2nd floor HR will start their tours from your HR

- *Point out bathrooms on all floors*
- *Library*
- *Wellness center & nurses office*

- *Cafeteria (explain different lunch lines, senior lounge, bathrooms etc)*
- *Bus lobby (Stop by for a brief meet & greet with Mr. Frat)*
- *Pool, gym, locker rooms (explain how you get from locker room to gym)*
- *Lost hallway*
- *Late HR in room 316 (Stop in for brief meet & greet with Ms. Urban)*
- *Main office & guidance (Stop in for brief meet and greet with Mrs. Schuman in attendance)*
- *Technology Office*

1st email to mentors

Dear Senior Mentors,

Hi Class of 2018! First, I hope you are having an amazing summer and getting excited for your senior year. And secondly, doesn't it seem like yesterday you were getting ready to attend your own freshmen orientation? I am sure you can remember some of the anxieties and uncertainties you had as you began high school....I know I remember and that was a long time ago! I am thankful that you are willing to volunteer to be a mentor for the incoming freshmen class and know that you will help to alleviate some of their fears as they begin this exciting chapter in their lives.

The first day of orientation is on Monday, August 28, 2017 where you will start the day in the theater at 7AM where we will have a quick meeting. You will help the freshmen meet their guidance counselor, HR teacher, and the administrative team. The freshmen will start the day with an assembly and during that time we will meet in the gym to discuss the mentoring program and the schedule for the orientation days. On the first day, you will provide your mentees with a tour of the building, participate in workshops with them, and enjoy a lunch provided by our parent association. On Tuesday, August 29, 2017 you are to report directly to your mentees HR by 7:35. On the second day of orientation, you will help the new freshmen continue to get to know their classmates, mentors, and teachers, participate in some more workshops, eat lunch in the cafeteria, and enjoy a short mini-pep rally! You will need to bring your lunch or buy lunch on Tuesday. Both days are half days and you need to be in dress code.

In the event you cannot be there for these days or if you cannot be a mentor please email me ASAP. I want to make sure we have everything ready to go for the class of 2021 :) Enjoy the last few weeks of summer and if you have any questions please let me know!

Mrs. Voltz

Dear Freshmen Students,

We are so excited to see you at CSW for our two day freshmen orientation program! Your first day of orientation is on Monday, August 28, 2017 where you will start the day in the theater and meet your guidance counselor, HR teacher, senior mentor and the administrative team. On your first day you will tour the building, participate in workshops, meet your teachers and enjoy a lunch provided by our parent association. On Tuesday, August 29, 2017 you are to report directly to your HR by 7:35. On the second day of orientation, you will continue to get to know your classmates, mentors, and teachers, participate in some more workshops, eat lunch in the cafeteria, and enjoy a short mini-pep rally! You will need to bring your lunch or buy lunch on Tuesday.

Both days are half days and you need to be in dress code. There will not be any books or HW assigned on these two days so you do not need to bring your book bag unless you want to. The entire staff welcomes you to CSW and we are looking forward to seeing you all in a few weeks!

Dear Transfer Students,

We are so excited to see you at CSW for our one day new student orientation program! Your orientation is on Monday, August 28, 2017 where you will start the day in the theater and meet your guidance counselor, HR teacher, mentors and the administrative team. You will tour the building, participate in workshops, meet your teachers and enjoy a lunch provided by our parent association. It is a half day and you need to be in dress code. There will not be any books or HW assigned so you do not need to bring your book bag unless you want to. The entire staff welcomes you to CSW and we are looking forward to seeing you all in a few weeks!

Appendix D

ARTIFACT 4: EVALUATION OF PILOT FOP

Program Evaluation for the Freshmen Orientation Program
at The Charter School of Wilmington

Eileen Voltz

Program Evaluation

University of Delaware EDUC 863

Dr. Buttram

May 15, 2017

Executive Summary

A program evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) at The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW). The FOP includes two half day orientation days the first two days of school and monthly meetings over the course of the school year. This program was designed in 2015 and piloted in the fall of 2016.

The program evaluation considered the following two questions:

1. Process Question – To what degree did having a mentoring program help the freshmen students during their transition to CSW?
2. Outcome Question – To what degree did the FOP activities from the first two days of school lead to a reduction in stress levels for the current freshmen class?

The process question was measured by evaluator-created survey questions that assessed freshmen perceptions about the effectiveness of the mentoring program. The results indicated that the mentoring program had an impact on roughly half of the new students. The outcome question was measured by evaluator-created survey questions that assessed freshmen student perceptions about the effectiveness of the various activities associated the 2 day orientation of the FOP. The results suggested that 80% of the participants believed that the activities from the FOP helped prepare them for their freshmen year at CSW.

Introduction

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine if the Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) for rising freshmen enrolled at The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) met its goals. The results will be used to make adjustments and improvements to the program to ensure that it is successful in meeting the program goals. This program was piloted during the 2016-2017 school year which means that the program may be unfavorable for evaluation since it is brand new. Ideally, an evaluation would be performed after several years, but for the purpose of this project it was evaluated in the spring of 2017.

Organization of the Report

First, I will present a description of the FOP at CSW. Secondly, I will present the two evaluation questions. Finally, I will present my results including data analysis and recommendations for action.

Description of the Program

CSW is a highly competitive, rigorous and comprehensive STEM secondary school for grades 9-12 located in Wilmington, Delaware that draws students from over 25 different public, private and parochial middle schools. Students from this many different feeder schools benefit from a well thought out transition program that will assist them in their adjustment to CSW. The FOP has two major components. The first is a two day orientation program that takes place on the first two half days of the

school year. The second part is a yearlong mentoring program that begins at the same time but continues throughout the school year. See Attachment 5 for a logic model of the FOP at CSW.

The half day sessions provide the new class opportunities to orient themselves to CSW in an effort to reduce their stress levels. Students go on tours of the building where they can ask questions of their tour guides who are current students. They attend assemblies hosted by the administrative team and wellness center and have hands on training on about their school email and Schoology, which is the LMS. Over the course of the first two days, there are team-building exercises that allow them to meet and interact with other stakeholders including support staff and parents, as well as their new classmates and upperclassmen. Some of the activities inform them about school policies and procedures and educate them on places they can go to seek out additional resources or help. Prior to the first day of the orientation program, all freshmen are assigned a senior mentor. The mentors send an introductory email, are there to welcome them on day one and participate in all of the activities with their mentees for the first two days. After the initial orientation program, they continue to meet once a month for the entire school year.

At the end of the 2017 school year, freshmen were surveyed about their experiences in both components of the FOP. This data will be used to enhance the program for the 2017-2018 school year. Starting in the fall of 2017, freshmen will be surveyed immediately following the two-day orientation program and both freshmen

and seniors will be surveyed about the mentoring program in May.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will be able to answer two questions regarding the program:

1. Process Question – To what degree did having a mentoring program help the freshmen students during their transition to CSW?
2. Outcome Question – To what degree did the FOP activities from the first two days of school lead to a reduction in stress levels for the current freshmen class?

The process question and outcome question connect because they both seek to understand whether the FOP is impacting the new students. The process data will also indicate whether it is helping to meet the intended outcome. I selected these questions since they represent the two prongs of the FOP. Reducing stress levels, so that ninth graders can perform at their best at CSW, is the ultimate purpose of the program. The process question determines to what degree students felt that having an CSW senior mentor helped them to feel more comfortable throughout the school year. Although I did not state it explicitly, I wanted to see if they felt that having a mentor reduced their stress levels. The outcome question sought to measure to what degree the activities on the two half days helped to orient them to CSW which would ideally reduce stress levels as the students entered their freshmen year.

Design and Methodology

Sample

The sample was taken from the population of all current freshmen from the

class of 2020. A stratified random sample was used by randomly selecting four students from each of the 10 homerooms. A stratified sample was used since the students travelled with their homerooms throughout both components of the FOP. A sample size of 40 represented roughly 20% of their graduating class. Non-response occurred when several students failed to hand in paperwork making the actual sample size $n=31$.

Instruments

The instruments used to evaluate both evaluation questions included a statement about the intent of the surveys, the maximum time needed and disclosure on anonymity so that students hopefully felt comfortable being honest. The process question was measured by evaluator-created survey questions. (Attachment 2) The survey included six items regarding students' opinions on the mentoring component of the FOP. The questions asked how the students felt about their interactions and relationships with their mentors at different times of the school year. Participants were also asked if they felt that having a mentor aiding them as they transitioned to high school. Questions included a Likert-type scale and in addition to the closed ended questions, there was an opportunity for students to share additional thoughts and opinions about the mentoring program. Due to time constraints for this evaluation, I was unable to utilize evaluator-created interview questions. (Attachment 3) However, this instrument will be used during the 2017-2018 school year.

The outcome question was also measured by evaluator-created survey questions. (Attachment 2) The survey asked ten close-ended questions, using a Likert-

type scale, regarding students' opinions on the FOP. These items focused on the activities that they engaged in during the two half day orientation days. The purpose of these questions was to assess their opinions on the quality of the various workshops including the tour of the building, academic integrity and technology workshops, and team-building activities. There was one open ended question where students could share any additional input on the FOP.

Data Collection Procedures

All students in the sample were required to sign a consent form. Since they were all under 18, their parents had to sign the form. After receiving these papers, surveys were administered in homerooms. Nine students did not bring back the consent forms and therefore did not participate in this study. Students filled out surveys with paper and pencil as opposed to an online version. This guaranteed that other students were not filling out the data collection tools. Three of the randomly selected students were absent and I followed up until I had 100% of the selected students. This evaluation could be improved by obtaining a larger sample size but due to time constraints I was limited.

Data Analysis Procedures

Since both the process question and outcome questions used a similar instrument, I analyzed the data in the same manner. First, I calculated frequencies for each question and made a table. I used this information to look for trends in the data. For each item, I looked to see if a majority of the students either agreed/strongly agreed or disagreed/strongly disagreed. Specifically, I looked to see if the participants were split on the two spectrums of the scale (strongly agree/agree vs. strongly disagree/disagree). I tried to identify areas of similarity across an item as well as themes across items. Unfortunately, this is a post only situation. Beginning next year, I plan on giving this survey to the freshmen prior to the first two days and then immediately after. I can then look at the difference between the responses to see if the FOP had a direct impact on them. In addition to calculating frequencies and creating tables, open ended questions were coded. Once codes were identified, I looked for themes across the sample and created tables to summarize the data so that I could identify themes.

Results

Process Question Results

The process question sought to see if having a mentoring program helped the freshmen students during their transition to CSW. Freshmen were surveyed regarding their experiences in the mentoring program. Of the 31 students surveyed, 100 % stated

that (a) they were assigned a mentor and (b) they had opportunities to get to know the mentors over the course of the first two days of the school year. Nearly 60% of the students surveyed felt that they had opportunities to meet with their mentors over the course of the school whereas 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. A vast majority of the freshmen enjoyed having a senior mentor and 77% felt that it helped them to adjust to CSW. (See Table 1)

Nearly 40% of the students' survey disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question asking if they developed a relationship with their mentors. However, this is a very small sample size so you would have to be cautious generalizing these results to the population of all freshmen students at CSW.

Outcome Question Results

The outcome question sought to discover if the FOP activities from the first two days of school lead to a reduction in stress levels for the current freshmen class. At least 90% of the freshmen surveyed thought the FOP provided opportunities to meet their teachers, guidance counselors, and peers. All of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the FOP helped them to learn how to log in to their CSW email account as well as the LMS. There were some split perspectives when students were asked if the team-building activities were worthwhile. Roughly 80% of those surveyed felt that the FOP prepared them for their freshmen year while 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. (See Table 2)

In addition to the closed ended questions, participants completed open ended survey questions about their opinions for the FOP at The Charter School of Wilmington. There were a variety of themes across this small sample size, n=16. (See Table 3) When asked for feedback regarding the program, 31% said they enjoyed meeting new people while 19% thought there needed to be more time for socializing. Roughly a third stated that the tours of the school needed more detail and better signage. 25% of the students felt that there was not enough food during the FOP. Several respondents stated they would have liked more time with their mentors.

Conclusions

Overall, analysis of the results of the program evaluation shows that the freshmen students believe that the FOP and their senior mentors have helped them adjust to life at the high school level. An overwhelming percentage of those surveyed were satisfied with both the individual activities in the FOP as well as their initial interactions with their mentor. Data analysis from the tables indicates that maintaining relationships with the mentors may wane over the course of the school year. More data should be gathered to understand why roughly 40% of the students surveyed were dissatisfied with the opportunities to meet with their mentor during the school year. Additional data should be gathered to understand why some freshmen developed relationships with their mentors and others did not. Although this is a small sample size and the first year of this pilot program, it does appear that the FOP and mentoring program are having some impact on the incoming freshmen.

Recommendations

1. Provide additional opportunities for freshmen students to interact with their mentors throughout the FOP. Less than 30% of the students surveyed strongly agreed that they had enough opportunities to meet with their senior mentors. Additional time is needed over the course of the FOP to ensure that the freshmen have enough time to develop a relationship with their mentor.
2. Develop team-building activities that the freshmen will see as worthwhile. Only 32% of the students at CSW felt that the team-building activities were worthwhile. If you can increase their satisfaction with these activities, you will be better be able to help them connect with their peers and adjust to their new school community more quickly.
3. Collect data from the entire freshmen class prior to the FOP and after. Do data analysis on the differences between the pre and post data to see if the FOP is directly impacting the freshmen students.
4. Create better signs and detailed tour routes for the school tour. 31% of the students who responded to the open ended question indicated that this is an area that could be improved.

Attachment 1- Survey Questions about Mentoring Program

Thank you for agreeing to participate! We would like to understand your perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding the **Mentoring** part of our Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP). Since it is voluntary, you do not need to answer all of the questions unless you wish and all answers will be reported anonymously. There are no right or wrong answers. This will take under 5 minutes and the data collected will be used to analyze our current program. We will also use your input to improve our program for future students.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. I was assigned a senior mentor.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

2. During the 2 day orientation program, there were opportunities for me to get to know my senior mentor.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

3. Over the course of the school year, there were opportunities to meet with my mentor.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

4. I developed a relationship with my senior mentor over the course of the school year.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

5. I enjoyed having a senior mentor this past year.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

6. Having a senior mentor helped me adjust to CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

Please feel free to use the space below and on the back to share any other thoughts, opinions, or feelings that you have about the mentoring program that will help us improve it for future freshmen.

Attachment 2 - Survey Questions about FOP

Thank you for agreeing to participate! We would like to understand your perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding our ***Freshmen Orientation Program*** (FOP). Since it is voluntary, you do not need to answer all of the questions unless you wish and all answers will be reported anonymously. There are no right or wrong answers. This will take under 5 minutes and the data collected will be used to analyze our current program. We will also use your input to improve our program for future students.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. The tour helped me find my way around CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

2. There were opportunities to meet my classroom teachers and guidance counselor.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

3. There were opportunities to meet other freshmen.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

4. There were opportunities to meet senior mentors.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

5. I am aware who can assist me with issues at CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

6. I understand the CSW academic integrity policy.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

7. I am able to log in to my CSW email.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

8. I am able to log in to my Schoology account.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

9. The team-building activities were worthwhile.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

10. The FOP prepared me for my freshmen year at CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

Please feel free to use the space below to share any other thoughts, opinions, or feelings that you have about the FOP that will help us improve it for future freshmen.

Thank you for completing this survey!

Attachment 3- Interview Questions about Mentoring Program

Thank you for agreeing to participate! We would like to understand your perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding the *mentoring component* of our Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP). Since it is voluntary, you do not need to answer all of the questions unless you wish and all answers will be reported anonymously. There are no right or wrong answers. This will take under 15 minutes and the data collected will be used to analyze our current program. We will also use your input to improve our program for future students.

1. In what ways did having a senior mentor help you? (For freshmen only)
2. In what ways do you think future freshmen would benefit from the mentoring program?
3. What would you like to see, if anything, added to the mentoring program?
4. In what ways did you enjoy being a mentor? (For seniors only)
5. Is there anything you wish to add that I did not ask you about?

Possible probes: Can you tell me more about that? Can you be more specific?

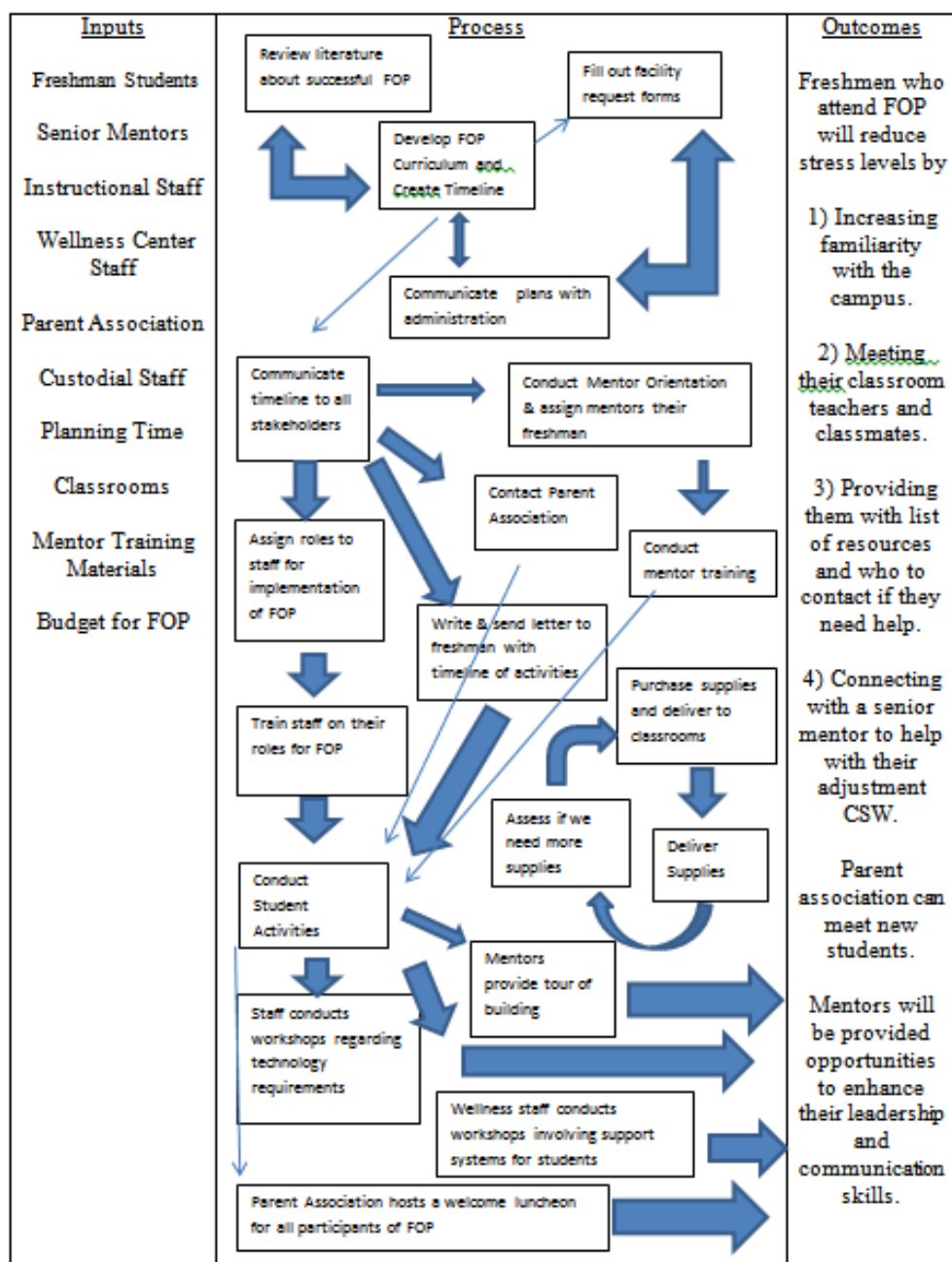
Attachment 4- Evaluation Design Worksheet

Evaluation Purpose: to determine if the Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) for rising freshmen enrolled at The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) meets its goals.

Evaluation Question		Sample	Variables/ Instruments	Data Collection Procedures	Data Analysis Procedures	Timeline
Process	<p>To what degree did having a senior mentor help the freshmen students transition to CSW?</p> <p>Purpose: To determine if the mentoring component helps incoming freshmen adjust.</p>	<p>Random sample of 4 students from the 10 homerooms.</p> <p>(20% of the Freshmen class)</p> <p>n=40 fresh.</p>	<p>Efficacy of mentoring program for helping freshmen transition to high school</p> <p>Survey Questions</p>	<p>Randomly select students to participate . Visit their homerooms and hand out consent forms. Collect consent forms and administer surveys.</p>	<p>Post-test only</p> <p>Tally data, calculate percentages and create frequency tables. Code open ended question looking for patterns.</p>	<p>April 1, 2017 until data collected.</p>

Outcome	<p>Did the FOP activities from the first two days of school lead to a reduction in stress levels for the current freshmen class?</p> <p>Purpose: To determine if the activities used during two day orientation program meet program outcomes.</p>	<p>Random sample of 4 students from the 10 homerooms.</p> <p>(20% of the freshmen class)</p> <p>n=40 fresh.</p>	Student satisfaction of FOP activities.	<p>Randomly select students to participate . Visit their homerooms to hand out the survey and collect.</p> <p>Follow up if people were absent so there is no non-response.</p>	<p>Post-test only</p> <p>Tally data, calculate percentages and create frequency tables.</p>	Middle of May 2017
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Attachment 5- Logic Model



Attachment 6- Data Tables

Process Question Results

Table 1

Freshmen Experiences in Mentoring Program

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was assigned a senior mentor	100%	0%	0%	0%
During first 2 days, there were opportunities for me to get to know my senior mentor	77%	23%	0%	0%
During the year, there were opportunities to meet with my mentor	16%	42%	39%	3%
I developed a relationship with my mentor	32%	29%	23%	16%
I enjoyed having a senior mentor this past year	64%	32%	3%	0%
Having a senior mentor helped me adjust to CSW	45%	32%	23%	0%

Outcome Question Results

Table 2

Freshmen Opinions on FOP Activities

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The tour helped me find my way around CSW.	35%	55%	10%	0%
2. There were opportunities to meet my classroom teachers/guidance counselor.	29%	65%	6%	0%
3. There were opportunities to meet other freshmen.	55%	42%	3%	0%

4. There were opportunities to meet mentors.	29%	58%	10%	3%
5. I am aware who can assist me with issues at CSW.	45%	45%	10%	0%
6. I understand the CSW academic integrity policy.	48%	42%	6%	3%
7. I am able to log in to my CSW email.	81%	19%	0%	0%
8. I am able to log in to my Schoology account.	84%	16%	0%	0%
9. The team-building activities were worthwhile.	32%	48%	13%	6%
10. The FOP prepared me for my freshmen year at CSW.	32%	48%	13%	6%

Table 3
Freshmen likes & dislikes about FOP

Code	Number	% of respondents
Enjoyed meeting new people	5	31
Tour needs better signage/detail	5	31

Not enough food	4	25
Need more socializing	3	19
Need more time with mentors	2	13

n=16

Appendix E

ARTIFACT 5: CSW FOP WEBSITE

Description: I created a website for all stakeholders. It has important information for freshmen students, parents and teachers. These are screenshots from the website.

The link for the website is:

<https://sites.google.com/s/0B1kXkOI4TtlIQm5SQkpCNkt0eU0/p/0B1kXkOI4TtlIeXlWSzZoSms0S2M/edit?authuser=1>

The pages of the website are:

Home

The FOP Program

- Schedule

Stakeholders

- Freshmen
- Parents
- Staff
- Mentors

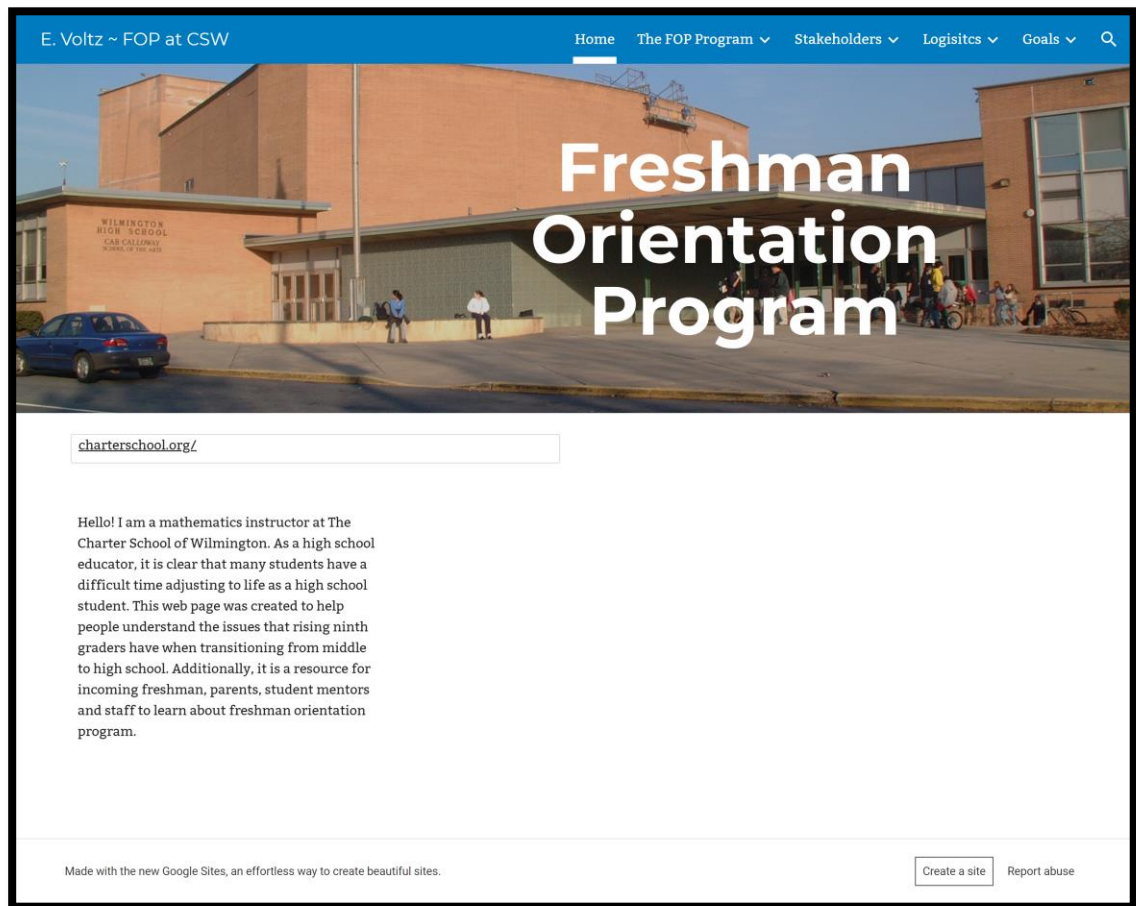
Logistics

- About CSW
- Tools for Data Collection

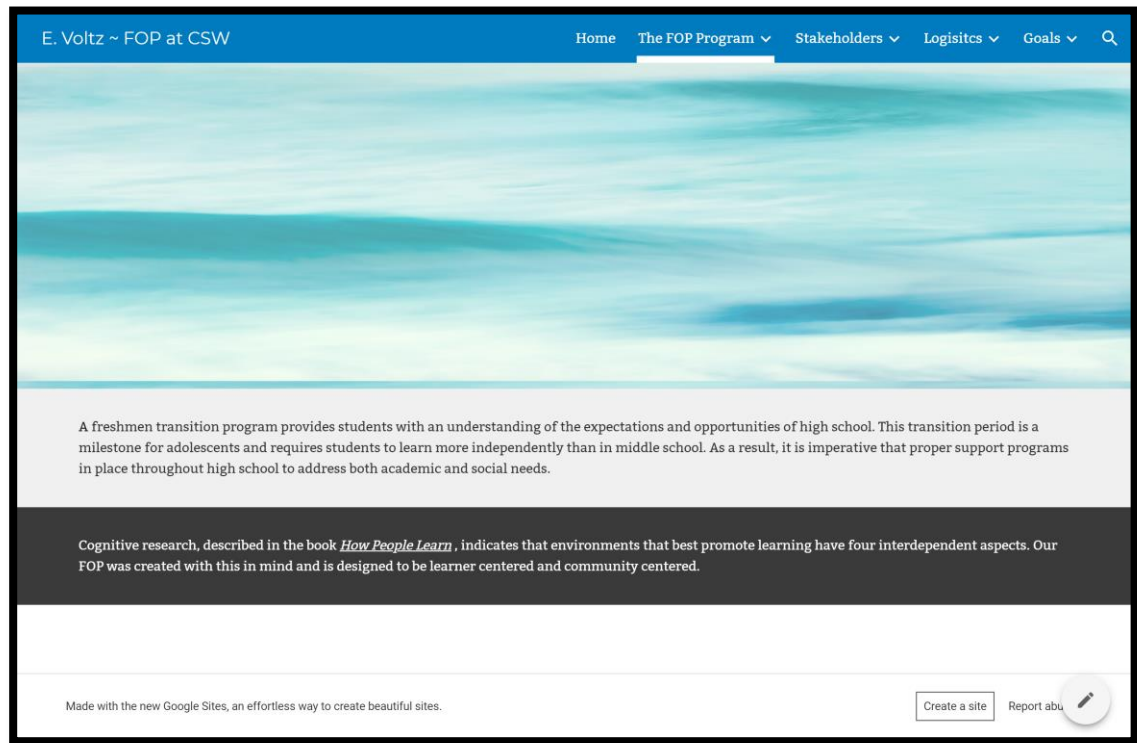
Goals

- Review of the Literature

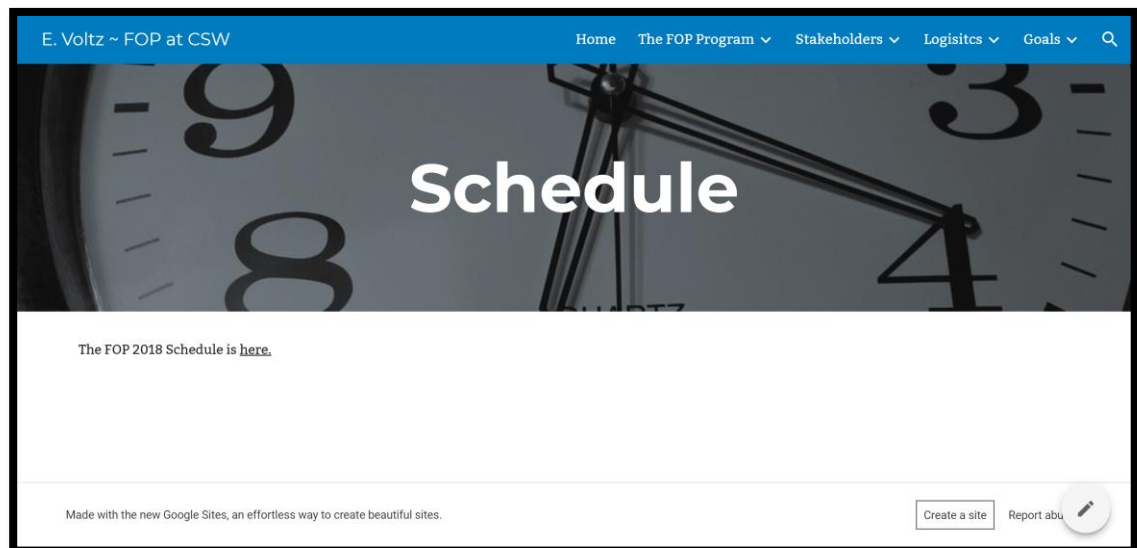
Screenshot #1: Home Page



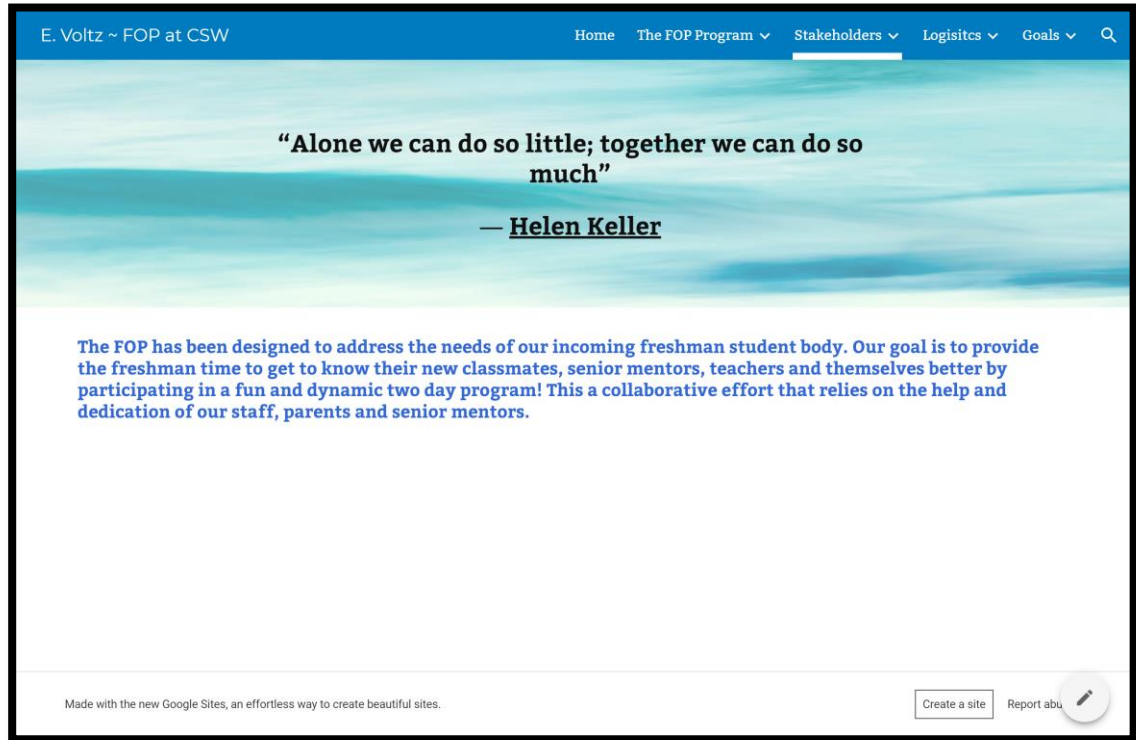
Screenshot #2: The FOP Tab



Screenshot #3: 2018 FOP Schedule




Screenshot #4: Stakeholders Tab



Screenshot #5: Information for Freshmen

E. Voltz ~ FOP at CSW

HomeThe FOP Program ▾Stakeholders ▾Logisitics ▾Goals ▾



Our Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP) is designed to help you acclimate to our school. Over the course of the two day program, which are both full days, you will have exciting opportunities to meet your new classmates and teachers. Additionally, you will be doing workshops throughout the school which will give you some time to familiarize yourself with the building. We want you to be able to spend time with your new community of learners including senior mentors so that you will be able to hit the ground running on your first full day of classes. Transportation and lunch are provided for both days. Please fill in the information below and we look forward to seeing you at The Charter School of Wilmington!

Registration

* Required

Last Name *

Your answer

First Name *

Your answer


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Create a siteReport abuse

Screenshot #6: Information for Parents

E. Voltz ~ FOP at CSW

HomeThe FOP Program ▾Stakeholders ▾Logisitcs ▾Goals ▾



Parents

The CSW PTSO will be hosting a picnic for all incoming freshmen students and their senior mentors on the first day of the FOP. If you are interested in making a food/drink donation and/or would like to volunteer to help out, please fill out the form below. If you have questions, please contact Eileen Voltz at evoltz@charterschool.org.

Freshman Picnic

Freshman Picnic

* Required

Parent Survey: FOP Picnic

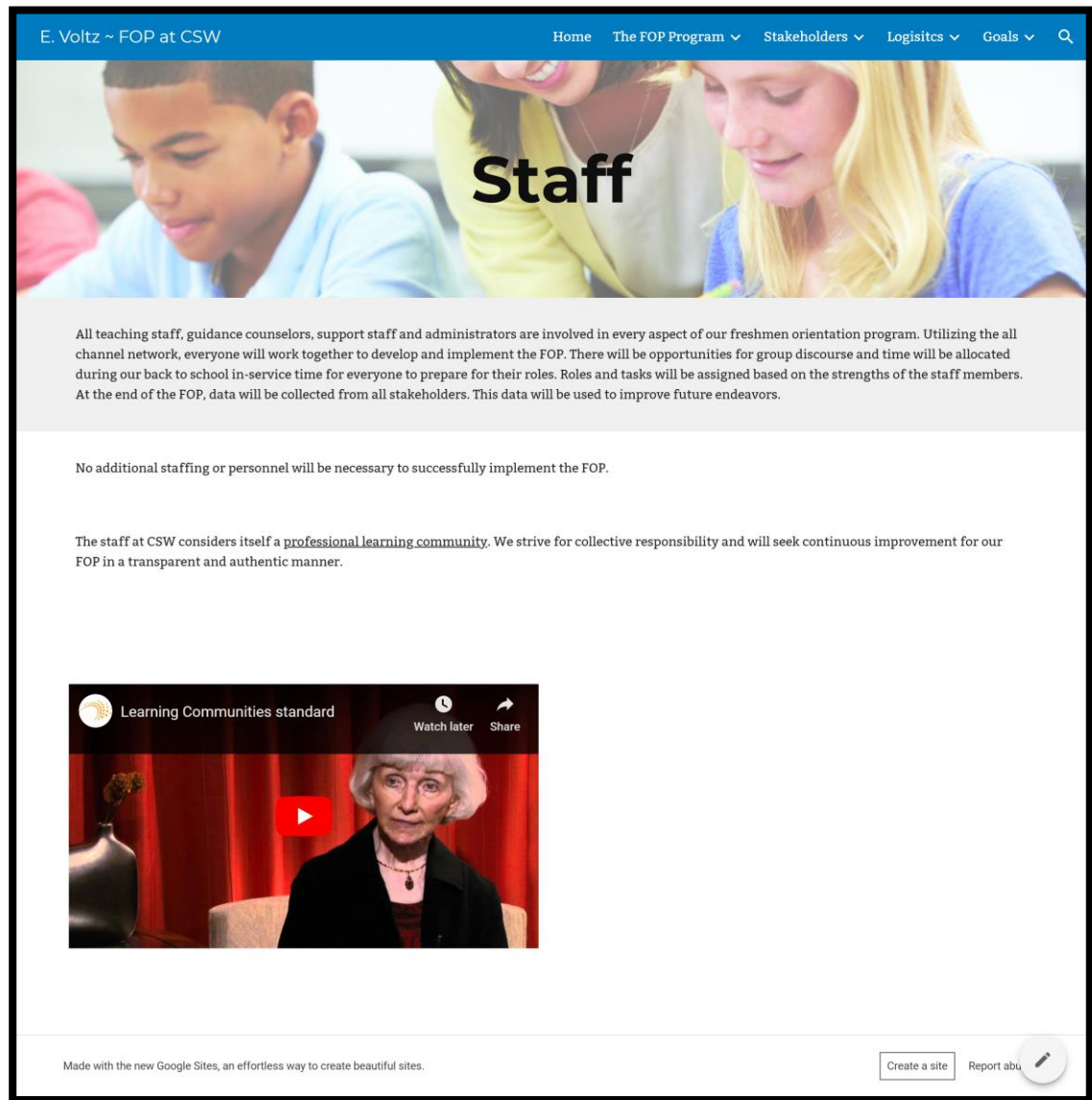
First name *

Your answer

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Screenshot #7: Information for Staff



Screenshot #8: Information for Mentors

E. Voltz ~ FOP at CSW

HomeThe FOP Program ▾Stakeholders ▾Logisitics ▾Goals ▾

Mentors

"For a mentorship to be successful, both the mentor and the mentee should derive benefits from the relationship."
(Campbell-Whitley, 2001)

Mentoring the Next Generation: Michael ...
Watch laterShare

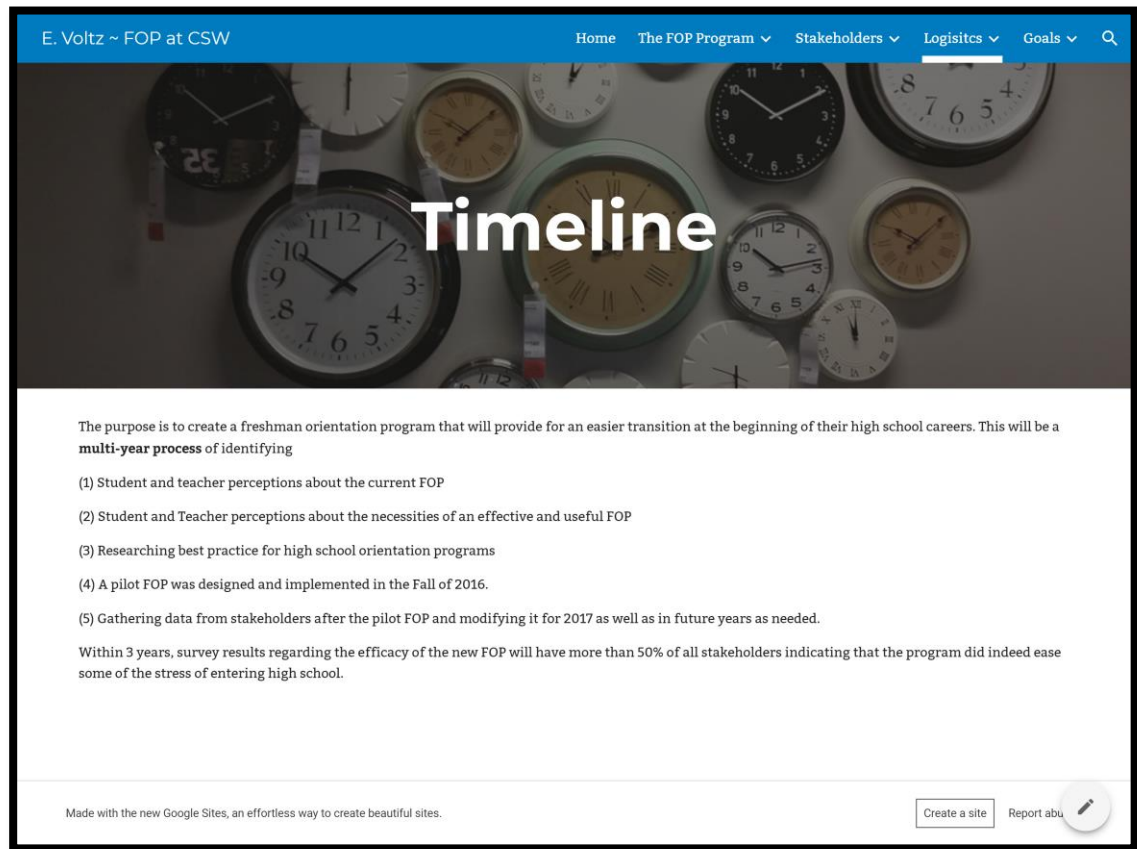
The foundation of this program is supported and substantiated by research that indicates that student to student mentoring programs are capable of impacting both the mentor and mentee.

Based on teacher recommendations, seniors will be selected in the spring of their junior year. We will conduct training sessions so that you will be equipped mentor 4-6 freshman for the entire school year. You will be responsible for attending the FOP in August and meeting with your mentees roughly 1-2 times a month during activity period. We will use a [Schoology Group](#) to communicate. If you have any questions please contact Mrs. Voltz in room 316 or via e-mail at evoltz@charterschool.org.

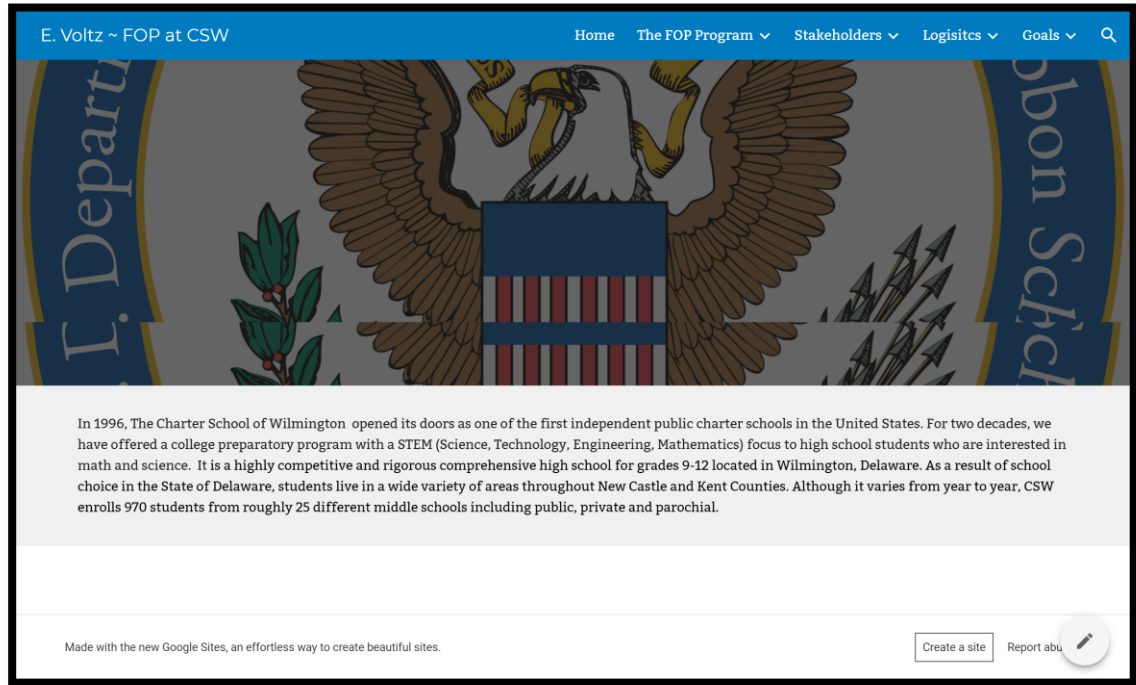
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Create a siteReport abu

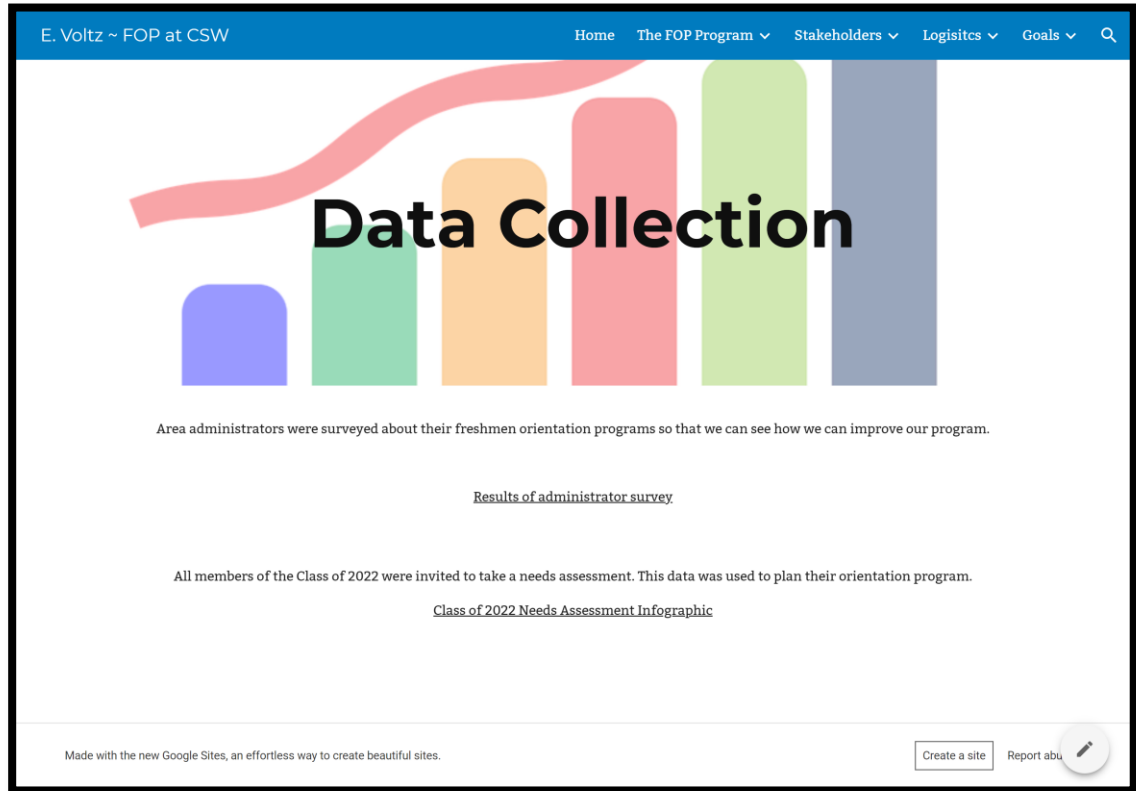
Screenshot #9: Logistics for FOP



Screenshot #10: About CSW



Screenshot #11: Data Collection Tools



Screenshot #12: Goals of CSW FOP

E. Voltz ~ FOP at CSW

HomeThe FOP Program ▾Stakeholders ▾Logisitics ▾Goals ▾

Why is this important?

As exciting as entering high school is for most students, it is also a transition period that is often characterized by declining academic performance, increased absences, increased behavioral disturbances, and less participation in extracurricular activities (Fritzer & Hurst, 1996). There is a need to develop and maintain supportive relationships within schools and create a caring school community for all students, especially incoming ninth-grade students (Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010). A well thought out FOP could provide such a foundation for the students at CSW.

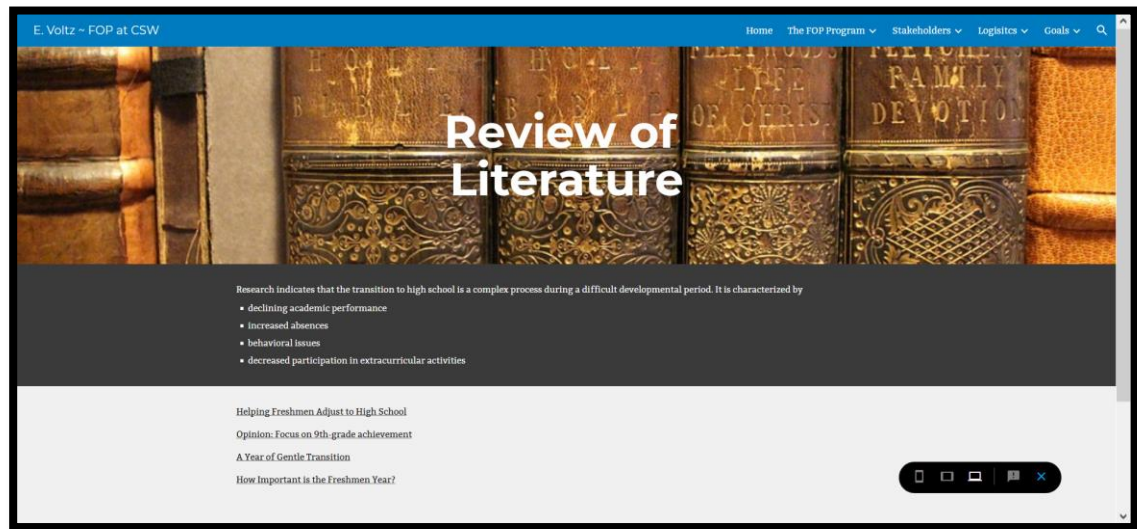
A freshmen transition program provides students with an understanding of the expectations and opportunities of high school. This transition period is a milestone for adolescents and requires students to learn more independently than in middle school. As a result, it is imperative that proper support programs are in place throughout high school to address both academic and social needs (Galloway & Gallenberger, 2000). One of the most needed supports is the Freshmen Orientation Program.



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Screenshot #13: Literature about Freshmen Orientation Programs



Appendix F

ARTIFACT 6: FRESHMAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In order to assess the specific needs of the members of the class of 2022, I developed a survey with one open ended and eleven closed ended questions that focused on students' perceived efficacy regarding technology, networking and facilities (Attachment 1). After securing Institutional Review Board approval, I distributed consent and assent forms to all 220 incoming freshman families. 170 students returned the necessary paperwork. The survey was distributed, electronically via Qualtrics, to the 135 students who provided a working email address and there were 82 responses for this study. The participation rate was 37.3%.

I qualitatively analyzed the closed ended questions in order to identify general patterns or unique responses and created an infographic of the needs of the rising ninth graders (Attachment 2). As part of the training for the FOP, the teaching staff engaged with this graphic in small group discussions and I discussed the survey results in more detail. This allowed the staff to see what the students were most concerned about as they start their high school careers at CSW. The infographic was posted on the FOP website so that all stakeholders could be aware of the findings of this study. I used this data to select the workshops that were most important to this incoming freshmen class. Based on analysis of the data, I created a list of recommendations for sessions needed for 2018 FOP.

Quantitative Analysis

Facilities. Incoming freshman were asked several questions regarding their comfort level navigating around CSW (See Table 1). Of the incoming freshmen, 35% have spent time at CSW and only 23% claimed they were comfortable finding their way around their new school (Questions 1 & 2). Additionally, 60% expressed concern with finding their way around CSW. Notably, this data from Question 3 had the lowest standard deviation of all of the survey questions.

Networking. In an effort to gain an understanding of the social aspect of their transition to high school, participants were asked whether or not they knew people going to CSW. Of the 80 students surveyed, 85 % of the students are entering CSW with friends (Question 4). Question 6 indicates that only 20% of the participants are concerned with making new friends (See Table 2).

Technology. There were four questions that focused on technology and Questions 7-9 each had higher variability than all of the other survey questions. Of those surveyed, 25% are not accustomed to using school email and only 50% of the incoming students have used online textbooks. More than 35% of our new students did not use Schoology with only 33% strongly agreeing that they submitted assignments via Schoology. When asked if they were concerned about the various technologies that they will use at CSW, only 11 participants are concerned. Roughly 86% of the incoming freshman state that they feel comfortable with the various technologies (See Table 3).

Table 1

Opinions on Facilities

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have spent time at CSW attending athletic contests, school plays and/or academic events.	9%	26%	35%	30%
I am comfortable navigating around CSW	4%	19%	61%	16%
I am worried about finding my way around	5%	55%	35%	5%

Table 2

Opinions on Networking

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am friends with other freshman students	56%	29%	9%	6%
I know upperclassmen who attend CSW	20%	56%	14%	10%
I am worried about making new friends	5%	18%	51%	26%

Table 3

Opinions on Technology

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In middle school, I routinely used a school email account	39%	35%	15%	11%
In middle school, I routinely used Schoology to check assignments	34%	30%	14%	23%
In middle school, I routinely used	33%	28%	13%	28%

Schoolology to submit assignments				
In middle school, I routinely used online textbooks	16%	35%	35%	14%
I am worried about the various technologies that I will be using at CSW	0%	14%	52%	34%

Qualitative Analysis

Students were also asked what they were concerned about as they transition to CSW. There were a variety of themes across this sample size, n=82. (See Table 4)

More than 40% of those surveyed are concerned with the workload in high school. Students expressed concerns about being able to adjust to more difficult curricula including being able to handle homework assignments. Many of these students expressed concerns with doing well, maintaining a good GPA and fear of failure. Almost 20% of the students talked about fears regarding fitting in, being bullied and making friends. Of the students surveyed, 12% are worried about finding a good school-life balance as well as logistical things at their new school including finding classes and opening their lockers.

Table 4

What is your greatest fear as you enter high school?

Code	Number	% of participants (n=82)
Workload/Failure	34	41%
Networking/Fitting in	15	18%
Time Management/School-Life Balance	10	12%
Facilities- Navigation/lockers	10	12%

Recommendations for 2018 FOP

After reviewing the data from the freshman needs assessment for the class of 2022, I am recommending the following sessions for the upcoming FOP.

Facilities recommendation. More than one session that allows the freshman to explore the building. Not surprisingly, over 70% of the incoming students are not comfortable with their new building. This fact also appears to be creating fears with being late to class and therefore getting behind academically.

Networking recommendation. Increase the amount of networking sessions over the course of the 2-day FOP. Twenty-five percent of the class of 2022 do not know any older students at CSW so there need to be additional opportunities for networking amongst these stakeholders. Additionally, almost one quarter of the students are concerned with making friends so there needs to be opportunities for the freshman to connect with each other.

Technology recommendation. Differentiate the technology sessions for the FOP. The higher standard deviations for the technology questions indicate that there is more variability regarding students' ability to use email, Schoology and online textbooks. Under the supervision of the teacher, senior mentors will be used in the workshops to help differentiate these sessions.

Attachment 2- Freshmen Needs Assessment

Thank you for agreeing to participate! We would like to understand more about your needs as an incoming freshman at CSW. Since it is voluntary, you do not need to answer all of the questions unless you wish and all answers will be reported anonymously. There are no right or wrong answers. This survey will take under 10 minutes and the data collected will be used to plan for your upcoming FOP.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. I have spent time at CSW attending athletic contests, school plays and/or academic events.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

2. I am comfortable navigating around CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

3. I am worried about finding my way around CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

4. I am friends with other freshman students who will be attending CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

5. I know upperclassmen who are currently attending CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

6. I am worried about making new friends at CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

7. In middle school, I routinely used a school email account.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

8. In middle school, I routinely used Schoology to check assignments.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

9. In middle school, I routinely used Schoology to submit assignments.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

10. In middle school, I routinely used online textbooks.

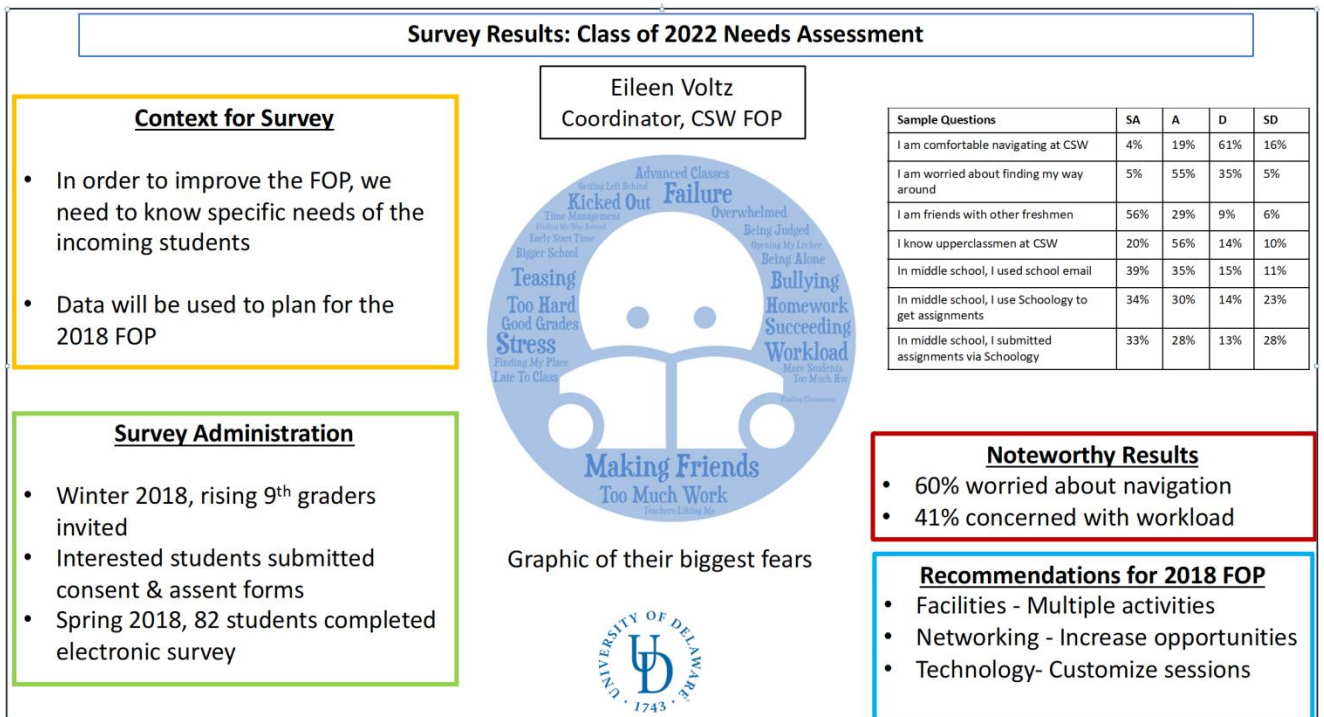
Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

11. I am worried about the various technologies that I will be using at CSW.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

Thank you for completing this survey

Attachment 2- Freshman Needs Assessment Qualitative Infographic



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Appendix G

ARTIFACT 7: SURVEY OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS & PRESENTATION

In the summer of 2018, I surveyed high school administrators in Delaware about their freshmen orientation programs. The goal was to learn about other programs to determine if we could implement similar components as a part of the FOP at CSW. I developed a survey with eight open-ended and four closed-ended questions that focused on the various components of their programs (Attachment 4). I used this data to identify the various strategies, interventions and practices that area schools used to help their freshmen adjust to high school and created a list of recommendations for the 2019 FOP.

The University of Delaware Institutional Review Board deemed this project as *Exempt* so I did not have to secure consent forms prior to collecting data. I emailed 30 principals from public, charter and private high schools in Delaware (Attachment 3) and asked them to participate in a brief, online survey. The survey was distributed, electronically via Google Forms, to this purposive sample. There were 13 responses making the response rate 43% for this study.

I qualitatively analyzed the closed-ended questions and coded the open-ended questions. After an analysis of the data, I developed a PowerPoint presentation that

explained the findings of the study (Attachment 4) and I created a list of recommendations for the 2019 FOP. In September of 2018, I used this PowerPoint as part of a presentation for the CSW administrative team. This allowed the school leaders to engage with the data, learn about local freshmen orientation programs, and listen to recommendations for the next installment of our FOP. The presentation is posted on the FOP website so that all stakeholders can access the findings of this study.

Logistics

Administrators were asked several questions regarding the logistics of their programs. Of the schools surveyed, 100% indicated that they hold their orientation programs on the first day(s) of school. Roughly 70% of the schools allocate one day or more for their programs and three of the schools used less than a half of a day (see Table 1). Question 3 asked how often schools updated their FOP. Approximately 15% make adjustments yearly, 62% every several years while 15% stated that they have never made any changes to their programs. The final closed ended question asked who facilitated the various FOP. The most common answer was administrators at 40% followed by teachers with 23% and nearly 25% of the schools stated that it was a team effort amongst administrators, teachers and support staff.

Table 1

Logistics of local FOP

Question	More than 1 day	1 day	Half of day	Less than half of day
Roughly how much time do you allocate for your freshmen orientation program?	46%	23%	8%	21%

Mentoring & Parental Involvement

There were two questions that focused specifically on the networking components of the other schools' FOP. Of the 13 Principals surveyed, 23% of the area schools do have a formal mentoring program associated with their FOP while 15% of those surveyed stated that they use mentors for struggling freshmen students (Question 12). Question 9 indicates that over 60% of the schools have parental involvement with their FOP and 8% had parents conduct some of the orientation workshops for the students. (See Tables 4 & 5)

Table 2

Describe any peer mentoring programs you provide your freshmen.

Code	Number	% of participants (n=13)
Formal Mentoring Program	3	23%
Mentoring Program for Struggling Students	2	15%
No Mentoring Program	8	62%
Investigating a Mentoring Program	1	8%

Table 3

Parental involvement at freshmen orientation programs at local high schools

Code	Number	% of participants (n=13)
Parent Information Sessions	6	46%
No parental involvement	5	38%
Social Gathering	2	15%
Parent Association Conducts Workshops	1	8%

Activities for FOP

Several of the survey questions sought to understand specific components of other FOP. There were many similarities to the CSW FOP including the following: 70% provide opportunities to meet other stakeholders, 62% review rules and

expectations including the student code of conduct, 46% of the schools provide some sort of meal like breakfast or lunch, 31% distribute student schedules and 31% conduct tours. More than half of those surveyed mentioned the importance of introducing technology to the freshmen. This data indicates that these components are practices in the area and so I feel confident that our program is headed in the right direction. We do school pictures as part of our FOP like 23% of the schools surveyed. However, three schools include additional pictures such as whole class pictures and cap and gown pictures which is a nice feature of their programs and worth considering for our program.

Recommendations for 2019 FOP

After reviewing the data from the administrator surveys, I am recommending the following additions for the 2019 FOP.

Parental Involvement

Increase the opportunities for parents to engage with the FOP as either participants and/or volunteers. Data from local schools indicate that 62% have a parent component to their orientation program. Additionally, several schools had opportunities for the parents to interact socially at the start of the schools year. Increasing opportunities for parental engagement at the start of the school year might provide an additional support system for the freshmen as they adjust to CSW. One possibility is doing a parent social at the same time the students are involved in workshops or parents may be able to have a small gathering the night of the first day of school.

Changes in Workshops

First, reduce the amount of time the CSW spend in workshops involving school policies and procedures. Although it is important to orient the CSW freshmen to their new student code of conduct as well as school policies and procedures, there are other more important and urgent topics to address over the course of the first few days of school. There is a limited amount of time for the workshops so in order to maximize the value of the time together, policies and procedures should not be the main focus of the orientation program. In the schools that were surveyed, 31% felt that their orientations were too focused on these elements. After running the FOP for several years, I have been told by several staff members that they think we also spend too much time focusing on rules. Therefore, I recommend reviewing the amount of time we are allocating on this over the course of the FOP and moving some of these teaching sessions to later in the first week.

Second, incorporate team-building activities for the freshmen. We eliminated this from the FOP the past several years. However, roughly 25% of administrators surveyed include this in their program and stated that it was a beneficial for their students. Team-building is a fun way for students to get to know each other and a natural way to encourage students to interact with each other. Since one of the goals of the CSW FOP is to provide opportunities for networking, team-building activities would be beneficial.

Third, investigate the interest/feasibility of adding class photos and/or cap & gown pictures. Approximately 25% of area schools do special photo opportunities

with their freshmen. We have never done this but it may be a nice addition to our program. In October 2018, I had the opportunity to speak at a parent association meeting about the CSW FOP. I had several side bar conversations with parents and most were interested in having pictures with caps and gowns.

Attachment 1- Administrator Survey Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey! This survey should take under 10 minutes and the data collected will be used to learn about practices at area schools. Our goal is to understand more about what your school does to help its incoming freshmen. The survey is anonymous and completely voluntary. If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you do not need to answer them. If you are interested in the findings of my research, I would be happy to discuss them with you either in person, on the phone or via email. Thank you again for your assistance.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Roughly how much time do you allocate for your freshmen orientation program?

Less than a half of day Half of day Full day More than 1 day

2. When do you conduct your freshmen orientation program?

In the spring In the summer On the first day(s) of school

3. How frequently do you update your freshmen orientation program?

Every year Every few years Never

4. Please list all activities that you include in your freshmen orientation program.

5. Rank the needs of freshmen at your school from greater to lesser (social, academic, technology, other [please list]).

6. What supports have been beneficial for your freshmen?

7. What supports have been less beneficial for your freshmen?

8. Who facilitates your freshmen orientation?

9. In what ways, if any, are parents included in the freshmen orientation?

10. What supports introduced during the freshmen orientation are ongoing through the school year?

11. Describe any online resources you provide your freshmen.

12. Describe any peer mentoring programs you provide your freshmen.

Thank you for completing this survey!

Attachment 3- Introductory Email

Hi,

I have been a high school mathematics teacher for 28 years and I am working towards my Ed. D at the University of Delaware. My dissertation is about freshmen orientation programs and I am hoping to learn what your high school does for your students. I know administrators are very busy but would truly appreciate about ten minutes of your time. If you would like to see the results of this survey and/or hear about what I have learned regarding the importance of freshmen orientation programs, I would be happy to talk or meet any time.

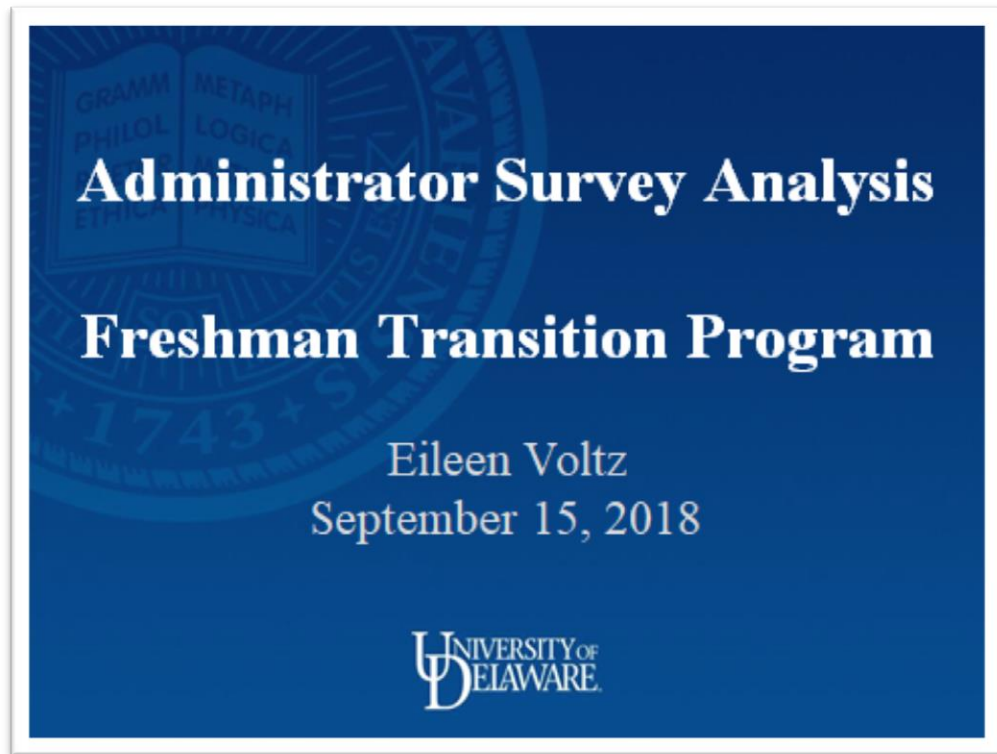
Thank you for your time and I hope you have a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Eileen Voltz
Ed. D Candidate
302-540-8526
evoltz@udel.edu

Attachment 4 - PowerPoint of Results

The following are screen shots of the PowerPoint that describes the results from the Administrator survey and that was presented to CSW colleagues.



HELLO AND WELCOME

Overview of this study

- ❖ Learn about FOP at area schools
- ❖ Analyze data to identify best practices
- ❖ Identify activities to use at CSW FOP
- ❖ Use findings to provide recommendations for 2019 FOP

Thank you all for supporting me and the FOP at CSW!

3

PROBLEM STATEMENT & PURPOSE

Incoming CSW freshmen struggle with their transition from middle school to CSW

The purpose of this project is to enhance the current FOP in order to decrease the amount of time it takes for freshman to adjust to the logistical and psychological challenges of high school.

3

What have I been working on?

Surveyed public, charter & private schools in Delaware

- ❖ Online survey
- ❖ 4 closed ended questions
- ❖ 8 open ended questions
- ❖ n=13

4

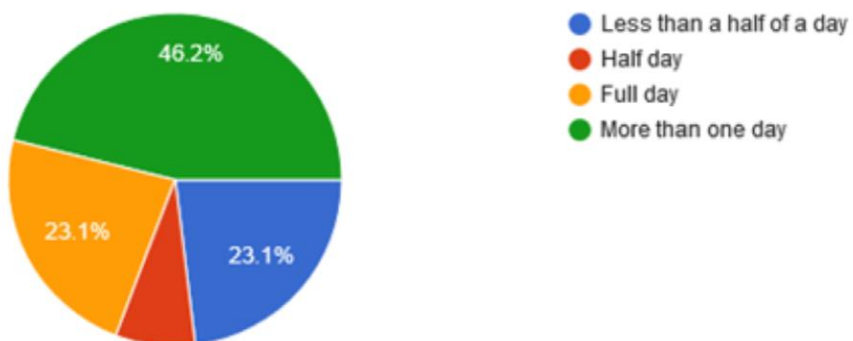
IMPROVEMENT GOAL: **Identify Best Practices**

- ❖ Analyzed results to identify themes
- ❖ Presentation to discuss findings...today!
- ❖ Share list of recommendations for our FOP
- ❖ All information will be on the FOP webpage

5

Survey Question 1

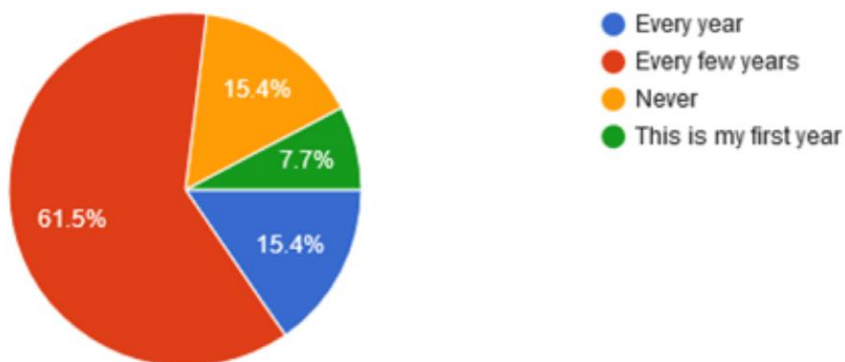
Roughly how much time do you allocate for your freshman orientation program?



6

Survey Question 2

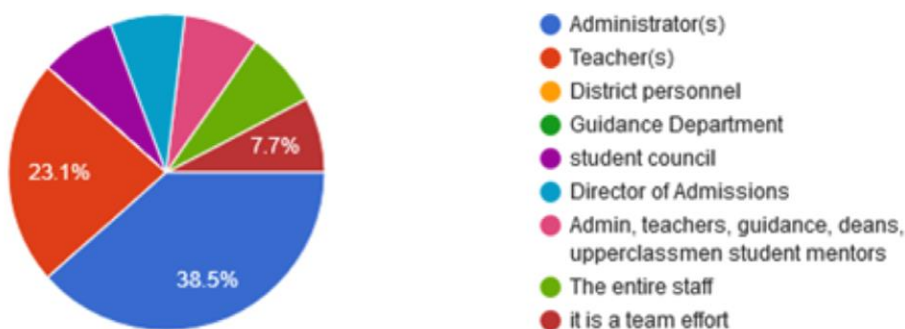
How frequently do you update your freshman orientation program?



7

Survey Question 3

Who facilitates your freshman orientation program?



8

Open Ended Questions

1. Please list all activities that you include in your FOP.
2. Rank the needs of freshmen at your school from greater to lesser (social, academic, technology, other [please list]).
3. What supports have been most/least beneficial for your freshmen?
4. Who facilitates your FOP?

9

Open Ended Questions

5. In what ways, if any, are parents included in the FOP?
6. What supports introduced during FOP are ongoing through the school year?
7. Describe any online resources you provide your freshmen.
8. Describe any peer mentoring programs you provide your freshmen.

10

What is going on at other high schools?

- ❖ 70% provide opportunities to meet other stakeholders
- ❖ 62% review rules and expectations including the student code of conduct
- ❖ 46% of the schools provide some sort of meal like breakfast or lunch
- ❖ 31% distribute student schedules
- ❖ 31 % conduct tours

11

What does the data tell us?

- ❖ Most schools include a parent component to their orientation program
- ❖ Best practices at area schools include opportunities for team building
- ❖ Freshman orientation programs at times overemphasize school policies & procedures

12

What might we do differently for next year?

Parental Involvement:

Increase the opportunities for parents to engage with the FOP as either participants and/or volunteers.

- ❖ 62% of the class of local schools have a parent component to their orientation program.
- ❖ May provide an additional support system for the freshmen as they adjust to CSW.

13

What might we do differently for next year?

Modify FOP Sessions

- ❖ Reduce the amount of time the CSW spend in workshops involving school policies and procedures
- ❖ Incorporate team building activities for the freshmen
- ❖ Investigate class photos and/or cap & gown pictures

14



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION

Questions?
Comments?
Discussion.

15

Appendix H

ARTIFACT 8: MENTOR TRAINING MODULE

Description: These are screenshots from the mentor training module. This is an online resource that uses Schoology Learning Management System.

Screenshot #1

Description and Pre-Survey

Welcome to the Mentoring Training Module!

First and foremost, thank you for volunteering to be a mentor for next school year! To start, we hope to learn what you know about mentoring before participating in this training module. Please complete the Pre-Survey, located below, prior to engaging with any parts of this module. After you complete the survey, please click the Discussions tab on the left to introduce yourself to the group! Once you introduce yourself, please start with Module 1: What is Mentoring?

-Mrs. V

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Mentoring Pre-Survey

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdhtBEr6d9fX0SalqUZE6k8nv6fNfWE2Sx2a97eLG_pHaMJw/viewform

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Screenshot #2

Facts about Mentoring

Added by You · Oct 29, 2018

What is Mentoring: Introduction

Think about a time when you were given advice about your education or your personal life. Was it good advice? Why or why not? Can you think of a person who has been a “mentor” to you? Who was it and what was the situation? What are some things you wish you knew as a freshman at CSW?

So what exactly is peer mentoring?

It is an opportunity for you to share your expertise and experiences as a senior with some freshman. By sharing important information about CSW and providing encouragement, you will facilitate a smoother transition for your mentees. You will provide them with the tools they will need for navigating the logistics of CSW. You will also be one of the first upperclassmen they will interact with so being a mentor is no small thing!

Please watch the video below:

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Mentoring Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtr--uo_WMc&feature=youtu.be

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Mentoring is...

- The act of making a difference
- The ability to achieve results through people
- Who you are... when no one else is looking
- Knowing what you're best at... what brings a light to your eyes, and what you love to do...

Screenshot #3

What is your Learning Style: Introduction

One thing you will do is to help the freshmen to understand more about themselves.

To facilitate this, you must know yourself too!

Below are some activities that you can work through at your own pace.

1. Multiple Intelligences Assessment – There is an article about MI that you can read & then a short multiple intelligence assessment.
2. Learning Style – Work through the Power Point and related activities to learn more about your learning style.

Added by Sean Moore · Nov 18, 2018

Article on Multiple Intelligences

<https://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-howard-gardner-video>

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Multiple-Intelligences Self Assessment

<https://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment>

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Learning Style Powerpoint

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sxxpaLzQPjSZ_dg9AmzyHFnvSxyZZkx8s4_m-WHSjOI/edit#slide=id.p

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Big Thinkers: Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences

Edutopia revisits its 1997 interview with the Harvard University professor about multiple intelligences and new forms of assessment.

April 1, 2009




Howard Gardner is the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor in Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He also holds positions as adjunct professor of psychology at Harvard University and as senior director of [Harvard Project Zero](#).

He has written 20 books and hundreds of articles, and is best known for his theory of multiple intelligences, which holds that intelligence goes far beyond the traditional verbal and linguistic and logical and mathematical measurements. Here he discusses student-directed learning, multiple intelligences, and a different approach to assessment.

Screenshot #4

Screenshot #4



Extrovert

- Prefer group activities
- Get energized by social interaction
- Tend to be more enthusiastic
- Easily excited

Screenshot #5

What Qualities make an Effective Mentor?

What are the qualities you would want in a mentor?

Everyone has their own opinions based on their own experiences but here are some good qualities:

- desire to make a difference in the lives of other people
- honest & trustworthy
- empathetic
- good communication skills, in particular listening
- encouraging
- genuinely cares about the well being of other people
- inspirational
- patient
- open minded and tolerant of opinions and thoughts of others
- respectful of self and others

What 2 qualities do you think are the most important and why?

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Screenshot #6

Final Thoughts and Post Survey

As you can see, being a senior mentor is important! Not only can you help new students, this process will also help you!

Please look at the website below on how to be a great peer mentor.

Take your time looking at the website. While you read, think about what type of mentor you want to be.

Jot down things you want to try and know that everything that you do will help to ease the transition for your mentees.

After you finish, please fill out the short survey below so that we can get feedback regarding this training module. We will use the data to improve the Mentoring Training Module for Fall 2019. Thank you for your participation in this study!

There will be having a debrief meeting in a few weeks during activity period so please keep an eye out for an email.

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

How to be an Effective Mentor

<https://owlcation.com/academia/How-To-Be-A-Great-Peer-Mentor>

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Post Survey

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchw84S_ygSx2748ifQRr57DrA1CgVvZU9Erudh3RL6KjULSQ/view/form

Added by Sean Moore · Oct 29, 2018

Appendix I

ARTIFACT 9: WHITE PAPER ON MENTOR TRAINING MODULE

Schoology Training Module for CSW Mentor Program

White Paper

Eileen Voltz

University of Delaware

EDUC 881: Educational Leadership Portfolio II

October 2018

Schoology Training Module for CSW Mentor Program

Transitioning to high school is a daunting task. In high schools all over the world, freshmen must quickly learn how to navigate around their new school, manage an increased work load brought on by more difficult classes and form relationships with their new peer group. The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) is a STEM school that draws from a wide number of middle schools which means many freshmen do not know their classmates. This is an additional stressor as they adjust to the rigor of their new school. Due to the academic demands at CSW, it is important that the new students adjust to their new school as soon as possible. Providing a senior peer mentor is one way to address this problem.

In conjunction with the Freshmen Orientation Program (FOP), CSW implemented a peer mentoring program where seniors volunteer to serve as mentors to incoming freshmen. The mentoring program begins over the course of a two day orientation program and continues with bi-monthly visits throughout the school year. Three years ago, CSW started its mentoring program, but there has never been training for the mentors. As a result, some mentors were able to help their mentees more easily than others. The problem is that there was too much variability between what the mentors were doing to help their mentees. In order to make sure that all mentors have the tools they need to be able to help freshmen adjust to high school, there is a need for a formal mentoring training program.

Research Supporting Mentoring Programs

Research has shown there are three potential benefits to peer mentoring. The first benefit of peer mentoring is for the freshmen. According to Berger (1990), mentees benefit from the constant support and encouragement from role models. This leads to an increase in self-esteem, better attendance, higher grades as well as a decrease in suspensions (Campbell-Whatley, 2001).

The second benefit of peer mentoring is for the mentors. Research has shown that through these mentoring relationships, mentors engage in self-discovery where they can mature, explore future careers and apply classroom knowledge (Berger, 1990). Often times, veteran CSW students excel in their own coursework but lack opportunities to interact with younger peers. The CSW Mentor Program allows seniors to experience the richness of human relationships with people they otherwise may not have opportunities to interact with.

Research has also shown that mentoring programs provide opportunities for mentors to hone their leadership skills as they give back to their school by sharing their knowledge and experiences (Murdock, 2006). By serving as a mentor, the CSW seniors are able to learn, demonstrate, and refine leadership skills in several different ways. Both the mentors and mentees struggle with similar personal issues, such as an absent parent(s), ADD or ADHD, dyslexia, shyness, and awkward social skills. Schwiebert, Deck, Bradshaw, Scott, and Harper (1999) assert that mentors and mentees should be matched based on similar social or learning issues since it benefits everyone involved.

The third benefit of peer mentoring is that it provides an opportunity for mentors and mentees to experience a community of practice (is there a citation you can add here). At CSW, both the freshmen and seniors can engage in joint discussions thereby helping each other. They build relationships with people they would not have met and develop social responsibility which is part of our school mission statement. The cultural competencies and sense of community that the mentor program provides help to ensure a safe and productive school environment which is another part of the mission statement for CSW.

Logistics of Mentoring Programs

Research has shown there are three important logistical matters to consider when implementing a peer mentoring program. The first logistical matter to consider is the location for the mentoring program. Roughly one fourth of mentoring programs in the country occur in schools, with a majority utilizing a school-based format where high school-aged mentors work with children at school. Successful mentoring programs provide opportunities for small and large group activities (Garringer, 2010). At CSW, the program is designed with these elements in mind and the program occurs during the regular school day with opportunities for students to engage in large and small group settings.

The second matter to consider is the length of the mentoring program. Research has shown that the longer the relationship continues, the more positive the outcome. For example, Dedmond, Brown, and LaFauci, 2006 indicate that “students’ needs are long-term and comprehensive.” The CSW mentoring program begins on the

first two days of the school year and continues with bi-monthly sessions that span the course of an entire school year.

The third logistical matter are the resources needed for the CSW mentoring program. According to Bisland (2001), administrators recognize the benefits of peer to peer mentoring, but lack of money often prevents the implementation of such programs. Fortunately, the mentoring program at CSW does not require significant monetary funding and there is a small budget. However, the program requires substantial time for students to meet and moving forward will require time for proper training of the senior mentors.

History of Mentoring Program at CSW

The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) Mentor Program was first implemented in the 2016-17 school year and has continued over the past three school years. Each year, roughly 60 seniors are selected to mentor the 240 members of the freshmen class. The mentors are a diverse group of teenagers that participate in many different activities including sports, student government, yearbook, National Honor Society, Science Olympiad, and Math League to name a few. Many of them have after school or weekend jobs and have rigorous college preparatory courses to attend to as well as family responsibilities.

Mentor Training Module

Existing research indicates that training is an important facet of a successful mentoring program. Berger (1990) states that training is needed for mentors to understand the purpose of the program, the expectations of being a mentor, and the

benefits for all stakeholders. Over the past three years, the mentors attended a brief meeting to learn about the program and their responsibilities but it was not a formal training program.

In the fall of 2018, a mentor training module was created using Schoology. Concurrently, rising juniors interested in mentoring were invited to a meeting and asked to volunteer to participate in the mentor training pilot study via Schoology. Interested students filled out an index card with demographic information and were selected for the pilot study. The sample consisted of 10 CSW juniors.

The students in the pilot study were invited via email, both before and after engaging with the module, to participate in an online survey. The surveys were included in the Schoology module but participants were also reminded via email. The purpose of the surveys was to determine if the participants felt the Schoology module helped them understand the purpose of the mentoring program and their role as a mentor. The pre and post surveys, which included closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale, as well as short answer questions, took the participants no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Since these students are involved in many different extra-curricular activities, the training module was posted on Schoology and the participants were able to conduct the training during one of their study halls. The training module is comprised of five components and took all participants less than an hour to complete.

The first module provided an overview of the CSW mentor training program, the purpose of mentoring, and a pre-survey that the participants did prior to engaging

with the other modules. The pre-survey was administered via a google form (Attachment 1). The second module included facts about peer mentoring and included an opportunity for students to reflect on their own opinions about mentoring. Also, there was a brief, inspirational video about mentoring. The third module allowed the students to learn about multiple intelligences (MI) and learning styles. There was an article to inform them about MI and a short assessment for them to take. Additionally, in the third module, there was a Power-Point on learning styles and a learning styles inventory for them to take. This module allowed the mentors to learn more about themselves as well teach them the different ways that their mentees may learn. The fourth module focused on qualities of an effective mentor and the prospective mentors were asked to reflect on the ones they felt were the most important. The fifth module provided participants with a website that delineated the various aspects of effective peer mentoring. This website reviewed the purpose of peer mentoring, attributes of a good mentor, as well as suggestions for connecting with a mentee, including various ways to offer support and encouragement. The final component of the training was for participants to take a post-survey. The post-survey was administered via a google form (Attachment 3).

Data Analysis

I compared the results of the pre- and post-surveys to determine if the Schoology module helped to prepare these students for the mentoring program. I quantitatively analyzed the results in order to identify if there need to be changes to the module. Specifically, I developed categories for the various responses for each

question, coded each response and tabulated the number of responses for each category (reported as percentages).

Results

Pre-Survey

The mentor training module was piloted with ten juniors at CSW. Prior to engaging with the training module, the participants took a five question survey (Attachment 1). First, participants were asked to use a scale from 1-10 to indicate how helpful it is it for freshmen to have mentors during their first year. Half of the participants felt that it was helpful for freshmen to have mentors during their first year.

In the second question (short-answer), participants were asked to reflect on their own freshmen experience with their peer mentors (see Table 1). Despite the small sample size, 70% of those surveyed agreed that the mentors can ease the transition to high school and provide advice about things like managing the workload and social life of high school. Precisely 50% of the participants recalled the difficulty they had navigating around the building, when they were freshmen.

Table 1

Interactions that Helped Mentors the Most

Code	Number of Participants	% of Participants (N=10)
Advice about being a CSW student	7	70%
Building orientation	5	50%
Opportunities to ask questions	4	40%
One on one interactions	1	10%

Question 3 (short-answer) sought to identify previous mentoring experiences. For this study, 40% of these students indicated that they participated in mentoring programs in their middle schools while 60% had no experience with mentoring.

In question 4 (short-answer), 70% indicated that they felt somewhat unprepared to be a mentor while 30% of the participants felt extremely prepared to be a mentor. Question 5 (short-answer), the final pre-survey question, asked the prospective mentors what they were most worried about as they took on the role of senior mentor. More than 60% of them were concerned with not being able to satisfactorily answer questions asked by their mentees, while 30% expressed concerns with being an effective mentor.

Post-Survey

After engaging with the training modules, participants were given a four short-answer question post-survey. The first question asked what they learned about mentoring (see Table 2). Of those surveyed, 40% now recognize the importance of establishing a relationship and connecting with their mentees. After learning about MI and learning styles, 30% felt that they could use this information to be a more effective mentor.

Table 2

What Participants Learned by Engaging with Mentoring Training Module

Code	Number of Participants	% of Participants (N=10)
Importance of connecting with mentee	4	40%
Using learning styles to understand self/mentees	3	30%
Importance of mentoring	2	20%
Need to follow through all year	2	20%

Students in this study were then asked what they might do differently as a result of their experiences with the training module (Question 2). Of those surveyed, an overwhelming 70% acknowledged the importance of engaging regularly with their mentees. Roughly half of the prospective mentors said that they will focus on being compassionate and encouraging with their mentees while 20% planned on considering the learning style and personality information to aid in building their relationship.

The third question of the post-survey aimed to identify the component of the module that the students enjoyed the most (see Table 3). A majority of the students enjoyed learning about themselves and about how they might use this information to connect with their mentees. Thirty percent of those surveyed enjoyed the information that was shared using the Power-Point presentation and informative articles while only 20% enjoyed the videos on mentoring.

Table 3

Most Enjoyed Component of Mentoring Training Module

Code	Number of Participants	% of participants (N=10)
Learning Styles/MI	6	60%
Power-Points/Articles	3	30%
Mentoring Videos	2	20%

Finally, prospective mentors were asked to reflect on what they were worried about prior to engaging with the Schoology module to see if the training helped to alleviate their concerns (Question 4). Prior to the training, 60% of those surveyed were worried about being able to answer questions. After the training, 40% stated that they recognized that they may not have all of the answers and that they would be comfortable finding the answers from other stakeholders. The post-survey data also indicated that 40% of the participants felt more prepared to be a mentor and that they knew additional strategies for being a more effective mentor.

Recommendations Future Mentor Training Programs

Overall, the results of the surveys, as well as anecdotal evidence from mentors, suggest that the pilot mentoring program was well-received by the participants. The module was able to inform the mentees about the importance of their role, strategies for effective mentoring and also provided opportunities for them to learn about themselves. In addition to the data collected via the pre and post-surveys, we had a

meeting to debrief on the training. The pilot participants felt the training was engaging and informative. Also, they felt it took an appropriate amount of time.

During the debriefing session, they also had several valuable suggestions. First, they indicated that having students do the training at the same time and place could increase the efficacy of the training. Secondly, they felt that the reflections would have been enhanced if they had been able to engage with fellow mentors about their thoughts and beliefs over the course of the activities. Based on this anecdotal data, I recommend that the mentor training program be experienced using the online module but take place in person so that the mentors can interact with the material as well as with their peers.

Since only two of the ten students enjoyed the videos in the training module it appears this would be another needed change. Based on this finding, future iterations of the mentoring program should include higher interest videos or I can try to create videos that will be more engaging for the mentors.

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Attachment 1- Mentoring Pre-Survey

1. On a scale from 1-10, how helpful do you think it is it for freshmen to have mentors during their first year?
2. Consider your freshmen year prior to the implementation of the mentoring program. What types of mentor experiences do you think would have helped you?
3. Have you had any previous opportunities to be a mentor? If yes, please describe what you did.
4. On a scale from 1-10, how prepared do you feel to be a mentor?
5. What are you most worried about as you take on this new role as a mentor?

Attachment 2- Mentoring Post-Survey

1. What did you learn about mentoring by engaging with this module?
2. Now that you completed the mentoring training module, what will you do differently as a mentor?
3. What component of the module did you enjoy the most? Why?
4. Recall what you were most worried as you take on this new role as a mentor. Is this still a concern? If so, what type of training would help you to be more comfortable?

Attachment 3- Schoology Module (Artifact 8)

See Appendix H

Appendix J

ELP PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

ELP Proposal:

Freshmen Transition Program

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University of Delaware

EDUC 880, Fall 2017

ELP Proposal: Freshmen Transition Program

The Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) is a 9-12th grade college preparatory STEM school in Wilmington, Delaware. I have worked there for the past sixteen years as a mathematics instructor and teacher leader. I am responsible for designing, organizing and leading our annual *freshmen orientation program*, hereafter referred to as FOP. Adolescence is a transformational time period where children experience a variety of major changes in a short amount of time. One of these major changes is the transition from middle to high school. Adjusting to a new building with increased academic demands, new routines and a larger social network is a challenge for students during an already fragile time period. The CSW FOP was designed twenty years ago and needed to be revised to address the needs of the current students. Therefore, the overarching goal of my Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP) is to provide an updated FOP with additional supports that orient incoming students to the facilities, policies, programs and people at their new high school so they can focus on their academics and get off to a good start.

Organizational Context

The purpose of this section is to provide information about *The Charter School of Wilmington*, hereafter referred to as CSW. I will provide a description of CSW, an overview of their curricula, an explanation of the school's vision/mission statement, CSW student demographic and performance data, an overview of the governance and leadership as well as the history of the FOP.

Organization Description

CSW has the distinction of being the first Charter school in the state of Delaware and one of the first independently public schools in the United States (established in 1996). It is a highly competitive and rigorous comprehensive high school for grades 9-12 located in Wilmington, Delaware. The school is intended for students with an interest in mathematics and science and offers a college preparatory curriculum with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focus.

Although CSW is the first Delaware charter school, it has been in operation for a short time period compared to most Delaware public schools, but has already received a variety of accolades. Historically and currently, CSW has the distinction of being the top high school in the state of Delaware for both SAT scores and for the Delaware State Assessment Test for 10-12th grade. In 2013, it was named a *Recognition School* by the Delaware Department of Education for exceptional performance and recognized as a *National Blue Ribbon School* by the U.S. Department of Education. In 2013 and 2016, Newsweek published rankings for *America's Best High Schools List*. CSW was ranked #62 and #15, respectively. In 2016, Niche ranked it as the *Best Public High School in Delaware* and #3 *Charter School in America*. In 2015, Newsweek ranked the school #15 for *America's Top High Schools List* while U.S. World News & World Report ranked CSW as the #5 *STEM high school in the nation*.

Curriculum

At CSW, there is an array of elective courses including Astronomy, Anatomy and Physiology, Introduction to Engineering, Biotechnology/Microbiology, Computer Graphics, Advanced Robotics, Discrete Mathematics, Genetics and Human Heredity, Forensic Science, Critical and Creative Thinking, Military History and American Politics. According to the Delaware Department of Education website, CSW “offers one of the state's broadest selections of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, as well as University of Delaware courses taught on site by University of Delaware instructors for college credit.” (Retrieved from <http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/School/Default.aspx?checkSchool=295&districtCode=32>).

Freshmen are required to enroll in a minimum of 6.5 credits, including full year classes in integrated mathematics, physical science, English I, integrated social science and a world language. Additionally, they are required to take semester courses in computer science, health and physical education. In their freshmen year, the only elective they can select is band.

CSW shares a building with Cab Calloway School of the Arts (CCSA), a fine arts magnet school in the Red Clay Consolidated School District (RCCSD). CSW students can enroll in classes at CCSA, so the school does not offer any fine arts classes. In addition to this extensive curriculum, there are ample extracurricular options for students, including 20 sports programs, musical performing groups, community service organizations, academic teams, student publications and nearly one

hundred clubs for every interest. These opportunities align with one of the pillars of the school's strategic plan. Specifically, the strategic plan of this organization is to offer a world-class college-preparatory curriculum in conjunction with arts, athletics and individual interest clubs in order to help students manage the stress that is inherent in a rigorous academic community.

Vision/Mission

According to the school's website, the mission of the school is to “engage highly motivated high school students with an interest in math and science by providing a challenging college-preparatory curriculum in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment that integrates practical learning opportunities, sets high expectations, develops social responsibility and promotes a global perspective” (Retrieved from <http://charterschool.org/mission-statement/>).

Demographic Information

As a result of school choice in the state of Delaware, students live in a wide variety of areas in New Castle and Kent Counties. Although it varies from year to year, CSW enrolls students from roughly 25 different public, private and parochial middle schools. Any eighth-grade student whose primary residence is in Delaware may apply for enrollment to CSW. The maximum enrollment is 970 students and the freshmen class size is determined by the difference between 970 and number of returning students for grades tenth through twelfth.

Table 1
Demographics for Freshmen Enrollment School Year 2014-2016

Year of Enrollment	% Male	% Female	% Caucasian	% Other
2016-2017	53.4	46.6	50.2	49.8
2015-2016	53.9	46.1	52.7	47.3
2014-2015	51.9	48.1	60.9	39.1

The demographics of the students are displayed above in Table 1. The highest race percentage of pupils is Caucasian with Asian being the second highest. There are nearly sixty members that make up the instructional staff and all but one of the fifty teachers is classified as a highly qualified teacher (HQT). There is a low turnover rate of employees and 80% of the teaching staff has over ten years of experience and 65% have a Master's degree or better.

Performance Data

Traditionally, CSW students perform well above average on state assessments. The 2015 SAT scores yielded averages that were roughly 200 points higher than peers throughout the state of Delaware for math, critical reading and writing. In 2015, CSW student took over 1,000 AP exams taken and more than 90% achieved a qualifying score.

Governance and Leadership

In 1996, a consortium of six local companies (DuPont, Ashland [Hercules], AstraZeneca, Christiana Care, Delmarva Power, and Verizon), founded The Charter

School of Wilmington. The Board of Directors (BOD) is the governing body of CSW and is comprised of members of the six founding companies, as well as two parent representatives, one teacher representative and other stakeholders from the community.

Based on the way the original charter law was written, the original BOD envisioned that the school would be run as a business. Therefore, in keeping with the titles of the business world, they determined that the school would be led by a President. The President is charged with overseeing everything at the school, which makes this position similar to that of a District Superintendent. The current President is in his fifth year and is the fifth president in school history. The Vice President (VP) is tasked with overseeing the academics and teaching staff. The current VP is also in his fifth year.

History of FOP at CSW

For the past two decades, The Charter School of Wilmington, has hosted the same FOP every August. Obviously, educational approaches have changed tremendously over this same time period, yet the FOP was not updated until the 2016-2017 school year. The original FOP allowed students to meet administrators and their classroom teachers, participate in team-building activities with their new classmates and attend a luncheon hosted by the parent association. The day was very low key and for many years it was received well by all stakeholders.

CSW has had several major changes over the past few years including the 2014 implementation of electronic mathematics and English textbooks that align with the Common Core State Curriculum (CCSC), the addition of *Schoology*, a new Learning

Management System (LMS) in 2015, and the *Chrome One-One* initiative in 2017 (an initiative to supply each student with a Chromebook computer). As a result of these and other technological changes, the FOP needed to be updated and expanded. The original FOP was a half day program. In 2016, a pilot FOP was implemented and the program was doubled to two half days and in 2017, it was doubled again and went to two full days. I played a major role in developing and implementing the updated FOP.

Role in Organization

I have been employed by the Charter School of Wilmington since August 2001. Prior to teaching at CSW, I taught both middle and high school for the Christina School District for nine years. Over the past sixteen years, I have taught a variety of mathematics classes including AP Statistics, Probability and Statistics, Research Statistics, Discrete Mathematics and Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III. My teaching schedule allows me to teach students in ninth through twelfth grade which gives me ample opportunities to engage with students over the course of their high school careers. All juniors are required to do a research project that utilizes statistics. I am one of two instructors responsible for helping all the eleventh graders perform the statistical tests for their projects. Under our supervision and tutelage, many of these students compete in Science Fairs at the state and the national level.

In addition to the instructional responsibilities, I have many other roles in this organization and also at the state level. I have been the varsity basketball coach since 2001 and varsity softball coach since 2004. As a head coach, I am in charge of overseeing all aspects of the program including instruction, personnel, finances and

addressing issues with the athletes and/or their parents. Additionally, twelve years ago I was selected to serve on the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) committees for both sports where I work collaboratively with other committee members to organize and oversee the state tournaments for both sports.

In addition to athletics, I am in charge of several service groups. First, I am a co-advisor for the CSW National Honor Society. My role includes ensuring that the application/selection process aligns with national guidelines, planning/running the induction ceremony, organizing/planning service projects, and dissemination of information to pertinent stakeholders. Secondly, for the past twelve years, I have been the moderator of a buddy program that pairs CSW upperclassmen with elementary students with special needs. I coordinate and chaperone monthly field trips of roughly 120 students and work alongside the administrative team to secure grant money for this program.

Role in FOP

Three years ago, I was accepted into the Ed.D. program at the University of Delaware. The Vice President of CSW also enrolled in the program and we took most courses together. This provided us with opportunities to discuss problems in education, as well as specific issues at CSW. Despite the high performance of our students on standardized tests, like any school we have things that need to be improved. We both agreed that the academic rigor at CSW creates a high stress environment for all students, but in particular for freshmen. I had a meeting with the administrative team to examine issues at CSW that I could address as part of my

graduate program. Ultimately, they asked me if I could revamp the FOP at CSW starting with a pilot program in the fall of 2016.

Although I needed to identify a topic for my Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP), my various instructional and leadership positions at CSW make me uniquely qualified to address this problem. First, I have the privilege of teaching students in all grades and typically about half of my students are freshmen. Secondly, I am involved with athletes at CSW and throughout the state from November to June every school year. Coaching allows me to hear about students' concerns and struggles as student-athletes. And as an advisor of NHS and the buddy program, I can engage with students outside of the school setting and learn even more about our student population.

Responsibilities

I am the lead teacher for the FOP and in charge of all aspects of the program. In the spring of 2016, I conducted research to identify and review scholarly literature on high school freshmen orientation programs. I gathered data from teachers and students, both formally and informally, to identify what was working well and what could be changed to suit the needs of the current freshmen. In the summer of 2016, I synthesized the research with the feedback from stakeholders to create a new curriculum for the FOP. In August of 2016, our staff implemented the pilot FOP over the course of two half days. I was responsible for all aspects of the day, including creating the schedule, allocating human resources, and communicating with all stakeholders. After the initial pilot program, I performed a program review.

In the summer of 2017, I did an internship through the University of Delaware where the bulk of my time was spent on the logistics of the FOP. In an effort to continue to aide with the transition from middle to high school, the administrative team decided they wanted to enhance the FOP so the program was extended from two half days to two full days. To accommodate this change, I used data from the program review and scholarly literature to expand the curriculum and revamp the program where needed.

Professional Growth

This ELP will contribute to my professional growth in many ways. First, I want to increase my capacity for examining an issue from the lens of multiple stakeholders. Students, teachers, administration, and parents all have differing opinions on the efficacy of the FOP as a result of differing wants or needs. My goal is to look at the FOP from all viewpoints in an effort to create a program that is beneficial for all stakeholders. Secondly, I want to build my skill set for developing and supervising a school wide program. As a classroom teacher for 27 years, I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to oversee something of this magnitude and importance. Being responsible for the FOP will allow me to continue to grow as a leader. I hope to continue to refine my communication skills and my ability to use data to inform all decisions for the FOP. And finally, I aspire to be a consultant for other high schools for their FOP. My goal is to meet with other principals in the RCCSD and potentially throughout the state, to share my expertise and experiences with our FOP.

As exciting as entering high school is for most students, it is also a transition period that is often characterized by declining academic performance, increased absences, increased behavioral disturbances, and less participation in extracurricular activities (Fritzer & Hurst, 1996). There is a need to develop and maintain supportive relationships within schools and create a caring school community for all students, especially incoming ninth-grade students (Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010). A well thought out FOP could provide such a foundation for the students at CSW.

Problem Statement

In this section, I will identify the problem statement that this ELP will address. There are four aspects of transitioning to CSW that are an issue for the incoming freshmen. I will describe the problems students are having for each component and provide a description of the ideal situation for the new students at CSW.

Statement of the Problem

This is my problem statement: *Incoming CSW freshmen struggle with the following four aspects of their transition from middle school to CSW: (a) keeping up with the rigorous demands of the CSW curricula, (b) learning and adjusting to the learning management system needed to navigate their high school experience, (c) leaving behind their middle school friends and establishing new social relationships and peer groups, and (d) navigating the new school building and environment.*

Freshmen are not adequately prepared to handle the logistics of CSW which means that they have a difficult time focusing on the academic demands of the school. The longer it takes freshmen to adjust to CSW, the harder it is for the school to fulfill

its mission statement. For example, Clark and Hunley (2007) assert that regardless of where they live, incoming freshmen face the same problems nationwide, such as anxiety about entering a new school, social pressure, and increased academic pressure and responsibility.

Keeping Up with a Rigorous Curriculum.

According to the school's mission statement, CSW provides a challenging college-preparatory curriculum that integrates practical learning opportunities and sets high expectations. The school exists to foster overall student performance to produce leaders for the future. In order for students to focus on the rigorous curriculum and in turn develop into the leaders of the future, freshmen students must be prepared to tackle the curriculum from day one of their high school careers. Accordingly, the school must provide an appropriate freshmen orientation program so that the students can adjust quickly to the academic rigor and successfully engage in the learning opportunities.

Students start their high school careers at CSW with an understanding that the course work will be a challenge. In most cases, it is one of the reasons that they applied to the school in the first place. However, many middle schools, in particular in the RCCSD, have eliminated homework for middle schoolers. This fact, coupled with the challenging curriculum, make the adjustment to the high school curriculum even more problematic for CSW freshmen. Not only do they need to attend to the increased demands of the courses, they need to learn how to manage their study time better than they did in middle school.

Learning New Technology.

A second issue that impacts a freshmen's ability to transition to CSW is the introduction of several new technological platforms, including online mathematics and English textbooks and the implementation of Schoology. Rivero (2015) indicates that the past 20 years have been an era infused with technology. Technological advances have drastically changed the ways schools are run in a positive manner but there is a learning curve for all stakeholders. Freshmen have a difficult time adjusting to these technological demands since they are also experiencing a variety of other things, including more rigorous academics and establishment of new peer groups. Schoology is a learning management system (LMS) that schools use to create, manage and share engaging content as well as assess student understanding.

With online textbooks and a LMS, the students are responsible for managing multiple aspects of their education. It requires increased responsibility, as well as knowledge of the different platforms, while they balance the personal upheaval of adolescence. The bottom line is that transitioning to high school is far more complex than it was 20 years ago and our FOP needs to respond to these changes.

In the fall of 2015, several teachers of freshmen (including me) participated in a professional learning community (PLC) to assess the transition of students from the Class of 2019. At this meeting, an ample amount of anecdotal evidence was presented to substantiate the fact that a vast majority of students were unprepared to successfully navigate the LMS. Many teachers reported that students were struggling to find assignments online while others did not understand how to submit assignments via the

LMS for grading. The information garnered from this PLC indicated most freshmen were not sufficiently prepared for managing their workload. There was a gap between the amount of time teachers thought the students needed to adjust to the demands of high school and the actual amount of time it was taking for the freshmen take to adjust to CSW.

Establishing New Relationships.

In traditional high schools, students entering ninth grade usually come from two or three feeder middle schools. Many students know each other and have long-established peer relationships. However, students at CSW come from over twenty-five different middle schools across multiple school districts. As a result, a large majority of ninth graders need to establish new social relationships and form peer groups. Some students enter CSW not knowing one other person. This is a daunting situation for any human being yet alone teenagers. This stage of development is mired in a variety of physical, social, emotional challenges. Cook, Fowler, and Harris (2008), state that teenagers, in general, can feel overwhelmed, confused and alone when they are forced to establish a new group of peers. The FOP needs to provide opportunities for students to network with their peers as well as chances for them to get to know the instructional, administrative and support staff at CSW.

Navigating New Facilities.

High school freshmen throughout the country usually move from a smaller middle school to a larger high school and have to learn how to navigate in their new building. When students attend a high school from one or more middle schools in the

same district, they are able to traverse around their new surroundings with friends from their former school. CSW freshmen are often learning their new environment at the same time that they are meeting their new classmates and forming new peer groups. This makes learning the new facilities an even more complex task for them than other freshmen throughout the state and country.

Vision for FOP

A freshmen transition program provides students with an understanding of the expectations and opportunities of high school. This transition period is a milestone for adolescents and requires students to learn more independently than in middle school. As a result, it is imperative that proper support programs are in place throughout high school to address both academic and social needs (Galloway & Gallenberger, 2000). One support program is a well thought out orientation program. Incoming freshmen students must be oriented to the facilities, policies, programs and people in order to focus on their academics.

Improvement Goals

In this section, I will identify the action strategies I will use to address the problem statement of this ELP. The freshmen orientation program has made some improvements over the past two years, but it is important to keep refining the program. The purpose of this project is to enhance the current FOP in order to decrease the amount of time it takes for freshmen to adjust to the logistical and psychological challenges of high school. The project has three goals: assess the needs of the incoming students and communicate this information to school personnel, identify

practices of local high schools to determine new strategies and/or interventions that could be utilized in the FOP, and create two online resources to supplement and enhance the effectiveness of the FOP.

Goal 1: Freshmen Needs Assessed and Communicated to CSW

In order to be successful at CSW, students have at least three immediate things they need to attend to. First, students need to use a variety of technologies, including Schoology, school email, and online mathematics and English textbooks.

Additionally, since students come from so many different schools, incoming CSW freshmen students must be given time to meet their new classmates, mentors and teachers. Finally, navigating around the building is important so that they can be in class on time to focus on the academic demands. This first improvement goal addresses the first three parts of my problem statement about technology, making new friends and navigating around the school building.

The first goal is to assess the needs of the freshmen and help my organization have a better understanding of those specific needs with respect to technology, networking and facilities. These three areas are consistently issues for our new students but we are currently not sure of the degree to which each student will struggle with those issues until after they arrive. The sessions for the 2018 FOP will be designed to target the specific needs of the incoming class which will hopefully make their transition easier than for previous classes.

To assess the needs of the next freshmen class, in March 2018, all incoming students will be invited via email to participate in an online, anonymous survey. The

purpose of the survey is to determine their self-efficacy regarding the various technologies that they will be required to use at CSW, to better understand their fears and concerns with networking in their new school and to gauge their ability to navigate at CSW. The survey should take the participants no longer than 10 minutes to complete. There will be closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale, as well as multiple-choice questions.

There will be separate questions pertaining to Schoology, using school email, and online textbooks, which is the second element of the problem statement. There are always students who come in with no experience in one or more of these areas. Since the surveys are anonymous, CSW cannot identify the students individually. But it will allow the staff to know what we are working with so that we can meet their needs more quickly than in the past.

I will analyze the survey results to look for general patterns across the responses, as well as unique responses that provide new insights. I will use this analysis to determine the workshops that will be needed for the 2018 FOP. Additionally, if logistically possible, I will offer different levels of workshops based on the results from the needs assessment. For example, we could offer beginner or advanced sessions for Schoology, email, and online textbooks that would differentiate instruction for the freshmen. This would be a major improvement over the one size fits all workshops offered the past two years.

The rising freshmen will also be asked about their fears and concerns with networking and getting to know people at CSW, which is the third element of the

problem statement. Teenagers are typically very social but can also be very shy, especially when they are in a new environment such as a new high school. Information from these surveys could be used to assign students to social groups over the course of the FOP. Traditionally, students travel with their homerooms throughout the FOP. But survey results from the 2017 FOP indicated that a majority of the participants wanted more time to socialize with students outside of their homerooms. Information from this needs assessment might suggest ways to group students to maximize their networking opportunities over the course of the first two days.

Finally, the eighth graders will also be surveyed about their familiarity with the school building, which is the fourth element of the problem statement. Some students have older siblings who attended CSW while others attended middle school in the same building. On the other end of the spectrum, some students have never been in the building before the FOP. The former group may not need a tour at all and the latter would benefit from a smaller and longer tour. I would hope to be able to differentiate the school tours based on the information from the needs assessment.

Identifying Needs of Freshmen Students

Action 1: Conduct Needs Assessment

1. Create needs assessment with closed- and open-ended questions focusing on technology, networking, and facilities
2. Secure IRB approval.
3. Administer the survey electronically to all incoming eighth grade students

4. Qualitatively analyze the closed ended questions; Identify general patterns and unique responses
5. Create infographic of data
6. Present infographic to teaching staff prior to start of the 2018 school year and post on the FOP website
7. Based on analysis of the data, create a list of recommendations for sessions needed for 2018 FOP; If logistically possible, workshops will be differentiated for the students

Evidence to collect: Student survey

Goal 2: Identify Practices for Strategies

My second goal is to survey administrators from other high schools in order to learn about their freshmen orientation programs. I will use this data to identify the best strategies and interventions that area schools are using to help their freshmen adjust to high school. Ultimately, I want to see if I can use or adapt elements for our program. This second part of my improvement goals addresses all four parts of my problem statement including curricula, technology, making new friends and navigating in the school building.

In March 2018, I will send cold-call emails to thirty to forty local school administrators to ask them to participate in an online survey. Ultimately, I want to get a wide-ranging sample of approximately twenty charter, public, vocational and private schools from Delaware. Although I am designing this program for a charter school,

there are common criteria that could apply to our population from different of types of institutions.

The survey should take the participants no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. There will be closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale as well as an open-ended question. Since I know school administrators are very short on time I did not want to do all open-ended questions. However, I feel it is important to give the participants the opportunity to give input that might not be garnered on the closed-ended questions.

I will qualitatively analyze the survey results to look for general patterns across the responses, as well as unique responses and I will code the open-ended question. I will use this analysis to determine if we should offer different workshops for the 2018 FOP. For example, I am hoping to learn about additional strategies that area schools use to help their freshmen transition to high school so that we can use these techniques with the freshmen at CSW.

Research Best Strategies & Interventions

Action 2:

1. Create survey with closed- and open-ended questions pertaining to FOP programs at local schools
2. Secure IRB approval.
3. Administer the survey electronically to high school administrators
4. Qualitatively analyze the closed-ended questions; Code the open-ended question. Identify general patterns or unique responses

5. Create PowerPoint presentation of data
6. Give presentation to administrative team prior to start of the 2018 school year and post on the FOP website
7. Based on analysis of the data, create a list of recommendations for sessions needed for 2018 FOP

Evidence to collect: Administrator survey

Goal 3: Creation of Online Supplements to FOP

Transitioning to high school is a highly complex process during an already tumultuous time period in adolescence. A two day orientation program may suffice for some of the students but a majority of students may benefit from additional resources. All students would benefit from some resources prior to the FOP, as well as online resources that they can access while they are adjusting to life as a high school student. In order to provide additional supports for our students, the orientation programs needs to provide resources beyond the first few days of school. My third goal is to create two online resources to aid with their transition to CSW.

First, a website is a powerful tool for communicating information to stakeholders including students, mentors, parents and staff. Incoming freshmen will be able to access the website prior to the two day freshmen orientation program. Students and mentors will be able to submit information, see the schedules for the FOP and also be able to ask questions before they arrive. Hopefully, this will help alleviate anxiety which would increase the efficacy of the orientation program. Parents of freshmen will also be able to see what the first few days will be like for their children, ask questions

and also volunteer to be a part of the FOP. And finally, the website will be one means of communicating with the staff, although private emails will also be used.

The second online resource that is needed is a formal training program for mentors that will make the mentoring program even more successful. According to Roybal, Thorton, and Usinger (2014), several factors are needed for a successful transition from middle school to high school including a sense of belonging or connection to school, which is directly related to academic success. One way we can help to facilitate this connection is to provide every new student a mentor. Mentoring can help the freshmen network at their new school. In order to help the incoming students, the mentors must be provided with training. I want to create a Schoology module that provides training for the mentors so that they can help the incoming students connect with CSW. This final part of my improvement goal addresses making new friends, but ultimately the mentors will be able to provide assistance with all areas of the problem statement.

In an effort to supplement what is already done to address the networking issues for our freshmen, I will develop a Schoology module to train the mentors. This would be an improvement over the current mentoring program, which had minimal training. The advantage of this online training is that the upperclassmen will be able to complete this training on their own schedules. Additionally, completion of the training will serve as a way of vetting the mentors and ensuring that they understand their roles so that they can help their mentees.

Once I have created the Schoology module, I will pilot the training module with ten students to determine if there is a positive effect on the problem. In March 2018, I will hold a meeting for any rising sophomores or juniors interested in mentoring. I will ask for volunteers to participate in the pilot program and then randomly select from this list the students for the pilot study.

The students in the pilot study will be invited, both before and after the training, via email to participate in an online pre and post survey. The purpose of the survey is to determine if the Schoology module helps mentors understand the purpose of the mentoring program and their role as a mentor. The survey should take the participants no longer than 10 minutes to complete. There will be closed-ended questions with a Likert-type scale as well as multiple-choice questions.

I will compare the results of the pre- and post-surveys to determine if the Schoology module helped to prepare these students for the mentoring program. I will quantitatively analyze the results and identify if there need to be changes to the module. Finally, I will write a report with recommendations to the CSW administrative team for the 2018 FOP.

Online Supplements to FOP

Action 3: Create a FOP website that has information for all stakeholders

1. Find a server (Google Sites)
2. Create a website containing general information about FOP
 - a. Needs assessment and infographic will be placed on the website

- b. PowerPoint presentation for local school administrators will be uploaded to the website
3. Publish the website and share with all stakeholders

Evidence to collect: Access to the website

Action 4: Design a Schoology module for freshmen mentors

1. Create a Schoology module for mentor training
2. Create a pre- and post-survey to use with pilot group
3. Secure IRB approval.
4. Select the students for the pilot group
5. Administer the pre-survey electronically to pilot group
6. Pilot the Schoology module
7. Administer the post-survey electronically to pilot group
8. Quantitatively analyze the data
9. Based on analysis of the data, prepare a white paper for the CSW administration

Evidence to collect: Pre & Post Survey data

The plan is to complete these goals in this order: Conduct needs assessment, research practices used at local high schools, create the website and create and pilot the Schoology modules with mentors. The end date for all actions is the end of July, 2018.

Description of Completed and Planned Artifacts

According to my plan, nine artifacts will make up this ELP. Table 2 describes the completed and proposed artifacts. Those artifacts that were already completed during Ed.D. coursework, prior to starting my proposal are marked with an “*”.

Table 2
Artifacts Table

Number	Artifact	Type	Audience	Description	Action Steps	Timeline	Status
1	FOP Paper*	Problem Analysis	CSW Admin. Team	A research paper- provides background information on the original FOP. Literature used for all variations of FOP.	Review of literature and analysis of the original FOP at CSW.	Executed at end of 2014.	Completed
2	Curriculum Revision*	Curriculum revision of original FOP	CSW Admin. Team	A research paper that examined the revisions to the original FOP. Information from this paper guided the creation	Analyzed original FOP curriculum	Executed May 2016	Completed

				of the FOP.			
3	Pilot FOP*	Adapted from the original plan I developed in EDUC 897	Freshmen Students	Schedule & Workshops used to help students transition to CSW	I developed this program over the course of several Ed D classes.	Executed Fall 2016.	Completed
4	Evaluation of the Pilot FOP*	Program Evaluation	Admin. Team	Process & outcome data were analyzed for efficacy of the Pilot FOP	Evaluated Pilot FOP and made changes for the Fall 2017 FOP.	Spring 2017	Completed
5	FOP Website*	Informative website	Freshmen, parents, & staff	This will be a tool for communicating about the FOP	Update with new schedules; Create hyperlinks to make surfing the site easier for stakeholders.	I started creating this tool during my summer internship	In progress
6	Infographic of Freshmen Survey Results	Needs Assessment	Members of ELP Committee, School faculty	I want to create and administer a survey to compile a list of needs from the incoming freshmen class. This	An infographic will be created and presented to inform teachers of the needs of the	Summer 2018	To be Completed

				information will be used to improve upon the FOP for Fall 2018.	incoming freshmen class. This information will also be used to select the workshops for the 2018 FOP.		
7	PowerPoint Presentation of Local Admin. Survey Results	Survey	Members of ELP Committee, Admin. Team	I want to create and administer a survey about local FOP to high school administrators. This information will be used to improve upon the FOP for Fall 2018.	A PowerPoint presentation will be developed and presented to inform the Admin Team about current best practice throughout Delaware. This information will also be used to improve the 2018 FOP.	Summer 2018	To be Completed

8	Networking Activities	Schoology Module for mentors & pre and post surveys	Current Junior Students	There will be one Schoology module that juniors can use to prepare them to network with new CSW students.	I need to create the Schoology module, pilot with a small sample of current juniors. Then I will gather data to see if modifications are needed.	Spring 2018	To be Completed
9	Analysis of Schoology Module	Report	Members of ELP Committee, Admin. Team	Written report explaining the mentor training module, the data collected, and recommendations for future FOP.	After creating the module, I will gather pre/post data from the participants. I will analyze the data and write a report that delineates the findings and uses the findings to make recommendations for modifications for 2018.	Summer 2018	To be Completed

* Artifacts that have been either started or completed during coursework in the Ed.D. program.

Narrative About Completed and Planned Artifacts

Problem Analysis Paper: The problem analysis paper explains why my project is needed at CSW. It includes background research that informs the remaining artifacts (completed - see Appendix A).

Curriculum Revision: The original FOP at CSW was established 16 years ago. This curriculum revision of the FOP helped me to better understand the FOP (completed - see Appendix B). It will be referred to for all future variations of the FOP. Additionally, it serves as a baseline history of the program so that future staff is aware of the changes that have occurred at CSW with respect to the FOP.

Pilot FOP: The Pilot FOP provides general information, schedules, and implementation tools used to modify the original FOP (completed - see Appendix C). It also is important to keep a record of the variations of the program so that future leaders are aware of the changes that have occurred at CSW with respect to the FOP.

Evaluation of the Pilot: This evaluation helped me to understand the degree to which this Pilot FOP was meeting the outcome and process goals. (completed - see Appendix D). Data gathered through this program review was used to make changes to the FOP for 2017.

FOP Website: A FOP website will be created to communicate with all stakeholders. Students, parents, staff and mentors can access important documents and schedules. It will be an open web page available to anyone interested in the FOP at CSW.

Needs Assessment Infographic: An infographic will be created to identify areas of transitioning to high school that ninth graders deem the most important. I will use this data to select workshops that will be meaningful to this incoming freshmen class. I will also share this with the staff so that they better understand the incoming freshmen class and their needs.

Local Administrator PowerPoint Presentation: An approximately 10-15 minute PowerPoint presentation will be designed to inform my school administrators about how area schools handle their FOP. I will use this data to see how we could or should modify our FOP based on other schools' practices.

Networking Activities: A Schoology module networking at CSW will be created to supplement what we do at our FOP. It will be provide freshmen with resources to help them beyond the 2 days of the FOP. I will pilot the module with some current CSW freshmen and gather pre and post survey data to test the efficacy of the module.


Report: This white paper will provide general information about the pilot study of the networking module. It will provide recommendations for modifications of the module so that they can be implemented in the 2018 FOP.

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Appendix K

IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENT

		RESEARCH OFFICE	210 Halliher Hall University of Delaware Newark, Delaware 19716-1551 Ph: 302/831-2136 Fax: 302/831-2828
DATE:	March 30, 2018		
TO:	Eileen Voltz, BS, MI		
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB		
STUDY TITLE:	[1196963-1] ELP		
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project		
ACTION:	APPROVED		
APPROVAL DATE:	March 30, 2018		
EXPIRATION DATE:	March 29, 2019		
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review		
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # (7)		

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.