Instructional Reform as a Pathway to Pedagogical Improvement

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Designing Productive Faculty Learning

Lessons and Findings from Scaling Innovation
A project of the Community College Research Center funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

CCRC and partner colleges work to adapt and scale promising developmental education reforms at new institutions

Faculty-driven effort, with intentional focus on professional learning and classroom practice

For more information visit www.scalinginnovation.org
Varying Faculty Questions and Needs

- Ready to act
  - Have ideas for improvement
  - Unsure how to improve

- Ambivalent
  - Different professional priorities
  - Awaiting evidence

- Reluctant to change
  - Discomfort with new approach
  - Satisfied with status quo

- What is the evidence of success?
- How is the new course structured?
- Which students are eligible?
- How will students get enrolled?
- What will I do in class tomorrow?
- What are the course materials?
- What are the assignments?
- How are students assessed?
- How will I use class time?
- How can I support struggling students?
Talking about Teaching

“I don’t have an education background. I have always been a textbook person... and I don’t have experience in curriculum development.”
Highly Prescriptive

Sharing Strategies
Grounded in Classroom Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESS CONNECTED TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE</th>
<th>CONTEXTUALIZED IN DAILY TEACHING WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Designed for broad appeal across disciplines and/or colleges</td>
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<td>• Presentations by consultants</td>
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<td>• One-time workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Descriptions of “best practices”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Generalized descriptions of context</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sharing strategies in the abstract</td>
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<td>• Infrastructure for ongoing collaboration, experimentation and refinement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examination of course materials, including classroom activities, assignments, and assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of wide array of data including course outcomes and student work</td>
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Purposeful Learning Opportunities

**Purpose**
- The learning objective is clear and relevant to participants.
- *Introducing a new pedagogical approach*

**Activity**
- The activity is designed to help participants meet the learning objective and is grounded in classroom practice.
- *Observing a teaching demonstration*

**Venue**
- The venue is aligned with the purpose and activity.
- *Monthly meeting of a faculty inquiry group*
Promise of Contextualized and Purposeful Learning

• Makes pedagogy visible and available for inquiry and discussion
• Builds stakeholder buy-in, facilitating scaling efforts and reform sustainability
• Facilitates a cultural shift toward continuous improvement and away from short-term reform launch efforts
Intermediate Algebra for Statistics

Creating a New Path for Non-STEM Students at College of the Canyons
Before Spring 2012

Arithmetic  Pre-Algebra  Elem Algebra  Int Algebra  Statistics
### Program Growth 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SECTIONS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PAIRED SHORT-TERM COURSES**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
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**Student cohort of Intermediate Algebra for Statistics (8 weeks) and Introductory Statistics (8 weeks) with the same instructor for both courses**
Core Design Principles

Streamlined developmental curricula should reflect three key principles (California Acceleration Project):

- **Backwards design** from college-level courses
- **Just-in-time** algebra remediation
- **Intentional support** for students’ affective needs
Pedagogical Improvements

- OLI textbook (free/online)
- Minitab + Excel + Statcato (free software)
- Group discovery activities
- Focus on real world applications
- Emphasis on building communication skills
Faculty Support

- Faculty orientation (6 hrs)
- Bi-monthly instructor meetings (1.5 to 2 hours)
- Workshops and department faculty seminars
- Document sharing (SugarSync)
- Individual meetings with Matt and Kathy
- Informal conversations in between classes
- Group/individual email communication
- Open invitation to visit classes
# Instructional Challenges

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>OUR RESPONSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Coordinating a rapidly growing program to maintain pedagogical consistency</td>
<td>• Having a coordination team (4 faculty) instead of a single coordinator</td>
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<td>• Recruiting instructors</td>
<td>• Creating a comfortable environment of sharing and collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teaching writing in a math class and grading writing assignments</td>
<td>• Cross-disciplinary training from English faculty in creating effective writing assignments and rubrics</td>
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Institutionalizing Pedagogical Improvements

- Increase the number of offerings to 22 sections per semester
- Offer all training through our professional development office
- Reform introductory statistics course to reflect best practices of our pre-statistics course
- Dramatically increase the number of statistics course offerings
Fullerton College

Leveraging Developmental English Acceleration Reform for Faculty Learning
Fullerton College: Our Sequence

• Our current composition sequence:
  English 39 → English 59 → English 60 → English 100

• Our pilot:
  • Set aside several sections of English 59, taught with a shared curriculum, as “accelerated.” Students who show readiness for 100 are “popped up” using an existing procedure

• Our future:
  • Two paths:
    o Traditional path: 39 → 59 → 60 → 100
    o Accelerated path: open-access English 99 → 100 if/when English 99 is approved through the curriculum process
Accelerated Curriculum

• We’re moving toward:
  • Increased level of challenge/amount of reading assignments (with corresponding support like training in metacognitive reading strategies), more “academic” genres
  • Increased challenge/amount of essay assignments
  • Focus on writing in response to readings and writing assignments that require students use the reading all semester long
  • “Scrimmage” versus “running drills” for English 100
Faculty Support and Collaboration

• Started as a Faculty Inquiry Group: “what is acceleration and should we pursue it on our campus?”

• After FIG money was cut from Basic Skills budget, continued as an informal, ad-hoc committee. Half piloted course, half worked on course outline proposal for English 99

• Officially recognized by the English department and given status as a major department committee this semester (all English faculty are required to belong to one major committee)
Challenges to Faculty Collaboration

• Finding purpose during a state of flux: What is the role of the committee now? What will it be once 99 is being offered?
• Training new faculty: How can we support those who are adjusting to this new pedagogical approach?
• Perennial issues: Finding time, avoiding “burn out,” staying connected to colleagues
Moving Forward

• New faculty members will be teaching the pilot course in Fall 2013
• We hope to offer English 99 in Fall 2014
• We’re working on defining the role of our committee:
  • This semester, meeting to continue 99 curriculum process and share student work, talk about evaluation: “What does it mean to be ready for English 100?”
  • In the future use committee time to discuss curriculum, teaching strategies, collect and analyze data?
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