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Consortium Project.

Partnership teams of an English teacher, a vocational teacher, and a representative from each of six different career areas will work together to design curriculum modules in language arts appropriate to each of the careers.

The business/community member designated below and a vocational instructor will work with English faculty in each of the following areas:

Administration of Justice: Virginia Black, Sergeant Yuba County Sheriff's Department
Health Careers: Nancy Summy, Nursing Staff, Fremont Hospital
Early Childhood Education: Barbara Pierceall, Children's Home Society
Fire Science: Jeff Palmer, Lieutenant, Yuba City Fire Department
Business-Office Administration: Polo Enriquez, Marketing Director, PG and E
Business-Mgt and Supervision: William Toby, Human Resources Director, Blue Shield; David Anderson, Attorney, Sanders and Anderson

In each case the English and vocational teachers will collect activities and write materials for the related module, based both on composition concepts to be covered and needs of the career area. The community members will review the materials, make recommendations, and provide additional input, to assure that the activities, reports, etc. approximate the real work experience as closely as feasible. In some cases they may also assist with arrangements for various workplace learning activities.

The community members will receive a small stipend in recognition of their assistance, but will be donating the majority of their time and effort.
This proposal addresses the need to extend the Tech Prep programs into the community college, specifically in relation to adding an Applied Communication course to Language Arts.

In the past three years, a major national concern has focused on issues related to our failure to educate adequately a large percentage of our students (especially see The Neglected Majority, Dale Parnell, 1985; "The Forgotten Half," US News and World Report, June, 1989; American 2000: An Education Strategy, US Department of Education, 1991; etc.) Responding to this concern, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1990 specify a need to better integrate vocational and academic education; in fact, the act requires that all recipients of vocational funds describe how they will "provide a vocational education program that... integrates academic and occupational disciplines...."

It is often difficult for this integration to take place. A study by Ernie Boyer (High School: A Report on Secondary Education in American, 1983) noted that teachers of vocational and academic subjects rarely worked together toward common goals, and more often than not had little comprehension of what other teachers were teaching. Many "academic" faculty are reluctant to change from traditional approaches; "vocational" faculty may be skeptical of results, or even defensive. And, even when there is the best of will, these faculty may find it difficult to determine just how they can bring about this integration. However, this type of curriculum development frequently requires that both vocational and academic teachers change from long-ingrained educational practices Although these comments were reflecting on high schools, they are equally applicable to post-secondary education.

This Yuba College proposal addresses the need to integrate educational experience, and it brings together English and vocational teachers, along with business personnel, to design the curriculum.
One result of the federal mandates is the Tech Prep initiative now being promoted at nearly all high schools in the state. Yuba College is a large (4,200 square miles) district in rural northern California, encompassing all or part of eight counties. It serves 22 feeder high schools, 13 of which are involved in the Tech Prep consortium and which are exploring, in a variety of ways, the implementation of the components of Tech Prep.

These high school students will soon be arriving at Yuba College, trained with new approaches and methods, involved in pursuing their "career paths" and accustomed to "applied academics" and "integrated curricula" that meet their needs. College faculty, however, may not be ready to serve these new students unless they also begin taking a close look at their traditional curricula and pedagogy. This grant proposes an integrated class to explore possible alternatives to the current instruction.
College English faculty have reviewed concerns and drawn several conclusions:

1. There is currently no English composition class that specifically addresses the needs of the vocationally-oriented student.

2. Students in a variety of vocational fields are required to develop reports, write to specifications, provide specific information, etc., but no training is available to help meet these needs.

3. Students who enter vocational programs are often reluctant to take composition courses, both for lack of interest or for fear of failure. They often fail to see any relevance in the content of the traditional courses.

4. English faculty, by themselves, are not prepared or trained to develop curriculum materials that provide integration of curriculum with vocational areas.

In addition, in the recent past, instructors from various vocational areas have requested specific report writing and/or communication courses related to a fairly narrow career area; obviously, a college cannot provide a designated writing course for each career area. However, the Yuba College English Department has designed a plan that faculty believe will be effective in meeting the requests of the vocational instructors and the needs of the vocational students. Working with vocational faculty and employers, Yuba College English faculty will develop and provide a pilot composition course parallel to its current associate degree level course, one that integrates English and various career fields, that provides an individualized emphasis in areas of students’ interest, but that meets all the standards of the current equivalent composition course.

This pilot course will integrate academic and vocational curriculum through a structure that consists of an "umbrella" course covering the key composing aspects but including modules related to various career fields from which the students will choose. For example, an Administration of Justice student would do the assignments and work from a set of materials developed in relation to the real career he or she is anticipating. A Nursing student would simultaneously be working on the health careers module. Students within each module would be encouraged to work collaboratively with others in the same field but also to share materials with those from...
other career interests.
This project is aimed at reaching the "middle majority" students, those who may not continue their education beyond community college, who are often older and impatient to see practical application for the courses they take, and those who learn best by focusing on concrete examples. They are perhaps the "community college majority."

Current research clearly indicates that many of these students coming to the community college today fall within the group that learn in more concrete, hands-on approaches. These are students for whom the integration of vocational and academic programs would provide a more appropriate approach. The data show that this type of integration is valuable for students, that it more closely approximates the way "real life" works, and that it brings meaning into the curriculum in a way that enhances retention. It is these students whom we hope to serve.

These students would be able to take the new course in lieu of the current traditional writing course (English 51L). It is anticipated that, because of the relevance to their fields and the encouragement of the vocational teachers, students would take this course earlier in their college careers and be better able to handle other college level writing. Also, because they could see the application, students would be less likely to drop the class if they were having problems. These students would ultimately be more successful at their careers because they would be more experienced and more comfortable in dealing with the type of writing required.
Objectives

1. A new "applied academics" composition course will be developed by November 1, 1994 that will integrate academic and vocational content in a meaningful way;

2. At least six vocational instructors, three English faculty, and six employers will work together to design six vocational modules for the course by December 1, 1994;

3. At least 25 vocational students will have enrolled in the pilot course by February 1, 1995;

4. Students will persist in the class and satisfactorily complete the departmental final at a rate 10% higher than a comparable group of vocational students enrolled in traditional classes.

Activities

Personnel required. The project will be under the administrative direction of the Dean of Instructional Services/ Language Arts, Dr. Jeanine Rounds. Dr. Rounds, a Yuba College employee since 1977, will oversee all aspects of the grant. Assisting her will be Lynne Koester, a full-time faculty member (since 1988) who serves as coordinator of the composition program for the college. Other English and vocational faculty will participate.

Curriculum work. Upon notification of project approval, a small team of Yuba College composition faculty will begin work on the "umbrella" course outline. As soon as the basic objectives of the course are identified, vocational faculty and related employers and/or business people will come together to work in teams with the English faculty to develop modules in the targeted career areas.

Career areas in which composition modules will be developed include the following: Administration of Justice, Business: Office Administration, Business: Management and Supervision, Early Childhood Education, Health Professions, and Fire Science.

Each team will create a full module of activities, assignments, and models that represent realistic activities an employee in a specific career area might reasonably be expected to encounter. The work of the student will thus approximate real life experience. The teams may recommend additional out-of-class assignments that bring students in a particular career area onto work sites and/or
situations that better prepare the student for the work experience. In addition, students in each career area will work in collaborative groups, to assist and learn from each other.

Despite the fact that much of the content will be different from the traditional class (English 51L), the course will teach similar competencies, so that students completing the class will be expected to take successfully the departmental final, with similar standards for all students in any English 51L equivalent class.

The course outline and syllabus will be completed by November 30, 1994, and will be approved through the Curriculum Committee process. Counselors will be kept informed and will assist in recruiting students beginning with registration for the Spring semester.

Instruction.

At least one section of the pilot class will be offered in Spring, 1995, enrolling approximately 25 students. A control group of similar students enrolled in English 51L will be identified. As the class is taught, the instructor will confer with the vocational faculty and will meet at least once for a progress report with the entire curriculum development group, including the business people.

Additional support will be provided for students through the Academic Skills Center, which will match tutoring funds in the grant with an equal amount of funds to provide tutorial assistance, especially to underrepresented students. Tutorial assistance will also be available for students in the control group, however.

Evaluation.

An evaluation form will be devised and administered to the students. A comparison between the control and experimental group will be made, using a difference in proportions assessment.

At the end of the term, students in the pilot class will have persisted in the class and satisfactorily completed the departmental final at a rate 10% higher than the comparable group of vocational students enrolled in traditional classes.

CALENDAR

July-August, 1994
  a. Recruit English teachers
b. Recruit vocational faculty and employers/business people
   c. Complete "umbrella" course outline.
   d. Provide "training" for teams (English, vocational faculty, employers)

August-December, 1994:
   a. Complete modules in the following areas:
   b. Pull all components of-course together
   c. Complete syllabus
   d. Evaluate and select commercially prepared instructional materials
   e. obtain approval of Curriculum committee for pilot course
   f. Work with counselors, vocational faculty to recruit students

January-May, 1995:
   a. offer pilot course
   b. Identify control group
   c. Provide tutorial assistance as needed
   d. Complete final exam
   e. Conduct student evaluation
   f. Conduct statistical evaluation

June, 1995:
   a. Compare result of experimental and control groups as to persistence and final exam score
   b. Prepare materials for Chancellor's Office
   c. Get materials ready for duplication and mailing to other community colleges.
Yuba

Workplan Narrative

[No information provided in this document for this section.]
Project Objectives

The project objectives can be easily measured, since there will be a control as well as an experimental group. However, because it is not uncommon in education that new approaches take a "breaking in" period, it is certainly possible that the differences between the two groups may not be as significant as expected. In this event, it is hoped that the pilot will nevertheless be considered to be of significant enough value that work will continue on the materials, to bring them to the expected level.

Impact of Project

The project will produce a model of an "applied communications" class as a forerunner of a number of other applied academics classes that will surely be coming to the community colleges. Further, it is anticipated that the benefits to the students will be such that they will do better and persist longer as a result of this class.

Potential for Continued Support

The course has strong potential for continued support, as it is anticipated that some of the students currently enrolled in the traditional course will choose to enroll in the new course; therefore the additional costs will be minimal. Further, it will meets needs for courses currently being requested by the vocational instructors.

Potential for Adaptation

Both the concept and the materials can be easily adapted. Colleges could choose to duplicate the modules, revise and use the modules, or apply the concept to developing modules of their own.
Evaluation Plan

Research Study

a) Research Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis: Students in both groups will do equally well.

Alternative Hypothesis: The difference in retention rates and final exam scores between the two groups will be greater than 10%.

b) Research Objectives:

A new "applied academics" composition courses will be developed by November 30, 1994 that will integrate academic and vocational content in a meaningful way;
Measure: Course Outline

At least six vocational instructors', three English faculty, and six employers will work together to design six vocational modules for the course by December 1, 1994;
Measures: List of participants, Meeting schedules, Work produced

At least 25 vocational students will have enrolled in the pilot course by February 1, 1995;
Measure: Course Roster

Students will persist in the class and satisfactorily complete the departmental final at a rate 10% higher than a comparable group of vocational students enrolled in traditional classes.
Measure: Research Data

Proposed Methodology:

Course will be developed, vocational students randomly recruited into it.

A control group of 50 similar students enrolled in several sections of the traditional course will be identified.

All students will take similar final exam. Persistence in class and final exam scores will be compared, using the difference between proportions for two independent samples.

Statement of outcomes will be developed.
Statement of recommendations will be developed.
In July, 1995, a final project report will be compiled which, after approval by the Chancellor's Office, will be forwarded to all community colleges in the state. This approach to addressing the training needs of vocational students is anticipated to have wide application toward learning success in other fields following this pilot effort.

The report, which will include a description of the course, with an abbreviated outline and information about the modules and results, will be mailed to the English Departments at each of the 107 community colleges. A report will also be made available at the fall statewide Tech Prep meeting and to the Occupational Deans Conference. Interested colleges will be able to get additional information upon request.
[No information provided in this document for this section.]