

memo

To: Marc Jerome
President

From: Paulet Facey
Adj. Faculty

CC:

Date: 12/10/2019

Re: Proposal- Empowering Instructors through Assessment and Collaboration to Enhance College Improvement

Overview

This short report presents a brief outline of an initial program for a Dean of English, plus a framework for a dissertation aimed at college improvement. Developing instructors' competencies is crucial to increasing college performance and students' outcomes; one important competency is administering assessment and providing feedback. Lev Vygotsky developed the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); simply stated, it is the difference between what the learner can do with and without help (Doolittle, 1997). A knowledge of institutional standards and assessment is the vehicle that takes an instructor to a learner's ZPD.

Assessment is referred to as a systematic collection of data, along with the use and analyses of that data. Besides, the identification of students'

achievements is the goal of assessment (Blumberg, 2017). College accreditations are earned and maintained through the demonstration of quality products for student and stakeholders (Stencil, 2014). There may be very few options beyond assessment that can deliver that assurance. Every area in the college program of a student should accommodate assessment; in order to experience continuous improvement, there must be assessment.

Introduction

The quality of teachers is the single most important variable in students' achievement and this may best be accomplished through professional development (PD). It is a process through which educators remain relevant; therefore, it is a practice common to educators. Moreover, the United States Department of Education views PD as an important component of having an effective cadre of teachers (Johnson, W, 2014). Currently, a more situated style of training is being practiced whereby teachers enter into deeper collaboration aimed at improvement of teachers' overall quality. This social platform is essential to support teachers in honing their craft through effective assessment that identifies students' strengths and areas that need improvements. It is anticipated that Instructors who have such valuable data at their finger-tips will be motivated to get involved in action research to shed light on some of the gaps they have identified.

Immediate Intervention

While Instructors gather their data, there are intervention strategies that can be employed based on research. Vocabulary/parts of speech and math vocabulary/syntax are vital topics that impact students' growth in all subjects.

The research on vocabulary indicates that vocabulary is important for learning to read (Johnson, C. Beitchman, & Brownlie, 2010), as it is directly related to reading comprehension. Moreover, in order to read materials that are appropriate for a given grade, students are required to be competent in academic and domain specific vocabularies (Robb, 2014). Vocabulary is often identified as one of the most significant differences between proficient and low-functioning readers. In addition, vocabulary competence allows students to form a central network that links information to the students' prior knowledge gained through experience (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Discussion

The immediate goal for the Dean of English is to have a culture wherein assessment drives instruction and students receive meaningful feedback. This means Instructors should target both weak and strong areas identified through assessment to strengthen and illuminate accordingly. The Dean of English needs to address the following with urgency:

- Remove the ambiguity in the delivery and assessment of EN 111
- Directly teach the Reaction Paper in EN 111 because this rhetorical mode is an integral part of most courses, as well as the college's entry essay.
- Encourage Instructors to work closely with provided texts and highlight objections if these texts are ineffective.
- Instructors should highlight uniqueness of each rhetorical mode in EN 111 and directly show students how a thorough understanding of

EN111 can assist them in EN 121.

- Instructor need to understand the importance of doing the “Literature Review” before students get fully immersed in their topic in EN 121.
- EN 221 should climax in display of the arts.
- EN 075 should closely utilize the Langan text; this means the Instructor along with students should go over all exercise in the text.
- APLIA should be discontinued
- Ten to fifteen minutes should be devoted to vocabulary/grammar or math vocabulary/syntax in all classes

Dissertation Possibility (Mixed method)

- Institute a data driven culture (that is, Baseline/Formative assessment then Summative at the end by the Instructors) for improvement college-wide wherein strengths/weaknesses of students are continuously addressed.
- Have a total collaborative approach for Instructors and built-in evaluation as part of the process.
- Have a vocabulary culture, and textbook focus college-wide.
- Train Instructors to do assessment and help motivate students
- Provide direct instructions that address identified weaknesses
- Train Instructors to give meaningful feedback
- Identify a focus group of Instructors to fully articulate the program
- Stimulate an action research culture across the campuses; provide incentives.

Recommendations

I recommend that this initiative be mentioned in several months before its implementation. During the period faculty members should be encouraged to design their formative and summative assessment instruments in order to claim ownership of the process. This will allow stakeholders to address concerns on a timely basis. I also recommend the discontinuation of APLIA, instead, there should be direct grammar instructions by each English Instructor. Each English class should have a ten to fifteen minutes vocabulary section. Finally, there should be direct instruction for specific groups in the classes identified via the assessment instrument.

Kindly examine this draft to see if it is in line with your thoughts.