



Graduate NYC!
College Readiness & Success



**Center for Teaching and Learning of Kingsborough Community
College
Graduate NYC! College Readiness and Success Project**

**A Standards-Based Approach to Cross Institutional
Analysis of Student Work**

Final Report

Academic Year 2013-2014

A Standards-Based Approach to Cross Institutional Analysis of Student Work Kingsborough Community College – Graduate NYC! Collaborative Project

Objectives:

- To support students as they prepare for the new Common Core-based English Regents Exam, the CATW, and for their subsequent enrollment in Freshman English Composition I (ENG 12) at Kingsborough
- To bridge any possible disconnect between high school and college instructors' perceptions and practices

Project Description:

A workgroup comprised of staff (including teachers, administrators and professional developers) from some of Kingsborough's main feeder schools (Abraham Lincoln, Edward R. Murrow, New Utrecht, and Rachel Carson), and Kingsborough faculty involved in the college's teaching and learning initiatives (the Kingsborough Center for Teaching and Learning and Learning Communities) met five times from October, 2013 to May, 2014 for discussions grounded in analysis and evaluation of student work and assignment prompts with the aim of building a common understanding of what counts as evidence of college readiness. On a rotating basis, participants from the various institutions would host the meeting and select sample assignment prompts and student work for the group to discuss in relation to various standards (i.e., the NYS ELA Common Core, CUNY CATW scoring rubric, and KCC English Department student learning outcomes for developmental English and ENG 12).

Participants:

KCC

Lesley Broder, Assistant Professor, English, and Director of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)
Rachel Ihara, Assistant Professor, English, and Assistant, Director of Freshman English
Laura Kates, Associate Professor, Behavioral Sciences, and Deputy Director of the Education Program
Janine Graziano-King, Professor, English, and Director of KCTL

New Utrecht

Heather Kiley (withdrew), Instructor, English
Marc Mann (withdrew), AP, English

Murrow

Mauro Bressi, AP, Communication Arts
Janeen Torres, Instructor, English

Carson

Brianna Immel, Instructor, English
Sean Nicholson, Instructor, English

Lincoln

Karen Achille, Instructor, English
Jennifer Baumfeld, AP, English
Sheron Cudjoe (additional), Instructor, English

Project Implementation/ Successes & Challenges

- **Recruitment:**

We were easily able to recruit from Kingsborough, inviting faculty who direct some of our English programs in order to increase opportunities for dissemination among our faculty.

To recruit HS instructors and APs, we first asked Rick Fox, our Dean of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning, to help us identify top feeder HSs. Once these HSs were identified, we contacted Kathy Pelles, Network Leader of the B.E.S.T. Network, who referred us to Ari Hoogenboom, Principal of Lincoln HS, and Margaret Tang, Deputy Network Leader of Children First Network 112. Ms Tang then referred us to Maureen Goldfarb, principal of New Utrecht HS. Both principals expressed an interest in participating and identified appropriate staff. One of the New Utrecht participants, Marci Mann, AP of English, emailed Mauro Bressi, AP of Communication Arts at Murrow, who agreed to participate, and recruited an instructor as well. Participants from Rachel Carson were identified by Greg Bethel and Karolina Dryjanska, of the DOE, who suggested Rachel Carson, as it is a small alternative HS that sends 25% of its graduating class to KCC. In short, HS recruitment took a bit of networking and we appreciated the help we received from Graduate NYC!

- **Engagement and Retention:** We had quite a disparity among participants in terms of engagement and retention. While some were highly engaged and consistently contributed materials and reflections on our [Google site](#), others were less committed and were not reliable in their responsiveness. Unfortunately, one of the more highly engaged participants had to withdraw due to a change in position, and the instructor she recruited left as well.
- **The Shareable Resource:** The process of creating a shareable resource was challenging, but we feel our final product, *Continuities and Disconnects: A Teacher Toolkit for Analyzing, Revising, and Creating Argument Essay Assignments*, is something that can be useful. Instead of simply offering practitioners another rubric or assignment template, the Toolkit offers them a way into our process and an opportunity to construct their own understandings, and use those understandings as a guide to creating or refining assignments that can support students in their writing. Although it took a while to reach consensus, once the Toolkit was completed, all of the participants agreed that it would be helpful to a wide range of practitioners at both the HS and college level. The Toolkit is attached.
- **Reflection:** Upon reflection, we found this project to be worthwhile; we were, however, frustrated with the lack of engagement and initiative of some of the participants. While we understand that we have little control over how committed a participant might be, we do wonder what we might have done differently to increase investment in the project. Some issues that arose were:
 - It seemed to us, from the outset, that some participants were unclear about just what activities and goals were involved in this project; this was confirmed by the response of one of the HS instructors on the post-project survey. However, we feel that the materials we disseminated prior to the start of the project about its focus and purposes were fairly clear, so we remain confused about how and where the miscommunication took place, and how it might have been avoided.
 - With the exception of the post-project survey responses, we have little in the way of documented participants' views on the project; an attempt to address this by asking for a mid-project reflection was met, again, with varied degrees of response. Perhaps building in a time at each meeting for ongoing written reflections, from the outset, would have helped.
 - It seemed difficult, at times, to keep momentum going in between meetings; one thought we have is that, were we to do this again, we might schedule more meetings, and perhaps longer meetings, with less time in between.

On the positive side, we believe that most participants came away from this project feeling much better informed about what takes place at the “other” level; i.e., institutional

requirements, assignments, assessments (including rubrics), and student work. Most were glad to have formed cross-institutional relationships and expressed interest in maintaining these and participating in other collaborative projects in the future.

Budget

Participant Stipend (12 participants @ \$500 each)	\$6,000.00
Materials: Getting Ready for College, Careers, and the Common Core: What Every Educator Needs to Know by David T. Conley (12 @ 27.95 each, plus tax and shipping)	<u>400.00</u>
Total*	\$6,400.00

*KCTL contributed snacks for all meetings and host schools often provided coffee and additional refreshments

Dissemination Plan – Campus-wide and CUNY-wide

Campus and institution-wide, we foresee participants revising their teaching strategies, assignments, syllabi, scaffolding activities, and informal assessment based on our work together. Our expectation is that the Toolkit be disseminated at participating institutions and becomes the core of faculty development workshops aimed at creating greater alignment between high school and college expectations and experiences. We will send out a request that participants pilot the Toolkit with their colleagues and keep this workgroup apprised of “what works and what doesn’t” so that so that the Toolkit might be revised as needed and so that interested participants might engage in continued discussion beyond completion of the project.

Regarding CUNY-wide dissemination, sharing at CTL Directors meeting was a start; we additionally hope that the Toolkit is made available on the Graduate NYC! website so that other campuses might utilize it in faculty development workshops. Perhaps, some new sites could also be supported with additional funds from Graduate NYC!, in order to provide time to collaboratively use the Toolkit.

Final Recommendations/Next Steps

We think that, despite the challenges, this project was successful—we have developed a relationship with staff at our feeder schools and think that participants have a better sense of where student are coming from and where they need to go. We offer our success to encourage other CUNY colleges—both two- and four-year—to engage in similar projects to develop a cross-level dialogue; we offer our Toolkit as a way to guide such conversations, although it can also be used at individual HSs and colleges as well; and we offer our challenges—not to dissuade others from engaging in such collaborative projects—but simply as caveats to think about as they plan such work.

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