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NECC Early College Program: Third-Year Outcomes

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NECC Early College Program: Third-Year Outcomes

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Summary/Abstract

Five-year longitudinal community-based program evaluation reports annually on outcomes for early college program between MA community college and 2 high schools (suburban; urban) for academically average students, grades 10-12.

Mixed methodology uses surveys, interviews and quantitative student data to illuminate program design, measure student outcomes, investigate changes in teaching practice and examine effective leadership practices.

Three-year results show impressive credit accumulation and improved college readiness skills in students. Strong support mechanisms promote student success. Program is now being replicated in other communities.

Goals and Objectives

1. More students will earn college credit before high school graduation.
2. More students will take AP courses at the high school.
3. All students must succeed, since failure would only reinforce the perception that some students are not cut out for college.
4. More students will attend college after graduation.
5. Fewer students will need remedial coursework when they attend college.
6. More students will complete a college certificate or degree within four years of graduating from high school.

Approaches and Methods

Community-based research, using concurrent mixed methods for five-year, longitudinal program evaluation.

Research Questions:

1. Are the EC students truly average?
2. Are the EC college courses truly rigorous?
3. What are the outcomes for the EC students?
4. To what extent has the EC program made students more college-ready?
5. How has the program changed teaching practice and expectations?
6. How does student support change for an early college program?
7. What funding mechanism will provide sustainability?
8. What leadership characteristics support early college partnerships?

Sample Population:

1. Suburban high school (600 students) & urban high school (1600 students).
2. MA community college (NECC).
3. Academically average students (report cards in B - C range) begin taking regular college courses in grade 10.
4. Opportunity to earn as many as 45 credits by graduation.

Data Sources & Instruments:

1. Student demographic and assessment data.
2. Student surveys/interviews.
3. Parent focus group interviews.
4. Teacher/leader interviews.
5. Classroom observations.
6. Course material analysis.

Results/Impact

Course Rigor:

1. Instructors for most courses are regular college faculty.
2. Students use authentic college textbooks, syllabi, assignments, and assessments.
3. Students receive college IDs and full access to Blackboard and campus facilities.

Third-Year Outcomes:

1. 105 students have successfully completed 1268 credits or 423 courses
2. 1st cohort graduated in 2012, averaging 7 college courses/student.
3. 23/32 students in 1st graduating class went on to post-secondary education (70% to 4-year colleges).
4. 17 graduating seniors had completed freshmen English writing course.

College Readiness Skills:

1. "The progress in their writing alone is unbelievable." – English teacher.
2. Students still study only 1 hour/day.
3. "It makes you realize how important the future is." –student.

Teachers report new gains in co-teaching methodologies, better understanding of college readiness skills. Shared responsibility splits costs between high school, college and families. Parent contribution enables increased student support mechanisms. Entrepreneurial skills in K-12 leadership prove essential for successful partnering.

Conclusion/Next Steps

Conclusions: Best practices include....

1. Strong student support from faculty and guidance.
2. Learning community model with integrated curriculum and co-teaching.
3. College Success skills class, reinforced annually.
4. College readiness is a shared construct; parents gain as well as students.

Next Steps:

1. Program evaluation will continue through 2014.
2. The model will be shared and implemented in other communities.

References and Resources

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Additional Partnerships, Information and/or Contacts

The NECC Early College model is now being replicated in other high schools, including:

- Haverhill MA
- North Andover MA
- Salem NH

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Bernie Sanders, Haverhill High School.