

Los Medanos SPECC report for December 2005

1. What are the long-term goals for your SPECC project?

Long-term goals	Interim Goals/Outcomes	Data/Evidence of Effect
<p>GOAL 1: Create a multi-media website for the purpose of orienting new faculty to the LMC Developmental Education program and providing information for other colleges designing Developmental Education programs.</p>	<p>Year 1 Outcomes: Developed a map of website content in four general themes: DE Program Goals and Structure; Support Material for DE Faculty; Assessment of Student Learning; Program Evaluation. Developed preliminary content for two of these themes.</p>	<p>We focused on the development of resource materials for DE Leads who are facilitating Teaching Communities and on program evaluation materials. Specifically, we created the following documents which can be accessed in the DE Program Blackboard classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff-development guide entitled “How to Facilitate a Teaching Community” • Sections of a Course Assessment Guide • Teaching Community Report form • Assessment Report form • DE Research agenda for Office of Institutional Research • Formative program assessment plan for DE Math
	<p>Year 2 Goal: Write curriculum for the seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching. Specifically, we plan to generate materials that capture classroom activity related to the teaching and learning of DE Program Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>Activity: Produce ten KEEP toolkit “snapshots” of projects connected to Teaching Community research questions that relate to DE Program Learning Outcomes.</p>	<p>Each “snapshot” will contain evidence of impact on planning (lesson plans, classroom activities, assignments, etc.), impact on teaching (videotaped class sessions, interviews with instructors, written reflections, etc.) and impact on learning (assessment of student work, videotaped interviews with students, survey of student perception, etc.)</p>

<p>GOAL 2: Expand and enhance the professional development and assessment efforts provided by Teaching Communities. Produce a staff development “curriculum” handbook and course-level assessment “guide”.</p>	<p>Year 1 Outcomes:</p> <p>Produced materials for DE Leads on how to facilitate a Teaching Community and how to conduct Course-level Assessment</p> <p>Focused Teaching Community activities on a research question related to DE Course-level or Program-level Learning Outcomes and present findings.</p> <p>English TC research questions: What are the most effective methods for dealing with error correction when teaching ESL students? What does the research say about the most effective methods for teaching grammar?</p> <p>Math TC research questions: Does computer-aided instruction and limited classroom instruction on procedural skills yield performance on standardized skill tests this is comparable to the performance of students in a traditional classroom where instruction is primarily focused on procedural skills?</p> <p>Provided professional development in different forms to increase participation and to norm instructor understanding of DE Program Learning Outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted weekly meetings for Prealgebra instructors. • Conducted a series of three retreats for Elementary Algebra instructors. • Offered two English Teaching Communities focused on related research questions. Expanded English Teaching Communities to include English instructors teaching at different levels and ESL instructors. 	<p>Developed materials for DE Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a Course-level Assessment guide • “How to Facilitate a Teaching Community” guide <p>By January 2006 DE Leads will have completed Teaching Community Reports that include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the research question and summary of what the group learned • curricular materials, assessment instruments, samples of student work • minutes of meetings • survey of faculty perception of impact on teaching • survey of student perception of impact on learning <p>Weekly prealgebra meetings attended by 4 of 9 prealgebra instructors; 50% of prealgebra sections participating in investigation of research question. For minutes of these meetings, see the Math 12 in the Developmental Math Blackboard classroom. 75% of Elementary Algebra instructors participated in at least 2 of the 3 retreats. For minutes of these meetings, see Math 25 in the Developmental Math Blackboard classroom. English Teaching Communities had a combined size of 13 participants, the largest to date.</p>
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	<p>Assessed student learning in capstone DE English and math courses with the goal of improving student attainment of learning outcomes.</p>	<p>For SP 05 completed Assessment Reports that include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • results of holistic assessment of student learning in capstone courses (Math 30 and English 90) • action plans based on findings • summary of effect of implementation of previous action plans. <p>See Assessment Reports in the Developmental Math and English Department Blackboard classrooms.</p> <p>For SP 05 completed an analysis of the indirect impact of Teaching Community participation on Intermediate Algebra success rates. See Assessment Reports in the Developmental Math Blackboard classroom.</p>
	<p>Year 2 Goals: Same as Year 1 with some changes to the composition of the Teaching Communities and a different set of “deliverables” for instructors participating in a Teaching Community.</p> <p>Instructors from any DE course will focus on a broad research question that is related to a DE Program Learning Outcome. Individual instructors will develop a personalized research project connected to the research question. Instructors will produce a KEEP toolkit “snapshot” of their classroom research project that will become part of our DE website (Goal 1)</p>	<p>Classroom research projects captured in a KEEP toolkit “snapshot”.</p> <p>In addition to these “snapshots”, we will again produce the Teaching Community Reports that summarize what the TCs have accomplished, the Assessment Reports for the capstone courses that summarize what students have learned by the end of the DE Program, and we will expand our analysis of the indirect measures of student learning in the DE Program by utilizing success and persistence information provided by the Office of Institutional Research.*</p>

* We are always hesitant to cite any correlation between the activities of the Teaching Communities and course success rates or persistence rates for the following reasons: 1.) Success and persistence rates are affected by a myriad of confounding circumstances so that the impact of instruction is difficult to ascertain. In fact, it is not uncommon for a single instructor’s course success rates to vary by 20% for different sections of the same course; 2.) TCs are focused on research questions that are fundamental to instruction but

may not be directly connected to grading. For example, the TC may focus on using the techniques from the Reading Apprenticeship, but course grades may be largely dependent on writing assignments. 3.) Instructors in the TCs are not required to norm their grading standards. In addition, TCs rarely comprise more than 50% of the instructors for a given course; hence it is illogical to imply a “cause and effect” relationship between the activities of the TC and course success rates.

2. What have been your major campus SPECC activities during January 2005- December 2005?

1. Mapping of content of website.
2. Development of Blackboard “classrooms” as temporary holding site for potential “content” of website.
3. Development of the following materials:
 - Teaching Community Report Form (replaces concept of e-notebook in original grant proposal)
 - Assessment Report Form
 - Staff Development Guide entitled “ How to Facilitate a Teaching Community”
 - Course Assessment Guide – first piece on how to conduct a random sampling for holistic assessment.
 - DE Research Agenda for the Office of Institutional Research
 - Formative program assessment plan for DE Math
4. Teaching Communities focused on a research question in English and math:
 - English 90 TC did a literature review of best practice in teaching grammar and effective pedagogical strategies
 - ESL Teaching Community read a book on the effective treatment of error with ESL writing and wrote mini-lessons to try out different strategies.
 - Math 12 (prealgebra) Teaching Community investigated efficacy of computer aided instruction, wrote mastery tests to assess student knowledge of procedural skills, and experimented with the use of manipulatives for developing a conceptual understanding of arithmetic. They are producing a handbook that summarizes what they have learned about computer-aided instruction.
 - Math 25 retreats explored issues of conceptual understanding of mathematical principles and worked to norm instructors’ understanding of key course learning outcomes.
5. Instituted a Teaching and Learning Project on campus as the primary group responsible for coordinating assessment efforts for the following major “groups” : Developmental Education, General Education, Occupational Education, Student Services and Library and Learning Support. This committee includes the chair of all the above groups, our senior instructional dean, our senior student services dean, and the campus researcher.
6. Developed “institutional level” program level outcomes for the DE program as a whole, integrating English, math, and student services. These SLOs are now included in the Course Outline of Record form for all new courses submitted for approval to Curriculum Committee.

7. Developed an institutional research agenda for developmental education in consultation with the Office of Institutional Research. This research agenda is tied to assessing achievement of our program level student learning outcomes. (See Developmental Program Blackboard classroom.)
8. Assessment of student learning in capstone DE English and math courses to summarize student achievement of DE Program Learning Outcomes and develop action plans for program improvement.

3. What have you learned during the first year that informs your plans for the coming year?

We now realize that developing the website is an enormous task. Given that our other responsibilities at the college preclude us from working on the website full time, most of the writing of the content will have to be done during summers, which is slowing the progress of the website considerably. We have learned that we will need the support and participation of a number of our colleagues to create a website that represents their work in developmental education, and lends itself to orienting new faculty to our DE program. In addition, we discovered that using a professional video and sound staff to capture classroom activity is cost prohibitive, so we are investigating less ambitious video projects connected to the work of the Teaching Communities. We plan to structure our teaching communities in a new way in Fall 2006, running them more as graduate seminars where instructors focus on a research question that is tied to the overall research area of the Teaching Community. Each instructor will create a KEEP tool webpage, incorporating their classroom materials, activities, samples of student work, and hopefully videotaped class sessions and interviews with students.

We have learned that the format of the Teaching Community needs to be flexible to continue to attract new participants and to meet the needs and interests of our departments. We are beginning to see the work of the Teaching Communities, particularly in English, as cyclical, beginning with research, followed by course-specific work that leads to curricular reform. For example, during the last several years in English we initially devoted a great deal of time to reading the research on how students learn to read at a collegiate level. We had a weekly “seminar series” in which we discussed articles appearing in the professional literature. From this research, we formed course-specific Teaching Communities that worked on major curriculum reorganization, including the complete restructuring of our previously separate reading and composition courses into integrated reading and writing courses at three levels. Now we are in essence, beginning the cycle again with a new focus on research in the learning of grammar with English instructors from all levels as well as ESL instructors participating. The innovation this time around is addition of ideas from the Scholarship of Teaching; individual instructors will produce a KEEP tool webpage summarizing what they have learned and how it has impacted student learning.

In math, the approach of “curriculum based professional development” was adopted after reading an influential study (American Educator, Summer 2002) that demonstrated that this was the only kind of professional development that had demonstrable effects on improving student learning. Teaching Communities in math have focused on the production of classroom activities connected to DE Program Learning Outcomes. In spring 2005 the assessment of student work on final exams demonstrated the effectiveness of the curriculum developed by the Teaching Communities (see Developmental Math Blackboard classroom, Math 30 Assessment Report for SP 05), but participation in the Teaching Communities has been limited. To increase participation in FA 05, we have experimented

with offering a variety of course-specific professional development activities and shifted the focus from curriculum production. A prealgebra group, comprised of four of the nine prealgebra instructors, met weekly to investigate the effect of computer-aided instruction on the learning of procedural skills. An Elementary Algebra group met three times during the semester for a total of 13 hours with the goal of developing common expectations for student performance of key learning outcomes for the course. The pre-semester retreat was attended by all but one instructor, with seventy-five percent of the Elementary Algebra instructors attending at least two of the three retreats. An Intermediate Algebra group met for 6 hours at the beginning of the semester to assess student work on final exams from the previous semester. All but one Intermediate Algebra instructor attended this session, which culminated in the development of action plans to address areas of student weakness. While this variety of professional development formats increased participation and faculty feedback was positive, we are uncertain of the real impact of these shortened sessions on teaching and learning. We plan to continue these pared down Teaching Communities but we will experiment with different types of follow-up activities like classroom observations and subsequent meetings with individual instructors. In addition, we plan to continue to sponsor the more intensive Teaching Community focused on a broad research question with the culminating production of KEEP tool webpages by individual participants.

4. Please describe your planned activities for the 2006 year. How do they build on your first year's activities? What changes, if any, are you proposing?

Spring 2006:

Teaching Communities

English :

English 90 Teaching Community will continue to explore best practices in the pedagogy of teaching grammar, adding an assessment piece that they piloted in Fall 2005 on a few sections. This is a pre/post assessment of the grammar skills specified as intended outcomes in the course outline of record. They intend to ask all sections of English 90 to administer this assessment instrument at the beginning and end of the semester. The intent is to realistically assess how much our students are learning with respect to this stated student learning outcome, and if desirable, rewrite the course outline of record to reflect the department's current understanding of what students need to know, and how they should be expected to demonstrate their mastery of grammatical usage. Participants in this teaching community will continue to develop lesson plans based on the research conducted in Fall 2005.

The ESL teaching community will continue to invite participation from instructors at multiple levels of English and ESL instruction. In addition, we hope to include consultants from the Reading and Writing Center. We will continue to educate ourselves about grammar issues particular to second language learners, and effective responses to error. Though not yet adopted by the participants for Spring, a proposal has been made to incorporate a pre/post assessment of students' ability to correct errors on their papers given

indirect, uncoded feedback. In addition, participants will continue to develop mini-lessons targeted for second language learners, based on the research done in Fall 2005.

Another proposal is to hold some kind of in-house conference at the end of the semester for the two teaching communities, as well as Reading and Writing consultants and other interested parties, to attend in order to share what we have learned with one another. We are hoping this will lead to curriculum revision (revision of the existing course outline of record), and possible revision of existing support services in tutoring and in the Reading and Writing Center.

Math:

The prealgebra Teaching Community will continue to meet weekly with the addition of two new participants. We will continue our investigation of the impact of computer-aided instruction on procedural skill development by comparing the performance on common quizzes of students who are using computers and those who are not. By the end of spring this Teaching Community will produce a report of their findings and a handbook summarizing what they learned about computer-aided instruction.

We will continue the Elementary Algebra retreats with the goal of norming instructor expectations for student performance of key learning outcomes. We plan to experiment with follow-up activities that will continue to foster a common understanding of course learning outcomes. For example, we may compensate instructors for observing each other's classes, for individualized meetings with the DE Lead, or for analyzing the incorporation of key learning outcomes into their exams and assignments. These retreats and activities will culminate in a holistic assessment of student work on final exams.

Intermediate Algebra instructors will again meet at the beginning of the semester to assess student work on final exams from the previous semester. This time we plan to ask instructors to develop individual action plans addressing areas of poor student performance. We will work to determine the extent to which action plans are implemented by compensating instructors to produce a KEEP tool "snapshot" of their action plan and its impact.

Fall 2006

The major change we are proposing for Fall 2006 is to structure our teaching communities in a new way, offering load for full-time faculty to participate and the equivalent in a stipend for our part-time faculty. Our idea is to offer something like a graduate seminar focused on a research question related to our student learning outcomes for the DE program. We are not sure yet if English and math will be combined or separate, but they will be combined for the "kick-off" event which we hope will be a two day institute by Randy Bass on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The ultimate "deliverable" will be a KEEPTOOL website page by each participating faculty member, including how they are addressing the research question, classroom materials and activities, assessments/rubrics, samples of student work, videos of class sessions and possibly interviews with faculty members and students, reflection on outcomes of project and impact on teaching and learning, etc.

As a result, the other change is that we are planning to “collect” the material for the website during year 2, and actually construct the website in year 3.

This approach builds on the work we have been doing in course- specific teaching communities for the last two years. Those teaching communities allowed us to “norm” our expectations of student work at various levels of English and math and helped faculty become more familiar with the concept of “designing backwards” from course level student learning outcomes. The new approach allows us to move our assessment efforts to the program level, and build more of a sense of “program” among DE faculty. In addition, we hope that it will attract new faculty both because of the increased compensation in term of load or equivalent stipend, and because it might appeal to those interested in receiving acknowledgement of their individual work in the classroom as captured by the KEEPTOOL webpage.

5. In looking at your proposed plans and strategic decisions, why do you think this approach will be effective? What impediments do you anticipate? How do you plan to deal with them?

We anticipate that the planned changes to the Teaching Community structure and focus for next year will be successful because these changes are grounded in small-scale experiments we conducted this year and incorporate successful strategies used by other colleges. Varied meeting formats have increased participation in math and begun to address wider needs associated with a programmatic approach to developmental education. The focus on a research question has reinvigorated faculty interest, resulting in increased participation particularly by English and ESL faculty. The research focus will be expanded to incorporate individual research projects connected to an overarching research question in an attempt to draw on the ideas from the Scholarship of Teaching exemplified in successful projects documented in the Gallery of Teaching on the Carnegie Foundation website. The inclusion of a “kick off” retreat with Randy Bass has been successful at Cerritos College (????).

We may encounter the same impediment to successful professional development efforts that we currently encounter, namely the need to expand participation. We are trying to address what we view as some of the causes of limited participation by using flexible scheduling formats for Teaching Communities, increasing stipends and offering release time to participants, offering opportunities for faculty to showcase their work through a KEEP tool webpage, and initiating the semester’s activities with a workshop facilitated by a dynamite consultant, Randy Bass.

6. Please describe your plans to evaluate the impact of your SPECC campus work.

Our intended interim outcome for 2006 is multifold:

1. Produce 10 -20 KEEPTOOL webpages for inclusion in our website.
2. Collect on those webpages qualitative data of impact of the Teaching Community on teaching and learning, such as curricular material, video of class activity connected to DE Program Learning Outcomes, samples of student work, interviews with faculty and students, and observations of students as they work in the classroom.
3. In addition to these “snapshots”, continue to produce the Teaching Community Reports that summarize what the TCs have accomplished, including surveys of faculty and student perception of impact on learning.
4. Continue to produce Assessment Reports for the capstone courses that summarize what students have learned by the end of the DE Program.
5. We will expand our analysis of the indirect measures of student learning in the DE Program by utilizing success and persistence information provided by the Office of Institutional Research and the data afforded by our participation in Cal-PASS. Part of our DE research agenda includes a qualitative measure of student engagement, comparing students in our first transfer level math and English courses who assessed directly into that level based on placement test scores with students who took at least one prior developmental education course.

How will we evaluate the impact of the seminar in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the consequent production of the KEEPTOOL webpages?

There are two major areas we hope to impact: teaching and learning.

Impact on teaching: Both the teaching community and assessment reports produced in Spring 2006, and the webpages produced in Fall 2006 will directly demonstrate impact on teaching. They will include curriculum in the form of lesson plans and classroom materials created directly as a result of participation in the teaching community. They will also include reflections that explicitly ask faculty to state how participation in the teaching community influenced their teaching practices.

Impact on learning: Learning can be measured directly or indirectly. Indirect measures of learning are addressed by data submitted via Cal- PASS, as well as implementation of our own institution research agenda – program level outcome #1. Direct measures of student learning have been the focus of our teaching communities and course level assessment efforts. In 2006, we plan for the following direct measures of student learning:

- Pre/post assessments in our English teaching communities focused on student achievement of our learning outcomes related to grammatical usage and error.
- Assessment of procedural skill development in prealgebra students
- Course level assessment of our students' achievement of DE Program Outcomes in capstone courses. In English we will assess the reading/writing learning outcome as students exit our developmental English courses: this is a holistic assessment of students' ability to write a 4-5 page persuasive argument including concession and refutation. In math we will assess communication, problem-solving, and use of multiple representations on common final exam questions.
- Class level assessment of student achievement related to individual faculty projects in the Seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

7. Sharing and disseminating information about SPECC – locally, regionally and more broadly:

There are three ways we share information about SPECC on our campus:

1. Through our English and Math department or sub- committee meetings.
2. Through our Developmental Education Committee meetings which include DE leads, Reading and Writing Center, tutoring, counseling, and our senior deans of instruction and student services.
3. Through our Teaching and Learning Project meetings – these are focused on the coordination of college wide assessment efforts and include representation from DE, GE, Oc.ED, Student Services and Library and Learning Support as well as senior administration.

We have regularly shared our work at all of the above, and will continue to do so.

- In spring 2005, Myra developed professional development materials in math for Brock Klein and Lynn Wright at Pasadena City College
- We have met with Frank Mixson and Jan Connal from Cerritos College who visited Los Medanos College in June 2005.
- In October 2005, Nancy (along with Tom DeWitt from Chabot) made a presentation to City College of San Francisco on our integrated reading and writing program.
- In November 2005, Nancy met with a faculty member from the English department at Chabot College to share our work in creating our developmental education program.
- Myra created Blackboard accounts for math faculty from City College of San Francisco and from Laney, who have accessed a variety of information on our DE Math Program through this beta-version of the future website.
- Nancy plans to talk with Jane Braunger from Reading Apprenticeship in Dec. 2005.
- We have been contacted by Laney College for a possible meeting with them in Feb. 2006.