



The Learning Community as a Pedagogical and Student Life Intervention Strategy

For the past twenty plus years, we have seen increasing groups of first-year students coming to community college campuses, unprepared or under-prepared for college level work. The deficiencies lie not only in academic preparation but also in life skills. These students test the limit of the open-access mission of community colleges and challenge the faculty and staff to explore different ways of teaching and advising.

In response to the challenge, the teaching faculty across the country has engaged in a variety of curricular innovations. One of most notable curricular strategies is rearranging the instructional time and space in such a way that cohorts of students are enrolled in a common set of classes frequently organized around a theme, involving multiple disciplines. This group of students and faculty working together, without the limitations of the traditional curricular and classroom arrangement, is referred to as Learning Communities.

Though not a new invention, Learning Communities have gained new momentum in the last two decades. In fact, they have sprung up across the higher education landscape, including two- and four-year, small and large, public and private, liberal arts colleges, and technical institutes. The reason for this new found enthusiasm for Learning Communities is that they can provide an exciting way to enhance students' academic, social and personal success. Both research and assessment studies have found that effective Learning Communities have resulted in

reduced student attrition and increased gains in students' intellectual and social development and their overall level of satisfaction with their college experience (National Learning Communities Project, 2004).

The structure and scope of Learning Communities vary greatly from well-integrated and thematic-based clusters of courses team taught by faculty members from multiple disciplines to loosely-linked or paired courses. However, to a different extent, they share a few common features:

1. Students are enrolled as a cohort that takes all or some of their courses together;
2. Students form co-curricular and extra-curricular groups outside the class and these become their study groups and social support system;
3. Instructional time and space for both students and instructors are rearranged to accommodate team-based and interdisciplinary teaching;
4. Counselors, advisors, and student life staff work closely with faculty to provide learning support, mentorship, and personal development.

By doing so, Learning Communities foster coherence and connections among courses, promote community among students, and create more sustained intellectual interactions between students and instructors. Traditional structure is one of "sink or swim" for the students—some make it, but more do not. Though there are support systems on campuses, many students do not know about them or

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News and Notes

Board of Trustees Meeting March 25th on South Campus

The Meeting started with a Student Forum where representatives from Student Government presented their concerns and those of the other students of South Campus. Key areas are familiar ones: cost of books, cost and quality of cafeteria food, and a different ATM machine. They also updated the Board on issues from last year's



SGA Member, Arshia Bozai, addresses the Board meeting and what has been done about them. As usual, the students did a very impressive job.

The Math Department shared some of the ways they are working to help make students successful in math. Prof. Joyce Nemeth and Prof. Jodie Fry gave a most impressive presentation through the use of PowerPoint. They also handed out individual folders which included some of the various flyers on many of the programs, projects, workshops, and events that are held through the Math Dept.



Jodi, Hank, and Joyce prepare for the presentation

Dr. Laura Schantz gave a very impressive presentation about the Legal Assisting Program, as well as the Legal Assisting Society, which has to be one of the most successful clubs in the college. There are over 62 members in the club. Testimonials were given to the program by not only students in it but also by lawyers who have had our students as interns and then hired them. The breadth of knowledge and practical skills that these students acquire in the program is tremendous.

FACC - Florida Association of Community Colleges:

Palm Beach Community College will be sponsoring the Region V Spring Conference on April 30, 2004 at the Lake Worth Campus.

If you are a member and haven't joined a commission yet, please do so now. It is time to send in your TDA to register and attend the commission meetings. Please go to <http://www.facc.org> for information on commission conference dates, a list of the commissions you may join, and more.

To join FACC, please contact any of BCC's FACC Chapter Officers listed on BCC's FACC's web site <http://www.broward.edu/locations/south/facc.jsp>

Fontana Addresses Town Hall Meeting

Leonard Fontana was the featured speaker at a town meeting organized by the Broward Regional Health Planning Council. The meeting was attended by more than 60 representatives of community agencies providing services to HIV/AIDS persons in South Florida. Dr. Fontana reported on a research project he recently completed on recently incarcerated persons with HIV/AIDS, and of recommendations to improve health and support services to this group. The town hall meeting took place on April 13, 2004.

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do not take advantage of them. Learning communities address this issue by providing a balance between challenge and support.

At BCC, faculty and staff have also begun to adopt Learning Communities as an intervention to address serious student failures, particularly among the college-preparatory students. Objective VIII of the College Strategic Initiative directs the College to use Learning Communities as a vehicle for improving graduating rate among college-prep students. North Campus faculty and Student Affairs staff initiated Freshmen Year Experience in Fall 2003, involving a cohort of 25 college-prep students. These students have been taking the same pre-college courses together, study together and participate in co-curricular programs together. For personal and academic reasons, 12 students still remain in the program. Though 50 percent of the original cohort have left the program, faculty and staff are gathering important lessons. They plan to start another cohort of college-prep students in the 2004-05 academic year. In addition, they have decided to create a learning community of honor students, called "HELIX.

Central Campus faculty and staff are poised to start 6 learning communities in the 2004-05 academic year. These learning communities involve 6 paired courses, including Nursing SLS with Reading, ESL with Reading, Reading with English, History with English, and Human Sexuality and English. Faculty members in these courses will have joint syllabi, shared lesson plans, and teach the paired courses as a team. Students will have the benefit of two instructors. They will work on one set of assignments but receive separate grades for each of the courses.

At South Campus, a campus-wide committee has been working diligently in designing CLASS (Community of Learners Achieving Student Success)—a learning community of college-prep students for the next academic year. Under the leadership of Dean Terri Justice and Dean Debbie

Sloan, the committee has made significant strides towards launching this initiative. The committee members are working in sub-committees to address curriculum issues, marketing, student recruitment, and student and faculty support.

The CLASS Curriculum consists of the following cluster of courses:

Term I (20051)

Reading 0006	4 Credits
SLS 1501/1301	3 Credits
ENC 0001+Lab	4 Credits
HSC 1101	1 Credit

Term II (20052)

MAT 0012 +Lab	4 Credits
ENC 0021+Lab	4 Credits
REA 1105	3 Credits
CGS 1061C	1 Credit

Term III

Math 0024 +Lab	4 credits
MUL 2010	3 credits

This is an exciting time for BCC faculty and staff as well as for our students. Learning Communities have a great potential in increasing student engagement in learning and course completion rate; they can also contribute in significant ways to faculty and staff development and revitalization. We are challenged to understand how Learning Communities work and to become a champion and supporter of Learning Communities.

Dr. Shouan Pan
South Campus Provost

Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever.
—Mahatma Gandhi

South Campus Science Field Trip to NASA (Winter, '04)

On March 26th, '04, Prof. Neil M. Mulchan of the Science Dept. and 36 of his science students headed off on a “Behind the Scenes Tour” of NASA at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Fl. Students were given a guided tour of otherwise restricted areas around the complex, including Mission Control, Shuttle Launch pads 39 A & B, (from which both the Challenger & Columbia shuttles were launched) and The International Space Station (ISS) assembly building where we were able to get a close-up view of parts being built to place on the ISS on future Shuttle missions. The event was a huge success and offered an interactive educational experience into science at work.



Replica of a Space Shuttle at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida.



Kelli Hammer being congratulated by Hank Martel, Dr. Pan, and Joyce Nemeth as they tell her she is the Adjunct of the Year.

Getting to Know:

Kelli Hammer, Adjunct Professor of the Year

Kelli Hammer was recently named Adjunct Professor of the Year. This is a good opportunity to get to know her better as someone who works everyday on South Campus and has for a long time, but is also someone you might not even know. Below, Kelli shares information about herself.

I received a full four-year Academic College Scholarship. I attended Broward Community College and received an Associate of Arts Degree in Secondary Education. At Broward Community College, I was a High Honors Graduate and a member of Phi Theta Kappa. I attended Florida Atlantic University and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics. I also attended Florida Atlantic University and Barry University for post graduate education courses.

I started teaching sixth grade Science, Math, and Social Studies at a private school. Then I taught BCC College Prep Classes at Piper Community School. After that I taught College Prep Classes and the CLAST Review Course at Nova Southeastern University. Now at BCC for almost 12 years, I teach Prealgebra, Elementary Algebra, the CLAST Review, and a Computer Interactive math course. I am also a math tutor and a published author of a college textbook supplement.

I love teaching. There is immense joy and gratification in helping students to master math so that they are able to further their education and career. My hobby is dancing. I take hip hop and ballet classes. I've performed at Disneyworld, the Broward County Fair, and the most exciting was the pregame shows at Superbowls 29 and 33. I am a big football fan (Hurricanes and Dolphins). I have a gorgeous little niece and nephew, and I am very close to my extremely supportive family.

South Campus has many other “unsung heroes.” If you’d like to share your story with the campus, email me with yours.
pellingh@broward.edu

Campus in Motion

With the renovation of the Performing Arts Center underway, the facilities group is in the midst of reorganizing its storage and supply space. Nate Garland has been taking the lead in this project.



Max Levine and Nate Garland in Bldg. 64, as Max gets ready to explain to Nate the intricacies of the new storage shelving system

With the anticipated start of construction of South's Child Development Center - plans are underway to relocate several trees on the site to a new location on campus. Upon completion of the CDC, the site will be landscaped with native trees and shrubs.



A Live Oak to be relocated from the CDC site.

From Sean Devaney

Campus Beautiful



The beautiful new garden outside Bldg. 68.

Photo by Deb Kruczek

Earth Day 2004

Mark your calendars! Thursday, April 22nd is Earth Day. There will be an Earth Day Fair in the Southern Breezes Cafe and the Breezeway. Many students have been working very hard on their projects and they would like to have a good attendance. Many outside groups will be represented as well (Sierra Club, South Florida Water Management District, National Wildlife Federation, Organic Consumers Association and several others). You and your students are encouraged to attend - food will be provided.

From Natalie Osterhoudt



It's Yesterday Once More!



Nellie as we all remember her:
with a big smile for everyone.

Nellie Dry filled several positions through the years. She was Area Leader in Accounting, Division Chairman of Business Administration, Academic Director at South Campus, and an Accounting Professor. She felt that an administrator's job was to make it possible for faculty to teach and students to learn. Nellie recently shared some of her thoughts and what she's been doing since her retirement with Jennie Tartaglia.

Dear Jennie and greetings to all the administrators, faculty and staff at BCC South. It is always good to know you carry the torch for education that some of us started at South.

Since my retirement in 1988, I have had a busy life. The first five years were wonderful while my husband, Sam, and I traveled across the US several months a year. We visited all the National Parks and the major places suggested by AAA.

The next five years had ups and downs as Sam fought colon cancer. We still traveled any time we felt like it and drove to Houston many times during his treatment at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

In 1995, we welcomed our only grandson, Eric Noden, and he brought joy into our lives. While Suzan and

family lived in Richardson, Texas, we visited them often and Sam had his treatments there.

My biggest loss came in 1999 when Sam lost the battle against cancer. The song, "I Cried a River," describes my four months after that. Tina continues to teach Special Education students for Orange County Schools. Suzan worked for H-P and Siemens in Richardson, Texas as a software engineer.

David, my wonderful son-in-law, works for Tekelec as a software engineer. He was transferred to Cary, NC in August so they now reside there in a beautiful new home. Suzan is a homemaker and volunteers at Eric's school and their church. Eric is now eight years old and is a good student and loves to play soccer and chess.

My days are spent volunteering at my church; socializing with friends from BCC and the condo building; and doing chores. I don't travel as much now, but in the fall I did drive to NC to visit Sam's family members, and Suzan and my family. From there I went to W. Va. to visit my sister and her family.

My family has been wonderful to me throughout my retirement.

My advice to you (if you want it) is to recognize the importance of family and friends as it is a great gift through good times and not so good times.

My best wishes always to each of you and thanks for all the wonderful memories.

From Nellie Dry

Southern Breezes will be published monthly on South Campus. Information, announcements, photographs, and anything else of interest are welcome. Send your work to Dr. Patrick Ellingham, pellingh@broward.edu, or c/o the English Department.

MATH AWARENESS LUNCHEON – BIG SUCCESS

By Jen Tartaglia

On March 19, 2004, The South Campus Math Department held their annual Math Awareness Week Luncheon. This event concluded the week of workshops held by the faculty for students: Controlling Math Anxiety, by Prof. Fry on Mar 15, and Conquering Math Verbal Problems by Prof. Nemeth on Mar 17. A \$25 gift certificate door prize was awarded at each of these workshops. The luncheon was held in the So. Breeze Café which consisted of individual boxed lunches supplied by Charlie Lyle. Approximately 75 students attended, along with 20 faculty/staff and guests. Dr. Martel introduced the four guest speakers: Dr. Kuang-His Wu, and Dr. Yong X. Tao, Dept of Mechanical/Materials Engineering, Ms. Stephanie Strange, Assistant Director of Recruitment & Retention, College of Engineering, and Ms. Michelle De Jesus, President of the student Society of Women in Engineering Club. All guest speakers were from FIU.



Dr. Martel introduced our other campus guests: Dr. Pan, Mr. Al Smith, Dr. Sloan, Terri Justice, Charlie Lyle, Erin Boyd, and all the faculty/staff in the math department.

Dr. Martel walked around the room with a hand held microphone and asked the guests various questions regarding their programs, opportunities in their field and requirements for admission.

Each speaker gave students the opportunity to ask questions during and after the luncheon, explained

their engineering programs, and left informative brochures for students to take with them.

At the end of the speakers' presentation, a raffle was held with bookstore gift certificates as prizes. These prizes were donated by: Jane Fleming, Addison Wesley; Nancy Meyers, McGraw Hill; and Lori Berman, Wiley (book publishers representatives), and door prizes (tee shirts, etc.) donated by Andre Pierre, our So. Campus Bookstore Manager and Dr. Pan, So. Campus Provost. As in the past, this event was a big success. It afforded students the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and administrators in a casual atmosphere and to learn something about programs available to them and mingle with other students.

One of the highlights of the event was when Dr. Martel turned the microphone over to Dr. Pan to pick the raffle tickets from the basket and call out the winning numbers. He "stole the show" with his comical anecdotes as he in turn passed the



basket along the guest table for them to have a turn to pick a winning ticket.

Students were so impressed by the guests' presentations they stayed around well after the luncheon ended to speak with them. The guests were very gracious and asked if they could return again for an additional session. Of course, the Math Dept. is already discussing this with enthusiasm and looking forward to next year's Math Awareness Week events.

Special thanks to Joyce Nemeth, Jodie Fry and Jen Tartaglia for orchestrating this annual event.

Professor of the Year

Dr. Richard Corseri was named the Professor of the Year for South Campus.



Dr. Holden and Dr. Pan present Dr. Corseri his well-deserved honor

The Multi-Language Cafe



The Multi-Language Cafe meets every Friday at 1:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. Everyone is welcome to attend. For further information, contact Denise Brown at dbrown@broward.edu or Cesar Grisales at fgrisale@broward.edu. Come share conversation and meet interesting people.

Welcome Onboard

The Aviation Institute is proud to present our new Aviation Maintenance Program Manager, Mr. Donnie Blalack. Donnie is a 35 year veteran of United Airlines and was the Maintenance Manager for the Miami and Latin American division. He is excited and ready to jump in and start helping us provide the high quality training for our students.



Donnie replaces our good old friend Al Rott. Al is having fun and enjoying his retirement. He will be missed. Please welcome Donnie as you see him around campus.

Thanks,
Jorge Guerra

A Great Loss

The Aviation Institute was very sad to report that Robert Schuster, former Flight Training Coordinator at BCC lost his fight with Cancer on Saturday, March 27th. Bob began with the Aviation Department back in January of 1988 and retired in February of 1999. Not only was Bob a Flight/Ground Instructor, Flight Training Coordinator, Advisor for Alpha Eta Rho & Flight Team, but a mentor and friend to many of our students and graduates. His dedication to the Aviation Industry and love of flight will continue on even though he will be missed by his Aviation family and friends.

From Doris Draper

