

THE IMPACT OF AN ONLINE CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM ON
STUDENTS IN GRADES NINE AND TEN

by

Andrew P. Capone

An executive position paper 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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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my wife, Kristin, and my son, Drew. Words alone cannot express my feelings for what both of you did for me during the last few years. I know I drove both of you crazy during this process! Without your unwavering belief and support, I would not have seen this through to the end. Thank you for all of your patience and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

Students who fall behind in credits in their first years of high school are at risk of not graduating. William Penn High School (WPHS) offers students who fail courses the opportunity to make up lost credits by using an online option called the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. The WPHS Credit Recovery Program is designed to keep students on the path toward graduation. It has been assisting students since 2012, but has never been evaluated. Currently the courses in the program consist of video lessons followed by multiple-choice assessments. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require a level of rigor that the current program may not provide. This paper is an evaluation of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program using quantitative and qualitative measures.

Colonial School District Curriculum and Instruction experts evaluated the following credit recovery courses, English I, English II, Integrated Math I, and Integrated Math II, on a custom rubric created by the investigator for this study. Students in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program completed a Likert-type survey about their perceptions of online learning and traditional classroom learning. A focus group interview was conducted with students who failed either English or Integrated Math during their first two years of high school. Teachers of English I, English II, Integrated Math I, and Integrated Math II participated in a separate focus group interview. Student records from 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 were reviewed to see if students benefited from the program.

Results of the evaluation revealed a program that is lacking in quality with low rigor courses that do not align to CCSS. Perceptions of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program differed between WPHS students and teachers. The program is not without merit; more students who participated in the online WPHS Credit Recovery Program graduated compared to students who did not participate in the online credit recovery program. Retention of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program is proposed since the program helps students meet graduation requirements. However, it should not continue in its present form. Four recommendations are offered for program improvement, including formation of a credit recovery team to guide a major redesign of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Delaware state law dictates high school graduation requirements in Title 14, Section 505 High School Graduation Requirements and Diplomas (Appendix A). Students of the 2015 graduating class had to obtain 24 credits to obtain a diploma: 4 credits in English, 4 credits in Math, 3 credits in Science, 3 credits in Social Studies, 3 credits in Career Exploration, 2 credits in World Language, 1 credit in Physical Education, .5 credit in Health, and 3.5 credits in Electives. If a student failed a course, he/she did not earn the corresponding credit and their progress toward earning a diploma was hindered. Students in such a situation are defined as “at risk” of not graduating on time by the United States Department of Education (Murin, Powell, Roberts, & Patrick, 2015).

To earn the credit for a failed course, a Delaware student must retake the course. Historically, this meant retaking the course in a classroom either in the summer or in a subsequent school year. The challenges presented by this “in-classroom” course requirement has motivated educators to explore alternate ways for students to earn their missing credits without attending a traditional course and still graduate on time. Technology allows for the implementation of a possible computer-based solution. Students can now sit at a computer and receive instruction that allows them to recover credits. Murin et al. (2015) label this kind of option an “online credit recovery program” (p. 6).

William Penn High School (WPHS) is located in New Castle, Delaware in the Colonial School District. According to the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), 2187 students attended WPHS for the school year 2013-2014; 49.2% were African American, 27.6% were White, and 18.2% were Hispanic/Latino. At WPHS, 65.9% of students were Low-Income and 12.9% were in Special Education. In 2010-2011, the dropout rate for WPHS was 6.4%. The dropout rate in the following year, 2011-2012, was 3.9%. During the 2011-2012 school year, WPHS incorporated an online credit recovery program allowing students to retake courses they had previously failed. The program uses the internet-based Compass Learning system. As described on the Compass Learning, Inc. website (2016):

Our Credit Recovery solution offers fun, dynamic digital content to stimulate students in a teen-friendly voice while giving them the skills necessary to excel in the modern education and career landscape. It also allows today's on-the-go teens to complete their coursework on their own schedules with anytime, anyplace access across multiple devices.

Providing students with the means to obtain a meaningful high school diploma is the driving force behind this examination of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

The Credit Recovery Program at WPHS

Compass Learning provides a catalogue of content modules in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Health Education. Certified WPHS educators used the content modules to create courses in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. Coursework and assessments correspond to the Delaware State Standards, as seen in Appendix B. Credit recovery courses were created to resemble the regular classroom coursework as closely as possible. Students taking the credit recovery

courses should have received the same depth of content covered as in the traditional classroom. There should also have been the same or similar learning supports in the credit recovery courses as there are in the traditional classroom. There is no fee for students to enroll in these courses. A typical credit recovery course consists of a recorded video lesson of a teacher providing instruction. After the instruction, there is an Activity Quiz that a student must pass with a 60% or higher to continue to the next lesson. This sequence is repeated until the end of the course.

There are approximately 60 lessons in full-credit courses (English, Mathematics, Science, US History, and Economics) and approximately 30 lessons in half-credit courses (Civics, Geography, and Health). Students can work at their own pace, but to receive credit courses must be completed by the end of the school year. They are allowed to work on courses at home and in the credit recovery computer lab. The credit recovery computer lab consists of 24 computers with online access and a staff member monitoring the room. Students who do coursework in the computer lab can ask for assistance from the staff member overseeing the classroom. However, since the staff member in the computer lab is not a certified teacher, most of the assistance is technical, not academic.

A student's final grade in the credit recovery course is based solely on the student's scores from the Activity Quiz assessments taken after each lesson during the course. Assessments are drawn from a bank of 20 multiple-choice questions. When a student takes an assessment, the Compass Learning program randomly selects 10 questions from the bank of 20 for the student to answer. A student must earn a passing score of 60% or higher on each assessment in order to move through the

credit recovery course. If a student fails an assessment, he/she is sent back to the lesson for further study. The English 1 course in Appendix B illustrates the progression of this credit recovery course.

Statement of the Problem

Keeping students on the path to a high school diploma is very important. Students who stray from that path early in high school are less likely to earn their diplomas. Tyler and Lofstrom (2009) report that the lifetime earnings of a high school dropout are \$260,000 less than that of a high school graduate. Students at WPHS have the following options for recovering a failed credit: retake the course in a live classroom during the summer for a fee, retake the course in a live classroom during the next school year, or take an online credit recovery “substitute” course at WPHS during the next school year. The majority of students typically choose the online credit recovery course. The WPHS Credit Recovery Program provides an expedited means for students to get back on the path to a diploma.

Between August 2013 and June 2015, 615 students attending WPHS failed the ninth or tenth grade English courses or the ninth or tenth grade Mathematics courses and enrolled in an online course to recover the failed credit. There were 93 students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) enrolled in these courses.

Prior to this evaluation, there appeared to be a perception gap about the WPHS Credit Recovery Program between the WPHS teaching faculty and their students. The perception gap was based on informal investigator conversations with the staff, in the investigator’s role as a counselor in the school. The staff seemed to perceive a lack of rigor, educational accommodations, and overall value of the online

courses compared to traditional classroom courses. The students with whom this investigator spoke, however, appeared to perceive the classroom courses and online courses as equivalent to each other in content and educational merit. No data were available that would confirm or refute these perceptions. Therefore, the focus of this investigation is to examine the quality of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Key Questions

The key questions of this investigation are as follows:

1. To what degree and in what ways does the Compass Learning online curriculum resemble the WPHS traditional classroom curriculum with respect to content covered and instructional supports provided to students?
2. What are the perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by WPHS students who failed the English course or Mathematics course in ninth or tenth grade?
3. What are the perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by the WPHS teachers of the traditional ninth and tenth grade English and Mathematics courses?
4. How well does the Credit Recovery Program help students meet WPHS graduation requirements?

Literature Review

In 1990, education programs accredited by the state of Delaware, such as the James Groves Adult Education Program, allowed students to earn needed credits or earn back credits that they failed to earn in high school (recovered credits) to obtain diplomas. The Groves Program has proven effective at decreasing the dropout rate, as

evidenced by the statewide rate decreasing from 7.9% in 1989 to 3.9% in 2012 (Delaware Department of Education, 2013). The Groves Program offers classes at night in a traditional classroom setting at one of the six Groves Program locations statewide. In 2004 the Groves Program partnered with the Delaware Center for Distance Adult Learning (DCDAL) and now offers an online option for earning a high school diploma. However, this is not a credit recovery program, it is a separate high school from which students earn a diploma. The online option requires a student to withdraw from their current high school and enroll in the Groves Adult High School. According to the DCDAL website (2016), there is a cost of \$20 per class, with a limit of two classes per semester for the Groves Adult High School.

Current WPHS students may attend the Groves Program night school classes for credit recovery while remaining enrolled at WPHS. Courses cost \$40 per semester. The WPHS Credit Recovery Program is free and housed on-site at WPHS, providing students the opportunity to stay on track for graduation from WPHS without encountering obstacles such as cost or transportation to a Groves Program location.

Credit recovery has become a polarizing topic in the field of education, with critics such as Finn (2012) stating that “today’s foremost objection to ‘credit recovery’ is not the second-chance opportunity but the painful reality that getting credit in this fashion does not denote true mastery, and that colleges and employers won’t honor it any more than the G.E.D., maybe less” (para. 11).

After observing NovaNET online learning, Ravitch (2012) argued that credit recovery creates the bigger problem of academic fraud:

Now, there may be some online courses that are genuinely beneficial. I grant that... I saw assessments that consisted exclusively of simplistic multiple-choice or true-false questions...responses of dubious value that were "graded" by machines...level of difficulty of these exams is shockingly low. But this fraud works. It is profitable...the student gets credit, the corporation makes money, the school raises its graduation rate...the graduation rate means nothing, and the students get an empty "education" (para. 7).

Pondiscio (2014) commented that "the trouble is that it's simply impossible to tell whether or not credit recovery is real and rigorous – the same academic target via different means – or just a phony way to juke the stats... it's impossible to know if there's real and serious academic work going on, or merely a wink, a nod and a diploma" (para. 7). This lack of identifiable rigor is further discussed by Burke, Chapman, and Monahan (2013), who stated, "though the practice helps kids who've fallen behind to move forward, critics argue it has artificially boosted the city's graduation rate and sometimes requires only flimsy homework assignments" (para. 1-3). Murin et al. (2015) caution that online credit recovery providers are among the worst offenders when it comes to concerns about rigor and graduation inflation. They often provide a quick, but low rigor solution to students who need to recover credits.

Improperly boosting graduation rates is one of the concerns brought up by many of credit recovery's detractors, such as Finn (2012), Ravitch (2012), and Pondiscio (2014). In the most recent publication by the National Center of Education Statistics (2016), the graduation rate of students in the 2012-2013 school year was 82%, the highest rate ever measured. One year earlier, Kamenetz (2015) questioned the validity of online credit recovery programs that offer multiple-choice tests that students take to recover a semester credit after just a few weeks. She also questioned

the standards to which credit recovery students are held compared to the standards for students receiving traditional face-to-face instruction. Finally, she questioned whether or not students who graduate via credit recovery are ready for post-high school academics.

Credit recovery often has varied implementation and poor oversight leading to questions about its effectiveness. (McCabe & Andrie, 2012). According to Fetsco, Donnelly, and Tang (2016), the evaluation of online credit recovery programs should be conducted using a team approach, with credit recovery program developers working with experts in educational research. This collaboration would improve best practices of online credit recovery and possibly limit the questions about its effectiveness.

While investigating the rise in the use of credit recovery in the United States, Carr (2014) interviewed educators currently using online credit recovery programs and found that they struggle to define what makes a great or even good online program. Carr noted that this may not be a concern for school administrators since credit recovery programs provide a way for low achieving schools to avoid punishment or closure by increasing the number of graduates.

The dearth of research in the credit recovery area has been discussed by many researchers (Heppen et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2015; Scott & Smith, 2014; Kronholz, 2011; McCabe & Andrie, 2012; Murin et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2014). This lack of research could be attributed partly to the rapid advances of technology Watson et al. (2015). The use of digital learning has shifted in recent years and has resulted in an explosion of new tools and products in use today; online credit recovery falls into the

realm of new tools. The wide variety of online credit recovery formats and their usage complicates research due to the multiple areas requiring investigation.

Hughes et al. (2015) conducted quantitative comparisons of online and face-to-face credit recovery programs in Florida. Results showed that students were more likely to receive a C or better using the online credit recovery program than the face-to-face credit recovery program. However, the authors noted that the research was limited by not knowing the rigor of the online classes or the level of student learning. Since “course grades are inherently subjective and are not a direct measure of student learning because of the absence of an objective assessment” (p. 14), the actual level of learning was not measurable.

Bowman (2015), using student records from 1997 to 2014, compared students who were recovering an Algebra I credit with an entirely online credit recovery course to students who recovered the credit using a blend of online learning and traditional instruction. Bowman evaluated the amount of knowledge gained via the Northwest Evaluation Association test and found that, although there was little difference in the scores between the two groups, there was a significant difference in graduation rates between the groups. Students using online credit recovery had a significantly lower graduation rate compared to students using the blend of online and traditional instruction. The WPHS Credit Recovery Program is an online format; Bowman’s findings suggest that moving to a blended format may improve graduation rates for the students in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. Also, Bowman found that students in online credit recovery did not perform well at the next level of Mathematics; this may mean students at WPHS who recover their ninth grade

Mathematics credit may not be academically ready for the tenth grade Mathematics coursework.

Bowman's (2015) study was a precursor to the first federally funded study of online credit recovery programs, which was conducted by Jessica Heppen and colleagues at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in 2016. Heppen et al. (2016) focused on credit recovery for students who failed Algebra I during their first year in high school. Students who failed Algebra I were given the opportunity to recover the Algebra I credit during summer school. Students who participated in the study were randomly assigned to either an online Algebra course or a face-to-face Algebra course. Heppen et al. found a difference in recovery rates for each group, with 76 percent of the face-to-face group recovering the credit and 66 percent of the online group recovering the credit. Despite the majority of each group recovering the Algebra I credit, there was no significant difference in the passing rate for the next level of Mathematics for all students in the study who recovered the Algebra I credit. The passing rates for the next level (Geometry) were 28 percent for the online group and 25 percent for the face-to-face group. This finding is important because it showed that recovering an Algebra I credit did not result in mastery of Algebra I content. This lack of content mastery resulted in many of the students failing the next Mathematics course. Given this result, it's clear that finding quality credit recovery opportunities for students who fail courses is imperative. Schools also face difficulties in managing traditional courses for credit recovery, such as knowing in advance how many extra sections of failed courses they would need to schedule and finding qualified teachers to teach those extra sections. Online programs can provide flexible and convenient

solutions, however, if schools want to utilize the convenience of online courses, then continued improvement of online courses is essential for students whose futures depend on opportunities to get back on track in high school.

Much of the research conducted about credit recovery focuses on courses taken in the first year of high school. In 2009, the Afterschool Alliance issued a research brief stating that “students who struggle with passing courses or earning credits are at higher risk of dropping out of secondary school and not pursuing a college degree...once students fall behind, it is difficult for them to get back on track within their regular school” (p.1). Both Bowman (2015) and Heppen et al. (2016) discussed the importance of students’ passing Algebra I during their first year in high school. In 2011, Franco and Patel found that students who fail a course in their freshman year are four times more likely to not graduate within four years and that second-year students placed in classes with freshman lost the desire to succeed academically. The school in which Franco and Patel conducted their research did not have an online credit recovery program. The school piloted a summer online credit recovery program that included teacher support. Their findings showed that students who failed a course during their freshman year and recovered the credit to progress to sophomore year were more likely to stay in school and graduate within four years.

Students at WPHS must earn a credit in English and Mathematics every year to be promoted to the next grade. This promotion system is similar to the promotion system that Franco and Patel studied. Students who fail an English or Mathematics course are retained in their current grade and referred to as “repeaters.” Between 2013 and 2015, only 57 “repeater” students who did not use the credit recovery program at

WPHS graduated. This is very concerning. Once a student fails a course, that student is at great risk of not graduating on time.

Chapter 2

METHOD

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data were used to examine the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. All data was gathered at WPHS. Table 1 shows the research questions with their corresponding data sources and analyses.

Participants

Participants of this study were students in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program, WPHS faculty, and Curriculum and Instruction experts from the Colonial School District. Participants were volunteers for whom informed consent was obtained (Appendix H, I, and K).

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction of the Colonial School District selected four individuals as experts in traditional classroom content; two were experts in English and two were experts in Mathematics. Curriculum and Instruction experts are responsible for the content and assessments taught in the classroom. The experts chosen were all certified teachers and were designated as highly qualified in their content areas by the Delaware Department of Education. Each expert had over ten years of classroom teaching experience and were now functioning in a supervisory role in the district.

All students enrolled in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program during the 2016 Spring semester were invited to complete an anonymous survey about the credit recovery program. The survey participants had an age range of fifteen to eighteen.

They were taking courses in all core content areas: English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Approximately 200 students received the survey. There were 118 returned surveys.

A focus group was conducted with students who participated in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program for credits in English I, English II, Integrated Math I, or Integrated Math II. A focus group also was conducted with current WPHS classroom teachers of English I, English II, Integrated Math I, or Integrated Math II. The purpose of these focus groups was to gain understanding of their perceptions of positives and negatives of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

The selection of focus group participants was randomized. An invitation to participate in the group was sent to 100 random students who had earned credits in English I, English II, Integrated Math I, or Integrated Math II through the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. There were 27 positive responses from the students. All 24 English and Mathematics teachers in grades nine and ten also received invitations. There were 17 positive responses from teachers. All positive participation responses in each group were assigned a number. Using a random number generator, seven participants were selected for each group. The student group consisted of four male students, three female students. Mean age of the students was seventeen; five students were African-American; two were Caucasian. Five female teachers and two male teachers comprised the teacher group. There were four Mathematic teachers and three English teachers. Five teachers held tenure and six were certified to teach special education.

Table 1. Key Research Questions

Question	Data Sources	Analysis
1. To what degree and in what ways does the Compass Learning online curriculum resemble the WPHS traditional classroom curriculum with respect to content covered and instructional supports provided to students?	Author-created rubric used by Colonial School District Curriculum and Instruction core area experts. (Appendix C) Focus group interview of teachers of ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics courses.	Rubric scores from all core areas were analyzed. Means for each core area were calculated. Comments from the rubrics were analyzed for common themes. Comments from the interviews were analyzed for common themes.
2. What are the perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by WPHS students who failed English or Mathematics in ninth or tenth grade.	Responses from a 5-point Likert Scale survey Focus group interview of students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics courses.	Mean and Standard Deviation of the 15 items on the survey were calculated. (Appendix D) Comments from the interviews were analyzed for common themes.
3. What are the perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by the WPHS teachers of the traditional ninth and tenth grade English and Mathematics courses?	Focus group interview with teachers of ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics courses	Comments from the interviews were analyzed for common themes.
4. How well does the Credit Recovery Program help students meet graduation requirements?	Record review of students who had taken credit recovery courses in the school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.	Percentage of students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics courses who used the credit recovery program and graduated compared to the percentage of students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics courses who did not use the credit recovery program and graduated.

Instruments

Course Evaluation Rubric

The course Evaluation rubric (see Appendix C) was designed by the investigator and used items drawn from three existing instruments: The Curriculum Rating Rubric, the Rubric for Online Instruction, and the Apex Learning Digital Evaluation Rubric. The Curriculum Rating Rubric from Kent State University designed by Pretti-Frontczac, Robbins, Jackson, Korey-Hirko and Harjusola-Webb, (2008) focused on early childhood programming. This instrument provided the foundation for the designed rubric by providing an organized framework for curriculum evaluation by separating curriculum into sections with corresponding items. The website for The Rubric for Online Instruction (ROI) developed at California State University, Chico (2009) states the purpose of this tool was designed to answer the question, “What does high-quality online instruction look like?” (para. 2). However, it was focused on measuring online instruction at a collegiate level. The ROI’s breakdown of areas for evaluation provided the basis for the areas of evaluation in the created rubric. Apex Learning’s Digital Curriculum Evaluation Rubric (2012) allowed the investigator to use items from a current rubric that evaluated digital curriculum.

The result was a rubric that consisted of three sections: Design of Instruction, Course Structure and Organization, and Assessment and Evaluation. Each of the three sections of the rubric contained six items for a total of eighteen items for evaluation.

Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus group interview consisted of 7 questions:

1. How does a credit recovery course compare to a traditional classroom class?
2. Describe how a credit recovery class works
3. How do you access the credit recovery classes?
4. How do students keep track of grades in credit recovery?
5. Discuss the positives and negatives of the credit recovery program.
6. Can students in the credit recovery program cheat?
7. Any additional comments?

Questions one through four focused on how the online curriculum compares to the traditional classroom curriculum. Questions four through six focused on perceptions of the credit recovery program. Follow-up questions were asked as deemed necessary to accurately understand the responses.

Student Survey

The survey instrument (see Appendix D) was a modified version of the instrument used by Buckley (2012). Buckley's instrument focused on perceptions of online learning as an alternative to classroom learning and consisted of 50 questions covering the following areas: parent support, online effectiveness, traditional setting, students, and school district staff. Buckley did a reliability calculation with the data gathered and found the instrument to be reliable. Fifteen of Buckley's items that related to online effectiveness, traditional setting, and students were used for the survey based on their relevance to comparisons between online teaching programs and traditional classroom instruction.

Procedure

Course Evaluation

Using the investigator-created rubric, Curriculum and Instruction experts evaluated the following WPHS online credit recovery courses: English I, English II, Integrated Math I, and Integrated Math II. The experts had never seen the courses prior to their evaluation. Experts were provided access codes to view the courses from the Compass Learning website. The experts evaluated the courses on a Likert-type scale that included an area for narrative comments. The experts were asked to rate the courses on their comparability to the traditional classroom curricula. English experts reviewed the English I and English II courses, Mathematics experts reviewed the Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II courses.

Student Survey

Students enrolled in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program were given paper surveys to complete at the beginning of their credit recovery class. Students were given 10 minutes to fill out the 15-item survey. All returned survey responses were entered into a spreadsheet for analysis.

Teacher Focus Group

At the teachers' request, the focus group took place at the end of the school day so that it would not interfere with instructional time. Participants gathered in a conference room. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Focus group comments were digitally recorded and transcribed so that they could be analyzed.

Student Focus Group

The Student focus group took place after school so that it would not interfere with classroom instruction. Participants gathered in a conference room. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Focus group comments were digitally recorded and transcribed so that they could be analyzed.

Records Review

Enrollment records for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years were reviewed to determine the number of students who no longer attended WPHS and who had failed one of the following courses: English I, English II, Integrated Math I, or Integrated Math II. Records were reviewed to determine how many students graduated using the credit recovery program versus students who did not use the credit recovery program.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Curriculum Experts

Analysis of the Curriculum experts' comments began with open coding. Open coding identified 65 codes within the comments of all English and Mathematics experts. Comments were analyzed again using axial coding to identify codes that were related. All related codes were classified as themes. The next step in analysis was axial coding, which is the disaggregation of core themes. Axial coding identified nine themes that were related. The nine related themes were re-examined to ensure that they related to the key questions of the investigation. Three themes were found to be common to both English and Mathematics comments from the rubric: lack of common core state standards (CCSS), lack of learning, and low rigor.

Student Focus Group

Analysis of the student focus group transcript began with open coding that identified 61 codes. The transcript was analyzed again using axial coding to identify codes that were related. All related codes were classified as themes. Axial coding produced nine themes for further analysis. The nine themes were examined for relationship to the key questions of the investigation. Four themes were found to be common and related to the investigation: cheating, motivation, learning environment, and workload balance.

Teacher Focus Group

Analysis of the teacher focus group transcript began with open coding that identified 75 codes. The transcript was analyzed again using axial coding to identify codes that were related. All related codes were classified as themes. Axial coding produced twenty themes for further analysis. The twenty themes were examined for relationship to the key questions of the investigation. Nine themes were found to be common and related to the investigation, the most prevalent themes were: content differences, lack of learning, and learning environment.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Course Evaluation Rubric

The ratings for the 18 items on the course evaluation rubric completed by the Curriculum and Instruction experts provided the data for quantitative analysis. Expert ratings on the Likert scale were disaggregated into the areas of Design of Instruction, Course Structure and Organization, and Assessment and Evaluation for analysis. The

analysis consisted of comparison of the experts' ratings of the WPHS credit recovery curricula to the traditional classroom curricula.

Student Survey

The survey of student perceptions of the credit recovery program was completed by 118 students. Responses to the 15 items by each student were entered into a spreadsheet. Mean and standard deviation (SD) for each of the items on the survey were calculated.

Record Review

Students no longer enrolled at WPHS were identified as “graduated” or “inactive” in the enrollment system. The records of students who graduated in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years who used the Credit Recovery Program for ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics were identified and reviewed. Records of students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics who chose not to use the Credit Recovery Program also were identified and reviewed. The number of students who graduated without using the Credit Recovery Program was determined. Student graduates who had IEPs were disaggregated.

Students who withdrew from WPHS prior to graduation were considered to be inactive. The inactive students who withdrew without an identified transfer high school were considered to be “dropped out” of school and are referred to in this investigation as “drop-out students.” The inactive students who had an identified transfer high school listed in their records are referred to in this study as “transfer students.” The records of students who transferred to another high school were not

available and, therefore, their graduation status could not be determined. Because of this uncertainty, they were excluded from the calculations in this study.

Using data from school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the number of WPHS students who took a credit recovery course and dropped out was determined. The number of students who did not take a credit recovery course and dropped out was determined as well.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

The investigation of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program was guided by four key questions. The findings from the data analyses are discussed as they relate to each key question that guided this investigation. Key Question 1 and Question 2 include both qualitative and quantitative findings. Qualitative findings are reported for Key Question 3. Quantitative findings are reported for Key Question 4.

Key Question 1

To what degree and in what ways does the Compass Learning online curriculum resemble the WPHS traditional classroom curriculum with respect to content covered and instructional supports provided to students?

The results of the Curriculum and Instruction rubric scoring are listed in tables that follow. There were two experts in each subject area who completed the rubrics. Experts reviewed each Compass Learning course and rated the courses on one rubric that covered both years of the content area. The rationale behind rating the two Compass Learning courses in each subject area on one rubric came from the experts. The English and Mathematics classroom courses taught in ninth and tenth grades follow the same organization and assessments scheme. Each expert's rating is reported separately rather than using rating means since only two experts in each content area completed the rubric.

Table 2 shows the ratings of the courses by the English experts on the Design of Instruction section of the rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Design of Instruction” refers to the presence and quality of learning outcomes, availability and presentation of content, and additional student learning resources.

Table 2. Design of Instruction Rating: English

Rubric Item	Expert A	Expert B
Learning outcomes are clearly defined for students	4	4
Learning outcomes are clearly matched to state and district standards	1	1
Content is made available to students in manageable segments	4	4
Appropriate supplemental resources are available for students that support learning outcomes	2	4
Appropriate visual and auditory tools are integrated within the course to achieve learning objectives	1	1
Content and requirements are equivalent to or surpass traditional classroom courses	1	1

Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)

Table 3 shows the ratings of the courses by the Mathematics experts on the Design of Instruction section of the rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Design of Instruction” refers to the presence and quality of learning outcomes, availability and presentation of content, and additional student learning resources.

Table 3. Design of Instruction Rating: Mathematics

Rubric Item	Expert C	Expert D
Learning outcomes are clearly defined for students	4	4
Learning outcomes are clearly matched to state and district standards	1	1
Content is made available to students in manageable segments	4	4
Appropriate supplemental resources are available for students that support learning outcomes	4	4
Appropriate visual and auditory tools are integrated within the course to achieve learning objectives	2	3
Content and requirements are equivalent to or surpass traditional classroom courses	1	1

Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)

Table 4 shows the ratings of the courses by the English experts on the Course Structure and Organization rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Course Structure and Organization” refers to the overall appearance and navigation of course materials and necessary course information for students.

Table 4. Course Structure and Organization Rating: English

Rubric Item	Expert A	Expert B
Content is presented in a logical progression	3	3
Course is clearly organized and easily navigated	2	4
Course materials are visually consistent throughout course	4	4
Course materials are functionally consistent throughout course	4	4
Course materials are matched to the development/grade level of the intended student population	2	3
Course materials adequately prepare students for the next level of study	1	1

Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)

Table 5 shows the ratings of the courses by the Mathematics experts on the Course Structure and Organization rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Course Structure and Organization” refers to the overall appearance and navigation of course materials and necessary course information for students.

Table 5. Course Structure and Organization Rating: Mathematics

Rubric Item	Expert C	Expert D
Content is presented in a logical progression	2	3
Course is clearly organized and easily navigated	4	4
Course materials are visually consistent throughout course	4	4
Course materials are functionally consistent throughout course	4	4
Course materials are matched to the development/grade level of the intended student population	1	1
Course materials adequately prepare students for the next level of study	1	1

Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)

Table 6 shows the ratings of the courses by the English experts on the Assessment and Evaluation rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Assessment and Evaluation” refers to assignments, quizzes, surveys, and other assessment strategies.

Table 6. Assessment and Evaluation Rating: English

Rubric Item	Expert A	Expert B
Assignments encourage students to use critical thinking strategies	1	1
Assignment and learning outcomes are closely aligned and available to students	1	1
Assignments provide ample opportunities to practice & apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways that enforce learning outcomes	1	1
Assignment expectations are explained, including guidelines and submission dates	4	4
Students are assessed by several different methods over the duration of the online course	1	1
Authenticity of student work is verified by appropriate means	1	1
Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)		

Table 7 shows the ratings of the courses by the English experts on the Assessment and Evaluation rubric. Ratings are based on a 4-point Likert scale, from 1-Not Evident to 4-Fully Evident. “Assessment and Evaluation” refers to assignments, quizzes, surveys, and other assessment strategies.

Table 7. Assessment and Evaluation Rating: Mathematics

Rubric Item	Expert C	Expert D
Assignments encourage students to use critical thinking strategies	1	1
Assignment and learning outcomes are closely aligned and available to students	1	1
Assignments provide ample opportunities to practice & apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways that enforce learning outcomes	1	1
Assignment expectations are explained, including guidelines and submission dates	2	3
Students are assessed by several different methods over the duration of the online course	1	1
Authenticity of student work is verified by appropriate means	1	1
Ratings range from 1 (Not Evident) to 4 (Fully Evident)		

The absence of alignment with the CCSS was a recurring concern for all curriculum experts throughout their evaluation of the WPHS credit recovery courses. English Expert A pointed out that the online courses dealt with only one strand of the English standards. When asked to explain, Expert A stated that CCSS English standards have four strands: Reading, Language, Writing, and Speaking/Listening. When asked if specific standards for Mathematics were met, Math Expert C explained that very few of the eight Mathematical practice principles were covered in the credit recovery courses.

Criticism of the lack of alignment with CCSS continued in the area of Depth of Knowledge (DOK). According to the Stanislaus County Office of Education

(2008), the concept of DOK was created by Norman Webb in 2002. The four levels of knowledge in Webb's DOK model are:

Level 1—Recall and Reproduce (recall a fact, information, or procedure)

Level 2—Skills and Concepts (engages mental process beyond habitual response)

Level 3—Strategic Thinking (require reasoning, plan development)

Level 4—Extended Thinking (investigation, complex reasoning and planning)

English Expert B commented that the majority of the assessment questions were at DOK Level 1 or 2; they should be at levels 3 and 4 so that the credit recovery courses align with the classroom curricula. This comment is backed by Herman and Linn (2013), reporting for the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, who stated that “we believe that DOK 3 and 4 reflect capabilities for 21st century competence” (p. 5).

Low rigor was demonstrated by the following comments “low rigor” “low cognitive growth target” and “Test questions are not to the level of rigor in the ELA classrooms.” The theme of low rigor was further identified by comments that there was a lack of “productive struggle” in all of the courses. Commenting on productive struggle, Pasquale (2015) stated that “perseverance, or continuing forward irrespective of struggle or difficulty, is an essential element in problem solving because the first or second approach or strategy may not result in a reasonable solution” (p. 2).

The lack of learning was exemplified by the following comments from the English experts: “Only assess knowledge of one text that was read with embedded supports. These supports do much of the “thinking” for students.” “Minimal reading,

clues and more are given for the quizzes.” Mathematics experts commented “No transfer of knowledge... No thought required, just memorization... Not investigative or exploratory.”

Teachers and students also saw differences between WPHS online credit recovery courses and traditional classroom courses. Student 1 commented, “I would also like to admit that I believe there's pros and cons to it [CR] we already spoke on you know the good things but a bad thing about it is you can't ask the computer questions you know like if you get lost on something.” This lack of having access to a teacher for feedback also was a concern for Student 4: “A negative of Compass learning is you can't ask a question or you can't get feedback from a teacher.” The lack of feedback as well as lack of accommodations for special education students taking credit recovery courses were concerns for Teacher 3:

There are no accommodations for special education students many of our special education students are enrolled in credit recovery and there are no accommodations so it's not even equivalent to what they get in their classrooms. Then they just keep hitting their head against the wall because they cannot do it. They can't access that curriculum and instruction because their needs are not being met and I think it's a complete waste of their time....kids miss out on feedback in credit recovery they don't get anything directed back and they don't get any correction in the moment of process especially for something like math when students give an incorrect answer they are not able to see where they went wrong.

The majority of students at WPHS work on their credit recovery courses in a computer lab. In 2015, Olivier and Kellogg commented about concerns of computer lab-based credit recovery programs, stating “the lab-based mode limits potential advantages to learning any time, any place...may present a disadvantage if students cannot get immediate help when needed; furthermore, this could be an issue if dispersed students cannot be grouped for collaborative work” (p. 25). On the surface,

this comment attends directly to the lack of teacher feedback with credit recovery done in a computer lab setting. However, the comment also relates to the CCSS English strand for Speaking/Listening when it mentions the inability for collaborative work.

Key Question 2

What are the perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by WPHS students who failed the English course or the Mathematics course in ninth or tenth grade?

The survey of student perceptions of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program was completed by 118 students. The mean and standard deviation (SD) for each of the items on the survey are presented in Table 8. Students rated items on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.

Table 8. Survey of Student Perceptions of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program

Item	Mean	SD
1. In a class offering either classroom learning or online learning, I learn better with the online learning.	3.01	1.19
2. Regular classes in classrooms better prepared me to graduate than online classes.	3.59	.86
3. Online classes helped prepare me to graduate.	3.17	.98
4. I prefer regular classroom classes over online classes.	3.56	1.2
5. I believe that I learn about the same amount of information in an online class as in a regular classroom class.	3.05	1.07
6. I feel successful when taking online classes.	3.28	1.09
7. I feel successful when taking regular classroom classes.	3.78	.90
8. I believe online credit recovery is a valuable program.	4.01	.83
9. I believe the regular classroom courses are the best way for me to learn.	3.61	1.09
10. I'm doing my best in each of my classes online and regular: same level of effort, studying for quizzes, and doing my own work.	3.88	1.00
11. I believe that I can make the same grade in a subject in an online class as in a regular course.	3.60	1.08
12. I would benefit if I were allowed to take more of my classes as online classes.	3.26	1.17
13. Online classes don't offer any benefit to me.	2.31	.97
14. I believe that I would learn more through online material than through teacher lectures.	2.81	1.07
15. My regular classwork was not affected by my online classes; I was able to successfully handle working with both classes during the school year.	3.82	.93

Students were very forthcoming when asked about cheating in the credit recovery classes. Student 7 bluntly stated, “I got far with that (cheating).” Six of the seven members of the focus group described a variety of options for cheating, including logging into another person’s account to see the answers to a test or using their phone to take pictures of the screen. This prompted Student 1, who apparently was unaware of the level of cheating by other students, to say, “Wow! There's a lot of ways you guys is cheating!”

Motivation was another theme during the student focus group interview. Student comments suggested that motivation meant having the correct attitude and discipline to successfully complete a course. Student 1 commented, “It’s kinda like something you have to snap into, if you don't snap into and you’re in credit recovery, and as everybody is saying, you are doing it all on your own if you don't snap into it you aren't going to do the work you need to do because you're still slacking which got you into credit recovery in the first place.” Student 3 followed up with, “That (motivation) was a problem for me for a while until I started doing it, you still need to...even though you still get all the positives you have to still have the motivation of wanting to pass that class.” Student 5 simply stated, “It all depends on you and whether you want to work so if you don't work then you're not gonna get any of those courses done and you're gonna fail.”

Learning environment, meaning the credit recovery classroom set up and self-paced learning, was exemplified by the following comments. Student 3 stated:

I would say yeah, (credit recovery) is easier for me because of the one-on-one thing you don't get in the classroom because teachers have to be worried about everyone. They (teachers) can't just be worried about one individual the entire

time, but with credit recovery you get that one-on-one and I feel it makes it a lot easier to learn.

However, some students said the credit recovery learning environment had its drawbacks. Student 2 stated, “A bad thing about it is you can't ask the computer questions; you know like if you get lost on something.” Student 3, however, enjoyed the credit recovery learning environment, “It's easier to focus because...you just have to worry about yourself and you don't really got to worry about your classmates are doing, you stay more focused and more on task.” Student 4 said:

After they [the computer] explain it to you, they make you do practice ones and if you get it wrong they do like an explanation of why it's wrong then which one is right and then once you take the test, if you fail it you can just do the whole thing over again but you can also just take it home with you, like you can just do it on the computer at home if you got one.

Students in the Davis (2011) study reported the same sentiment about working at their own pace, “they (students) can listen to audio or watch video of lectures or lessons more than once to revisit something they might have missed or not understood” (p. S13).

When asked about the person monitoring the credit recovery classroom and his helpfulness, Student 3 stated, “I mean sometimes yeah, just basic help yeah but like other than that, like going deeper into the course (no).” This contradicts what Heppen et al. (2016) described in their findings, “students in the online course sections also had an in-class mentor, which is recommended and strongly encouraged by this and other online course providers” (p. 6). According to Fetsco et al. (2016), “schools should endeavor to staff credit recovery programs with teachers and/or paraprofessionals who can relate effectively to students who may have disengaged from school” (p. 4). Taylor et al. (2016) found that “the credit recovery passing rate

for online students with instructionally supportive mentors was higher than that for online students whose mentors provided less instructional support...the average credit recovery rate for online students in instructionally supportive classrooms was similar to that of the students in their schools who took the face-to-face class” (p. 10).

Contrary to these recommendations, the WPHS staff member in the credit recovery classroom was not a certified teacher. Nevertheless, students were, for the most part, complimentary of that staff member. Student 4 stated that “his phone number (a Google number) is on the board and he said you can text him and he'll unlock it...That's a positive thing too because he stays up later he said that he doesn't go to sleep until 3am because kids get locked out.”

Workload balance was demonstrated in comments by Student 1, who found that credit recovery demonstrated the need for better time management when it came to balancing his credit recovery work and his regular classes. He stated, “yeah it's definitely about how you control your time pretty much, use your time wisely, stay on top of everything because if you don't, then with the classes you have now then you're going to have to take credit recovery for those classes.” Student 6 commented about the difficulty of balancing workloads, stating “it (balancing) was hard and that result had me going back into credit recovery because I couldn't balance the two so now I just do it (credit recovery) in that class (the credit recovery classroom).” She discussed that this was her second year in credit recovery because she failed her classroom courses by neglecting them and she now focused on working on credit recovery so she wouldn't be a “repeater” again.

Student survey data on the WPHS Credit Recovery Program showed that students saw merit in offering the credit recovery program, as seen in Table 8. However, when students rated the items that directly compared online learning to traditional classroom learning, classroom learning received higher mean scores each time. This trend in the data is consistent with what was found by Heppen et al. (2016), who stated “students in the online credit recovery course perceived their course to be significantly more difficult and less clear regarding grading expectations than students in the face-to-face course” (p. 7).

Key Question 3

What are perceptions of the online Credit Recovery Program by the WPHS teachers of the traditional ninth and tenth grade English and Mathematics courses?

The first theme discussed was content differences. Teacher 7 put it plainly: “I think the philosophy of what they want us to do in the classroom is different from the expectations of credit recovery. Maybe my understanding is incorrect but I thought it was more lecture based taught on a computer system. It's a lecture, then they have to do problems until they pass it. That's not our philosophy here in the math department in the district.” Teacher 2 critiqued the Credit Recovery Program’s curricular content:

What they learn in Integrated Math 1, 2 and 3 doesn't directly align with the modules in credit recovery so sometimes when they come and ask for help with teachers it does take a while. I have to go back and look at the modules and say hold on, we don't even teach this.

Teachers also spoke about lack of CCSS alignment of the credit recovery course content. Teacher 6 stated “common core says you need to do this and I have to squish all this stuff into my classroom and all this stuff into my teaching, whereas credit recovery doesn't even seem to align with any of that.” Teacher 3 remarked

“we're doing a disservice by not holding them to the same standards (CCSS) as the other students.”

Lack of learning was a contested issue among teachers in the focus group. Teacher 5 stated: “I don't think much learning takes place. I think it's just recovering the credit. Learning, you learn better in the classroom as far as actually learning how to do things whatever the topic may be.” He listed, however, many positives in having the credit recovery program:

- Quick refill on credits
- Promotion to next grade level
- Work done in a short amount of time
- Maintaining athletic eligibility

Teacher 7 countered by stating: “those are all positives but those are to me for completion of something but not necessarily learning. There is a difference to me between learning and receiving credit, just passing them along.” To which Teacher 5 stated: “We're not talking about learning, we are talking about the positives of the program, not whether you are learning. Teacher 2 added: “Getting that credit is doing something even though it may not result in learning anything or learning much.”

Teacher comments about credit attainment at the expense of learning are not uncommon about other credit recovery programs. Fetsco et al. (2016) found that credit recovery students receive a less challenging curriculum so that they can maximize credit attainment, but also stated the belief that, as a result, these students aren't prepared for future success in school.

Obviously, teachers in the focus group had differing views of the overarching purpose of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. Five of the seven teachers believed that learning was not occurring in the credit recovery classes and that the credit recovery purpose was credit attainment. Two teachers felt that learning did occur and saw the program as providing students the ability to master concepts they didn't previously understand.

The learning environment in credit recovery courses was an issue for the teacher focus group, as evidenced by the following comments from Teachers 2 and 3:

Teacher 2:

Kids miss out on feedback in credit recovery they don't get anything directed back and they don't get any correction in the moment of process especially for something like math when students give an incorrect answer they are not able to see where they went wrong.

Teacher 3:

Additionally, they don't get any collaborative problem solving with peers because it's literally just the kid with the computer so they miss out on that huge component which is something that's been identified as something very important these days.

Teacher 7 inquired about how the credit recovery classroom was structured.

Multiple teachers expressed that there was a lack of structure in the classroom, which led Teacher 7 to state: "So they [credit recovery students] are completely not learning in the same environment where (students in a traditional classroom) are where there's more structure?" Teacher 4 stated: "They [credit recovery students] are learning in a completely different environment with completely different standards and expectations." Teacher 3 added: "I don't think they're monitored either; all the computer screens are facing away from the (staff member in the room)." Teacher 3 also commented on students in special education noting that since they don't receive

their required accommodations in the credit recovery classroom, their educational needs are not being met.

Key Question 4

How well does the Credit Recovery Program help students meet WPHS graduation requirements?

Based on a review of student records from school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, Table 9 reports the percentage of regular education students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics, utilized credit recovery courses, and graduated or dropped out of school.

Table 9. Percentage of Regular Education Students Who Failed a Course, Used Credit Recovery, and Graduated or Dropped Out

	English 1	English 2	Math 1	Math 2
Graduated	2.4%	2.2%	5.6%	9.5%
Dropped Out	1.6%	1.2%	0.7%	2.3%

Table 10 reports the percentage of special education students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics, utilized credit recovery, and graduated or dropped out.

Table 10. Percentage of Special Education Students Who Failed a Course, Used Credit Recovery, and Graduated or Dropped Out

	English 1	English 2	Math 1	Math 2
Graduated	0.2%	0.2%	1.1%	0.8%
Dropped Out	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%

Table 11 reports the percentage of regular education students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics, did not use credit recovery, and graduated or dropped out of school.

Table 11. Percentage of Regular Education Students Who Failed a Course, Did Not Use Credit Recovery, and Graduated or Dropped Out

	English 1	English 2	Math 1	Math 2
Graduated	0.9%	0.9%	2.3%	2.4%
Dropped Out	5.5%	2.2%	5.0%	3.0%

Table 12 reports the percentage of special education students who failed ninth or tenth grade English or Mathematics, did not use credit recovery, and graduated or dropped out of school.

Table 12 Percentage of Special Education Students Who Failed a Course, Did Not Use Credit Recovery, and Graduated or Dropped Out

	English 1	English 2	Math 1	Math 2
Graduated	0%	0.4%	0%	0.6%
Dropped Out	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation is the first effort to evaluate the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. The investigation was guided by four key questions. Each question is examined below using the analyzed data, as well as published research findings. Based on the answers to these questions, recommendations to the WPHS administration about the WPHS Credit Recovery Program are presented.

Key Question 1

To what degree and in what ways does the Compass Learning online curriculum resemble the WPHS traditional classroom curriculum with respect to content covered and instructional supports provided to students?

According to the rubric scores and comments from the curriculum experts, the comments from the student and teacher focus groups, and the student survey, the only way in which the WPHS online curriculum resembles the traditional classroom curriculum is in the course design and organization as seen in Tables 4 and 5. Aside from that aspect, the two curricula are very different. The most apparent area of difference is in how students are assessed, as seen in Tables 6 and 7. Additionally, the lack of CCSS alignment of the online course curriculum reveals a more significant difference from the curriculum of the traditional classroom courses.

Key Question 2

What are the perceptions of the online credit recovery program by WPHS students who failed the English course or the Mathematics course in ninth or tenth grade?

Students participating in the focus group appeared to have a positive perception of the WPSH Credit Recovery Program. Students commented on how the program helped them focus on their work by offering a self-paced curriculum that was one-on-one with the computer acting as teacher. Students also felt that the WPHS Credit Recovery Program helped them organize their time and become more disciplined. They reported that their improved organization and discipline led to recovering credits more quickly than if they had to take an entire class again in a traditional classroom setting.

Student 5, who was a senior and needed to pass a credit recovery course during his senior year, saw positive value in the program. However, having to complete a credit recovery course added stress to his already stressful senior year. As a result, he felt that it is important for students to take classroom courses seriously and to avoid failing them, stating that credit recovery should be a last resort for students.

Student responses to the survey items provided some additional insight about their perceptions of the program. They tended to believe that the program was valuable (mean score of 4.01) but less so that learning was better in online courses versus traditional classes (a mean score of 2.81). The data suggests that students liked the credit recovery program but didn't believe that they learned better online.

Key Question 3

What are perceptions of the online credit recovery program by the WPHS teachers of the traditional ninth and tenth grade English and Mathematics courses?

The comments of the teacher focus group highlighted a perceived difference of philosophy underlying the credit recovery program and traditional classroom instruction, especially when it came to course content and the learning environment. Teachers commented positively about earning credits quickly, however, credit attainment as the priority over learning content was a concern. The majority of the teachers in the focus group (five out of seven) felt that learning was not occurring in the credit recovery classes. This information leads the investigator to conclude that most teachers have a negative perception of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

During the focus group, teachers demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. Teacher 7 believed that students earned credits based on seat time they accumulated; this is not accurate; students earn credits based on course completion. Teacher 5 believed students did not need to complete the entire course, only a percentage of the course, to obtain credit. This is not correct; students must complete a course in its entirety with a passing grade in order to obtain credit. Such inaccurate understanding of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program was not unexpected; many WPHS teachers have very little experience with the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. What was unexpected was five out of seven teachers were not overly concerned about a program in which they believed learning didn't take place. If this is the prevailing perception school wide at WPHS, will staff take on the challenge to make the program rigorous with an emphasis on achievement?

Key Question 4

How well does the credit recovery program help students meet WPHS graduation requirements?

From the WPHS graduation records from school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the answer to this question is very apparent. Of all the students who failed an English or Mathematics course during their first two years of high school, more of those who used the WPHS Credit Recovery Program graduated than did those who chose not to use the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. The same was true for special education students who used the WPHS Credit Recovery Program compared to special education students who did not use the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

The WPHS Credit Recovery Program also had a large impact on student drop outs. Fewer regular education and special education students who used the WPHS Credit Recovery Program dropped out students than those who did not use WPHS Credit Recovery Program. The WPHS Credit Recovery Program helps students meet WPHS graduation requirements.

Limitations of the Study

The findings and interpretations of this study should be considered in light of the following limitations. There was no pilot test of the survey with the intended participants. Therefore, the investigator cannot be entirely certain the items were being interpreted as intended. The same limitation can be applied to the evaluation rubrics.

During the interviews, students reported they liked working one-on-one with a computer in a credit recovery course, but they wished they had the ability to ask

questions. The investigator neglected to follow up with students about the degree of teacher-student connection in the traditional classroom. This might have produced more content to analyze regarding how students felt about their traditional classes and about differences between the two types of classrooms. The investigator also neglected to follow up with Teacher 3 regarding the availability of accommodations for special education students in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. This could have yielded more discussion about the effectiveness of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program for special education students.

Recommendations

The aim of this project was to investigate the quality of the online credit recovery program at WPHS. The general lack of evaluation of online credit recovery programs nationwide is a critique expressed by a number of researchers (Carr, 2014; Fetsco, et al., 2016; Heppen et al., 2016; McCabe & Andrie, 2012). The present investigation collected quantitative data from curriculum experts in the Colonial School District's Curriculum and Instruction Division and from WPHS students currently participating in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. Qualitative data also was gathered from the curriculum experts, WPHS students, and WPHS teachers.

The WPHS Credit Recovery Program is lacking in quality, especially by nonalignment with CCSS and a lack of rigor. Curriculum experts and teachers noted the lack of alignment with CCSS as a major problem. Curriculum experts indicated that the current credit recovery assessments do not meet the DOK required for college readiness. The Credit Recovery Program needs to align with CCSS so that it is current with what is being taught in the traditional classrooms. In the teacher focus

group, a few teachers complained about the inconsistency between credit recovery content and the content they were teaching in the classroom. This lack of alignment may stem from the creation of the original Compass Learning credit recovery program. At the time of its creation in August 2013, schools were not required to be aligned with CCSS; that has since changed.

The WPHS Credit Recovery Program is not without its merits. Students appreciate the program for keeping them on track to graduation. Some students found that they became better with workload balance and motivation after completing a credit recovery course. These findings are very similar to the those of Oliver and Kellogg (2015), who found that students who were retaking courses online showed more motivation to do the work and put in the effort.

Recommendation 1: Retention of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Since the WPHS Credit Recovery Program helps students meet graduation requirements, the investigator recommends that the WPHS Credit Recovery Program be retained. However, the program should not continue in its present form due to lack of CCSS alignment and to its content differing from the WPHS traditional classroom courses.

Recommendation 2: The WPHS should align the WPHS Credit Recovery Program with CCSS.

Alignment to CCSS would increase the rigor of the courses in the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. D'Ambrosio, Martin, Morgan, and Shirali (2015) discussed the need for adherence to standards and high rigor when developing a high quality credit recovery program. Schools should ensure that their online credit

recovery courses are aligned to state and district standards and discontinue services from vendors that do not meet this alignment

If the rigor of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program is not changed, then the critiques of Burke, et al., (2013), Carr, (2014) and Kamenetz (2015), who questioned the rigor of online credit recovery, will continue to apply to the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. A failure to authorize and support the necessary efforts to improve the rigor of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program also would call into question whether the administration is more concerned about graduation rate than about learning, as highlighted by Chapman et al, (2013) Finn, (2012) and Pondisco (2016).

This transition to a more rigorous online credit recovery structure by WPHS might encounter a problem, as the Montana Digital Academy found when they changed their program. When the Montana Digital Academy aligned their credit recovery courses with CCSS, Stevens and Frazelle (2016) report that, the student passing rate declined substantially. The director of the Montana Digital Academy commented that students who took and passed the CCSS-aligned credit recovery courses previously had failed a traditional course that lacked CCSS alignment; therefore, the credit recovery courses were actually more rigorous than the original classroom courses (Stevens & Franzelle, 2016). However, a decline in passing courses might not be as much of a problem at WPHS because the traditional classroom courses are already aligned with the CCSS. There is a potential for decline in passing rates due to the WPHS Credit Recovery Program increased rigor.

Compass Learning's website states that Compass Learning has the ability to make its curriculum CCSS aligned only in the English and Mathematics content areas. Compass Learning's alignment with CCSS, however, is not complete; especially when it comes to the CCSS English strands and Mathematics principles. The most glaring omission in Compass Learning's attempts at alignment is the lack of writing assessments. The investigator accessed the Compass Learning curricula and discovered that all assessments CCSS aligned modules were multiple choice; there were no subjective or open-ended assessment items.

Students who take courses other than English or Mathematics do not and will not have a CCSS-aligned curriculum through Compass Learning. Therefore, alignment with CCSS through Compass Learning will not fix the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Recommendation 3: WPHS should create a Credit Recovery Team consisting of administrators and certified teachers in both regular and special education to make important revisions to the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Utilizing the people on the front lines of learning to make revisions will help enrich the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. This recommendation does not emerge directly from the data collected in this study, but rather from the investigator's deep experience with the WPHS Credit Recovery Program and his review of the scholarly literature on credit recovery programs. Mileaf, Paul, Rukobo, and Zyko (2012) state that, when a school is starting a credit recovery program, "as an initial step, each school should set up a credit recovery team, whose members would include but not be

limited to administrators, teachers and guidance counselors within the school community” (pp 8-9).

Recommendation 4: WPHS should use the Schoology learning management system for the WPHS Credit Recovery Program.

Teacher 3 from the teacher focus group provided, “create recovery courses on Schoology that mirror the courses the kids failed rather than pay an outside company for a course that is so dissimilar to the original course.” The investigator believes that this is a very cost effective solution that could, in theory, fix the CCSS alignment and academic rigor issues, possibly giving the WPHS Credit Recovery Program more validity.

Schoology is a computer-based learning management system that public schools in the state of Delaware started utilizing in the 2014-2015 school year. Some teachers have placed entire courses on the Schoology system. Each student has the ability to login to Schoology to see due dates of assignments and to submit their coursework to teachers. Using Schoology, students also can easily see the assignments they missed when they are absent. This solution has the potential to fix many of the flaws of Compass Learning and perhaps result in an end to WPHS use of Compass Learning. One of the challenges, however, might be in securing agreement from certified teachers to create courses and grade student credit-recovery work.

Recommendation 5: The WPHS administration should offer teachers on the Credit Recovery Team supplemental pay prorated according to the number of courses they oversee or it should create Extra Pay for Extra Responsibility (EPER) positions for members of the Credit Recovery Team.

According to Mileaf et. al. (2011), teachers who facilitated credit recovery programs spent longer hours at school during the workweek and received compensation in the form of additional pay for compensation. This is consistent with the comments of Teacher 3 regarding paying teachers to create courses. EPER positions are given to staff who take on extra responsibilities in their building. For example, the chair of each department (Mathematics, English, Science, etc.) signs an EPER contract that stipulates their extra responsibilities and their extra pay. Currently, the WPHS administration provides EPER positions to teachers who provide afterschool help to students. The teachers on the Credit Recovery Team would function in a similar way, but, in addition to helping students, they also would create courses and grade student credit-recovery work.

Recommendation 6: The WPHS Credit Recovery Program should undergo continuing evaluation.

Franco and Patel (2011), after piloting a credit recovery program for one school, stated, “Student participation in the new credit recovery program should be tracked for student impact and teacher feedback” (p. 26). This was the first evaluation of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. The evaluation used both student and teacher feedback in the form of focus groups, a student survey and a record review. District Curriculum and Instruction Experts evaluated the current courses offered to students. Continued evaluation of the WPHS Credit Recovery Program by the proposed Credit Recovery Team incorporating factors of student impact (measured by credits recovered, promotion rates, and amount of recidivism in credit recovery) and the

voice of the teachers will ensure that the Credit Recovery Program at WPHS is of high quality.

Recommendation 7: Students should complete an end-of-course comprehensive assessment that is comparable to the final exam in the corresponding tradition classroom and that is proctored by a teacher.

Fetsco et al. (2016) and Watson and Gamin (2008) made similar recommendations for credit recovery programs. Both sets of authors stated that this would enhance the rigor of online programs. Pondiscio (2015) and Ravitch (2012) forcefully stated that academic fraud is an important concern in credit recovery programs. The student focus group described a variety of ways they were able to cheat the WPHS Credit Recovery Program, including having another student do the work and assessments for them. Teacher 4 in the focus group stated that students should take assessments without the ability to search for correct answers. This investigator believes that a required in-classroom teacher-proctored final exam would reduce cheating and motivate higher performance. If a student would choose to have someone else do the coursework, the likelihood of the original student passing an end-of-course assessment would be low. Commenting on performance learning centers (PLCs), which are facilities that use an online credit recovery program in the State of Virginia, Kronholz (2011) stated that “the PLCs insist on the rigor of their program because it’s based on a general-education curriculum, not a credit-recovery curriculum. PLC students take the same state tests as their traditional-school peers.” (p. 8).

Conclusion

This investigation was the first effort in evaluating the WPHS Credit Recovery Program. According to Johnston (2012), credit recovery programs should be reviewed regularly and altered to meet the needs of the students requiring credit recovery. Identifying which traditional courses students are failing most frequently, how many students are using credit recovery, and which credit recovery courses they are taking helps to ensure that the program is offering courses that students need for graduation and find to be beneficial.

Moving forward, the investigator can envision the Colonial School District using the revised and improved online Credit Recovery Program for students who are on temporary homebound status or who have truancy issues to facilitate their continuing education and graduation. Thinking to the future, starting with an online Credit Recovery Program that provides content and rigor that are comparable to its traditional classroom counterparts, WPHS and the Colonial School District could be well positioned to move toward a complete online academy.

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Appendices

Appendix A

GRADUATION CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

3.0 Credit Requirements Beginning with the Graduation Class of 2015

(Freshman Class of 2011-2012)

3.1 For the graduating class of 2015, a public school student shall be granted a State of Delaware Diploma when such student has successfully completed a minimum of twenty four (24) credits in order to graduate including: four (4) credits in English Language Arts, four (4) credits in Mathematics, three (3) credits in Science, three (3) credits in Social

Studies, two (2) credits in a World Language, one (1) credit in physical education, one half (1/2) credit in health education, three (3) credits in a Career Pathway, and three and one half (3 ½) credits in elective courses.

3.1.1 The student shall complete mathematics coursework that includes no less than the equivalent of the traditional requirements of Geometry, Algebra I and Algebra II courses.

3.1.2 Scientific investigations related to the State Science Standards shall be included in all three science course requirements.

3.1.3 During the senior year the student shall maintain a credit load each semester that earns the student at least a majority of credits that could be taken that semester. A credit in Mathematics shall be earned during the senior year.

3.1.3.1 Senior year credits shall include regular high school course offerings, the options available in 8.0, or a combination of both.

3.2 World Language:

3.2.1 Students may fulfill the two (2) credit World language requirement by either:

3.2.1.1 Earning a minimum of two (2) World Language credits in the same language or,

3.2.1.2 Demonstrating Novice-high or higher proficiency level on a nationally recognized assessment of language proficiency, except English, in the skill areas of oral or signed expressive and receptive communication, reading and writing, that uses the levels of proficiency as identified by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language, or as approved for use by the Delaware Department of Education.

3.2.2 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school between and including October 1st of the 11th grade year and September 30th of the 12th grade year with one (1) World Language credit from a previous school shall be required to earn the second credit in that language unless the language is not offered at the enrolling school. In such case, the student shall earn one (1) credit in an additional language for a total of two (2) credits or pursue available options in 8.0 to earn the second credit of the original language.

3.2.3 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school between and including October 1st of the 11th grade year and September 30th of the 12th grade year with no World Language credits, shall be required to earn at least one (1) World Language credit prior to graduation. Provided further, the minimum twenty-four (24) total credits outlined in this section shall still be met, or any other credit requirements pursuant to 7.1.

3.2.4 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school on or after October 1st of the 12th grade year, the World Language requirement shall be waived. Provided further, the minimum twenty-four (24) total credits outlined in this section shall still be met, or any other credit requirements pursuant to 7.1.

3.2.5 Any student transferring between Delaware public schools with one (1) World Language credit from a previous school shall be required to earn the second credit in that language unless the language is not offered at the enrolling school. In such case, the student shall pursue available options in 8.0 to earn the second credit of the original language students or earn one (1) credit in an additional language for a total of two (2) credits.

10 DE Reg. 1802 (06/01/07)

12 DE Reg. 934 (01/01/09)

15 DE Reg. 62 (07/01/11)

18 DE Reg. 127 (08/01/14)

4.0 Credit Requirements Beginning with the Graduation Class of 2016 (Freshman Class of 2012-2013)

4.1 Beginning with the graduating class of 2016, a public school student shall be granted a State of Delaware Diploma when such student has successfully completed a minimum of twenty four (24) credits in order to graduate including: four (4) credits in English Language Arts, four (4) credits in Mathematics, three (3) credits in Science, three (3) credits in Social Studies, two (2) credits in a World Language, one (1) credit in physical education, one half (1/2) credit in health education, three (3) credits in a Career Pathway, and three and one half (3 ½) credits in elective courses.

4.1.1 The student shall earn credit upon completion of mathematics coursework that includes no less than the equivalent of the traditional requirements of Geometry, Algebra I and Algebra II courses. The student shall complete an Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III course as one of the Mathematics credits.

4.1.2 Scientific investigations related to the State Science Standards shall be included in all three science course requirements. The student shall complete a Biology course as one of the Science credits.

4.1.3 The student shall complete a U. S. History course as one of the Social Studies credits.

4.1.4 During the senior year the student shall maintain a credit load each semester that earns the student at least a majority of credits that could be taken that semester. A credit in Mathematics shall be earned during the senior year. Further provided, a student participating in a dual enrollment course or dual credit course, as defined in 14 DE Admin. Code 506 Policies for Dual Enrollment and Awarding Dual Credit, shall be considered to be meeting the majority of credits, as long as a credit in Mathematics is earned during the senior year.

4.1.4.1 Senior year credits shall include regular high school course offerings, the options available in 8.0, or a combination of both.

4.2 World Language:

4.2.1 Students may fulfill the two (2) credit World language requirement by either:

4.2.1.1 Earning a minimum of two (2) World Language credits in the same language or,

4.2.1.2 Demonstrating Novice-high or higher proficiency level on a nationally recognized assessment of language proficiency, except English, in the skill areas of oral or signed expressive and receptive communication, reading and writing, that uses the levels of proficiency as identified by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language, or as approved for use by the Delaware Department of Education.

4.2.2 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school between and including October 1st of the 11th grade year and September 30th of the 12th grade year with one (1) World Language credit from a previous school shall be required to earn the second credit in that language unless the language is not offered at the enrolling school. In such case, the student shall earn one (1) credit in an additional language for a total of two (2) credits or pursue available options in 8.0 to earn the second credit of the original language.

4.2.3 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school between and including October 1st of the

11th grade year and September 30th of the 12th grade year with no World Language credits, shall be required to earn at least one (1) World Language credit prior to graduation. Provided further, the minimum twenty-four (24) total credits outlined in this section shall still be met, or any other credit requirements pursuant to 7.1.

4.2.4 Any student enrolling in a Delaware public high school from an out-of-state school or nonpublic Delaware high school on or after October 1st of the 12th grade year, the World Language requirement shall be waived. Provided further, the minimum twenty-four (24) total credits outlined in this section shall still be met, or any other credit requirements pursuant to 7.1.

4.2.5 Any student transferring between Delaware public schools with one (1) World Language credit from a previous school shall be required to earn the second credit in that language unless the language is not offered at the enrolling school. In such case, the student shall pursue available options in 8.0 to earn the second credit of the original language or earn one (1) credit in an additional language for a total of two (2) credits.

Appendix B

ENGLISH 1 CREDIT RECOVERY COURSE

Assignment Name: WP-English 1 14/15

High school English

Task Type	Task Title
 -E1111	Vocabulary: Using a Dictionary
 -aqe1111	Activity Quiz: Vocabulary: Using a Dictionary
 -E1113	Gift of the Magi: Part 1
 -E1115	Gift of the Magi: Part 2
	Lesson Quiz: Gift of the Magi
 -E1121	The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: Part 1
 -E1123	The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: Part 2
	Lesson Quiz: The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge
 -E1151	To Build a Fire: Part 1
 -E1153	To Build a Fire: Part 2
	Lesson Quiz: To Build a Fire
 -E1221	Thank You Ma'm: Part 1
 -E1223	Thank You Ma'm: Part 2
	Lesson Quiz: Thank You Ma'm
 -E1231	Vocabulary: Context Clues
 -aqe1231	Activity Quiz: Vocabulary: Context Clues
 -E1233	The Necklace: Part 1
 -E1235	The Necklace: Part 2
	Lesson Quiz: The Necklace
 -E1311	The Most Dangerous Game
	Lesson Quiz: The Most Dangerous Game
 -E1321	Vocabulary: Word Origins
 -aqe1321	Activity Quiz: Vocabulary: Word Origins
 -E1323	The Cask of Amontillado
	Lesson Quiz: The Cask of Amontillado
 -E1441	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings: Part 1

Assignment Name: WP-English 1 14/15

High school English

	-E1443	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings: Part 2
		Lesson Quiz: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, excerpt
	-E1641	Nikki Giovanni: Part 1
	-E1643	Nikki Giovanni: Part 2
		Lesson Quiz: Nikki Giovanni: Speech and Free Verse Poem
	-E1621	Chicago: Part 1
	-E1623	Chicago: Part 2
		Lesson Quiz: Lyric Poem: Chicago
	-E1711	Make a Difference Day: Part 1
	-E1713	Make a Difference Day: Part 2
		Lesson Quiz: Media Comparison: Make a Difference Day
	-E1921	Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 1a
	-E1923	Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 1b
		Lesson Quiz: Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 1
	-E1931	Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 2a
	-E1933	Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 2b
		Lesson Quiz: Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Scene 2, Part 2
	-E1941	Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 1a
	-E1943	Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 1b
		Lesson Quiz: Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 1
	-E1951	Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 2a
	-E1953	Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 2b
		Lesson Quiz: Romeo and Juliet: Act 5 Scene 3, Part 2

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 1.5 Written and Oral Communication
Students will use written and oral English appropriate for various purposes and audiences.
Listen to and comprehend oral communications.
- 2.2a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to develop an increasingly extensive vocabulary and actively seek the meaning of unknown words as an important facet of comprehending texts and messages by using context clues to determine the meanings of words.
- 2.4a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (a) making...predictions as needed.
- 2.4bL Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of literary texts by (b) identifying the story elements (e.g., characters, setting, and plot) and story structures (conflict, resolution, cause/effect).
- 2.4c Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (c) recognizing and interpreting figurative language and literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor, allusion) and (e) differentiating between literal and non-literal meanings.
- 2.4d Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (d) retelling a story or restating an informative text through speaking and/or writing.
- 2.4e Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (e) organizing the important points of the text via summaries, outlines, and/or graphic organizers.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 2.4f Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (f) identifying the author's purpose.
- 2.4g Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (g) comparing information between and within texts.
- 2.4j Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (j) accepting or rejecting the validity of the information and giving supporting evidence.
- 2.5a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print by (a) connecting and synthesizing information from many sources.
- 2.5f Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print by (i) evaluating texts and media presentations for bias and misinformation, by (k) evaluating texts for their completeness, accuracy, and clarity of communication (e.g., overcome problems of ambiguity), and by (a) evaluating how the content, techniques, and form of texts and media affect them.
- 2.5g Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (g) (h) acknowledging the possibility of a variety of interpretations of the same text; proposing other interpretations as valid if supported by the text.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 2.6a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech and mass media and extend meaning by (a) offering a personal response to texts.
- 2.7b Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (b) identifying the underlying purposes of media messages (e.g., profit vs. nonprofit, humanitarianism, support of artistry).
- 4.1a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Connect their own experience to those of literary characters; explain the reasons for a character's actions; identify with characters.
- 4.2a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Respond to literary text by making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, and author's decisions.
- 4.2c Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Interpret the impact of the author's decisions such as word choice, style, content, and literary elements; understand the author's intent in choosing a particular genre.
- 4.2f Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Identify the effect of point of view.
- 4.3a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Respond to literary texts and media representing the diversity of American cultural heritage inclusive of ages, genders, nationalities, races, religions, and disabilities; respond to literary text and media representative of various nations and cultures.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 4.4b Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Understand social and political issues.
- 1.5 Written and Oral Communication
Students will use written and oral English appropriate for various purposes and audiences.
Listen to and comprehend oral communications.
- 2.2a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to develop an increasingly extensive vocabulary and actively seek the meaning of unknown words as an important facet of comprehending texts and messages by using context clues to determine the meanings of words.
- 2.3a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to self-monitor comprehension while reading by (a) generating a purpose for reading.
- 2.4a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (a) making...predictions as needed.
- 2.4bL Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of literary texts by (b) identifying the story elements (e.g., characters, setting, and plot) and story structures (conflict, resolution, cause/effect).
- 2.4c Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (c) recognizing and interpreting figurative language and literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor, allusion) and (e) differentiating between literal and non-literal meanings.
- 2.4d Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (d) retelling a story or restating an informative text through speaking and/or writing.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 2.4e Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (e) organizing the important points of the text via summaries, outlines, and/or graphic organizers.
- 2.4f Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (f) identifying the author's purpose.
- 2.4g Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (g) comparing information between and within texts.
- 2.4j Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of printed texts by (j) accepting or rejecting the validity of the information and giving supporting evidence.
- 2.5f Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print by (i) evaluating texts and media presentations for bias and misinformation, by (k) evaluating texts for their completeness, accuracy, and clarity of communication (e.g., overcome problems of ambiguity), and by (a) evaluating how the content, techniques, and form of texts and media affect them.
- 2.5g Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (g) (h) acknowledging the possibility of a variety of interpretations of the same text; proposing other interpretations as valid if supported by the text.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 2.6a Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech and mass media and extend meaning by (a) offering a personal response to texts.
- 2.7b Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (b) identifying the underlying purposes of media messages (e.g., profit vs. nonprofit, humanitarianism, support of artistry).
- 4.1a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Connect their own experience to those of literary characters; explain the reasons for a character's actions; identify with characters.
- 4.2a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Respond to literary text by making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, and author's decisions.
- 4.2c Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Interpret the impact of the author's decisions such as word choice, style, content, and literary elements; understand the author's intent in choosing a particular genre.
- 4.2f Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Identify the effect of point of view.
- 4.3a Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Respond to literary texts and media representing the diversity of American cultural heritage inclusive of ages, genders, nationalities, races, religions, and disabilities; respond to literary text and media representative of various nations and cultures.

Delaware State Standards for High school English

- 4.4b Reading-Literary
Student will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
Understand social and political issues.
- 2.7b Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (b) identifying the underlying purposes of media messages (e.g., profit vs. nonprofit, humanitarianism, support of artistry).
- 2.7b Reading
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing. Using appropriate texts, students will be able to critically analyze and evaluate information and messages presented through print, speech, and mass media by (b) identifying the underlying purposes of media messages (e.g., profit vs. nonprofit, humanitarianism, support of artistry).

Appendix C

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRICS

Course: _____

Design of Instruction

Refers to the presence and quality of learning outcomes, availability and presentation of content, additional student learning resources

	Not Evident (1)			Fully Evident (4)	Comments
Learning outcomes are clearly defined for students					
Learning outcomes are clearly matched to state and district standards					
Content is made available to students in manageable segments					
Appropriate supplemental resources are available for student that support learning outcomes					
Appropriate visual and auditory tools are integrated within the course to achieve learning objectives					

Course: _____

Course Organization and Structure

Refers to the overall appearance and navigation of course materials and necessary course information for students

	Not Evident (1)			Fully Evident (4)	Comments
Content and requirements are equivalent to or surpass traditional classroom courses					
Content is presented in a logical progression					
Course is clearly organized and easily navigated					
Course materials are visually consistent throughout course					
Course materials are functionally consistent throughout course					
Course materials are matched to the development/grade level of the intended student population					
Course materials adequately prepare students for the next level of study					

Course: _____

Assessment and Evaluation

Refers to assignments, quizzes, surveys and other assessment strategies that are used to assess students.

	Not Evident (1)			Fully Evident (4)	Comments
Assignments encourage students to use critical thinking strategies					
Assignment and learning outcomes are closely aligned and available to students					
Assignments provide ample opportunities to practice & apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways that enforce learning outcomes					
Assignment expectations are explained, including guidelines and submission dates					
Students are assessed by several different methods over the duration of the online course					
Authenticity of student work is verified by appropriate means					

Appendix D
STUDENT SURVEY

Circle all of the following courses that you have taken:

English 1 English 2 Integrated Math 1 Integrated Math 2

Read each statement carefully; then select the response that best describes your opinion:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. In a class offering either classroom learning or online learning, I learn better with the online learning..	1	2	3	4	5
2. Regular classes in classrooms better prepared me to graduate than online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Online classes helped prepare me to graduate.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I prefer regular classroom classes over online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I believe that I learn about the same amount of information in an online class as in a regular classroom class.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel successful when taking online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel successful when taking regular classroom classes.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I believe online credit recovery is a valuable program.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. I believe the regular classroom courses are Best way for me to learn	1	2	3	4	5
10. I'm doing my best in each of my classes online and regular: same level of effort, studying for quizzes, and doing my own work	1	2	3	4	5
11. I believe that I can make the same grade in a subject in an online class as in a regular course.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I would benefit if I were allowed to take more of my classes as online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Online classes don't offer any benefit to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I believe that I would learn more through online material than through teacher lectures.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My regular classwork was not affected by my online classes; I was able to successfully handle working with both classes during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E

IRB APPROVAL



RESEARCH OFFICE 210 Hullahen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-
1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: May 27, 2016
TO: Andrew Capone
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [910354-1] The Impact of an Online Credit Recovery Program
on Students in Grades Nine and Ten

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED APPROVAL DATE: May 27, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: May 26, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review 45 CFR 46.110 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. Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Maria Palazuelos at (302) 831-8619 or mariapj@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Appendix F

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of the Study: Online Credit Recovery: Impact on Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

Principal Investigator: Andrew Capone, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Delaware.

I am inviting you to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the purpose of this study, what you will be asked to do if you agree to participate, and any potential risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and ask me any questions you may have before you decide whether or not to participate in this study.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

This is a study of the impact of the Credit Recovery Program at William Penn High school on students who are at-risk of not graduating. Research shows that students who fail classes are at risk of not graduating. William Penn permits students who failed a class to take an online class to try to make up those credits through its Credit Recovery Program. I am conducting this study to find out if any changes are needed to improve William Penn's Credit Recovery Program.

If you agree, you will be one of 6 teachers participating in a focus group interview. I am asking you to be in this study because you currently teach one of the following courses: English I, English II, Integrated Math I, or Integrated Math II.

What Will You Be Asked To Do?

I will interview the focus group about your opinions about students taking classes online and students taking classes in a traditional classroom. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The interview will be done after school on a day that is convenient for you.

What Are the Possible Risks in Participating?

I do not expect your participation to cause you any stress or discomfort.

What Are the Potential Benefits?

You will not benefit directly from taking part in this research. The knowledge you provide, however, may help us determine what, if any, improvements could be made to the Credit Recovery Program in the future.

How Will Confidentiality Be Maintained? Who May Know That You Participated in This Research?

The focus group interview will be audio-recorded. The audio-recording will be transcribed. Each of the teachers who participate in the focus group will be assigned a number. In the transcriptions, all teachers' names will be replaced with their corresponding numbers. I will keep information obtained from you confidential to the extent possible. My advisor, Dr. Cavalier, will also have access to the recording and transcription. In a written report of this study, I will use only the participant numbers

and never your names. I cannot promise that information that you share with the other participants during the focus group interview will be kept confidential by them.

The confidentiality of your records related to this research will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records may be viewed by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board, which is a committee formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans. I will keep your records related to this research for at least three years after the study has been completed.

Page 1 of 2

Participant's Initials _____

Will You Receive Any Compensation for Participation?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Do You Have To Take Part in This Study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time. If you decline to participate or if you decide to stop participating at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision not to participate or to stop participating will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Delaware or William Penn High school.

Who Should You Call If You Have Questions or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Andrew Capone, at 302-323-2800 or acapone@udel.edu. You also may contact Dr. Al Cavalier, Doctoral Advisor, at 302-8316309 or cavalier@udel.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at hsrb-research@udel.edu or 302-831-2137.

Your signature on this form means that: (1) you have read and understand the information given in this form, (2) you have asked any questions you have about the research and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and (3) you accept the terms in the form and volunteer to participate in the study.

If you sign this page, please also place your initials in the proper space at the bottom of pages 1 and 2. You may keep the second copy of this form for your records.

Printed Name of Participant Signature of Participant Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent Signature of Person Obtaining Consent
Date

Page 2 of 2

Participant's Initials _____

Appendix G

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT SURVEY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of the Study: Online Credit Recovery: Impact on Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

Principal Investigator: Andrew Capone, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Delaware.

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the purpose of this study, what you will be asked to do if you decide to give permission for your child to participate, and any risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and ask any questions that you may have before you decide whether or not to allow your child to participate.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

Students who fail a high school class are at risk of not graduating. William Penn High school permits students who failed a class to take an online class to make up those credits through its Credit Recovery Program. I am conducting this study to determine the impact of William Penn's Credit Recovery Program and to find out if any changes are needed to improve it.

Your child would be one of approximately 200 participants in this study. Your child is invited to participate in this study because your child is currently taking a course in the Credit Recovery Program

What Will Your Child Be Asked To Do?

Your child will be asked to complete a 15-question survey about how they feel about taking classes online and taking classes in a traditional classroom. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will be given at the beginning of their Credit Recovery Class in Room S205.

What Are the Potential Risks?

I do not believe that there are any risks to your child for participating in this survey.

What Are the Potential Benefits?

Although your child will not benefit directly from participating in this survey, the knowledge they provide will assist in determining what, if any, improvements should be made to the Credit Recovery Program in the future.

How Will Confidentiality Be Maintained? Who May Know That Your Child Participated In This Research?

Your child's survey responses will be anonymous. Your child will not place their name or school ID on the survey form. My advisor, Dr. Cavalier, will also have access to the survey results. All completed survey forms will be kept in a sealed envelope in a locked file cabinet in my office for a minimum of 3 years after this research study has been completed.

Will There Be Any Costs to You for Your Child's Participation in This Research?
There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Will Your Child Receive Any Compensation for Participation?

Page 1 of 2

Parent's Initials _____

At the end of the school year, each survey participant will be given a ticket containing a unique number. I then will conduct a random drawing of eight numbers. Each participant with a winning number will be given a \$10 Wawa gift card.

Does Your Child Have to Take Part in This Study?

Your child's participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your child does not have to participate in this research. If you and they choose to participate, you and they have the right to stop at any time. If you or they decide not to participate or decide to stop participating at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you and they are otherwise entitled. Your and their decision to stop participation, or not to participate, will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Delaware and William Penn High school.

WHO SHOULD YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Andrew Capone, at 302-323-2800 or acapone@udel.edu. You also may contact Dr. Al Cavalier, Doctoral Advisor, at 302-831-6309 or cavalier@udel.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at hsrb-research@udel.edu or (302) 831-2137.

You are making a decision whether or not to have your child participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and decided to allow your child to participate. If you sign this page, your child also will receive a form asking them if they would like to participate.

If you sign this page, please also place your initials in the proper space at the bottom of page 1. You may keep the second copy of this form for your records.

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Page 2 of 2
Parent's Initials _____

Appendix H

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of the Study: Online Credit Recovery: Impact on Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

Principal Investigator: Andrew Capone, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Delaware.

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the purpose of this study, what you will be asked to do if you decide to give permission for your child to participate, and any risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and ask any questions that you may have before you decide whether or not to allow your child to participate.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

Students who fail a high school class are at risk of not graduating. William Penn High school permits students who failed a class to take an online class to make up those credits through its Credit Recovery Program. I am conducting this study to determine the impact of William Penn's Credit Recovery Program and to find out if any changes are needed to improve it.

Your child would be one of approximately 200 participants in this study. Your child is invited to participate in this study because your child is currently taking a course in the Credit Recovery Program

What Will Your Child Be Asked To Do?

Your child will be asked to complete a 15-question survey about how they feel about taking classes online and taking classes in a traditional classroom. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will be given at the beginning of their Credit Recovery Class in Room S205.

What Are the Potential Risks?

I do not believe that there are any risks to your child for participating in this survey.

What Are the Potential Benefits?

Although your child will not benefit directly from participating in this survey, the knowledge they provide will assist in determining what, if any, improvements should be made to the Credit Recovery Program in the future.

How Will Confidentiality Be Maintained? Who May Know That Your Child Participated In This Research?

Your child's survey responses will be anonymous. Your child will not place their name or school ID on the survey form. My advisor, Dr. Cavalier, will also have access to the survey results. All completed survey forms will be kept in a sealed envelope in a locked file cabinet in my office for a minimum of 3 years after this research study has been completed.

Page 1 of 3

Parent's Initials

transcription. In a written report of this study, I will use only the student numbers and never their names. I cannot promise that information that your child shares with the other participants during the focus group will be kept confidential by them.

The confidentiality of your child's records related to this research will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your child's research records may be viewed by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board, which is a committee formally designated to approve, monitor, and review research involving humans. I will keep your child's records related to this research for at least three years after the study has been completed.

I also am required to let you know that if during your child's participation in this study our research team was to observe or suspect, in good faith, child abuse or neglect, Delaware state law obligates us to file a report to the appropriate officials.

Will There Be Any Costs to You for Your Child's Participation in This Research?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Will Your Child Receive Any Compensation for Participation?

At the end of the focus group interview, each participant will be given a ticket containing a unique number. I then will conduct a random drawing of one number. The participant with the winning number will be given a \$10 Wawa gift card.

Does Your Child Have to Take Part in This Study?

Your child's participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your child does not have to participate in this research. If you and they choose to participate, you and they have the right to stop at any time. If you or they decide not to participate or decide to stop participating at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you and they are otherwise entitled. Your and their decision to stop participation, or not to participate, will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Delaware and William Penn High school.

Who Should You Call If You Have Questions or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Andrew Capone, at 302-323-2800 or acapone@udel.edu. You also may contact Dr. Al Cavalier, Doctoral Advisor, at 302-8316309 or cavalier@udel.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at hsrb-research@udel.edu or (302) 831-2137.

You are making a decision whether or not to have your child participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and decided to allow your child to participate. If you sign this page, your child also will receive a form asking them if they would like to participate. If you sign this page, please also place your initials in the proper space at the bottom of pages 1 and 2. You may keep the second copy of this form for your records.

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

Page 3 of 3

Parent's Initials

Appendix I

CONSENT FORM FOR CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Online Credit Recovery: Impact on Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

Principal Investigator: Andrew Capone, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Delaware.

I am inviting you to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the purpose of this study, what you will be asked to do if you agree to participate, and any potential risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and ask me any questions you may have before you decide whether or not to participate in this study.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

This is a study of the impact of the Credit Recovery Program at William Penn High school on students who are at-risk of not graduating. Research shows that students who fail classes are at risk of not graduating. William Penn permits students who failed a class to take an online class to try to make up those credits through its Credit Recovery Program. I am conducting this study to find out if any changes are needed to improve William Penn's Credit Recovery Program.

If you agree, you will be one of 4 participants to review a Credit Recovery Program course in this study. I am asking you to be in this study because you are an identified expert in one of the following curriculum areas: English or Mathematics.

What Will You Be Asked To Do?

I would like you to review a currently used Credit Recovery courses in your curriculum area on the following dimensions: instructional design, structure and organization, content, and assessments. You will be provided a rubric to use in rating the course on a numerical scale and in providing narrative feedback. You may complete the review in your own office and it should take approximately 60 minutes per course.

What Are the Possible Risks in Participating?

I do not expect your participation to cause you any stress or discomfort. Because only 4 curriculum experts will participate in this study, there is some chance that a person familiar with the Colonial School District office might be able to determine your ratings or comments if they encountered them. To the extent possible, however, I will do everything I can to keep your evaluations confidential and secure (see below).

What Are the Potential Benefits?

You will not benefit directly from taking part in this research. The knowledge you provide, however, may help to determine what, if any, improvements could be made to the Credit Recovery Program in the future.

How Will Confidentiality Be Maintained? Who May Know That You Participated In This Research?

Each of the 4 curriculum experts will be assigned a number. Your name will not appear on the evaluation rubric that you complete; only your number will be on the rubric. I will keep information obtained from you

Page 1 of 2

Participant's Initials _____

in the rubric confidential to the extent possible. My advisor, Dr. Cavalier, will also have access to the rubrics you complete. In a written report of this study, I will use only the phrase "curriculum expert(s)" and the curriculum expert numbers; never your names.

The confidentiality of your records related to this research will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records may be viewed by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board, which is a committee formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans. I will keep your records related to this research for at least three years after the study has been completed.

Will You Receive Any Compensation For Participation?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Do You Have To Take Part In This Study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time. If you decline to participate or if you decide to stop participating at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision not to participate or to stop participating will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Delaware or William Penn High school.

Who Should You Call If You Have Questions or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Andrew Capone, at 302-323-2800 or acapone@udel.edu. You also may contact Dr. Al Cavalier, Doctoral Advisor, 302-831-6309 or cavalier@udel.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at hsrb-research@udel.edu or 302-831-2137.

Your signature on this form means that: (1) you have read and understand the information given in this form, (2) you have asked any questions you have about the research and the questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and (3) you accept the terms in the form and volunteer to participate in the study.

I

f you sign this page, please also place your initials in the proper space at the bottom of page 1. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Printed Name of Participant Signature of Participant Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent Signature of Person Obtaining Consent
Date

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Participant's Initials _____