

# DENNIS LEARNING CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## OUR MISSION

**Supporting students so that  
they can enter, excel in and  
successfully complete  
academic programs at  
The Ohio State University.**

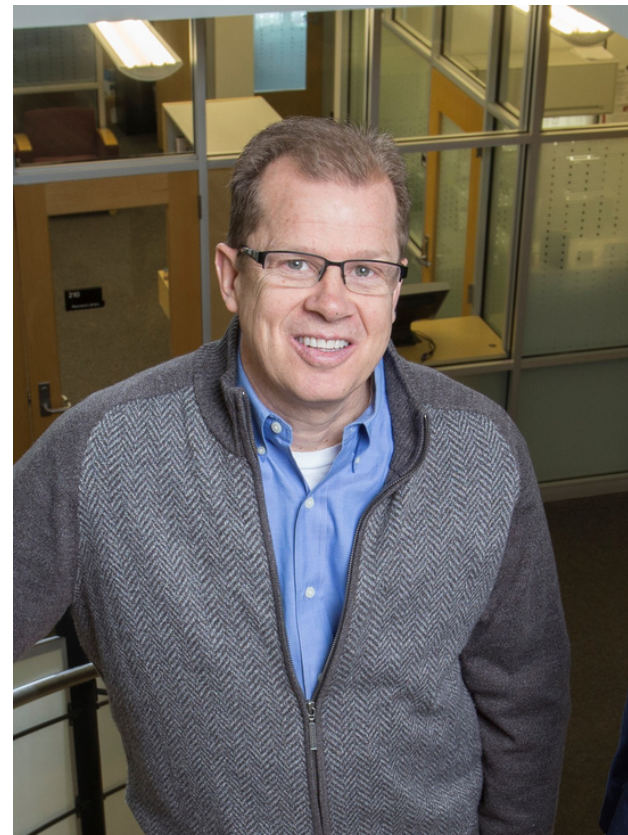
It is my great honor to serve as Director of the Dennis Learning Center, a dynamic, hard-working and skilled team that includes faculty, staff, lecturers and graduate and undergraduate students. As a community, our mission is to support the academic success of all Ohio State students through elective courses, academic coaching, group workshops, online resources and the advancement of scientific research. Independently or frequently in collaboration with other members of the broader Ohio State community, we also design and implement innovative custom programs tailored to the specific needs of Ohio State students.

In all these efforts, we draw upon and contribute to the theoretical and applied understanding of college students' learning, motivation and well-being. Further, we pursue our mission with an understanding and dedication to diversity, justice, inclusion, internationalization and other core values embodied within the College of Education and Human Ecology (EHE) and its Centers for Practice, Research and Policy.

The Dennis Learning Center is housed in the Office of Student Life's Yunkin Success Center, along with other units dedicated to supporting students' academic and career success. Funding for our faculty, staff, undergraduate coaches and instructional positions comes primarily from EHE, the Department of Educational Studies, and through the generous financial support of our donors. Additional funds used to support our mission come through competitive research grants and collaborations with our strategic partners. The Dennis Learning Center's SpringForward Academic Coach position, for instance, is made possible by the Office of Student Academic Success.

I invite you to review this report and get a sense of our work during the past year. If you would like to get more information, schedule our services or explore a partnership with our team, please see our website ([dennislearningcenter.osu.edu](https://dennislearningcenter.osu.edu)) or reach out to me ([wolters.21@osu.edu](mailto:wolters.21@osu.edu)).

Sincerely,  
Christopher A. Wolters



# INSIDE THE DLC

Academic Coach Taylor Clewell recently graduated from Ohio State summa cum laude with honors in public health. Taylor was a driving force behind the DLC's expansion in online learning content, bringing a fresh focus on the student voice and experience. Taylor will be an analyst with a leading healthcare advisory firm this fall and credits her time at the DLC with developing her skills and sense of purpose.



*Meet Coach Taylor!*

**Question: Tell me about your journey with the DLC's YouTube channel.**

Inspired by British “studytube” style videos, I became interested in reinvigorating the DLC YouTube channel while training to work as an academic coach in spring 2020. I had quickly learned how invaluable having skills like time management and academic resilience can be, and I wanted to find a fresh and easily accessible way to get this information to students who otherwise might never hear of or come to the DLC. Making new videos was important to me because videos allow students to see the DLC — and the people working within it — as a living, breathing (and hopefully friendly!) entity at a sometimes overwhelmingly large institution. They also offer an easy way to ensure that students can learn or relearn skills that we talk about in coaching appointments and workshops days or weeks after the fact.

**What do you wish you knew as an incoming student? What is your advice for new students?**

I wish I had known that struggling through first semester of freshman year is normal and very common! Coming to college is an enormous adjustment in almost every part of your life. My advice is to do your best to roll with the punches and keep in mind that you will adjust and things will get better. Find the courage to reach out and ask for help when you need it. Shamelessly, I also advise meeting with an academic coach early on in the semester (like, BEFORE your first set of midterms - especially you, STEM students).

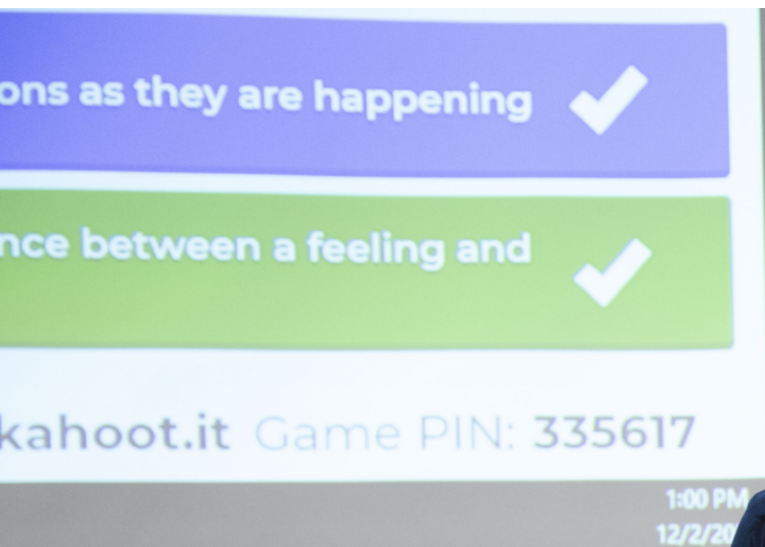
**Why should other students apply to be an academic coach?**

There's no place like the DLC! Aside from the lifelong study, time management and interpersonal skills you will learn as an academic coach (which should not be ignored!), it is so incredibly special to work in a place where you constantly get to learn from and alongside your colleagues, develop new ideas, see them through to fruition and spend your days committed to helping students become the best version of their academic selves.



# SPOTLIGHT: TEACHING PARTNERSHIPS

DLC courses are bolstered by partnerships across the university. Read on to learn about our team of lecturers and the unique perspectives they bring to the classroom from EHE, University Libraries, and the offices of International Affairs, Student Academic Success Technology and Digital Innovation, and Student Life. Read the [full article](#) on the college website.



"This role reminds me to keep the students and their experiences as the focus of my teaching. I teach and hold this position because I care deeply about creating an environment for our students where they can grow, learn about themselves, be curious and find a sense of belonging. Teaching allows me to stay connected to the current trends, issues and concerns of our students."

Rachel Tuttle, ESEPSY 2059 lecturer and the college's director of recruitment, retention and student engagement



# SPOTLIGHT: CAMPUS CHANGE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Using funding secured through a grant from Ohio State's Office of Student Academic Success, researchers at the DLC initiated a project to better understand how to support students who transition to the Columbus campus after beginning their studies at one of Ohio State's five open-enrollment regional campuses. Campus change students must navigate academic, social and practical changes that accompany their transition to a larger campus with competitive admissions.

To support students in this unique context, the DLC team designed a new orientation session and coaching series. As well, DLC researchers used surveys and focus group interviews to evaluate campus change students' motivational and strategic strengths and challenges, as well as how they navigate campus resources. Findings will be used to develop and improve services provided by the DLC and by other units on campus. They will also inform theory and practice more widely.

# VALUES IN ACTION

**The DLC is proud to support the values of the College of Education and Human Ecology through our core work and special initiatives.**

## INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

- We facilitated multiple workshops on time management and help seeking for students who are the first in their family to attend college. This was through partnerships at Ohio State with Buckeyes First, Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Multicultural Center.
- Through a collaboration with EHE's Office of Equity, Diversity and Global Engagement (EDGE), the DLC's coaches and instructors participated in three group sessions of "Be the Change!" to build understanding of biases and commitment to anti-racist pedagogy.
- We reviewed all DLC scholarly work to ensure the use of person-first language, inclusive gender pronouns and anti-deficit and community-cultural-wealth framing.
- We facilitated a study skills workshop for high school students at the Pipeline Mentoring Institute, which provides early preparation for underrepresented students with goals of attending medical school through the Student National Medical Association.
- We presented a time management training for students in the Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP), designed to develop a diverse pool of well-trained postbaccalaureates for biomedical, research-focused doctoral degree programs.

## INNOVATION

- We adapted our services to provide virtual coaching, live synchronous workshops and on-demand materials with broader access.
- We offered a new online synchronous professional learning experience for the EHE Summer Institute. "Busting Procrastination and Boosting Time Management" was an intensive weeklong continuing education course for Ohio educators, focused on developing learning environments that enhance motivation.
- To increase awareness of the DLC among Ohio State students and the community, we launched one of the first Ohio State-branded TikTok accounts, creating entertaining and informative short videos featuring the DLC undergraduate academic coaches and partnering with Ohio State's social media creators.

## INTERNATIONALIZING HIGHER EDUCATION

- We focused on international student success through 10 custom workshops designed for students who are new to both the country and university. These workshops focused on developing skills in studying, writing papers, communicating with professors and giving presentations.
- Through enhanced recruitment and partnership with the Office of International Affairs (OIA), we offered four sections of ESEPSY 2060: Academic Success Strategies for International Students in both face-to-face and online synchronous formats.
- We presented information on DLC services and academic support strategies at the OIA international student online orientation.

# CAMPUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaged with over 400 returning second-year students who had been learning remotely during their first year through a new Returning to Campus workshop focused on tools for managing in-person classes and exams

Supported the efforts of Student Life Disability Services' access specialists by designing a new workshop focused on practical skills for students using accessible note-taking tools

Conducted a pilot study on graduate student-parents who work full time and shared data and advice with EHE graduate students in a custom workshop

Strengthened our connection to EHE by providing custom trainings: time management for the college centers' Writing for Publication program and academic support skills for the Office of Academic Affairs' directors and staff

Developed and facilitated a new workshop for undergraduate student employees throughout the university titled New Job Jitters: How to Boost Your Confidence through Self-Efficacy

Served on various advisory boards and working groups focused on teaching and learning:

- Teaching First-Year Students
- SpringForward
- Keep Learning 2.0
- Academic Support Services
- Tutoring Services Resources

Served on the Campus Change and Transfer Students Workgroup convened by the Office of Student Academic Success to advance understanding of and support provided to these students

Provided a new academic coaching internship position to support the growth and educational opportunities for students studying higher education and student affairs in the college

Shared expertise on conducting educational research by serving on grant review committees for the Student Academic Success Research Grants and Drake Institute Research and Implementation Grants



# COURSES

Students applied the science of learning and motivation through our for-credit courses.

Amanda Donahue, ESEPSY 2059  
lecturer and SpringForward  
program manager

1,761  
STUDENTS

ENROLLED IN  
OUR SIX  
ELECTIVES

78  
SECTIONS

OFFERED ON  
FIVE OHIO STATE  
CAMPUSES

5  
PERCENT

INCREASE IN  
ENROLLMENT  
OVER PRIOR YEAR

# COURSE ENROLLMENT

**ESEPSY 1159: Online Learning Strategies and Skills**

**488 students | 17 sections**

**ESEPSY 1259: Learning and Motivation Strategies for College Success**

**911 students | 40 sections**

**ESEPSY 1359: Communication and Critical Thinking in Online Learning**

**52 students | 2 sections**

**ESEPSY 2059: Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner**

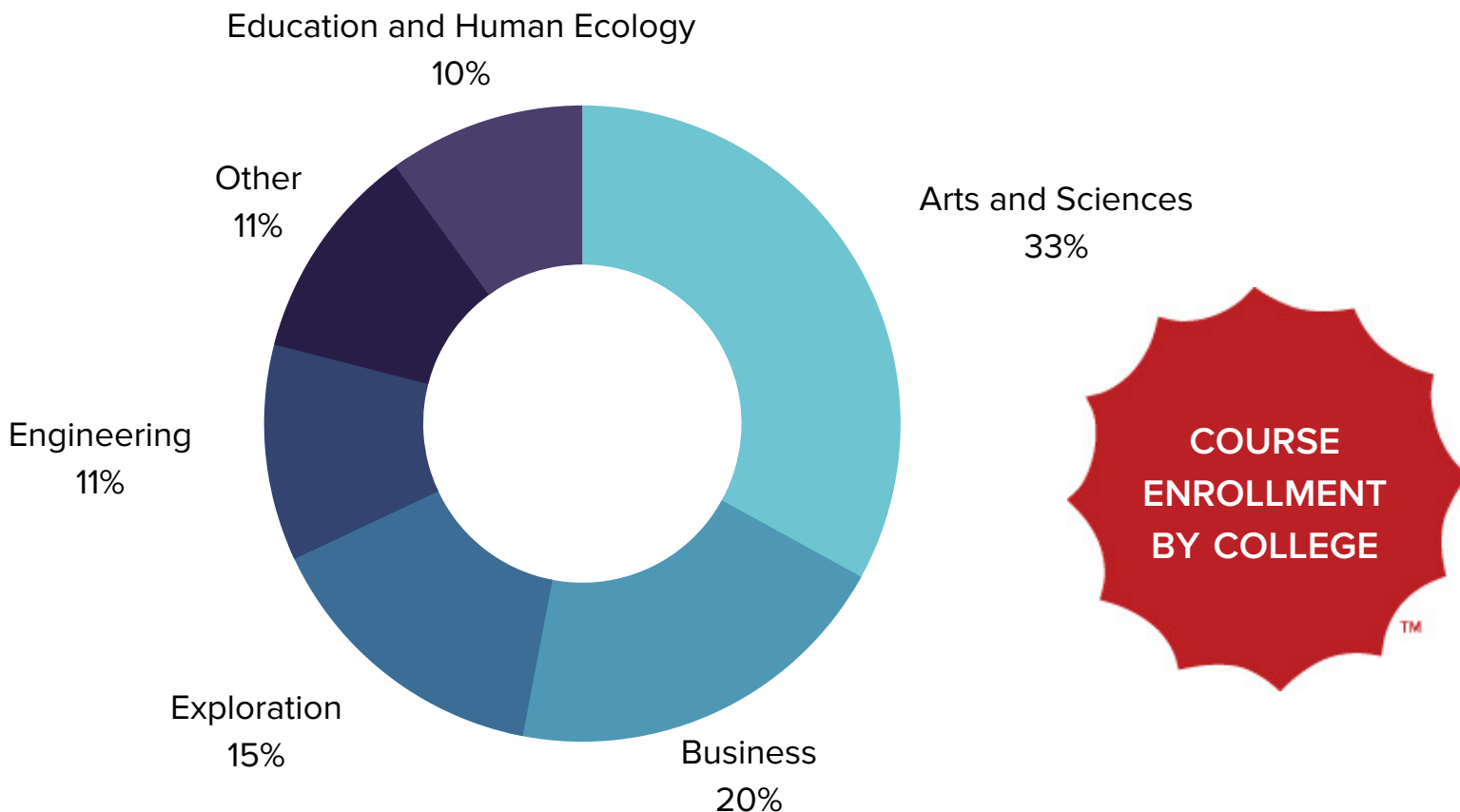
**226 students | 14 sections**

**ESEPSY 2060: Academic Success Strategies for International Students**

**74 students | 4 sections**

**ESEPSY 5194: Group Studies – Procrastination Accountability Groups**

**10 students | 1 section**



# COURSE IMPACT: STUDENT VOICES

"This class gave me a much better picture of how to improve my studying and organizational habits. The skills emphasized in this class translate well to both learning online and in person, and I find them very helpful while still dealing with the pandemic."

"I have come leaps and bounds from where my motivation and habits previously had been. I've learned to motivate myself. I know how to fix any learning issues. I learned not to blame others for my own academic mistakes, and the power of recognizing imposter syndrome. These are just a few of the topics that I think will stick with me through my entire college experience."

"I had the opportunity to work on myself. I have never had a class that cared about the students' well-being, goal setting and achievement. That was a breath of fresh air."

"Each assignment helped me in a different class, I was not just doing an assignment; I was improving how I work as a student."

"[The course] played a huge part in my success this summer and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. The overall experience could not have gone better for me."

"My goal was to find motivation and strategies to overcome the funk I was in. This course was exactly what I needed to find ways to not only improve my grades but improve the quality of my learning!"

## 90%

would recommend  
the course  
to a friend

## 94%

rated their  
instructor  
as excellent

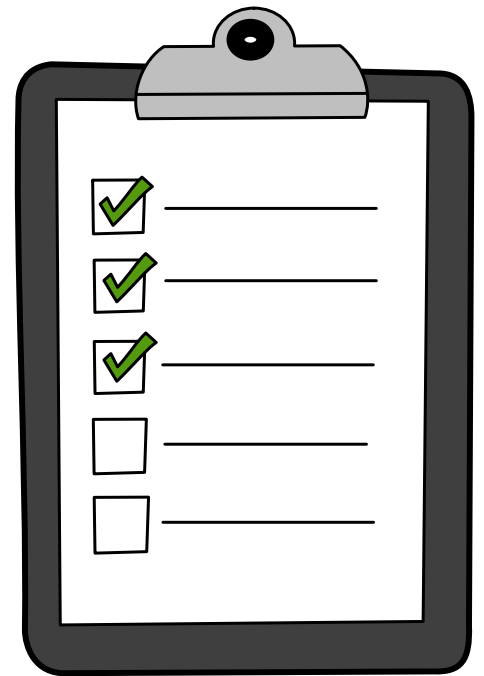
## 95%

agreed/strongly agreed what  
they learned in the course  
would be useful in the future



# ACADEMIC COACHING

Peer coaching helped students set and reach meaningful academic goals while feeling heard and understood. Coaches provided personalized guidance to Ohio State students at all academic levels.



775  
STUDENTS

PARTICIPATED IN  
PEER COACHING

1,705  
SESSIONS

OFFERED VIRTUALLY AND  
IN SIX CAMPUS  
LOCATIONS

The academic coaching team  
(and Brutus!)



# COACHING IMPACT: STUDENT VOICES

"Having someone to talk through things with who understood what it's like to be in a graduate program was wonderful."

"In high school, I was close with my teachers. If I didn't finish an assignment or try very hard, they would be disappointed in me. Since I've gone to college and my professors don't know me, I've been missing that accountability. Now when I come to a coaching session and they ask what I've been trying and how well it works, I have that accountability back."

"[I appreciated receiving] tangible tools I could implement right away. My coach offered several ideas for me to try, and in our follow-up meeting when certain things didn't work, we talked about alternative approaches."

"[Coaching] felt like a completely judgement-free zone where I could be honest."

## 100%

agreed/strongly agreed that they learned useful learning and motivation strategies

## 100%

agreed/strongly agreed that the academic coach was easy to talk to

## 97%

agreed/strongly agreed that academic coaching was a positive experience

# WORKSHOPS

- Academic Emotions and Resilience
- Active Note Taking
- Dealing with Procrastination
- Gearing Up for Higher Education
- Memory Tools for Effective Studying
- Planning Effective Study Groups
- Preparing Papers
- Retaking College Courses
- Strategic, Confident Test Taking
- Successful Group Projects
- Thriving in Science and Math



Coach Aaron helps a student make a fixed commitment calendar.

Our workshops and webinars shared strategies for academic success with students, parents and other members of the Ohio State community.

200  
SESSIONS

OF WORKSHOPS  
AND WEBINARS

7,000  
ATTENDEES

AT PROGRAMS FOR  
THE OHIO STATE  
COMMUNITY



# WORKSHOP IMPACT: STUDENT VOICES

"I think the advice/tips were the most valuable because they taught us how to confidently take tests, which is something that I personally struggle with, and I know others might too."

"I liked that [the workshop] was relevant, and not only did I learn new things, but it also reassured me that I am on the right track and doing the right things to study."

"I think this workshop was valuable, in that it was very encouraging and refreshing. It gave me a new perspective on how to deal with procrastination."

"I believe this workshop offered insight on how to be more productive in life in general and not just note taking – especially the part where [the presenter] spoke about distractions and how to minimize them."

**94%**

agreed/strongly agreed that the workshop helped them be more successful

**97%**

agreed/strongly agreed that the workshop content was personally relevant

**99%**

agreed/strongly agreed that the academic coach was knowledgeable about the topic

# PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

**Our six-week small-group program provided support and accountability as master's and doctoral students applied research-based strategies to boost productivity.**

Program Manager Jackie von Spiegel and Graduate Academic Coach Kelsey Varzeas share goals and assessment results of the Productivity Program at the Academy of Teaching conference.

How can we help?

## PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

### Program Description

Our six-week small group program provides support and accountability as graduate and professional students learn and apply research-based strategies to boost productivity.

### Program Outcomes

- ✓ Improving Time Management
- ✓ Reducing procrastination
- ✓ Managing Multiple Responsibilities
- ✓ Overcoming Perfectionism

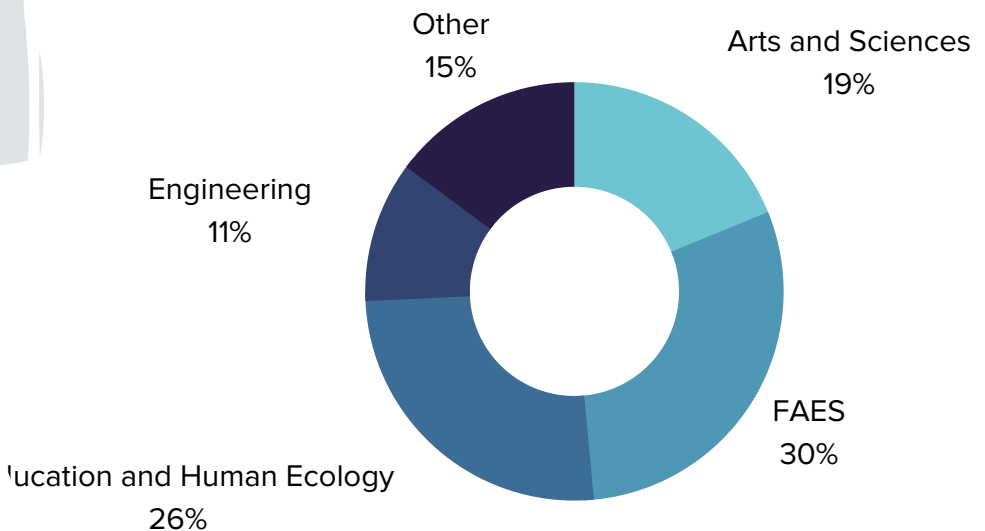
# PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM IMPACT: STUDENT VOICES

"All the specific strategies that we learned were awesome. [My coach was] super supportive and created a space where we could share freely and not worry about being judged."

"The program provided validation of my struggles, supportive camaraderie and actionable solutions to improve my productivity and overcome mental blocks."

"I think this is a good tool and program for ... graduate students. I will definitely be recommending it to other students in my program."

PROGRAM  
ENGAGEMENT  
BY COLLEGE



93

students received  
certificates of  
completion

95%


agreed/strongly agreed  
that they learned new  
strategies for success  
as a graduate student

95%

strongly agreed  
that they felt  
welcomed and able  
to speak freely



# RESEARCH LAB



**Through the **Self-Regulated Learning and College Success Lab** at the Dennis Learning Center, faculty, staff and students are active in conducting research designed to better understand and promote college students' academic success.**

"Managing distractions in a digitally enabled world can be a challenge for college students.

College instructors have the opportunity to support students in their development of self-regulatory strategies so students can better manage digital distractions on their own....

College instructors can structure their classroom and assignments to build a healthy balance between learning and staying connected. In this chapter, we provide a review of the strategies that college instructors can use both within and beyond the classroom to support students' management of digital distractions."

- Excerpt from chapter in  
*Digital Distractions in the College Classroom*

"That emergency remote learning may initially feel foreign and challenging for college students underscores the importance of instructor compassion and accommodation. Despite the positive strategies that students can develop, the COVID-19 global pandemic revealed that there may be situations where students are limited in how much control they can exercise.... Principles of effective communication, emphasized in prior research on instructor support and student help-seeking, take on new urgency in the case of emergency remote education."

- Excerpt from article in the  
*Journal of Research on Technology in Education*

# PUBLICATIONS

**Find these works  
and more at  
[go.osu.edu/dlcresearch](https://go.osu.edu/dlcresearch)**

Brady, A., Hensley, L., Sovic, D., Kulesza, A., Wolters, C., & Breitenberger, C. (2022). What makes a study strategy intervention impactful? An interview-based study. *College Student Affairs Journal*.

Brady, A., Kim, Y. E., and von Spiegel, J. (2022). Learning in the face of digital distractions: Empowering students to practice self-regulated learning. In Flanigan, A. E., and Kim, J. H. (Eds.), *Digital Distractions in the College Classroom* (pp. 120-142). IGI Global.

Brady, A., Kim, Y., and Cutshall, J. (2021). The what, why, and how of distractions from a self-regulated learning perspective. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 51(2), 153-172.

Hensley, L., Brady, A., Kim, Y.E., and Sayers, R. (2021). Understanding the practical, contextual, and malleable nature of motivation—and why it matters. In D. K. Meyer and A. Emery (Eds.), *Teaching motivation for student engagement*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Hensley, L., Iaconelli, R., and Wolters, C. (2021). “This weird time we’re in”: How a sudden change to remote education impacted college students’ self-regulated learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 54(1), 203-218.

Hensley, L., Kulesza, A., Peri, J., Brady, A., Wolters, C., Sovic, D., and Breitenberger, C. (2021). Supporting undergraduate biology students' academic success: Comparing two workshop interventions. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 20(4), 1-21.

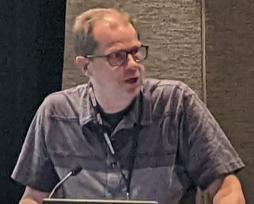
Hensley, L., Sayers, R., Brady, A., and Cutshall, J. (2021). Supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness in a learning-to-learn course: College students’ insights into effective instruction. *Teaching of Psychology*, 48(3), 236-247.

Sayers, R., von Spiegel, J., and Hensley, L. (2021). Instructor caring and support in online and face-to-face settings. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 32(4), 117-145.

Director and Professor Chris Wolters describes the malleable nature of motivation at the American Educational Research Association annual conference.

CHRISTOPHER A.  
WOLTERS  
DENNIS LEARNING  
CENTER  
THE  
OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## CONTROLLING YOUR OWN MOTIVATION IS AN ACQUIRABLE SKILL



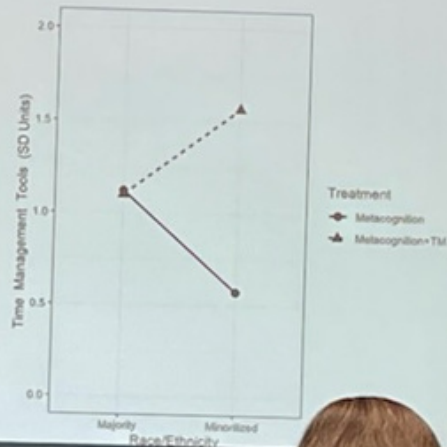
Wolters also was an editorial board member for Educational Psychologist and Metacognition and Learning, two leading peer review publications in educational psychology.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

Dennis Learning Center  
STUDY SMARTER

### Results, cont.

- Q3. Different impact? Significant treatment by minoritized status interaction ( $p = .002$ ) on time management tools
- Compared with students from minoritized groups in the Metacognition-only intervention, students from minoritized groups in the Metacognition+TM intervention had greater self-reported use of time management tools at the end of the semester when accounting for pre-intervention time management and other covariates



Senior Associate Director Lauren Hensley shares the impact of a collaborative workshop intervention at the American Educational Research Association annual conference.



# CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MISSION

## Walter E. Dennis Learning Center Endowment Fund

Fund Number: 641645  
<https://give.osu.edu/dlc>

The endowment of Walter E. Dennis Jr. and family enables the Dennis Learning Center's academic outreach programs to take place year after year. Income from the fund covers primary support for our team of undergraduate academic coaches. The coaches facilitate one on one sessions with Ohio State students, deliver the center's core set of workshops across campus and provide inspiration for communication and outreach efforts. The fund also enables our staff to share research based insights from the center with other educators and practitioners through presentations at local and national conferences. Contributions to this fund will add to the center's endowment, increasing its long term stability as a resource for the university community.

## Bruce W. Tuckman Student Enrichment Fund

Fund Number: 315444  
<https://give.osu.edu/tuckman>

This fund, established in honor of the late Professor Emeritus Bruce W. Tuckman, has received donations from the family, friends, colleagues and former students of the founding director of the Dennis Learning Center. In the past year, the fund was utilized to expand the availability of undergraduate academic coaching across campus and through virtual means. The fund also supported a part time graduate academic coach to serve graduate and professional students through academic coaching, productivity groups and workshops. In addition, the fund enabled undergraduate academic coaches to continue their work over the summer, developing resources to support students' transitions to college. Contributions to this fund will allow us to be responsive to immediate needs and to develop new and innovative supports for all Ohio State students.

**Learn more about the  
Dennis Learning Center  
and follow us on social!**

[go.osu.edu/dlc](https://go.osu.edu/dlc)