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Inquiry

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Oral Communication Competency Across The Virginia Community College System: A Faculty-Designed Assessment 5

Lindsey Interlante, MPA, MA

Cynthia De Reimer, PhD

Araceli Palomino, MA

Philip C. Tirpak, MA

A full-scale oral communication assessment was conducted by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) during the academic year 2013-14. Key components of this assessment included faculty involvement at all stages of assessment and collaboration with assessment coordinators and lead staff personnel. The VCCS Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness partnered with CST faculty experts to design the assessment. The Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form, a standardized and tested instrument used to assess public speaking competency in higher education, was used to evaluate student speeches. Designed by the National Communication Association, this instrument identifies eight competencies for measurement. The results of this assessment indicate that over 70% of students assessed who graduated with an associate degree from a Virginia community college have proficient oral communication skills. This project demonstrates that assessment can be a shared endeavor in which results can be understood and used to inform curricular planning by all major stakeholders.

Perceived Barriers to Higher Education in STEM Among Disadvantaged Rural Students: A Case Study 19

Lisa Henley, M.Ed., M.A.

Phyllis Roberts, M.A.

This case study examined the perceptions of scholarship recipients participating in Southwest Virginia Community College's (SWCC's) S-STEM scholarship program which examined whether the program helped remove barriers to students' educational goals and STEM career aspirations. The study used a focus group and a survey to elicit responses from student participants in the SWCC S-STEM program. Participants were low-income residents of rural Appalachia, and many were first generation college students. Results indicated that students in the SWCC S-STEM program experienced a wide variety of barriers to STEM educational and career success, including economic, geographic, social, and educational barriers, and that the S-STEM program assisted students in overcoming these barriers. This study may inform efforts to further increase the number of underrepresented students who enroll in and complete STEM education programs.

**Community College and University Interprofessional Collaboration:
Student Centered Partnership Between Nutrition and Dental Hygiene Faculty 39**

Cynthia P. Cadieux, PhD, RDN, FAND
Christine L. Medline, PhD, RDN, FAND
Gayle B. McCombs, RDH, MS

Interprofessional education (IPE) is critical in today’s educational and healthcare arenas. This article describes the initial design, implementation, and evaluation of a Community College/ University IPE collaboration that enabled dental hygiene graduate students to satisfy course requirements and service learning competencies, promoted faculty development, and also served the community. Under the direction of a community college dietetics professor, students and faculty from both academic institutions had opportunities to participate in community outreach events. Experiences included teacher recertification training for community college credits in the local school system, paraprofessional workshops, community-based health fairs, career counseling, guest lectures, expanded internship sites, and access to daycare personnel studying childcare. Step-by-step procedures for implementing such a model offers guidance for other institutions seeking to replicate the arrangement. The model presented in this paper can serve as a guide for curriculum integration with a variety of nursing and allied health programs. Partnerships of this nature provide rich environments for faculty development, program marketing, transfer counseling, student service learning experiences, IPE collaborations, and access to community at-risk populations.

**An Examination of the Predictive Relationship Between Mode of
Instruction and Student Success in Introductory Biology 49**

Lynette Hauser, M.S.

Community colleges, including those in Virginia, continue to increase online course offerings in an effort to provide access and cost effective education to a growing student population. With increased student demand for online learning, community colleges should explore further the possibility of offering more science courses online. This research study investigated the success of non-science major Virginia Community College System (VCCS) students in BIO 102 who had previously completed BIO 101 online. This multi-institutional, multi-semester study of community college online biology students collected data from the VCCS and found that the mode of instruction in BIO 101 was not predictive of student success in BIO 102 on campus students. Both online and on campus BIO 101 included higher percentages of female students, Caucasian students, and college age students. Additionally, more students enrolled in online BIO 101 after completing a previous online course. Overall, the findings indicate that online biology is a viable option for community colleges to address effectively the needs of their students.

Ballroom Dance: An Education Like No Other 61

Carrie Pledger, M.S.

As a disciplinary program, dance falls between the arts and physical education. As a result, it can often be overlooked or sidelined by either program, to the detriment of its great value for community college students. Dance and its attention to movement, mental focus, and physical control provide important neurological benefits that affect both the mind and the body. This study examines research studies that identify the neurological benefits of dance and evaluates student perceptions of its value on physical and mental well-being. The research on student perceptions was conducted at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

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