

My One Thing: Surveying Students to Benefit Students Innovation of the Year Application 2018-2019

Principal Applicant

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My One Thing: Surveying Students to Benefit Students
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Team Members

Primary Team Members

Dr. Julie Bauer Morrison, Faculty, Psychology, julie.morrison@gccaz.edu
Dr. David Boninger, Faculty, Psychology, david.boninger@gccaz.edu
Cory Platts, Student, Lead Coding Scheme Designer/Data Coder
Elizabeth Dobre, Student, Secondary Data Coder
Molly Weitzel, Student, Secondary Data Coder

Secondary Team Members

Fall 2017 Research Methods in Psychology Students
Completion Task Force
Department Chairs
Leadership from Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

Presentation

Access our presentation slides [here](#).



“If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn’t be called Research.” When you have the participation of over 2000 members of your community, it is easy to figure out what to do and how to learn from it.

- ✓ Dr. David Boninger, top left
- ✓ Dr. Julie Morrison, top right
- ✓ Elizabeth Dobre, bottom left photo, far right
- ✓ Cory Platts, bottom middle photo, far right
- ✓ Molly Weitzel, bottom right photo, far right
- ✓ Selected Fall 2017 Research Methods students

Executive Summary

What makes students successful? With the participation of over 2000 members of the Glendale community, 1713 students shared what GCC has done and what GCC could do to make them successful. With this rich dataset, we are building a community that can learn from one another, past, present, and future.

Strategic Commitments

Select the MCCC CD Strategic Commitment best aligned to the project. Explain how the project demonstrates the selected MCCC CD Strategic Commitment.

Build a Thriving Community Through Access and Student Success

Be a Driving Force for Economic and Workforce Development in Arizona

Attain Recognition as an Innovator Among Institutions of Higher Education

In the fall of 2017, Glendale's Completion Task Force, a cross-functional team of college leaders, was charged with identifying what makes students succeed. If we knew why students were successful we could build on that success in order to bring it to more students and increase our persistence and completion rates. The challenge was how to identify the reasons students succeed. The answer, as simple as it may seem, was to ask them. While the answer was simple, the implementation of this idea required the contribution of over 2000 members of the Glendale Community.

The My One Thing project began as a one-question survey asking students to identify the one thing that made them successful. The original idea was Dr. Julie Morrison's, a member of the Completion Task Force, a faculty member in the Psychology Department, and one of the instructors for Research Methods. Dr. Morrison immediately recruited Dr. David Boninger, a colleague in the Psychology Department and the other Research Methods instructor, for the project. With the approval of President Terry Leyba Ruiz, they presented the idea to their Research Methods students and brainstormed how to best implement the survey and how to word the instructions and questions. It was a student in Dr. Boninger's class who suggested a second survey question: What one thing could Glendale do better?

With the help of the Research Methods students, the [final survey](#) included the following:

Instructions: We want to discover all the little things GCC faculty, staff, and administration are doing to help you be successful in college - from your first class to when you graduate with your certificate or degree - so we can do those things better. We are looking for something an instructor does as part of a class, a one-on-one interaction with an instructor, staff, or administration member, a peer mentorship relationship, a technology you're encouraged to use, a program, workshop, activity, club, or event on campus, or anything else that has helped you that might benefit others.

Question 1: Describe one thing that someone at GCC has done to help you succeed in college that you think would help others succeed.

Question 2: Describe one thing that GCC could start doing or do better to help you succeed in college.

A survey without data has no value, so Drs. Morrison and Boninger turned to the campus community to recruit students to complete the survey. The President sent a [campus-wide email](#) encouraging employees to recruit student participants, Faculty posted a [recruitment slide](#) on the screens in their classrooms and in their Canvas sites, Student Affairs handed out [recruitment cards](#) in the Enrollment Center, and a request for participation was posted on [social media](#). A preliminary update on the progress of the survey and a further call for participation was presented during the [Spring 2018 Convocation](#). The President's email set the participation goal at 500 students. The survey was available from November 17th, 2017, through February 14th, 2018. By the end of the survey period, 1713 students (8% of the Glendale student body) had responded. In order to make sense of this wealth of data, the President approved the hiring of three of the students from the fall Research Methods classes to serve as coders for the data. Cory Platts was the lead coder, with Molly Weitzel and Elizabeth Dobre serving as assistant coders to ensure inter-rater reliability. Mr. Platts reviewed and created coding categories based on the first 300 hundred student responses. Using his codes and the Glendale organizational chart, Drs. Boninger and Morrison worked with Mr. Platts to create an initial coding scheme. Ms. Dobre and Ms. Weitzel used the scheme to code the first 200 responses. Mr. Platts reviewed the codes for inconsistencies and the coding scheme was revised. Once the final coding scheme was in place, Mr. Platts coded all remaining responses, a total of 3456 responses across the two questions. Ms. Dobre coded a subset of the responses for reliability purposes. In total, the student coders logged 47 hours and 52 minutes on this project.

With results in hand, Mr. Platts, Dr. Boninger, and Dr. Morrison gave a [presentation](#) to the Completion Task Force during a working session where members were provided laptops to delve into the data and determine next steps. Members of the task force also received a [summary handout](#) of the coding scheme and results. Following the meeting, President Ruiz requested that Mr. Platts share his [impressions of the data](#) in a written statement. The results were additionally presented to the Department Chairs. All members of these groups were given access to the [results file](#) which contained the summary page as well as individual tabs with all relevant items for each coding category. Many students named employees in their responses to what Glendale does well, and these [comments](#) were shared through [email](#) to celebrate not only our students' success but our role in that success.

Immediately, the Library faculty [reviewed and enacted changes](#) based on the student responses. Student Affairs included a review of the results during their summer retreat to identify areas of improvement. Dean Chuck Jeffery from Academic Affairs conducted a follow-up analysis of the data in order to develop an eight-page [Action Plan](#) for implementation of the results. The key stakeholders, our students, were emailed a [visualization](#) of the results along with a thank you for participation. Even those students who did not complete the survey were able to see the results. Finally, we shared the results with [Chancellor Maria Harper-Marinick](#).

So how did we *Build a Thriving Community Through Access and Student Success*? The inspiration for this project was to identify what makes students successful in order to expand on it to increase overall student success. To make that goal a reality, we had to build a community of participants - in survey development (Research Methods students), promotion (employees), and completion (students); in survey coding and sharing of results (Mr. Platts, Ms. Dobre, Ms. Weitzel, Dr. Boninger, Dr. Morrison),

use of results (Completion Task Force, Department Chairs), action plans (Library, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, thus far); in communication of the results to our most important stakeholders (students) with the promise that their voices will continue to be heard. Now that the coding scheme has been developed, which presented the greatest challenge of this project, future My One Thing surveys can measure the success of our action plans and lead to new discoveries of actions to be taken. With this project, we did not just *build* a thriving community, we *are building* a community that can learn from one another, past, present, and future.

Quality: It is evident that the innovation increases "quality" in the course, program, office, or institution.

The purpose of the My One Thing survey is to improve student success by learning directly from students what Glendale does and could do to make them successful. The quality of the project is evident in four ways.

First, during the design year, the quality of student learning was enhanced for those directly involved in the project. The Research Methods students gained experience applying their classroom learning as they consulted on this project. The student coders, who had minimal experience with qualitative research, developed marketable skills in coding scheme development and written response analysis.

Second, with minimal prompting over 1700 students voluntarily completed the survey. They did so with a belief that the request for their responses was genuine and that their responses would be meaningfully acted upon. The simple act of asking students to share their thoughts with us demonstrated our dedication to them and their success. By sharing the results of the survey with them, we showed them that their trust in us was well placed. As we implement the findings of this survey, we will continue to build relationships with our students.

Third, we engaged over 2000 employees and students in this project in its first year. The results provided a renewed sense of purpose and value to our work. The results also provided a reason to celebrate all of the successes the students shared. Student responses included one or more employee names 163 times. Employees expressed how special it was to see their name appear in a student response.

Fourth, the My One Thing survey provided an actionable dataset detailing how we can improve student success across the college. Detailed action plans have been developed by Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and the Library. The recent completion of the Academic Affairs Action Plan by Dean Chuck Jeffery is sure to inspire other departments to delve more deeply into their data. Now that we have developed the My One Thing survey and created the coding scheme, we can easily conduct follow-up surveys to assess the success of our action plans and identify what new plans need to be created.

Efficiency: There is evidence that the innovation contributes to a more efficient way of doing things.

The inspiration for the My One Thing project was this question: why are students successful? There are many complicated and indirect ways to try to answer that question. The simplest answer is to ask students, and by asking a lot of students you increase the reliability and validity of your data.

In the first month, we designed the survey. In the next three months, we generated over 1700 responses to guide our understanding of student success. In the following two months, we were able to provide an organized summary and rich dataset from which to develop action plans. Since those first six months, we have been able to use the student data to make the changes that students have told us will benefit them.

Cost effectiveness: There is evidence that the innovation adds a value to the institution while at the same time containing or reducing costs.

The My One Thing survey is a valuable project because we are able to implement action plans based on our knowledge of what has helped students succeed and what could be improved to help them succeed. The greatest cost of the project was the payment of the student coders, which would be minimized in the future now that the coding scheme has been developed.

By having the Research Methods students develop the survey, the design costs were nonexistent. The survey itself was conducted with Google Forms, part of the Maricopa GSuite. Given the brevity of the survey and its clear value to those being asked to participate, students did not require incentives to participate. Marketing was primarily electronic with the only cost the printing of the survey cards for the Enrollment Center. Those who have developed action plans and worked on implementation have done so as a part of their job duties.

Gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data from 1700 participants would typically be an expensive proposition. This project cost about \$500, with that money supporting the 47 hours and 52 minutes of student coder time.

Replication: The innovation selected can be replicated in other institutions with a minimum of difficulty.

The survey can be copied, and edited if desired, for use by any Maricopa college. The coding scheme includes definitions and examples to make it easily understandable. In addition, we have our entire Glendale dataset that could be reviewed to see how the coding was applied. Drs. Boninger and Morrison are available to consult with leaders from other colleges that may wish to adapt the My One Thing survey for their own use.

Creativity: The innovation should be as original as possible or the adaptation should be creative.

While the idea of surveying stakeholders to learn from them is not original, the adaptation of this idea for the purpose of improving student success was. We are not aware of any similar project particularly one of this scale that has occurred within or outside Maricopa. Although not unique across the college or the District, this was the first time the Research Methods students consulted on an outside project. Knowing the continuously poor response rates to surveys emailed to students, we found creative ways to reach them and encourage their participation - faculty contact, survey cards, social media posts. We shared the results with employees and students in word clouds and visualizations.

By far, the most creative and time-consuming aspect of this project was the development of the coding scheme and the data analysis and presentation. From data review, to preliminary codes, to alignment with the Glendale organization chart, to revision and inter-rater reliability checks, to re-revision and final coding, our student coders and the faculty advisors worked to generate a sustainable and reusable coding scheme. Future coding of data will be far simpler now that a coding scheme exists. Once the data were coded, for the in-depth analysis, we created a summary that displayed the percentage of positive and negative responses in each coding category along with a multicolor-coded indication of the strength of the difference (a darker red that indicated more negative responses than positive through a darker green that indicated more positive responses than negative).

Timeliness: The innovation should not be more than five years old in the institution, but it must have been around long enough to be tested so that it meets most of the criteria.

The My One Thing survey was designed during the fall 2017 semester with data collection occurring from November 2017 through February 2018. The data were coded and results were analyzed during the spring 2018 semester. Action plans based on the data were implemented as early as spring 2018 and continue to be designed with implementation plans in spring 2019. Given the richness of the dataset, further action plans can be developed, with the ultimate goal to re-survey students, potentially during the 2019-2020 academic year, to gauge the effectiveness of the implementation efforts.

Learning: The results of the innovation have been shared with others for the benefit of students throughout Maricopa.

The results of the My One Thing survey were formally shared with the Completion Task Force, which is a cross-functional team of college leaders, and the Department Chairs. The members of these groups then had the opportunity to share the results with the teams they lead. Overview results were shared with employees at Convocation and through email as well as with the Chancellor. With the implementation of the action plans that have been developed or will be developed, we are able to use what students have shared about Glendale's strengths and weaknesses to students' direct benefit.

A visualization of the key results was shared with all Glendale students. The benefit of sharing the results with students is it shows those who participated that their voices were heard and those who may

not have learned of the opportunity to participate that we are listening to students. As our action plans are implemented and assessed, we can share out more results with our students further enhancing students' sense of their value to Glendale as an institution.

Collaboration: The innovation successfully demonstrates collaboration, teamwork, and cooperation to ensure continuous process improvement efforts on behalf of students throughout Maricopa.

Over 2000 members of the Glendale community were involved in this project. Most importantly, there were 1713 students who trusted us enough to share their perceptions of Glendale's strengths and weaknesses. They did so with the belief that we would act on their responses, as we have and will. An additional 40 or so Research Methods students were part of the design process for the survey, not only contributing to the success of the project but engaging in a real-world application of their classroom learning. An unknown but certainly significant number of faculty and staff encouraged students to complete the survey. Without them, we never would have nearly quadrupled our target number of responses. Many hours were spent by our student coders, most notably Mr. Platts, in working with Drs. Boninger and Morrison to design the coding scheme then code the 3456 responses. Not only did the student coders provide an essential service to the college with their work, they expanded their research experience into qualitative analysis, which is not a focus of the Research Methods course. Conversations with the Completion Task Force began the project as well as provided the first in-depth discussion of the results. The Department Chairs learned of the results and had the opportunity to share them with their departments, with the Library, for example, immediately implementing changes based on what they learned. All employees learned of the progress and results of the project through a series of in-person and email communiqués. All Glendale students saw the top five items that helped them succeed and that could be improved to help them succeed. Members of the Glendale faculty and staff are currently involved in the implementation of action plans that have resulted from the analysis of this rich student response dataset. We will continue this collaboration between employees and students as we expand the project. For example, as we began a project this week to identify Glendale Values, the question of how to assess our Values arose. Data from the My One Thing survey and follow-up surveys could be used not only for Values assessment but to aid us in our continuous improvement efforts.