

Rural Students' Reflection on CEP's College Skill Development

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Context

- ◉ 10 Years as English Mentoring Professor
- ◉ Involved in accrediting process
- ◉ Increased interest level caused change in career trajectory
- ◉ Completed Masters Thesis on CEP and College Readiness
- ◉ Need for Research on CEP
- ◉ Doctoral Student at UW Madison, U of M, now ISU

Thesis Conclusions

- Too little information
- Wide variety of policies, models, relationships, funding, assessments, etc.
- Students and Teachers were very positive but with little evidence aside from anecdotes and experiences
- Serious concerns regarding funding – even before the current crisis

Need for more student input

What do STUDENTS:

Want
Need
Value
Criticize

Why was Qualitative Research Appropriate?

- Very little research exists
- Exploratory - Depth not breadth
- Understand a particular population's perspectives and experiences
- Needed to gather more information in fewer cases

Human Subjects and Confidentiality

- Emphasized confidentiality, privacy, and respect for the subjects and the information that they would provide
- Ensured students that the data gathered was for the study purposes only

Methodology

- Invitation explaining the study's methods and intention sent to
 - All current SMSU students who
 - Had participated in an SMSU CEP program and
 - Were rural students by nature of these criteria
- Recorded and transcribed the conversation of 10 students
- 12 primary questions were sent to those **NOT PARTICIPATING IN FACE-TO-FACE** focus group but who would email
- Reached a point of saturation

Questions

- Q1: What were some of the alternatives to taking a College Now course in your schools?
- PSEO
- AP
- Shop
- General lower level courses

Questions

- Q2: What prompted you to take the College Now course?
- Parents
- Money savings
- Time savings
- What was expected as one of the school's "smart kids"
- Ambition
- Prepare for college

Questions

- Q3: How much of a difference is there between a college course in the high school like College Now and a college course that is more of a traditional course?
- Depends on the high school teacher
- High school gives more time for similar number of major assignments
- High school has more assignments
- High school tends to add busy work
- High school has high points for everything

Questions

- Q4: How did you feel about the course? What were your first impressions?
- Budgets threaten the offerings
- Offered in place of PSEO because it is better for the high school
- Knew teachers from earlier classes
- Felt no different
- Assumed if students were planning on a four year school, they would take the College Now courses

Questions

- Q5: How important is the professor contact?
- Confirmation that work is college level
- Builds confidence
- Learn to write for a variety of teacher's rubrics
- Felt more real

Questions

○ Q6: If the program were to have professors be in contact with only the teachers, how would that affect the program?

- The student who didn't get papers graded from professor resented the intrusion
- Gave insight to college course
- Professor's input made it "feel" like a college course
- Helps teachers who have to teach a lot of lower grades
- Professor input improves teachers

Questions

- Q7: What were your high school peer's opinions of College Now?
- Positive perceptions
- Confusion about the college credits and how they transferred
- Unaware the high school had to pay for students to take College Now courses

Questions

- Q8: Would you prefer PSEO over College Now?

- PSEO causes students to miss out on social life of college – don't know one's class as well
- PSEO causes students to miss out on social life of high school – don't have same experiences in common
- College Now forces students to prolong the high school overly demanding daily time commitment
- High school juniors don't have maturity to go full time as a PSEO student but can take College Now classes successfully.

Questions

- Q9: How helpful was College Now in choosing a college?
- Most hadn't planned to come here and were not aware of SMSU
- College Now was the first experience many students have making them aware of SMSU

Questions

○ Q10: How helpful was College Now in preparing you for college?

- Does not always transfer well, even into SMSU if the advisor is unaware of how to read a DARS report
- Different teachers were more helpful than others
- College professor mentoring could increase that for teachers who are less helpful in real college preparation
- College culture requirements can cause students to have to retake classes to get that piece
- The high school environment does not require students to learn time management because all of the work is done in the class.

Questions

○ Q11: What are some general college readiness skill necessary for college?

- MLA formatting
- Time management (possible planner usage)
- Take constructive criticism well
- Sleep management
- Basic math skills
- Self discipline
- Study skills and strategies
- Practice in doing work outside of class
- Awareness of diversity of teaching styles
- Ability to respond to syllabus due dates only
- Ability to write a paper
- Advanced research skills
- **BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS, PARTICULARLY ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS (D2L)!**

Questions

● Q12: Is there more that you would like to add?

- High schools should offer more CN courses
- Parents would be willing to pay a fee for more offerings
- CN keeps students less likely to choose PSEO and keeps the school open
- Library skills are important and not taught in college but expected
- Make the college time paralleled in high school – too much in class time for the content
- Less high school busy work
- Make courses more universally transferrable
- Students should have to visit the SMSU website

Questions

● Q13: Has the summary missed anything?

- Make the college time paralleled in high school – too much in class time for the content
- Less high school busy work
- Make courses more universally transferrable
- Students should have to visit the SMSU website
- **Make it more online based**

Conclusions:

- “Highly visible professor” collaborative model is effective for many students within the rural setting
- Students need greater system literacy
- Media literacy should be emphasized
- Online learning platforms should be further developed in CEP courses

Future Research Project

- Investigating the best model of virtual high schools participating in CEP
 - Consider how current accreditation requirements suit this unique partnerships
 - Offer suggestions to four year schools interested in innovative methods of CEP developments
 - Contribute to the small body of knowledge on CEP, cybergogy, and virtual high schools

Parting Thoughts

- CEP as beginning of seamless system practices
- CEP as immediate conduit to greater post secondary system access
- CEP as a conversationalist in articulation dialogues
- CEP as savior to continuing higher education budget meltdown
- CEP as watchdog to college readiness standards
- CEP as innovator in quality education access and delivery

Questions?

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