



Department of Psychology
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Center for First Generation Student Success

March 28th, 2024

RE: Empower Success of First Generation College Students

Dear Center for First Generation Student Success Representatives:

On behalf of the Bjork Learning and Forgetting Lab at University of California, Los Angeles, and in partnership with COGx, we are pleased to offer our support for Eric and Deborah Suders' vision to "design an innovative program that dramatically increase the graduation rates of first-generation college students. In particular, we commend your Center's leadership and efforts to transform "higher education to drive first-generation student success effectively and equitably across education, career, and life." Given our experience over the decades, your vision for first generation student success is unequivocally complemented by a system that is more inclusive of research and evidence from cognitive science.

Decades of research has shown that much of what we think we know about learning stands opposite to how learning actually works. As a result, students are not learning effectively and efficiently, making them less prepared for college and less likely to graduate and be successful in life. Together with other prominent human learning and memory researchers/experts around the world, we have discovered proven techniques that make both teaching and learning markedly more effective. Yet these techniques are not widely deployed in our schools around the world. COGx is changing that. Since 2010, COGx has been devoted to translating scientific research and evidence-based practice into accessible programs. They are rigorous in their approach and committed to applying research findings and evidence with fidelity. As a result, they are making great strides in changing the status quo in education to one that embraces scientific research on learning.

COGx Programs on the Science of Learning are based on rigorous research on how to best facilitate student learning. The foundational learning principles which underlie these programs have been shown to increase several different outcomes (e.g., GPA, self-efficacy, self-regulation of learning, metacognition) for a variety of student populations (e.g., K-College students) and in many contexts (e.g., in-classroom learning, online learning).

These programs take the perspective of students as holistic learners, incorporating evidence-based principles of socioemotional learning, self-regulated learning, and our own work on "desirable difficulties" to promote students' motivation to learn, long-term learning, transfer of learning to new challenges and contexts, and management of their learning.

Evidence supporting the online content of this program is robust. Additionally, the feature of providing expert coaching ensures context-appropriate application of course principles and fidelity in adoption of these principles by your network of universities serving first generation students, which is central to benefitting student learners who participate in this program as well as to transferring capacity and sustaining outcomes

Our Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles has worked closely with COGx to develop the content of the programs, and we are confident that it reflects the most cutting-edge research on the science of learning. We believe this program has the potential to considerably enhance the academic achievement and graduation rate of our nations first generation college students, inspiring other universities to join your network.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with COGx on this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Bjork
Distinguished Research Professor
UCLA



Elizabeth Ligon Bjork
Professor
UCLA