

Broward College fulfills a family's dream

Caterina Garcia walked into the Achieving the Dream (AtD) office as a concerned parent. Her son Rogelio was just beginning his journey at Broward College. Caterina wanted to be with him when he met his student success specialist, **Elvira Perez**. "I guess I am a typical overprotective parent," Caterina says and laughs, "I walked out wanting to enroll myself."

Caterina did enroll in the college, and says it was this first meeting with her son's advisor that inspired her to pursue her own dream of being a teacher. She says, "I had always wanted to be a teacher. Elvira told me about the college's bachelor's degree in teacher education, and encouraged me to enroll."

Like many students at Broward College, Rogelio and Caterina face a variety of challenges as they move through their academic careers. Rogelio, a traditional student matriculating from high school, is still somewhat unsure about his long-term academic goals, and admits that it is easy to get distracted. "I am very interested in working in the music business, so I am still trying to figure out what major will work best for what I want to do." Caterina, a student in the non-traditional mode, is returning to college after several years away from the classroom. "I married young and had to go to work. Now that my kids are a little older I want to go back to school and become a teacher," she says.



Caterina Garcia and her son Rogelio both work with their student success specialist, Elvira Perez.

Both mother and son work closely with their AtD student success specialist and have enjoyed watching each other's progress in college. Rogelio says, "It's funny – my mom studies all the time. She's always after me to get my work done." Caterina says, "From what I can see it's been such a positive experience. There have been social benefits. He has had an easier time meeting friends and has excellent teachers. Everyone at the college seems to be more helpful and accepting than when he was in high school."

While they do not share any classes, Caterina and her son thoroughly enjoy interacting on campus. Caterina explains, "Sometimes we see each other in the library, and he is always happy to have lunch with his mom." Rogelio has also become an active member of the Kempo Karate club on campus. "I really like it – it helps me stay focused."

Rogelio and Caterina credit their positive experience at Broward College to the guidance from Achieving the Dream Student success specialist Elvira Perez. Rogelio says, "She's been such a big help selecting classes that will work for me as I think about a career in the recording industry." Caterina says, "She's been great helping Rogelio too. She's always there to answer questions, and reminds him when certain things are due. As for me, I wouldn't be here if it were not for her." AtD is guiding the Garcias on their journey to student success.

Register now for learning-centered workshops

In line with the college's learning-centered initiative, the Achieving the Dream programs will co-sponsor a two-day workshop series with Title V Co-Op and HR-Professional Development and Training.

Friday, January 23 • 9-11:30 a.m. • Central, 17/425

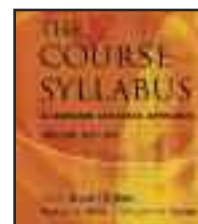
Linking Cooperative Learning to the Research on How People Learn

Friday, January 23 • 1-3:30 p.m. • Central, 7/425

Using Structured Group Work to Promote Deep Learning

Saturday, January 24 • 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Central, 17/425

Course Redesign and Syllabus Construction for Learning and Assessment



Dr. Barbara J. Millis, co-author of *The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach*, will facilitate.

Breakfast and lunch for registered participants will be served on Friday. Breakfast and healthy snacks will be served on Saturday.

Register online today! Use keyword "LC" or search by date.

Tinto leads a learning-centered workshop

Vince Tinto, renowned educator and distinguished lecturer at Syracuse University, facilitated Broward College's fall 2008 learning-centered conversation. This professional development event engaged students, faculty and staff in a two-part workshop that focused on how Broward College might become a more learning-centered organization.

The morning began with an interactive presentation from Dr. Tinto at which he outlined a variety of conditions and strategies necessary for student success. Dr. Tinto explained, "As we move from teaching to learning we need to rethink how we promote student learning and focus on those conditions in which we place students and ask them to learn." These conditions for student success can be categorized into areas of focus for the college. They include:

- Expectations
- Support
- Feedback
- Involvement
- Learning

Dr. Tinto discussed student support mechanisms as well as learning-centered classroom strategies that promote real learning for students. One of these techniques, the one-minute paper is an easy classroom exercise that asks students to anonymously author a brief note that states what they are interested in learning and what concepts they find confusing. Dr. Tinto says this method allows instructors to get some useful and honest feedback on their students' learning. "When used frequently, this technique helps students and faculty alike adjust their learning and teaching in ways to promote learning" Dr. Tinto said.

Dr. Tinto's visit to Broward College encouraged faculty and administration to continue to examine their work in supporting student learning. "I really got a lot of out of it," said North campus English professor Juan Calle, "it really makes me want to learn more about learning-centered practices and implement them in the classroom."

At lunch, Dr. Tinto met with faculty and administrators to discuss the challenges the college faces in meeting the needs of



Dr. Vince Tinto facilitates a lively vote on learning-centered proposals.

today's students. He said, "It's easy for me to stand here and talk to you about change, but as you know, the real hard work begins here with you."

The afternoon session, Making Successful Learning-Centered Transformation, brought together a diverse group of faculty, staff and administrators to develop projects that would help facilitate the learning-centered transformation at Broward College. Each of the groups worked out potential proposals in the following areas:

- Problem-based learning
- Career-focused Learning Communities
- Faculty teaching faculty best practices
- Arranging for collaboration
- Training faculty to develop learning-centered outcomes and assessment
- Infusing basic skills into technical/career courses
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Communicating across the curriculum

Online Math Forum provides a model for best practices conversation

The Mathematics Forum gives full-time and part-time math faculty members an online meeting place where they can discuss and keep track of the ongoing math initiatives at Broward College. Mathematics Professor **Abe Biggs** helps manage this Blackboard site that centralizes the numerous math conversations that are occurring across the college.

The Math Forum is an online location for discussions and documents related to all developmental courses and Title V math initiatives:

- Research studies in the classroom
- Student success initiatives
- Best practices
- Reports from other institutions and workshops/conventions
- Standardized homework assignments

- Syllabi and sample practice tests
- Suggested course schedules for all developmental courses

The forum allows users to keep track of collegewide and campus-based math initiatives. Visitors can view a list of initiatives and accomplishments in college-prep math.

Online academic communities like the Math Forum may serve as a model for other disciplines that look for more effective ways of communicating ideas across a large institution. The overall goal of these communities is to give faculty a platform for sharing best practices as they strive to better serve students.

All math faculty members are invited to post success stories on the forum about improving student performance in math courses.

Prep English at BC: coalescing best practices

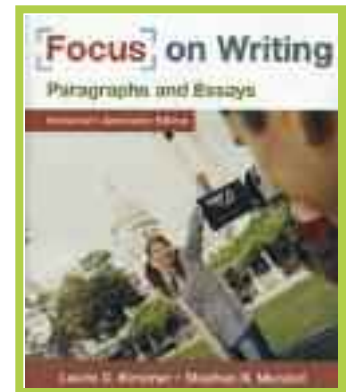
A significant result of the 2008 Achieving the Dream student success initiative has been the effort to unify developmental writing best practices across the college. Led by Dr. Dianne Ruggiero, Mimi Markus, Linda McCloud and Marci Macgregor, the English student success team spearheaded an initiative to coalesce key aspects of the ENC0010 and ENC0021 curricula. Noteworthy accomplishments of this project include:

- Developing a standardized ENC0010 objective test and writing final
- Selecting common textbooks for adjuncts for Fall 2008
- Creating collegewide ENC0010 and ENC0021 syllabus templates for adjuncts
- Generating a collegewide topic bank for ENC0021 Florida Basic Skills Exit Essay
- Implementing uniform holistic grading sessions per campus for the ENC021 Exit Essay
- Writing a new rubric for teachers to use when grading the final exam

These changes were seen as much needed improvements by the college prep coordinators for each campus. Mimi Markus, the college prep coordinator on North Campus, noted that the ENC0010 final exam had not been updated since 1993 and that many instructors had abandoned the old test. “The new ENC0010 objective final has been completely rewritten and beta-tested to eliminate problematic questions.” The ENC0010 final consists of two parts, an objective section and a written component. This final exam will be administered to all ENC0010 students. These kinds of initiatives allow for a more consistent approach to teaching and measuring the success of Broward College’s burgeoning developmental student population.

The new college prep standards are especially designed to support adjunct faculty in their work at the college. “The aim is that all of our adjuncts and their students are on the same page when it comes to college prep English. There was a real need for this level of consistency across the departments,” said the Associate Dean of English on North Campus, Casey Gilson. He also stated that a resulting benefit from this type of standardized curriculum is that students will be able to transfer from one class to another more easily as well as across the various campuses at Broward College.

Also in the fall term, Broward College piloted a new course design for ENC0021. This four contact-hour English Prep course replaces the one-credit lab component with additional writing instruction, allowing more time for one-on-one conferencing and other activities that address errors in context rather than through isolated grammar drills.



Ruggiero guides developmental education



Dr. Dianne Ruggiero

As Broward College’s inaugural Associate Vice President of Developmental Education, **Dr. Dianne Ruggiero** guides the effort to unify college-prep initiatives across the college. The new position provides an organizational center for synthesizing various developmental projects in English, reading, math and English for academic purposes. “Our office directly supports inter-campus collaboration in the prep areas as we look for new ways to improve our programs for student success,” she stated.

This new component to Broward College’s developmental programs is the result of a recommendation from the College Prep Steering Committee which called for an Associate Vice President of Academic Success who would provide “collegewide supervision and coordination of college prep and EAP/ESL student success initiatives.” The creation of this office weaves the

commitment to serve under-prepared students into the administrative framework of Broward College.

One of the key functions of the new office is to promote faculty collaboration and conversation on developmental best practices and communicate these ideas throughout the Broward College community. Some of these college prep initiatives in 2009 include:

- Exploring new models for developmental math students
- Piloting a four-hour ENC0021 course that embeds the lab component into the classroom
- Creating an EAP fast track curriculum for ESL students

Dr. Ruggiero’s office works closely with the Business Intelligence team to gather and disseminate data that help evaluate what initiatives are positively impacting students. “We are also tracking students as they move out of prep, so we can chart their progress as they move into the college credit curriculum. This helps us evaluate the long term successes of the students we serve,” commented Dr. Ruggiero.

A learning-centered conversation



Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Judith Scherer participates with faculty during a discussion.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. **Judith Scherer** is coordinating the collaborative effort to transform Broward College into a “learning-centered” institution. This evolution promises to engage everyone in the Broward College community in a series of conversations that will connect outcomes,

measurements and best practices in all areas of the college. Dr. Scherer says, “There are many definitions of ‘learning centered,’ but essentially it means placing learning first in every decision we make and accepting our responsibility for continuous improvement.”

This fall Broward College faculty and staff participated in a number of conversations that began to activate the learning-centered process. Some of the questions included:

- What does learning centered mean for Broward College?
- What common terminology can be used in the learning centered evolution?
- What common approach will Broward College use to measure outcomes for success?
- What are Broward College’s best practices for continuous improvement?

“Our faculty members have already shown that they are willing to challenge themselves and change,” Dr. Scherer says. “In a learning-centered model faculty will reconsider pedagogy, structure and ideas on learning to constantly improve student success rates.”

For students, this approach concentrates on teaching how to learn, rather than on covering material. “One of the great benefits of a learning-centered organization is that it educates students about how to assume responsibility for their own learning,” Dr. Scherer states.

Putting learning first in Learning Communities

How do learning communities support the teacher as the facilitator?

Learning Communities (LC) succeed when two or more faculty members collaborate during the planning stages, mutually agreeing that they must intentionally give up a degree of their central authority in the classroom. The traditional reliance on the sage paradigm shifts in an LC to a learning paradigm where it becomes essential to facilitate learning rather than instruct or lecture only. To create a rich collaborative learning environment,

faculty structure ways to promote disciplinary grounding in course concepts, principles and knowledge. By enhancing critical thinking in their respective disciplines, LC faculty promote inter-disciplinary learning. In LCs, active learning, group work and field trips ensure learning beyond the classroom.

Donna Samet, North Campus Learning Communities coordinator, makes a point during a discussion.



What outcome-based assessments are included in Learning Communities?

Outcome-based assessments in North Campus Learning Communities include the following:

- Formal reflective essays
- Open-ended essay responses
- Written observations of field trip learning opportunities and relationship to course concepts
- Inter- and intra-group evaluations of peer-developed projects
- Direct application of subject matter to personal experience and perspectives in lively discussions or debates
- LC student products evaluated by other LC faculty
- Shared grading rubrics, peer competition and external evaluation of LC projects.

Specific examples of LC outcome-based assessments on North Campus have included:

- Visual arguments related to political and social issues
- Creative writing students’ haikus drawn by art students
- Original student pledges on environmental sustainability
- PowerPoint presentations on environmental themes at special events such as Earth Day
- Service-learning activities applied to formal speeches, essays, and group presentations.
- Interactive opera with student and faculty participants



Learning Communities events



Broward College students participate in the “Black, Brown & College Bound” annual conference at Hillsboro Community College.



Students participate in an “open mic” discussion at North Campus.



Students and staff gather for “Soup at Central” on November 24, to provide strength and sustenance for the finals.



South Campus Learning Community mentors gather at the “Fall Welcome Back.”



Music ambassador Willie Stewart brings his high-energy and hands-on percussion rhythms to the South Campus Learning Community “Music Tells a Story” celebration.



Living the dream collegewide

