

Professional Development Activity Summary

Event: BSI Regional Meeting Report

Location: Canada College, Redwood City

Date: April 23, 2009

Name of Attendee: Becky Reetz

Summary

The meeting consisted of a series of presentations from various colleges who have innovative programs that support BSI students. There were three sets presentations on the following topics: cross-curricular programs, first-year experience programs, and tutoring programs. All of the presentations will be available online through the Bay Area Learning Network.

Cross-Curricular Programs

The first set of presentations was cross-curricular programs. There were three presentations: The Math Achievement Pathway Program (MAPS) from Mission College, Writing in the End Zone from San Mateo College, and Crossing Borders from Canada College.

The Math Achievement Pathway Program (MAPS)

This is a learning community for students seeking to complete beginning and intermediate algebra. Each math course is paired with a counseling course that focuses on study skills, math anxiety, learning styles, and test taking strategies. Students can receive extra credit for submitting a completed education plan or reading the text, Winning at Math. A half-time counselor is in the class 3 hours per week. The counselor and the math instructor meet weekly to discuss the progress of the students.

This is an 8 unit course that includes both classes and time to do group work in class for a total of 8 hours of in-class time each week. A tutor is assigned specifically to work with students outside the class. Students who wish to participate are interviewed to determine if they have the necessary pre-requisites and their motivation level. They must agree to take the beginning algebra program in the fall and the intermediate algebra program in the spring.

Writing in the End Zone

This is a three-part learning community for student-athletes that pairs developmental level English courses with physical education courses for football players. These learning communities were developed as a result of the close collaboration of English faculty, counselors, and football coaches. All English faculty who participate in the program also have reading certificates as well. Data shows that success and completion rates of students who participated have doubled.

Crossing Borders

These learning communities combine developmental English, a transfer level course, and a counseling/career component.

5 pilot learning communities for fall 2008 were developed by faculty in a 3 day planning retreat. In addition to the course time, all five LC's met during a common 2 hour period for special events and other activities. In spring 2009, the program was reduced to 2 learning communities because of expense and low enrollment in some. In fall 2009, 2 LC's that are formed around a theme such as health sciences will be offered. Some LC's

that are separate will join together for a combined History course on Fridays. Data at Canada indicates that students who participated in LC's and no other classes, had a higher success rate than those who did the LC with other classes, or didn't participate in the LC's at all.

First Year Experience Programs

The second set of presentations included a description of FYE programs from Canada College and Pasadena City College, as well as the Digital Bridge Academy program which is in place at multiple institutions.

Freshmen Year Experience Program at Canada

This program has 2 learning communities, either a math or English course paired with a counseling course. Students are recruited through outreach to high schools, through counselors and student ambassadors, marketing, etc. To be eligible, students must place into either a developmental math or English class and must commit to participating for the full academic year.

Faculty members sit through each other's classes and actively participate. Classes may differ from week to week as different teachers teach during the class time block at different times. Faculty meet for 2 hours each month.

The counselor's role is to attend class 1 or 2 times per week. They observe student habits, maintain contact, and coach and counsel students.

All students complete an assessment at the beginning of the program asking them what kinds of obstacles or challenges they are facing. The end of semester survey is given to both FYE students and FYI non-students (for comparison).

All LC's share the FYE events and activities (the event time is an overlapping class time between the LC's) Here are some examples of activities they do:

- Welcome and Orientation Day – College President welcome, campus resource presentation, scavenger hunt
- College Bowl- Student teams answer questions related to the college and the LC curriculum with clickers.
- A Major Affair- Faculty from many disciplines are encouraged to participate. Formatted like a career fair. Students ask representatives questions about majors and how they connect to different careers.
- Field Trips- Tours to CSU and UC's
- End of Semester Recognition Ceremony- Students receive a certificate of completion, awards, scholarships, and lunch.

Teaching and Learning Community Program (TLC) at Pasadena City College

TLC is a program of multiple learning communities, workshops, field trips and community building events developed for first generation college freshman who place into basic skills courses.

First year programs include a 6 week summer bridge program, learning communities developed around centralized themes, Math Jam (a 2 week summer math prep and college orientation course), and MESA.

www.pasadena.edu/tlc

Digital Bridge Academy at Cabrillo

This is a comprehensive program that targets new college students who place into basic skills English, and wish to form a learning community with their fellow students. Students who are accepted in the program of the Academy must attend an intensive 2 week foundation course (3 units) in the summer which focuses on self-management. A cohort of students takes the same block of learning communities along with leadership

and other training. The program seeks to ignite a love of learning in the students as well as a culture of knowledge.

The developers of the Digital Bridge Academy also offer professional development workshops for faculty at other colleges.

www.cabrillo.edu/academics/digitalbridge

Tutoring

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum (WRAC) Center at Chabot

This program was developed under a \$5 million dollar Title 3 grant. Since the late eighties, they had a writing and reading center established. However, the focus was on mastery-based learning, providing a segmented path to English 1A. Under this grant, they refocused the mission of the program to create a more holistic model that supports the reading and writing students were engaged with at the moment.

They accomplished this shift by having regular meetings with English instructors, doing internal quantitative and qualitative research, and attending conferences. They worked together to articulate their assumptions (i.e. the hierarchal model of English where skills proceed from words to sentences to paragraphs to essay structure is not favored in this division) and develop a "throughline" that articulated a set of shared outcomes among all English courses (i.e. English courses at all levels will integrate reading, writing, critical thinking, speaking, and listening).

They also developed an English Writing and Reading core curriculum that offers 2 paths to English 1 A, one with two developmental level courses, and one with one accelerated course. They have completed cohort studies that demonstrate that 49% of students who participated in the accelerated course in Fall 2006 reached English 1A by Summer 2008.

They established a set of goals and values for the WRAC Center:

- The WRAC Center will offer assistance to students with their reading and writing from any class in any discipline.
- The WRAC Center will offer assistance to students in their English classes.
- As an English Department program, the WRAC Center will be guided by the Articulated Assumptions and the "Throughline".
- WRAC Center computer hardware and software, as well as computer classroom design, will be guided by the instructional values reflected in the Articulated Assumptions and the "Throughline".
- The WRAC Center will value collaboration among instructors, staff, and students, respecting that each contributes to the learning environment.

Their WRAC Center offers peer tutoring, faculty-student tutoring, and computers. They observed that students work primarily with peer tutors and that students rarely request reading support. They deduced that students usually ask their content area peer tutors reading and writing questions related to other disciplines such as math or science courses. As a result of these findings, faculty are now encouraged to mentor future tutors in the areas of reading and reasoning.

What they have learned from their experience is that faculty need to drive the program and need to be supported to do so. They also learned that:

- there is always resistance to change
- grant funding helps
- it is important to report back to the college
- you should write down the mission, vision, policies, and procedures and revisit them often
- keep instructors actively engaged
- be intentional about location

Their newest model for learning assistance is "The Learning Connection". It is a cross-curricular learning support collaboration among students, faculty, and staff. The Learning Connection is made up of the Tutoring Center, the WRAC Center, the Math lab, the Language Center (ESL), peer advising, and their new Center for Teaching and Learning. Basically, they are moving from a model of separate centers, budgets, and tutoring programs to a centralized model of learning support for students and a centralized model for teaching and learning (i.e. teacher research, faculty inquiry groups, learning pilot designs, etc)

Extending the Classroom at Fresno City College

This program is based on a model for supplemental instruction. It is promoted as an alternative model to tutoring.

This is the description of the program found on their website

(<http://www.fresnocitycollege.edu/index.aspx?page=358>)

ETC is designed to aid students in acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a specific class. ETC target historically difficult courses, not specific students. ETC is not tutoring, nor does it intend to mimic a traditional classroom setting. In ETC sessions, students collaborate and work closely on course content with the assistance of an ETC Leader, a model student who has completed the class with a high grade and is recommended by a faculty member. The kinds of activities that typically take place in an ETC session are interactive – group study, comparison of notes and organizing information, as well as discussion of key concepts through interactive assignments. It is intended to relieve pressure and help students learn in a stress-free environment. ETC leaders do not merely repeat information given in classes and hand out notes to students, but help students to become self-sufficient learners and gain confidence in their own learning abilities.

Implementation of this program involved six steps:

Phase 1: Securing program funding, proposing an action plan, SI training

Phase 2: Researching data to select targeted courses, choosing instructors, getting ETC leaders, articulating policies and procedures.

Phase 3: Hiring and training ETC leaders

Phase 4: Providing workshops for ETC leaders, presenting to targeted classes, marketing

Phase 5: Tracking the program using a database, monitoring the program

Phase 6: Collecting rosters and grades, creating data templates, revising the program

