The Findings of Area C in BSI Practices: Staff Development

C1 Administrative Support of Staff Development in BS/Institutional Mission Link

Many respondents commented that there was a need to have college-centered programs focused on pedagogical practices effective with developmental students.

The research team recognized that while 75% of our students can be described as developmental students in some areas, some faculty feel that they are not teaching basic skills students and thus have no need for training in this area.

Block Scheduling presents a problem for the planning of widely inclusive staff development programs because faculty work at all hours of the day.

Incentives for professional growth in pedagogy and skills targeted for teachers of basic skills should be highly valued and institutionalized.

Opportunities to develop learning communities that enhance basic skill student learning should be provided. These should be supported by the college infrastructure, considered essential to our mission, and rewarded by release time for planning and collaboration. While developing curriculum is part of a faculty member’s “duties as assigned,” the development of learning communities and collaborative curriculum requires the synchronization of multiple disciplines, teaching pedagogies and teaching schedules. This collaboration, essential to the college mission, should be supported and rewarded.

A shift of focus from WSCH generation to student learning and assessment is to be encouraged.

C2 Faculty Primacy in Needs Assessment and Planning of Staff Development Programs

While we have “home grown” experts in basic skills pedagogy and active learning, these experts are sometimes marginalized and their expertise is not recognized.

Several noted that panel discussions with a variety of experts on cognitive theory and effective teaching strategies and discipline veterans would be enticing entry-level, non-threatening ways to include faculty in the discussion about the teaching and learning of basic skills students.

Most existing staff development funding goes to discipline-specific conferences and not general pedagogy ones.
Faculty expressed a need for workshops in instructional design or other workshops that are often a part of education classes.

**C3 Structure and Ongoing Support of Staff Development Programs**

Many respondents felt the need for a Commons, a meeting place housing staff development, resources, workshops and materials.

Several commented that training for basic skills teacher should be ongoing and supportive and that basic skills teachers should be rotated in and out of basic skills classes so that they may “re-calibrate” their expectations by teaching college-level classes.

**C4 Characteristics of Staff Development Programs (flexible, varied, responsive, coordinated)**

**Re Math My Way (MMW)**

The design and implementation MMW both illuminated the need and shaped the design a variety of staff development programs. For example, MMW team noted that basic skills instructors needed not only the specific teaching skills that match emerging student needs, but also the classroom management or learning strategies expertise to engage these students.

These might include: understanding learning styles, recognizing defensive strategies of struggling students, helping students ask for help, using multiple approaches to teaching specific skills, identifying characteristics of the developmental student and developing strategies to teach them.

To that end, MMW staff has designed a book specifically reviewing materials, resources, and rules effective with basic skills students. Ever MMW instructor gets one. They have also developed panel discussions with adaptive learning to learn about cognitive theory.

The OnCourse workshop was mentioned as an example of a multi-disciplinary approach to training faculty staff to meet the needs of struggling students.

**Re: Convocations and Teaching Fairs**

Scheduled “all hands” meetings with samplers or poster sessions of a variety of pedagogical strategies would “spark” interest in staff development workshops. Possible topics would be samplers in backwards design, differentiated instruction, and classroom management techniques.