

FEATURE ARTICLE

The Peer Tutor and Supplemental Instruction Leader Experience: Perceived Gains in Learning, Connection to Campus, and Fulfillment

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the perceived gains of postsecondary peer educators, specifically related to their views of learning, feelings of connection to campus, and feelings of fulfillment as a result of their roles. The peer educator in the campus learning center is a critical but undervalued resource for student success. This is reflected in the literature, which has a gap in the research related to the experience of the peer educators themselves. To address this problem, a survey was sent through public listservs to college learning assistance professionals, who then distributed it to their respective peer tutors and SI leaders ($N = 1217$). Using three open-ended questions from the Peer Educator Experiences Survey, I analyzed responses to generate several themes for each question. I identified five distinct themes from responses to the first question, which asked participants about their views of learning. Of the five themes, “learned how/ways people learn” had the highest frequency of responses ($n = 239$). I discovered four themes from responses to the second question that asked about the most rewarding aspect of their jobs. For this question, the theme of “helping/witnessing growth” was the most evident response ($n = 326$). The final question asked about participants’ connections to campus; again, four themes identified four distinct themes. The theme of “campus people/resources” proved to be the most populous ($n = 203$). Institutions and learning center administrators should consider these results when recruiting, training, assessing, and requesting funds for these programs.

Keywords: tutor, Supplemental Instruction leader, peer assistance

The use of peer educators to assist in retention and persistence is not revolutionary in higher education. From the health peer educators who inform students of healthy decision-making to the mentors assigned to first-year students, peer educators are a critical part of the strategies institutions employ to help students succeed. Campus learning centers are no exception to this practice, as both peer tutors and Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders are a part of these peer assistance programs. Peers are one of the top influencers on college students (Astin, 1993; Kim, 2015; Kim et al., 2021; Kuh, 1995). Peer tutors work with their tutees (those they tutor) to assist in not only content knowledge but also study skills and time management. SI leaders function in a different manner, as they facilitate collaborative learning sessions outside of class times in typically challenging courses.

Regardless of the role or history of the peer educator in the campus learning center, research has confirmed that their work is a significant part of the persistence and retention rates of the students they serve. However, less studied is the impact of the peer tutor and SI leader experience on these

peer educators. Abbot et al. (2018) succinctly described the research stating that few “have asked tutors directly about their experiences” (p. 245). Even less often researched is the experience as a whole regarding the holistic work of the peer educator in the campus learning center. In studying the experience for the learning center peer educator, namely the peer tutor and SI leader, new dimensions can be added to the persistence equation in the data-driven funding model of higher education.

Even though administrators and scholars alike agree that peer educators in campus learning centers are valuable tools for persistence, the number of financial and other resources allotted to these departments is not equitable to the work they do. In short, the resource allocation for these centers is not equal to their value in student retention. This body of research needs a more inclusive approach—one that considers the experiences of both the peer

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tutor and the SI leader as many of these student transitions between roles in their tenure at their learning centers.

The purpose of this study was to describe the experience of the peer educator in the campus learning center, specifically as it related to academic learning gains, rewarding aspects of the experience, and connection to campus. As a learning assistance professional, I explored the gains of the peer tutor and SI leader experiences in several capacities, both anecdotally and in published articles. Prior to analysis of the current study's results, the quantitative results from the sample were published in a peer-reviewed journal. The findings from this quantitative portion of the study showed that peer educators perceived the most gains in the non-academic skillset subcategory. Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference in the gains for the peer tutors, but the length of time serving in the roles did not present significant differences. In addition to better informing the practices and approaches for student success, this research may also contribute to the training and assessment of these peer educators.

Literature Review

My review of the literature on the peer tutor and SI leader experience found three areas of gains: academic performance and learning for the peer educators, feelings of self-confidence and fulfillment, and non-academic skillsets attributed to the work. In reviewing research on the experience for the campus learning center peer educator, the literature is limited and separated into studies about the peer tutor experience and those about the SI leader experience.

Although not devoted solely to the work of the peer tutor and SI leader, Newton and Ender (2010) explored the use of the campus peer educator and argued for their efficiency, stating, "they are experienced with the campus, they are economical to the budget, they can relate to the situations of fellow students, and they are effective" (p. 3). Skipper and Keup (2017) elaborated on this argument as they used data from both the 2009 and the re-administered 2013 Survey on Peer Leaders, noting that the campus peer educator's role developed beyond that of an educator to a peer leader, thus supporting the survey's title. The scholars also found that the research related to these peer leaders' experiences was "relatively underdeveloped" (Skipper & Keup, 2017, p. 96).

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Academic Performance and Learning for the Peer Educator

When reviewing the gains related to academic performance and learning, the literature described this subcategory in several ways, including metacognitive skills and content knowledge gained, awareness of learning styles, and scores on content assessment knowledge (Arco-Tirado et al., 2011; Blanc & Martin, 1994; DeBacker et al., 2012; Lockie & Van Lanen, 2008; Malm et al., 2012). Studies tended to focus on tutors in the STEM and health science fields (Brannagan et al., 2013; Dioso-Henson, 2012; Iwata et al., 2014; Unger et al., 2014). Dioso-Henson (2012) and Brannagan et al. (2013) both studied STEM tutors' increases in content knowledge in physics and nursing, respectively. Pulling and Allen (2014) developed this argument further by examining how their work helped tutors explain their content knowledge effectively. Studies on this subcategory of gains for the SI leader examined the experience through multiple perspectives, such as that of the former SI leader or through the lens of the academic mindset of the SI leaders (Congos & Stout, 2003; Hoiland et al., 2020). Again, several studies utilized STEM SI leaders as participants, but Smuts (2002) diverged from this STEM trend and found increases in understanding and interest in teaching/learning for Law School SI leaders. Similarly, in a collection of essays by current and former writing center tutors, Orsini and Kleinman (2022) found gains in understanding how diverse learning can be. In an essay, one former tutor explained, "Seeing a diversity of students led me to gain a better understanding as to how students learn based on a wide spectrum" (p. 10).

Feelings of Self-confidence and Fulfillment

The next subcategory of gains found in the literature was self-confidence and fulfillment for the peer tutors and SI leaders. Several studies described self-confidence and fulfillment as increases in personal development and feelings of accomplishment (Stout & McDaniel, 2006). DeFeo and Caparas (2014), Dvorak (2001), and Sneddon (2015) had feelings of fulfillment reported by participants as they transformed into their roles as tutors. Boyd and Paterson (2016) also found this subcategory of gains, but their participants were previous tutors reflecting on their work afterward. Al Kharusi's (2016) tutor participants noted the friendships made through their work and expressed feelings of fulfillment. Several SI leader

studies discussed these same feelings of fulfillment and self-confidence. Lockie and Van Lanen's (2008) qualitative study and then a questionnaire utilized by Malm et al. (2012) reported increased self-confidence after completing their role as SI leaders. Using two unique sample groups of former SI leaders, researchers explored their experiences and found development in the role and unanticipated fulfillment (Eller, 2016; Lozada, 2017). In another study, one participant discussed this concept of fulfillment, stating that her work allowed her to have a legacy at her institution (Hoiland et al., 2020).

Non-Academic Skillsets

The final subcategory of gains found in the literature was non-academic skillsets, described by scholars as skills in areas such as communication, personal, leadership, and interpersonal relationships. An early study about the peer tutor experience found gains related to social skill development when participants expressed increases in managing conflict and nonverbal communication (Mann, 1994). Whether using qualitative or mixed methods tools, scholars like DeFao and Caparas (2014) and Unger et al. (2014) did not provide statistical data to support the gains but relied on tutor reflections to show limited gains in communication skills and perspective development. For the SI leader research, studies on the non-academic subcategory of gains are less substantial in number and qualitative in design. Several studies framed these gains through the reflection of former SI leaders (Goomas, 2014; Lozada & Johnson, 2018). Moorehead (2021) examined the SI leader experience related to organization and communication skill increases at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). One of the most recent publications related to these gains was Orsini and Kleinman's (2022) book, which contained personal narratives from writing center tutors around the world.

Methods

The current study employed a qualitative research design with the use of a survey that contained open-ended items. Using a constructivist paradigm, I explored the experience of the peer educator in the campus learning center, recognizing that each participant's perspective contributed to their perceived gains. The constructivist paradigm assumes there are multiple realities to be studied, and the researcher derives understanding by working through the participants' perspectives (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). For this study, I assumed the peer tutor and SI leader experiences to be unique realities for each peer educator.

Researcher Description

In approaching this study, several considerations had to be accounted for prior to conducting the research. I have served as both a peer tutor

and a learning center administrator at several higher education institutions; I also examined the tutor and SI Leader experience previously, including in previous publications and studies of the experience. As the researcher of this study and a professional in the field for close to two decades, I recognized that potential biases existed and worked to manage those biases. I managed these biases through the use of an anonymous survey and communication sent directly to other administrators of centers.

Data Collection/Instrument

Before data collection began, I applied for and received IRB approval from Georgia Southern University. This IRB approval included information regarding how I protected the details of the respondents through an anonymous survey link in Qualtrics. I created a survey (see Appendix) and distributed it to supervisors of peer tutors and SI leaders through two open listservs and direct contacts with learning center administrators. The open listservs I utilized were SI-Net and The Open Forum for Learning Assistance Professionals, both of which professionals across Supplemental Instruction, learning assistance, and higher education can join. The final research instrument, titled The Peer Educator Experiences Survey, had two parts; Part I contained 12 close-ended questions and five open-ended questions, and Part II contained the demographic questions.

Inclusion of open-ended questions in the instrument allowed participants to use their own words, and I initially included only the close-ended and demographic questions. However, after a review of the literature and subsequent consultation with fellow professionals in learning assistance, I added five open-ended questions. My decision to limit the survey to only 12 close-ended and five open-ended questions is supported by Nardi (2018), who cautioned the desire to gather useful data must be balanced with the goal of an instrument not taking so long to complete that it is not appealing to potential respondents. I used three of the five open-ended questions from the instrument for this study: questions 1, 2, and 4. The three open-ended questions analyzed for this study examined participants' views of learning (question 1), any perceived rewarding aspects of their roles (question 2), and their connection to campus (question 4). The remaining two questions not used in this study asked how the experience connected to their professional and personal goals and how it enriched them as a student. These two remaining questions did not relate to the three subcategories found in the literature review and, as such, did not connect to the research questions.

Sample and Setting

Collection of the participants' demographics and responses was anonymous, and as such, I did not analyze specifics related to background and experience. However, every participant was currently or had been a peer educator within the previous year. Of the 1,217 participants who completed the required portions of the survey, 546 responded to the optional open-ended questions. I could not determine which participants completed the open-ended questions, and as such, the demographic information of the full sample is presented ($N = 1217$). The largest percentage of participants identified as current or former peer tutors (47.6%, $n = 579$), with the smallest percentage only having served as SI leaders (25.5%, $n = 310$). The largest percentage indicated science as the primary subject in their role (28.3%, $n = 344$), and the largest percentage were serving in their role for one semester (23.6%, $n = 287$). Related to their personal demographics, the largest percentage of participants identified as White (68.8%, $n = 837$), female (55.9%, $n = 680$), and seniors (32.0%, $n = 390$).

Each respondent completed the demographics portion of the instrument, but the setting for each respondent was not a variable in the study and, as such, was not explored. Participants came from higher education institutions across the United States, Canada, and several centers located internationally. These locations included rural, urban, public schools, and private institutions alike. Learning centers may also have had in-person as well as online tutoring and SI options, especially considering the time period of the study following the pandemic. As this was also not a variable in the study, I did not gather or analyze data on the location of the peer tutors or SI leaders.

Analysis

Prior to reviewing the qualitative data, I analyzed the demographics using descriptive statistics to better understand the sample in this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained that an initial reading of the data allows for a general sense of the information in the responses, and then additional reviews provide familiarity with the data. I used an inductive approach to analyze individual responses for broader. I coded the data by bracketing chunks of related responses into categories and noted a phrase that represented those categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I then grouped codes into themes

that represented a common idea in the data. Once the final themes were generated, I determined the frequency of each theme through color coding and recorded these theme frequencies. In cases when a response included multiple themes, I bolded and annotated the response with additional themes and the color code of the initial theme found.

Methodological Integrity

To provide as much integrity to the data collection and analysis processes as possible, I remained distant from the potential respondents, never communicating directly with them and relying solely on their center administrator to relay the survey to these peer educators. I also focused on several features of methodological integrity for qualitative research, such as the adequacy of the data. In reaching out to centers and higher education institutions of all types, I achieved diversity related to the peer educator experience. Maintaining distance from the peer educators allowed me to manage my own perspectives in the data collection. Utilizing quotations from participants in presenting my data also showed groundedness in the study.

Findings

An analysis of the three open-ended questions revealed how peer educators perceived their gains in terms of views of learning, rewarding elements of the experience, and connections to campus. The findings showed peer educators reflected heavily on their experience as rewarding in several ways. The theme I identified most often was feeling accomplished when they helped their students grow and learn. However, the narrative data analyzed indicated largely positive experiences as the peer educators reflected on the ways they had grown in their roles. The three open-ended questions I explored through this study were:

1. How has your view of learning, both your own and others, changed as a result of your work as a peer tutor or SI leader?
2. What have you found to be most rewarding about being a peer tutor or SI leader?
3. How has your work as a peer tutor or SI leader affected your connection to campus?

Common responses from several reviews of the narrative data were compiled and organized by question and then prevalent themes within those responses.

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Question: How Has Your View of Learning Changed?

Regarding the first question about views of learning, I found five in the analysis. The theme I discovered most frequently in the responses to this question was related to respondents learning how others learn, which included strategies and application ($n = 239$). Table 1 reflects the findings for this first question, including the frequency of the themes and sample statements. Several responses noted a realization that learning is a process, something that is constant and unique for each person. The second most common theme related to learning styles is the sense that respondents expressed increased knowledge and appreciation for the varied ways people learn. Respondents expressed more of an idea of the differences in how people learn, as opposed to strong support of the learning style construct, and even referred to them as “preferences” at times. The phrase “learning styles” was used in the generation of this theme, but it was one of several terms used for the different ways of learning respondents expressed.

Table 1
Question 1 Themes

Theme	<i>n</i>	Sample respondent statements
Learned how/ways people learn	239	“Helped me realize people understand better when you explain in ways they see in everyday life.”
Learning styles/preferences	184	“Different people learn differently and accommodating that takes skills that I am learning as a peer tutor.”
Skills, qualities changed	68	“Made me think more critically and thoroughly.”
Reinforced/appreciated ideas	30	“I have a greater appreciation for learning and education alongside others.”
No/little change; unsure	19	“No, I’ve always maintained my same beliefs.”

Note. $N = 1217$; responses can be counted in multiple themes.

Through their work as peer educators, respondents indicated gains in metacognition related to their students’ learning and even their own, which applied to their own classes. Another respondent wrote, “I have started looking for new teaching ways that help with my studying.” Based on the themes and data from this question, peer educators in the campus learning center both understood and appreciated learning more as a result of their experience.

Question: What Have You Found to be Most Rewarding?

The next question asked participants about the most rewarding part of their peer educator role; I identified four themes for this question’s responses.

Those themes and the corresponding frequency are found in Table 2. Peer educators found the helping aspect of their job as the most rewarding, and several discussed the “ah-ha moments” ($n = 326$). Although the witnessing of these ah-ha moments was phrased differently, it was a common response to this question. One peer educator wrote about these moments, expressing the satisfaction “when something you’re explaining finally clicks for your student,” whereas another participant expressed this feeling stating they found it rewarding “being present at the moment a concept makes sense for a student.”

Table 2
Question 2 Themes

Theme	<i>n</i>	Sample respondent statements
Helping/witnessing growth	326	“The a ha moment students have when they understand something.”
Feedback	92	“When the students come up to you after an exam and tell you how well they did.”
Relationships	61	“The connections I make with the students”
Personal gains	33	“I was rewarded with such skills as patience and reliability.”

Note. $N = 1217$; responses can be counted in multiple themes.

The next most common theme in responses was about the different types of feedback peer educators received ($n = 92$). The feedback included praise directly from their session attendees or tutees. Several respondents explained that they appreciated it when a student returned with updates on their academic performance. One response to this question stated, “I feel so accomplished when a student comes to me after an exam saying that they got an A and contribute that to my sessions.” Several participants also included relationship building in their work, as they noted seeing students they worked with on campus was rewarding. The least common response was in regard to personal gains, such as skills improved and experience gained ($n = 33$).

Question: How has Your Work Affected Your Connection to Campus?

The final open-ended question addressed the peer educators’ potential connection to campus. Results of the data analysis of this question are presented in Table 3. The theme occurring most often in these responses was about the campus people and resources the peer educator learned about through their work, which led to feelings of connection to their campus ($n = 203$). The individuals they felt more connected with included fellow students, both coworkers and non-coworkers, faculty, and staff. For

example, one participant said this role helped them connect with more people on campus, professors included. Another response explained that these connections would not have been made if it was not for their peer-educating work. One participant explained the connection stating, “I have been able to get more involved in the chem department.” Additionally, they said they knew about more resources on campus because of their work. Although more involvement/presence was the theme noted least, it still accounted for several responses ($n = 40$). A number of participants noted their work made them be present on campus more, which they expressed was beneficial. For example, one peer educator said, “I am more present here physically.”

Table 3
Question 3 Themes

Theme	<i>n</i>	Sample respondent statements
Campus people/resources	203	“I get to know more people from a larger variety of academic and personal backgrounds.”
Belonging/connection	113	“I’ve felt an increased sense of belonging to the community.”
Unsure/little/none	82	“Little to none, I’ve never had a lot of school pride and working for the school didn’t change that.”
Personal- pride, sense of purpose	77	“I take great pride in my role as a peer tutor.”
Involvement/presence on campus	40	“It has increased my desire to be on campus as well as represent my campus positively.”

Note. $N = 1217$; individual student responses can be counted in multiple themes.

Of the three open-ended responses used in this study, the third question elicited the most responses of “unsure/little/none” ($n = 82$). Respondents worded this theme in several ways, explaining that they felt neither more nor less connected because of the hands-off nature of the tutoring job or that they did not feel a significant change in this connection.

Discussion

As found in this study, peer educators perceived gains in terms of how they understood learning to be unique; they also noted aspects they considered to be rewarding about the experience, such as helping others and gaining connections on campus. Two of the themes found least were expressed little or no change in specific attitudes or beliefs and unsure of their gains. Results from this study support previous literature that found the experience of serving as either a peer tutor or an SI leader led to gains in the areas of learning and

feelings of fulfillment and connection (Cofer, 2020; De-Backer et al., 2012; DeFeo & Caparas, 2014; Dioso-Henson, 2012; Hoiland et al., 2020; Lockie & Van Lanen, 2008; Lozada, 2017; Lozada & Johnson, 2018, 2019; Malm et al., 2012; Moorehead, 2021; Stout & McDaniel, 2006; Unger et al., 2014; Wankiiri-Hale et al., 2021).

Enhanced Views of Learning

Findings related to the question about views of learning were similar to those from Fiorella and Mayer (2013) and Unger et al. (2014), as both studies found that the experience of serving as a peer tutor allowed those tutors to enhance their learning. In question 1 in the current study, the theme found least ($n = 19$) was that of little or no change or unsure of their view of learning. Most participants expressed gains in how they viewed learning for themselves and their students, as they thought more about the learning process than prior to their work as peer educators. This connects directly to the results of DeBacker et al. (2015), who found that tutors employed in a Reciprocal Peer Tutoring program engaged in metacognitive regulation.

Additionally, SI leaders in previous studies noted the benefits of sitting in on the class as part of their role, stating, “Sitting in helps me refresh my memory” or “You’re seeing it from different angles” (Lozada, 2017, p. 70). The current study’s theme of “reinforced/appreciated ideas” was similar to these previous studies’ findings. When asked about their view of learning, the current study’s respondents expressed similar content gains stating, “Being both an SI and tutor has helped me learn the materials more deeply.”

Gains in Fulfillment and Self-Confidence

The current study also confirmed peer educators’ gains in fulfillment and self-confidence, another trend in the literature. Respondents in the study said of these feelings, “what’s most rewarding is helping others learn” and “getting confidence.” The narrative data obtained from the current study’s instrument supported the argument that serving as a peer tutor or SI leader allowed these student employees to not only feel fulfilled in their work but also increased their confidence and connect to campus. A later study by Malm et al. (2022) also included leaders of PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) in their analysis of the skills gained through the experience.

Participants in the study, who were both PASS and SI leaders from three different institutions, noted several personal skill gains that fall under the rewarding themes in the current study. When asked to reflect on the most significant skills gained, “leadership confidence” was reported by 17% of the respondents from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, 1% of the participants from Northwest university in South Africa, and 34% of those from Lund University in Sweden (Malm et al., 2022). In the current study, one peer

educator expressed the same leadership development noting, "It has allowed me to gain leadership experience." Another 2022 study by Arendale also explored the development of these student leaders using a qualitative methodology of a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Program in Minnesota. Participants in that study noted, among other reflections, that serving as the sole leader of the group elicited leader identity emergence. The PAL leaders explained that this developed their self-concept as a leader, like several responses noted in the current study.

Peer tutors and SI leaders were aware of the non-academic gains from their experience as well, something previous studies found in excess (Goomas, 2014; Lozada & Johnson, 2018, Malm et al., 2022). Based on the previous research and the current study, peer educators serving in the campus learning center were aware of the gains in terms of skills from the experience, but not to the same degree as was present in other literature. Question 2 had 33 responses related to the theme of these personal gains, which included skills. Although several responses noted these personal gains to include breaking down difficult content, communication skills, and patience, this theme was the least noted in the responses to this question in the current study.

Gains in Connection to Campus

The second open-ended question in the current study related to connection to campus, a finding in several prior studies (Al Kharusi, 2016; Lozada & Johnson, 2019; Wawrzynski et al., 2011). Orsini and Kleinman's (2022) edited work discussed gains from the perspective of the writing tutor, as told through narratives. Nasser's narrative, for example, stated openly, "My role as a tutor has provided me with an environment that made me more confident" (p. 10). Another narrative written by a tutor from Lebanon also commented on the confidence gains they experienced as a result of their work from its onset (Orsini & Kleinman, 2022). A review of the current study's responses about campus connection had similar findings, though several respondents also recognized that their work did not impact their connection to campus. However, the idea that serving in these roles increased peer educators' physical presence and involvement on campus existed throughout the data. One respondent said, "I have to go to the main campus more often which give [sic] me access to services offered by the school." Another noted, "It has made me more present on campus." Although connection to campus as part of the self-confidence

and fulfillment subcategory is not very prevalent in the literature, the current study does support this gain as the theme of belonging/connection had the second-highest frequency of responses.

Strengths and Limitations

While one of this study's strengths lies in the fact that the data came directly from the peer educators, there are also limitations with this approach. I specifically limited my potential participants by only recruiting peer educators that were currently serving in the role or had been in the past year. This decision was based on a need for more recent reflection from the participants but also left out peer educators, whose opinions could have been useful in the study. Additionally, the peer educators may have served as both a peer tutor and an SI leader, which could have presented challenges as they reflected on their experience. The strength of this study, though, lies in the unique perspective of each participant and the diverse nature of the potential participant pool I drew from in data collection. Peer educators from writing centers, math centers, general learning centers, and SI programs all had the opportunity to participate and provide their perspectives.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, multiple conclusions can be drawn about the peer tutor and SI leader experience in the campus learning center. The themes found most frequently in the three open-ended questions related to how they understood learning to be complex and varied (views of learning), the reward of seeing a student understand the material (fulfillment), and connections to campus increasing. Of all three open-ended questions used in this study, connection to campus had the most occurrences of unsure or little change. Peer educators did note several personal gains, but they expressed that their fulfillment came largely from watching others grow.

The findings from this study can be applied not only to future research but also in practice for learning assistance professionals. When considering how learning center professionals can and should recruit and train their peer educators, the results from this study can inform those decisions. Reframing the work of the peer tutor and SI leader to consider the impact these roles have on the peer educators themselves is a needed perspective shift in the research. Considering how the peer-educating experience has been impacted following the COVID pandemic may also be a future research topic; the role of the peer tutor and SI leader may be

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different following the pandemic but still holds significance. Additionally, more research is needed on the SI leader and peer tutor experiences at specific institution types, such as HBCUs and tribal colleges.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

About the Author

Rebecca Daly Cofer, EdD, is currently the assistant director of The Learning Center at Georgia College & State University (GCSU). Dr. Cofer's research explores the peer educator on college campuses, focusing on how the work can positively impact the students serving in these roles. She has published her research in *The Learning Assistance Review* and *The Journal of Peer Learning*. Prior to her time at GCSU, she worked in learning assistance at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and before that, in Disability Services at Texas Tech University. Cofer holds several leadership roles in professional organizations, such as co-chair of the Peer Assistance Programs Special Interest Group in the College Reading and Learning Association. After attending Virginia Tech for her bachelor's and master's degrees, she earned her doctorate in 2022 from Georgia Southern University in Educational Leadership, with a focus on higher education. As a first-generation college student herself, Cofer's passion lies in helping students be successful; however, they define success.

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Appendix

Peer Educator Experiences Survey

Part I: Survey Items

Please respond to the below statements by circling the number that reflects the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. For current peer educators, think about your experiences so far. For former peer educators, think back on your experience while in the tutoring role. Below is the 5-point Likert scale that should be used when rating the statements.

- 1= Strongly Disagree
2= Disagree
3= Neither Agree nor Disagree
4= Agree
5= Strongly Agree

1. Serving as a peer educator increases/increased my self-confidence.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Serving as a peer educator improves/improved my academic performance.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Serving as a peer educator improves/improved my communication and listening skills.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Serving as a peer educator improves/improved my own time management skills.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Peer educating gives/gave me feelings of fulfillment and accomplishment.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I develop/developed a better sense of responsibility through my peer educator position.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Being a peer educator allows/allowed me to develop more patience.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Being a peer educator helps/helped me be more aware of the learning process for myself.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Being a peer educator helps/helped me be more aware of the learning process for my tutees/

SI attendees.

1 2 3 4 5

10. My experience as a peer educator helps/helped me develop social skills, such as working with diverse groups and empathy skills.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Being a peer educator makes/made me feel more connected to my institution.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I believe that the skills I gain/gained being a peer educator will benefit my future professional life.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Would you like to enter a raffle for the chance to win 1 of 8 \$100 gift cards for participating in this survey?

YES NO

Added questions to consider:

- How has your view of learning, both your own and others, changed as a result of your work as a peer tutor or SI Leader?
- What have you found to be most rewarding about being a peer tutor or SI Leader?
- Did your experience as a peer tutor or SI Leader enrich you as a student? If so, how?
- How has your work as a peer tutor or SI Leader affected your connection to campus?
- How does the peer tutor or SI Leader experience fit into your professional and/or personal goals outside of college?