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Breaking Bread: Holistically Meeting Needs to Increase Writing Tutorial Success and Engagement

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PASS:

Breaking

Bread

“Breaking Bread: Holistically Meeting Needs to Increase Writing Tutorial Success and Engagement”

Make sure to grab your
“BRAIN FOOD”



What is PASS?

- ▶ Peer Assisted Study Sessions (P.A.S.S.)
 - ▶ Embedded tutoring/supplemental instruction adaptation for English, ESL, linguistics, literature, and other classes primarily involving reading and writing
 - ▶ Center Model (open six days a week 8am-7pm; online 24/7)
- ▶ Funded through Student Equity, Basic Skills, and general funds (primary goal is to serve disproportionately impacted students to increase success and equity in reference to writing)

What Does PASS Do?

- ▶ The PASS Center serves over 60 classes/sections
- ▶ Over 45 embedded tutors and student aides
- ▶ Open six days a week and serve students online 24/7
- ▶ Provide holistic services (e.g. academic tutoring and food)
- ▶ Goal: Build community in and out of class

What's the Problem?

- ▶ LOW ATTENDANCE FOR PASS TUTORING (THIS IS A PROBLEM NATIONWIDE)

National Averages: 18% attendance for SI and 24% attendance for tutoring (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012)

- ▶ FOOD INSECURITY

Fresno is the second most food insecure city in the United States. More than 25% of our community is unable to consistently put food on the table due to extreme poverty (Ram Pantry, 2016).

Response to the Problems: “Brain Food”

- ▶ “Brain Food” is food provided to students during PASS Center tutorial sessions
*(holistic support & positive reinforcement)
- ▶ Brain Food is offered continuously during PASS Center visits
- ▶ Brain Food includes the following: granola, packaged peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, rice treats, string cheese, yogurt, super-food bars, and carrots.
- ▶ PASS Center is located in dual locations (one with food and one without)

*Additional holistic supportive measures include free printing and student supplies

Theoretical Foundations

- ▶ Learning Theories
- ▶ Behaviorism (Thorndike, Pavlov, Skinner, et al.)
- ▶ Operant Conditioning (modifying behavior) (Skinner)
- ▶ Positive Reinforcement (Skinner)
- ▶ Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow)
- ▶ Survival (Darwin)
- ▶ ALL of these theoretical underpinnings led me to the concept of brain food as a positive reinforcement instrument to increase tutoring session attendance, reduce food insecurity , and increase student success in the PASS program.

How Does this Work?

- ▶ **Brain Food** not only reduces food insecurity, but it also motivates students to attend the PASS Center. Brain Food acts as a positive reinforcement instrument that is meaningful to our students.
- ▶ **By meeting** this normally unmet need, students visit more often and stay longer, which helps mitigate underpreparedness in reading and writing; approximately 75% of our students take one or more remedial courses in English or math. Writing tutoring is **NEEDED!**
- ▶ **The outcome** of this treatment is increased engagement and attendance, which improved success overall; completion, GPA, and retention are significantly increased following the provision (treatment) of Brain Food.

I know what you're thinking...

- ▶ Students must grab food and leave!
 - ▶ Student sessions last longer than 1 hour on average
 - ▶ One hour a week of tutoring over the course of a semester has been shown to improve outcomes by one letter grade (Munley et al., 2010)

Do Students Actually Visit the PASS Center due to Brain Food?

- ▶ YES!!!
- ▶ Attendance without Brain Food: 26% (FA14)
- ▶ Attendance with Brain Food: 85% (FA15)
 - ▶ PASS attendance increased from 26% in FA14 to 85% in FA15(w/ brain food treatment)

But, What About My School?

How to pay for Brain Food

▶ INITIAL ROLL-OUT

Faculty donations (I stopped buying Starbucks and other indulgences for a semester to fund the initial roll-out)

▶ Why did I do it? Maslow's Hierarchy of Need; saw the need

▶ SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Community Food Bank donations

Grants (Student Equity Grant, Basic Skills Grant)

▶ TIPS

Connect with your cafeteria to find out about accessing a small storage space for food.

Obtain a small refrigerator for use in the center

▶ Boost School Morale!

PASS Coordinator Honored for her “Brain Food” Project

BY CRESENCIO RODRIGUEZ DELGADO
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Jennifer Dorian, Peer Assisted Student Sessions Coordinator and Instructor at the Fresno City College, takes student reporters on a tour of one of the tutoring centers on campus.

She points to a bowl of snacks sitting at one of the tables in the center where students can gather and indulge on what she calls “Brain Food”.

“I came up with the idea for the ‘Brain Food’ project in the fall of 2014,” Dorian says as she walks down the hall pointing out different sections of the PASS center. The food, donated by the community and also funded by student equity funds, is free to students.

Dorian says the community is “gracious enough to share with the students in this way to really, holistically meet students’ needs.”

The holistic approach Dorian refers to is her program’s commitment to comprehend the different issues students face and ultimately resolve them, with solutions that encompass the whole problem.

“Often, we talk about student success but it is other factors of life that get in the way of student success and one of those on this campus is hunger,” Dorian says.

It is for her initiative of start-

ing the “Brain Food” project at the PASS center that Dorian has received much praise.

Dorian is a candidate for the 2016 Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award for the very close work she does with students at the college, mainly due to her “Brain Food” project for students.

“I was very, very honored that FCC has selected me to move forward in this way,” Dorian said. “[It is] a major validation for me, the team [and] the students because this just tells us that the work that is being done here is respected by the campus.”

Dorian was nominated by the Certificated Personnel Committee and voted on by the Academic Senate. Her name has been forwarded to the state level. Awards ceremony is scheduled at the Sacramento Convention Center on April 22.

The simple “Brain Food” project is being recognized throughout the country, including at Texas A&M University where Dorian visited last May.

“I was lucky enough,” Dorian says. “[To] share with them there what we are doing here on this campus and how providing food to students increases their engagement and supports their academic success.”

On March 9, Dorian is traveling to Savannah, Georgia where she will present her project at a conference

hosted by Georgia Southern University.

“I am very excited about that because in the fall of 2016, the Journal of Student Success and Writing will be publishing an article that I have written on ‘Brain Food,’” she said.

Similarly, Dorian was selected to receive the 2016 ‘Dorothy Golden Teaching Award’, also for work with the “Brain Food” project.

Dorian’s dedication to FCC students and their success stems from her inclination to aid and encourage those around her.

“I just can remember from a very young age, wanting to help other people become their best selves,” Dorian said. “Education helped me do that for myself, so I knew that this was the way that I could help other people.”

Her numerous award nominations have bolstered the overall moral among student aides, tutors and students who attend the PASS center, Dorian says.

“I could definitely tell you that winning at the state level would really confirm PASS as one of the premiere programs not only at FCC but within the state of California for sure,” Dorian says.

Though she did not teach her regular English class this semester, Dorian says every student who walks into the center feels like her own.



Jennifer Dorian, Peer Assisted Student Sessions Coordinator, is nominated for a statewide award.
 Photo/Larry Valenzuela.

She says no matter what happens, she is forever grateful and honored to have received such praise for her work.

“When you put good out in the world, good is what you get in return,” Dorian said. “That is the most important lesson here. When you care authentically, that is what comes back to you.”

P.A.S.S.

Peer Assisted Study Sessions

P.A.S.S. EMBEDDED TUTORING/SI for ENGL & EMLS

FA 14–FA 15: 1963 unduplicated students served & 20,079 contact hrs.

		Unduplicated Headcount	Sections Served	Contact Hours
Fall 2014	1185 total visits	265	12	1,714
Spring 2015	2408 total visits	358	25	3,258*
Summer 2015	4112 total visits	440	31	4,057*
Fall 1 2015	8320 total visits	900	53	11,050*
Totals:	16,025 total visits	1963	121	20,079

*with brain food treatment (represents positive reinforcement using food)

Online	Total Visits	Contact Hours
Summer 2015	24	22
Fall 2015	55	43

Fall 2014–Summer 2015: 818 developmental students (or 78%) out of a total of 1055 were served

Attendance Rates

Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015	Fall 2015
26%	68%	70%	85%

Significant Survey Findings

N=300 roughly for survey responses

- About 50% of students visited PASS 4 or more times a week during SU15 (this is at least 3x higher than is indicated by the literature as beneficial for letter grade improvement in outcomes).
- A majority (71%) of students believed their grade improved because of PASS during SU15.
- A majority (96%) of students plan to attend PASS in the future after SU15.

Spring 2015 Retention

200 level 100% PASS vs. 76% Non-PASS
 100 level 99% PASS vs. 81% Non-PASS
 Transfer 95% PASS vs. 88% Non-PASS

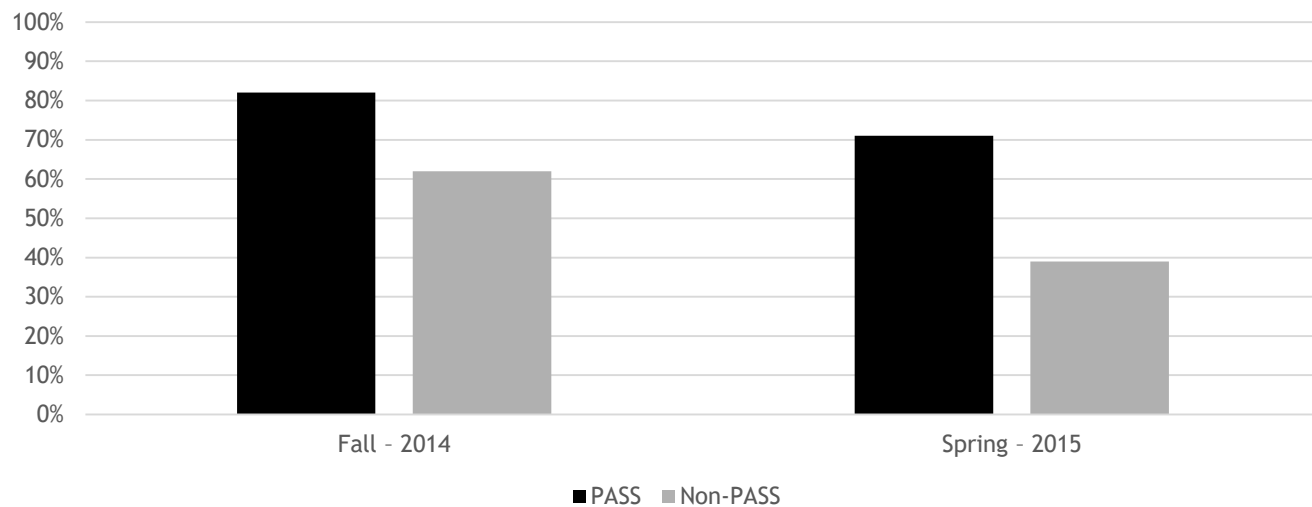
ENGL/EMLS PASS AND NON-PASS COMPARISONS

Fall 2014 (N=265)		GPA	Success Rate	
PASS 200 Level		3.25	91%	
Non-PASS 200 Level		1.65	56%	
PASS 100 Level		2.86	82%	
Non-PASS 100 Level		2.33	62%	
Spring 2015 (N=358)		Retention	Success Rate	
PASS 200 Level		100%	76%	
Non-PASS 200 Level		76%	45%	
Spring 2015 (N= 358)		GPA	Success Rate	Retention
PASS 100 Level		2.33	71%	99%
Non-PASS 100 Level		1.23	39%	81%
PASS English IA Level		1.84	61%	95%
Non-PASS English IA Level		1.17	41%	88%

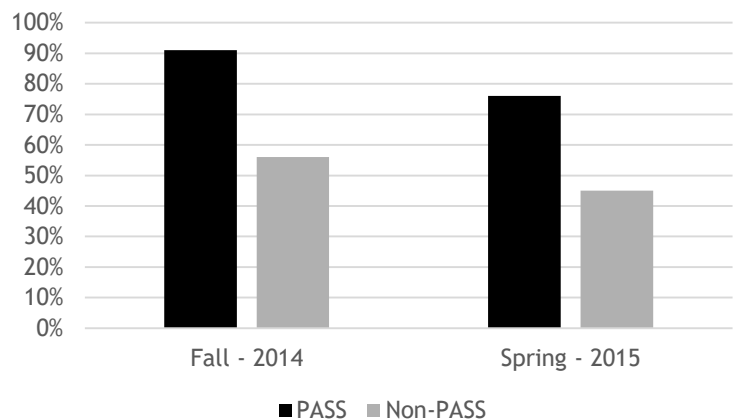
DISAGGREGATED DATA: PASS AND NON-PASS COMPARISONS

Fall 2014	N	Success Rate
PASS Low Income	216	82%
Non-PASS Low Income	658	63%
PASS: African-American Females	24	83%
Non-PASS: African-American Females	22	45%
PASS: African-American Males	59	90%
Non-PASS: African-American Males	39	36%
PASS: Hispanic Females	67	78%
Non-PASS: Hispanic Females	281	65%
PASS: Hispanic Males	44	84%
Non-PASS: Hispanic Males	179	56%
PASS: Asian Females	29	86%
Non-PASS: Asian Females	57	65%
PASS: Asian Males	23	87%
Non-PASS: Asian Males	69	64%
Spring 2015	N	Success Rate
PASS: African-American	216	82%
Non-PASS: African-American	8	38%
PASS: Asian	75	80%
Non-PASS: Asian	55	55%
PASS: Hispanic	174	64
Non-PASS	112	41%
PASS: White/Non-Hispanic	30	77%
Non-PASS: White/Non-Hispanic	21	62%

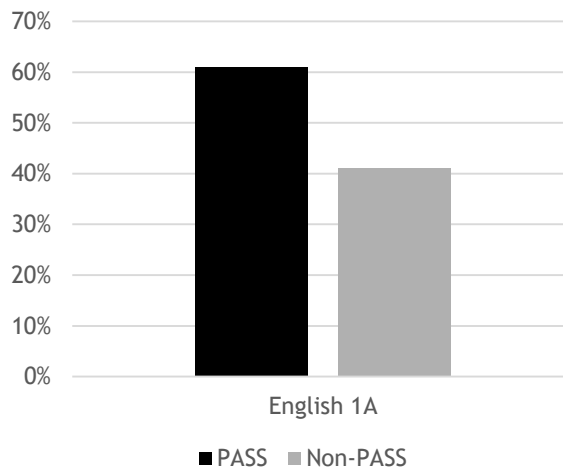
100 Level* Success Rates



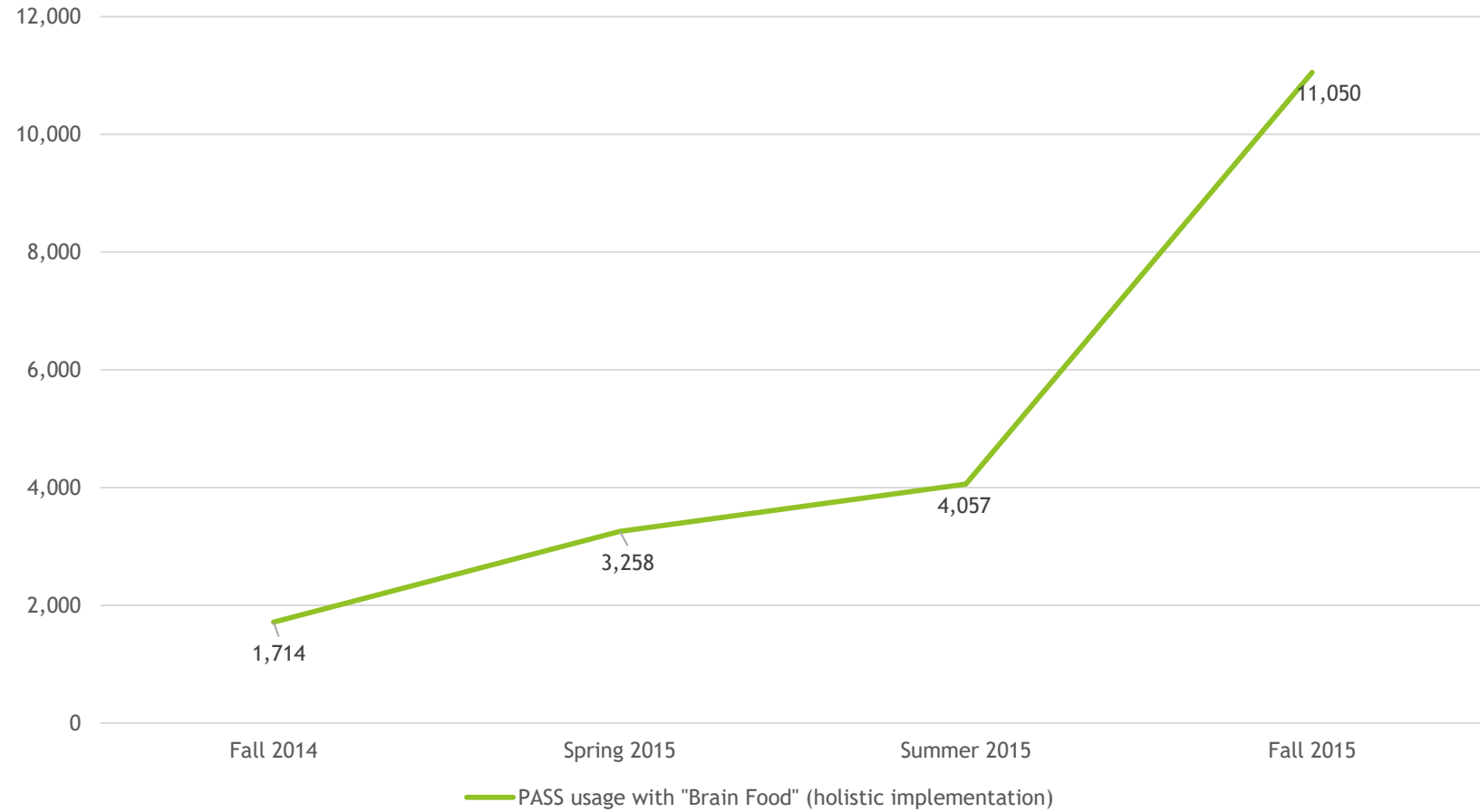
200 Level* Success Rates



English 1A



PASS Contact Hours/Usage



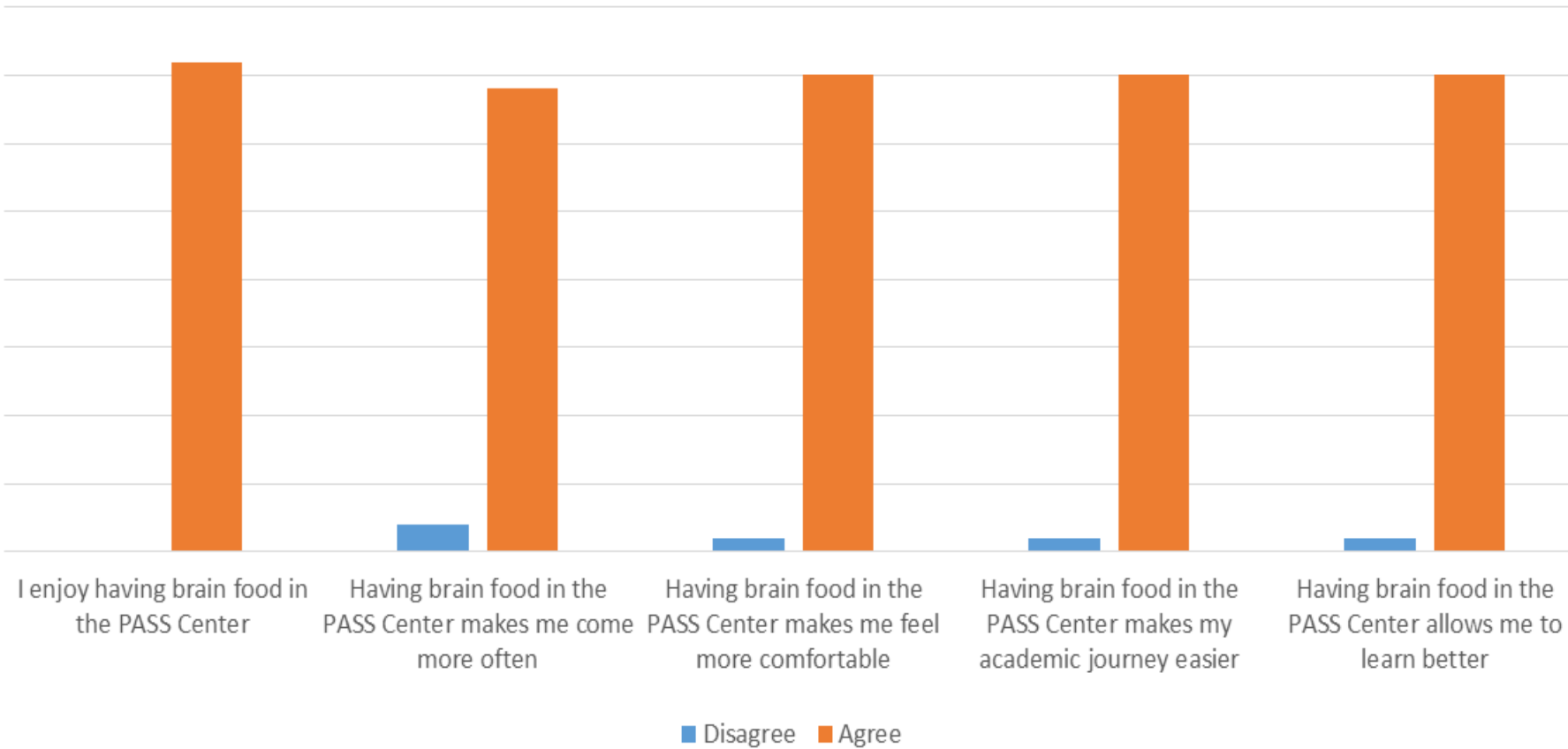
Qualifying our Impact

- ▶ **Significant Survey Findings (N= 300 roughly for survey responses):**
- ▶ About 50% of students visited PASS 4 or more times a week during SU15 (this is at least 3x higher than is indicated by the literature as beneficial for letter grade improvement in outcomes).
- ▶ A majority (71%) of students believed their grade improved because of PASS during SU15.
- ▶ A majority (96%) of students plan to attend PASS in the future after SU15.
- ▶ Emerged theme from SP15 **FOCUS GROUP**: Authentic care for students decreased stigma for reading and writing tutoring in the PASS Center
- ▶ “It was easier for me to let the tutor read my paper because I didn’t feel as nervous; I felt like you guys cared because there is food. It’s more social, and I’m writing better.”

Here's What Students Think!

It's All About Community

PASS Program Brain Food Survey Results



What's Next?

- ▶ True experiment is the next step (Approval Granted)
- ▶ Test group (food)
- ▶ Control group (no food)

QUESTIONS???