Spring 2025
Elevating Student Voices
Focus Group Thematic Coding and Summary Report

Requesting Department: Centers for Academic Success
Number of Student Voices Elevated: 7

🧩 Thematic Coding

Academic Support Effectiveness
- English Language Support: Help with grammar and writing for ESL students
- Math Tutoring: Patience and concept clarity
- History Tutoring: Multi-tutor feedback improved writing quality
- Regular use for bilingual support
- Use for specific subjects (Math, English, APA/MLA)

Impact on Academic Performance
- Early Intervention: Tutoring from early inquiries built strong foundations
- Writing Improvement: Direct link between tutoring and better essay grades
- Helped understand difficult concepts
- First-time college support
- Improved grades and study tips
- Cost-effective alternative to private tutoring

Access Challenges
- Limited Subject Coverage: Some subjects (e.g., Astrology) lack tutoring support
- Online Student Barriers: On-campus focus limits access for remote learners

Suggestions for Improvement
- Scheduling Flexibility: More appointment times and longer sessions
- Tutor Training: Assessments or training to improve tutor effectiveness
- Inconsistent campus schedules
- Overwhelming Canvas announcements
- Uncertainty about subject-specific tutors
- Need for peer-review tutoring

Integration with Academic Programs/Curriculum
- Course Familiarity: Tutors should understand course-specific content and expectations
- Homework assignments linked to tutoring
- FYE events and advisor referrals

Communication & Interaction
- Stigma & Anxiety: Social discomfort and tutor responsiveness affect engagement
- Video library and YouTube channel
- Peer tutoring and assignment flexibility
- Testimonials and success stories
- Skill-building for college readiness
- Information overload

Encouraging Participation
- Incentives: Extra credit given in courses for tutoring attendance.
- Promotion: Meet-and-greet events to reduce stigma and build rapport.
- Peer study groups
- Extra credit incentives
- Tutor certification and recognition
- Online tutoring and video resources

Tutor-Student Relationship
- Positive relationships
- Communication styles and personality awareness
- Tutors unaware of class content
- Group tutoring sessions and surveys

Suggestions for Improvement
- Match tutors to learning styles
- Encourage student tutors
- ESL support and extended time
- Recognition for tutors

📋 Summary Report

Overview
The focus group responses highlight the positive impact of tutoring services on academic performance, particularly in writing and foundational subjects such as Math and English. Students appreciate the personalized support and the opportunity to receive feedback from multiple tutors. Responses reveal a generally positive perception of tutoring services at CSN, with students appreciating the academic support, especially in Math, English, and Writing formats. However, several areas for improvement were identified, particularly around accessibility, communication, and integration with academic programs.

Key Findings

- Tutoring is most effective when tailored to individual needs, especially for ESL students and those struggling with writing.
- Early academic support has long-term benefits.
- Barriers to access include limited subject availability and a lack of online options.
- Students desire more flexible scheduling and longer sessions.
- Social factors, such as stigma and anxiety, can deter students from seeking help.
- Integration with course content and better tutor training are seen as ways to improve effectiveness.
- Promotional efforts and incentives can increase student engagement.
- Tutoring is valued for its role in improving understanding, grades, and confidence, especially for first-generation and ESL students.
- Scheduling inconsistencies across campuses and a lack of clarity on available subjects were common concerns.
- Canvas announcements are overwhelming; students prefer streamlined communication like event calendars or pop-ups.
- Peer tutoring and group sessions are highly encouraged, with suggestions for incentives and recognition.
- Integration with coursework (e.g., mandatory tutoring visits, professor-tutor collaboration) could enhance usage.
- Video resources and testimonials were suggested to increase awareness and engagement.
- Students want personalized support, including matching tutors to learning styles and more time for ESL learners.

Recommendations

- Expand subject coverage, especially for niche courses.
- Improve online accessibility for remote learners.
- Offer flexible and extended tutoring sessions.
- Train tutors to align with course content and improve student interactions.
- Address stigma through community-building events and positive reinforcement.
- Collaborate with instructors to incentivize tutoring participation.
- Standardize tutoring schedules across campuses and improve visibility of tutor availability.
- Create a centralized communication hub (e.g., calendar or app) to reduce Canvas overload.
- Expand peer tutoring programs and offer incentives like transcript notations or cords at graduation.
- Develop video libraries and testimonials to showcase tutoring success stories.

- Encourage faculty involvement in promoting tutoring services and integrating them into assignments.
- Survey students to better match tutoring styles and explore group session availability.