Cross-Sector Communities of Practice: University, Community College, and High School English and Mathematics Collaborations

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Successful Transitions Partnership

University & College Partners	Public School District Partners
Eastern Washington University	Cheney Public Schools
	Columbia Public Schools
Community Colleges of Spokane	Deer Park Public Schools
Spokane Community College	Lind-Ritzville Public Schools
Spokane Falls Community College	Mead Public Schools
	Spokane Public Schools
	West Valley School District

Partnership Targets

- Lower rates of placement into developmental courses in ELA and mathematics

- Higher pass rates in "first college level classes" in ELA and mathematics

- Collaborative development of a repository of resources for ELA and mathematics instructors

Partnership Objectives

- Establish regional professional partnership, convening 9-12 and higher education faculty around goals related to student success.

- Engage members over successive years, creating conditions for sustained collaboration to improve practices.

- Focus collaboration on development and testing of instructional approaches to measurably improve learning and teaching, beginning with mathematics and English.

In order to…

ensure more of the region's students, especially low-income students, make successful transitions from high school to college.

Partnership Methods

- Design a professional partnership, tailored to regional needs, to allow new forms of collaboration to take-hold over time.

- Create and sustain communities of practice (cohorts) that work together to understand and articulate problems of practice.

- Provide time and resources for cohorts to conceive, apply, and evaluate solutions.

- Connect with administrators to strengthen ties within and across sectors to facilitate cross-sector improvement practices.

Partptnership Timeline

2014-15

2015-16

2016-17

| Organize for collaborative improvement work | Identify problems of practice , form cohorts & develop work plans/timelines | Execute plans. Develop/test solutions to agreed-upon problems of practice. | Populate toolkit w/ solutions. Reflect on first round approach. Plan second cycle approach. | Execute plan. Develop/test second cycle solutions. Populate toolkit. Determine next steps. |

Defining Characteristics of PD
Evaluating Professional Development, Thomas R. Guskey

- It is an *intentional* process.
  - "True professional development is a deliberate process, guided by a clear vision or purposes and planned goals" (17)
- It is an *ongoing* process.
  - "education is a dynamic professional field with a continually expanding knowledge base" (19)
- It is a *systemic* process.
  - "True professional development is a systemic process that considers change over an extended period of time and takes into account all levels of the organization" (20)

Qualities of Effective PD
Evaluating Professional Development, Thomas R. Guskey

- A Clear Focus on Learning and Learners
  - "teachers commit themselves to making major changes in how they and their students participate in the school" (36)

- An Emphasis on Individual and Organizational Change
  - "organizational and systemic changes are usually required to accommodate and facilitate these individual improvements" (37)

Collaboration is Key to Effective PD

Professional Learning in the Learning Profession,
Linda Darling-Hammond, et al.

- Development of Relationships as *Goal* of PD
  - "Professional development should build strong working relationships... [R]esearch shows that when schools are strategic in creating time and productive working relationships within academic departments or grade levels, across them, or among teachers schoolwide, the benefits can include greater consistency in instruction, more willingness to share practices and try new ways of teaching, and more success in solving problems of practice" (11).

ELA Problems of Practice

- Students need to learn how to meaningfully and appropriately integrate source material into their writing.

- Students struggle to understand critical reading, specifically contexts of genre and purpose.

- Students need to learn how to interact with texts to develop their own thinking.

- Students have a hard time close reading and thinking analytically about texts.

- Develop students' abilities to discover and apply appropriate processes for reading and writing across the disciplines.

Math Problems of Practice

- Get students to use appropriate resources other than the teacher without prompt.
- We haven't given explicit attention to fostering independent learning and critical thinking.
- Students need to improve their ability to read for content and think critically about what they read.
- Addressing student difficulties with applying or transferring prerequisite skills and knowledge to calculus.
- Too often math is taught without students understanding its "meaning."

Principles for Collaborative P-16 Professional Development

The STC "networked improvement community" was intentionally designed to be:

- **Inquiry-based**– Participants engage in collaborative research to address problems of practice

- **Non-hierarchical**– High school, university, and community college participants are equal partners

- **Non-"siloed"**– Problems of practice under investigation cut across sectors and disciplines

Embedded Communities of Practice

- **Cohorts**--English and mathematics content-specific, cross-sector, CoPs of classroom teachers

- **Participants**—Full CoP of project participants (approximately 50 educators—English teachers, math teachers, and administrators)

- **Leadership**—CoP of English and math faculty and contracted facilitators

Support for Each Community

In what ways is support provided to each community of practice?

- o Discipline specific, cross-sector cohorts
- o The full group of participants
- o The leadership team

Relevance of this type of PD to each CoP

- How is this type of professional development different/innovative?

- How is this type of professional development relevant teachers' work with students in all sectors?

Relevance of this type of PD to each CoP, continued

- Why would a high school teacher or college instructor want to participate in this type of professional development?

- Other successes/challenges?

Thank you!!

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