(de)Composing ENGL&101

A system-level leadership group for English faculty

Fall 2019 Convening

Friday, November 8, 2019

South Seattle Community College Georgetown Campus

Results from a survey of current reform efforts

As part of the work of our group, we wanted to get a rough picture of where we are as a system in developing our writing programs to meet our goal, which is creating equitable access to an equitable ENGL&101. This brief survey’s results gives us some information that may help us plan our activities the rest of the year.

# Raw numbers

Respondents: 23

Institutions represented: 22

# Responses

## Placement: We are revising placement to ensure equity.

## Learning outcomes: We are revising outcomes to reflect currency.

## Developmental Education: We are revising dev ed to enhance access and equity.

## Curriculum and pedagogy: We are revising curriculum and pedagogy for access and equity.

## Professional development: We are revising professional development activities to enhance equity.

## Assessment: We are revising student learning assessment practices to enhance equity.

## Assessment II: We are revising program assessment to enhance equity.

## Data: We are gaining access to disaggregated data on student success.

## Data II: We are gaining access to disaggregated data on placement.

# Interpretation of responses

## The positive: placement, learning outcomes, developmental-education reform

As a system, we seem to be fairly far along in placement. Seventeen of the respondents stated that placement reform *to ensure equity* was either completed or “getting there.” Only two institutions are “not considering” (though one may be after this meeting).

Likewise, learning outcomes seem to have been reformed fairly well, again with 17 respondents stating that the reform was completed or “getting there.” However, 5 are “not considering,” which begs the question of what the current state of learning outcomes are on those campuses.

Also encouraging is the state of reform regarding developmental education, with all but one working on reforming and again 17 well along.

Jumping ahead to the last question, our access to data seems pretty good, though my sense from talking with people, the availability of data when needed and the dissemination of important data points remain work to be done.

All four of these initiatives may reflect broader, national trends as well as work influenced by our group.

## The challenges: practitioner knowledge and assessment.

Now to some more challenging findings. As a system, we seem to be “just starting” the more difficult equity work or redesigning our curriculum and pedagogy and professional development, with the seventeen “reform minded” institutions (probably) placing themselves in the “getting there” or “just starting” categories. For both questions, 4 institutions are “not considering.” These responses may suggest that it’s more challenging to look at practitioner knowledge and practices than at student-focused reform (placement, outcomes, etc.)

Another challenging area is assessment, with the numbers falling to the “not considering” or “getting started” categories. It could be that because assessment has been left to individual instructors and, therefore, is seen as something we do individually “to” students and student work, and because assessment at the program level has too often been a rote and meaningless exercise, as a system, we are just wading into assessment as an equity issue with an eye on ourselves and our own practices. This is an area we’ll likely want to focus on this year.

# Comments

Below are most of the comments that respondents offered beyond a list of current initiatives:

“Faculty who are actively skeptical of diversity often have the ear of the administration.”

“Issue: Faculty who are unwilling to examine and/or implement the practice of culturally responsive teaching under the argument of academic freedom and contractual considerations.”

“Need: Get access to live data.”

“It’s up to just one or two faculty to carry the conversation forward, and these conversations happen with a majority of faculty who are content with the status quo.”

“Issues: (1) Developing a long-term PD plan for English faculty; (2) Helping faculty become more familiar with their own specific data.”

“We are struggling to gather data and provide equitable access to economically disadvantaged white students and first-generation students.”

“We are involved in several initiatives but they are not in the name of equity . . . . Most of the department would rage if the idea of anti-racist pedagogy came up—not so much because they are racists but because they don’t believe the tests and their pedagogy is racist.”

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