Successful Transitions: A Cross-Sector, Cross-Disciplinary Project

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College 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

Context of Our Work

- Widespread efforts to address students' successful transition across sectors

- Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- Core-to-College work in Washington state

- Affinity Partnership

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

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).

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.

- Regional educational leaders work together on agreed-upon problems of practice.

- Provide time and resources for network members to conceive, test, and apply solutions.

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

Partantship 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. |

Problems of Practice

PROCESS:

- Observations
    - Assumptions about each others' contexts
    - Differences in each others' contexts
    - Below the surface
- Examine standards to clarify expectations
- Develop inquiry skills

Guidelines

- Briefly describe the general problem of practice.
- Briefly describe the more specific problem of practice that will be your cohorts' focus.
- List the standards tied to your area of focus.
- Why is this area of focus essential to successful student transitions from high school to college?
- How will adjustments to this area of focus accomplish the goals of the grant?

Guidelines

- What background information will you need to begin to make informed adjustments to this area of focus?

- Once you have evidence to show the more specific challenges associated with improving learning and teaching in this area of focus, how will you intervene?

- How will you evaluate your interventions?

- Provide:
  - SUMMARY PROBLEM STATEMENT
  - ANTICIPATED PRODUCTS
  - WORK PLAN OUTLINE

ELA Example

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFYING PROBLEM OF PRACTICE
& DEFINING SCOPE OF WORK

GUIDELINES	NOTES
Briefly describe the general problem of practice	Teaching reasoning skills, specifically skills of discernment around how and when to effectively integrate textual evidence into their own argumentative writing.
Briefly describe the more specific problem of practice that will be your cohorts' focus.	In our composition classes, students don't seem to be able to figure out the best way to use textual examples in their argumentative essays. They can often highlight important information from the article/book being used, but when it comes to using those examples to support an assertive thesis, there isn't a direct correlation. Students don't see their writing as part of a larger conversation (with the texts or with other writers or thinkers). If they use textual examples, it is usually as filler.
List the standards tied to your area of focus.	CCSS ELA-LITERACY 11-121 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. CCSS ELA-LITERACY 11-121B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
Why is this area of focus essential to successful student transitions from high school to college?	Students need to learn how to make connections when studying English: critically thinking about what they have read/learned and how they can apply that information into their own writing. Students need to develop skills around asking and explaining to themselves how the textual examples they have selected help support their own assertions/arguments. This ability to critically think about how another writer's ideas support, disprove, or redirect their own ideas will help them become stronger independent writers and thinkers, necessary for success in college.

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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 Example

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFYING PROBLEM OF PRACTICE & DEFINING SCOPE OF WORK

Date & time of next cohort meeting: __November 5, 3:30__

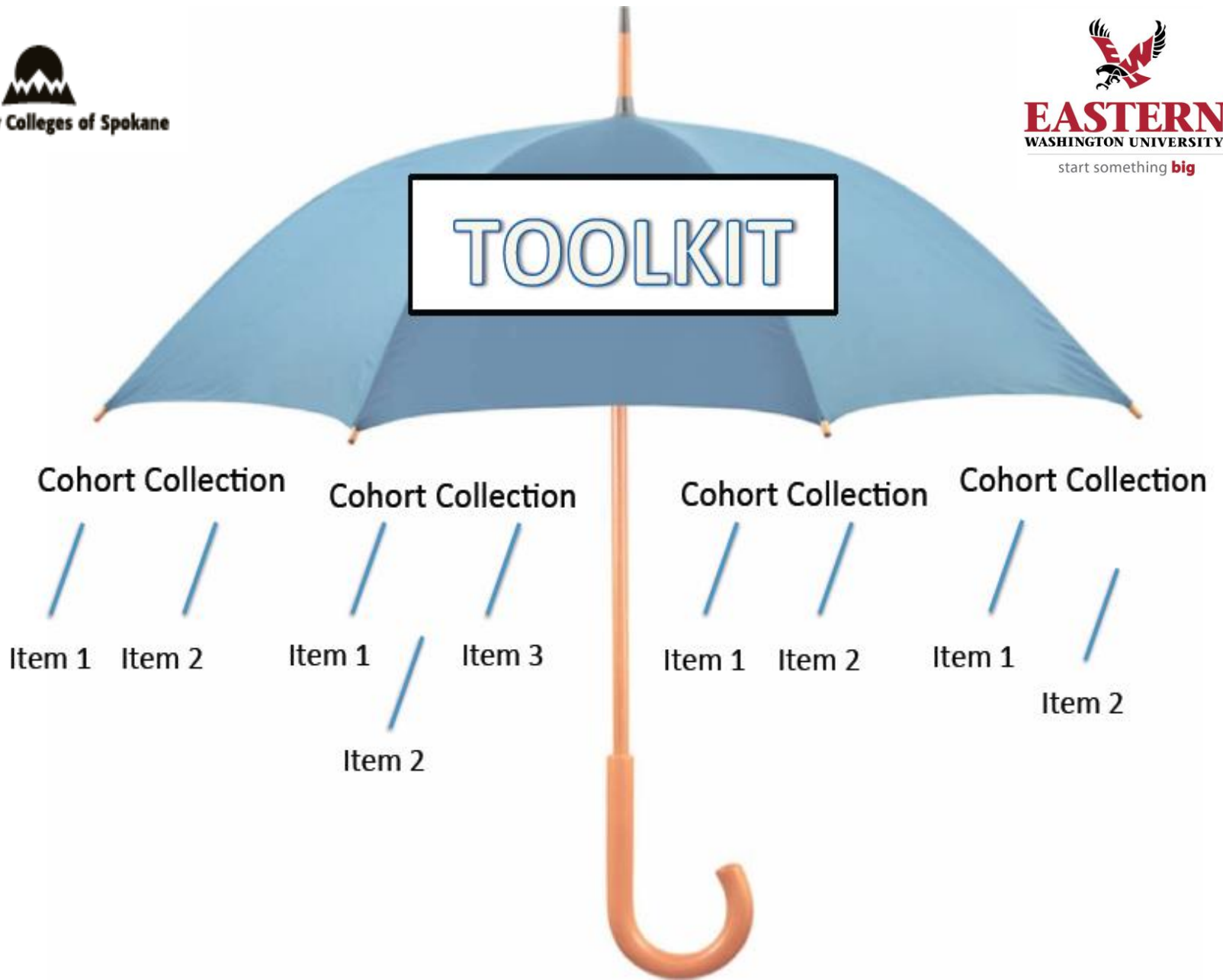| GUIDELINES	NOTES
Briefly describe the general problem of practice	Teaching reasoning skills.
Briefly describe the more specific problem of practice that will be your cohorts' focus.	In our geometry classes, students don't seem to be able to use the theorems we've proved in new or different situations (either new theorems or problem solving). The purpose of proving the theorems was to help them understand the properties that must be true when certain conditions are met, but they don't seem to have gained that understanding in a way that allows them to use the properties for reasoning in new situations.
List the CCSS content and practice standards tied to your area of focus.	SMP 1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them SMP 3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others G-C Understand and apply theorems about circles.
Why is this area of focus essential to successful student transitions from high school to college?	Students need to learn how to make connections when studying mathematics: critically thinking about what they have learned and how they can apply it, asking and explaining to themselves why the conditions of a theorem lead to the conclusions, and using mathematical reasoning to make sense. This ability to critically think about math and a disposition to make sense will help them become stronger independent and interdependent math learners, necessary for success in college.
How will adjustments to this area of focus accomplish the goals of the grant: -increase first-year college level pass rates in introductory math or composition? -increase placement into college-level course work? -decrease need for developmental course work?	A focus on improving these skills in high school and introductory college classes should help increase pass rates because students will be better prepared to support their own learning through improvement of critical thinking and sense-making about math.
What background information will you need to begin to make informed adjustments to this area of focus? -Where is this focus area addressed in the curriculum? -How is it addressed in the curriculum? -When is it addressed in the curriculum?	What does research say about how students learn to reason mathematically? More specifically, what does research say about students' development of understanding of what a theorem is and students' ability to use proofs as a way to understand mathematical ideas? According to the CCSS, making sense and reasoning should be included in all of learning mathematics, but it is only stressed in our book in the chapter on writing proofs. In high school, students are expected to write formal proofs by the end of

Math Problems of Practice

- Get students to use appropriate resources other than the teacher without prompt.
- Give 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."

Similarity Between Problems of Practice in ELA and Mathematics

Mathematical Practices and Portraits of students ready for college-ready ELA courses

Share Your Thoughts

- How could this cross-sector model of professional learning be used to approach problems in *your* contexts?

TOOLKIT

Cohort Collection

Cohort Collection

Cohort Collection

Cohort Collection

Item 1   Item 2

Item 1   Item 3

Item 1   Item 2

Item 1

Item 2

Item 2

Possible Toolkit Items

- Case studies
- Lesson studies
- Classroom video studies
- Created and/or vetted curriculum
- Reviews of texts
- Collections of research
- Assessments, their uses and results
- Other useful items proposed by cohorts

Cohort Responsibilities

- Investigate shared problems or questions of practice
- Learn with and from colleagues
- Seek expertise and perspectives of others beyond the inquiry group
- Use evidence and data
- Act, reflect, and refine practice
- Share and connect learning

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Thank you!!

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