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Guam Community College Mission Statement



The mission of Guam Community College is to be a leader in career and technical workforce development by providing the highest quality education and job training in Micronesia.

Foreword

In February 2008, the Academic Vice President's Office instituted a new program known as the Academic Vice President's Small Assessment Grant Award, better known as AVP SAGA. Its purpose is to create an incentive program that provides financial rewards to departments or faculty members with innovative ideas on improving practice in course level assessment. It also serves as an incentive for individual faculty members willing to engage in small assessment research projects that build upon issues identified in the 2006 WASC Evaluation Report.

With the initial announcement of the program, three faculty members responded to the challenge: Dr. Clare Camacho (Education), Sally Sablan (Advisement and Counseling), and Barbara Jacala (Adult Education). This publication is an attempt to bring their contributions to the college's institutional assessment efforts to a wider audience.

Dr. Clare Camacho's project focuses on equipping faculty with a multicultural perspective. She contends that a direct connection exists between students' cultural background and learning, and that Guam Community College (GCC) instructors must be knowledgeable of this connection and develop practices that are effective in meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners. The project explores teaching and learning of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with focus on groups from Guam and the surrounding Pacific Islands.

Sally Sablan's project concentrates on utilizing COMPASS Data to identify the academic needs of GCC's postsecondary students. COMPASS is the computer adaptive assessment program that helps the college quickly evaluate incoming postsecondary students' skill levels in reading, writing, and math. The study finds that utilizing data from COMPASS along with data from student surveys effectively identifies and informs the college of the academic needs of postsecondary students, and helping with planning of developmental and college-level courses and scheduling of courses.

Barbara Jacala's project places emphasis on the importance of integrating meaningful participation of adjunct faculty members into the assessment process. Her project presents a synthesis of the strategies implemented through the participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process, particularly in the Adult Education classroom. Her project also illustrates how the organizing of retreat activities brings participants together and how the documentation of strategies implemented is illustrated in student learning gains based on CASAS¹ pre- and post-test results.

The AVP SAGA program will continue to provide incentives to involve departments and individual faculty members in finding ways to improve the delivery of academic programs and services. The call for proposals for the AVP SAGA program happens twice every academic year in the Fall and Spring semesters, to give ample opportunity to faculty who are interested in embarking on small research initiatives that make a difference for the college, particularly those that greatly impact student learning outcomes.

¹ CASAS is, "Comprehensive Adult Students Assessment System," the most widely used system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills within a functional context.

Equipping Faculty with a Multicultural Perspective

by Dr. Clare Camacho, Professor and Chair, Education Dept.

ABSTRACT

A direct connection exists between students' cultural background and learning. Teachers at Guam Community College (GCC) must be knowledgeable of this connection and develop practices that are effective in meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners. According to a WASC 2006 Evaluation Report, GCC should develop "college-wide programs or efforts to promote greater student understanding between groups and to promote a general appreciation of the value of diversity of students." This project explores teaching and learning of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with a focus on groups from Guam and the surrounding Pacific Islands. A literature review was completed to obtain information on culture and learning, effective teaching practices, and Pacific Island groups. In addition, focus groups were conducted with students and faculty at Guam Community College. As part of this project, a 3-credit course, entitled "Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the Vocational Classroom," was developed that assists faculty members in meeting the needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse students.

INTRODUCTION

Guam Community College is a public educational institution that provides secondary and postsecondary vocational programs, adult and continuing education, community education, and short-term specialized training. The College was created through public law in 1977 to "strengthen and consolidate vocational education on Guam."

Students at GCC come from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Data from Fall 2008 obtained from the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research, indicates that almost half (49%) of the enrolled students at GCC were Chamorro. Filipinos comprised the second largest ethnic group (31%), followed by Micronesians (9%). For the purposes of this project, the term "Micronesian" will be used when discussing students from Chuuk, Pohnpei, Marshall Islands, Kosrae, Palau, and Yap. Based on these numbers, approximately 89% of GCC's population comes from Guam and the nearby Pacific Islands. Therefore, the effects of culture on learning are important to recognize to create an inclusive learning environment and to improve student learning at GCC.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Neito (1999) presents five principles of learning. These five principles are based on the assumption that learning occurs from interactions between students and teachers and within social, cultural, and political contexts. One principle is that learning is influenced by cultural differences. Neito states, however, that teachers rarely consider the cultural identities of students. This lack of consideration for cultural differences may lead to a disparity between teachers and students and negatively affect the learning process. This review of the literature will examine the relationship between culture and learning teaching practices, and specific learning characteristics of Pacific Islanders.

Importance of Multicultural Education

The literature clearly documents the need and the importance for teachers to implement best practices in multicultural education. Community colleges are committed to open access and are therefore educational avenues for minority groups (Harbour, Middleton, Lewis & Anderson, 2003). Community colleges offer proximity to culturally diverse populations at a relatively low cost compared to four-year universities. Although college enrollment and graduation rates of minority groups have increased, these groups are still underrepresented at all levels of higher education (Harbour et al.; Swail & Holmes, 2000). In addition, the gap between minority students and whites remains wide, and retention rates are generally lower for minority groups (Swail & Holmes).

Pacific Island Cultures and Learning

Research on Pacific Islanders is limited. Some of the references are dated and are not from peer-reviewed journals. Although thesis and dissertation reports are listed in the University of Guam library system, the university has not catalogued many of them and many were not available for review. Nonetheless, the research found and the ensuing discussions are important in providing critical information for improving learning for Pacific Island students.

Libarios (2002) examined the representation of Filipinos in the community college system in Hawaii. He reviewed the literature and discussed aspects of Filipino culture that may influence learning in the classroom. Libarios found that Filipinos place great worth on social interactions and thus do well in classrooms that promote social interchange through group activities. He affirmed the Filipino value of social interaction and its parallel to social constructivist conditions. In addition, respect for authority, especially parents and the elderly, is valued and that respect is transferred to the teacher. Thus, directly questioning the teacher is considered rude and is not done.

In a review of the literature on cultural differences of Pacific Islanders, Kawakami (1991) noted the expectations of Pacific Island students were inconsistent with Western middle class expectations. Although her article discussed young children, generalizations to other areas of education can be made. Unlike Pacific Island cultures, routines at home in the Western culture closely resemble those in the classroom. In addition, the organization of the Western-style classroom is based on the Western culture's assumptions about time, space, language, and instructional strategies. In contrast, the Pacific Island students communicate, participate and learn in distinct ways (Kawakami). These strengths often do not translate well into the typical Western school environment, and there is often discontinuity in interaction patterns between home and school. Kawakami concluded that island students learn better through orientation to peers, group work and meaningful topics. Teachers must also match the pacing and timing to student preferences. Finally, the content of lessons must be appropriate and meaningful for successful learning (Kawakami).

Ballendorf (1980) relates a story of an American teacher attempting to teach Micronesian students. This American teacher was frustrated with students' refusal to participate and volunteer answers. Her fellow American teachers told her, "These people are just slow, you can't teach them much." When she asked an island leader, the islander stated that competition is frowned upon in the Micronesian culture. Volunteering or speaking out is rude and making oneself look better by flaunting knowledge is a violation of cultural norms. Ballendorf also describes the differences in how time is perceived between cultures. In the Western culture, being on time is valued and arriving early is a sign of respect. In the Micronesian culture, events begin "when things are ready" which can be hours later. The concept of future also differs. For Micronesians, only the here and now are real. Planning or saving for the future is not considered valuable.

According to Ballendorf (1980) the Micronesian culture appears to be field dependent in its cognitive style. People from cultures that are field dependent prefer to work with and assist others, display sensitivity to the feelings of others, seek guidance and demonstration from their teachers, and seek rewards that strengthen the teacher-student relationship. Ballendorf cautions, however, that not enough research has been done in this area in respect to Pacific Island cultures.

In another research study on Micronesian students, Jackson (1991) researched male Chuukese students enrolled at GCC in her dissertation. She reported that these students experienced culture shock when coming to Guam. In addition, the Micronesian males often deferred first to their families and then to their peer groups when making decisions. Although education was a priority for many of them, and often the main reason for their migration to Guam, their economic condition was a conflicting priority. In her study, Jackson discovered "all knowledge was a possession" in the Chuukese culture and "lessons were shared, not taught" (p. 26).

Effective Teaching Practices

Culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to understand how ethnically diverse students learn and the influences of cultural socialization on these students (Gay, 2000). In addition, teachers must translate this knowledge into effective teaching practices in the classroom. Swail and Holmes (2000) assert that developing teaching practices is perhaps the "most important and fundamental need that colleges must address" in terms of minority student retention (p. 410). White-Clark (2005) adds teachers lack the skills, knowledge and pedagogy to teach culturally diverse students. This section discusses the literature on effective teaching practices for culturally diverse groups, specifically contextualization and instructional discourse with particular emphasis on collaborative group learning. Unfortunately, limited research is available on specific teaching practices in Pacific island cultures. Therefore, related literature is presented.

Contextualization

Contextualization involves making classroom concepts meaningful to students' prior experiences. Yamaguchi (2002) discusses this practice in her article on Native Hawaiians. Teachers must make connections between classroom concepts and student experiences. Concepts are then better remembered, analyzed, and applied (Yamaguchi). Kawakami's (1991) review of the literature in the Pacific area affirms this approach and indicates appropriate and meaningful lessons are critical for student learning.

Neito (1999) discusses contextualization as building on students' strengths. He values the "significant experiences, insights, and talents" students bring into the classroom (p. 109). The role of the teacher then evolves into building on these strengths and co-constructing learning experiences with students.

Instructional discourse

In the practice of instructional discourse, teachers adjust classroom discussions based on students' responses and interests. Discourse in the classroom is consistent with real conversations yet still relevant to instructional outcomes (Yamaguchi, 2002). Thus, instructional discourse "includes characteristics of both true conversation regarding equal participation and deliberate instructional elements" (Yamaguchi, p. 33). Her literature review suggests the ideal instructional conversation uses a less restricted approach to conversation so that the teacher does not dominate the discussion.

Collaborative groups

Many studies advocate the use of collaborative groups as an effective teaching practice for culturally diverse classrooms. Gay's (2000) review of the research reflects the positive effects of using cooperative processes, especially the dimensions of communication, procedures, motivation and relationships. According to Gay, cooperation is a distinct theme with many cultural groups. Therefore, the dimensions of cooperation should be "key pillars of culturally responsive teaching" (Gay, p. 158). Swail and Holmes (2000) advocate for a balance of teaching methods including hands-on and exploratory activities, and peer learning groups. The authors discount traditional rote memorization activities and instead encourage teachers to focus on comprehension of content. Kawakami's (1991) review of the literature also discusses the value of collaborative group work with island students. In a Pacific Island educational summit, then Governor of Guam, Joseph Ada stated, "We are, by culture, a group-oriented people. For us, teamwork is not a mechanism for the domination of a few over many. For us, the team is the whole point of it all" (McCauley, Flores-Mays, Lewis, McCauley & Quan, 1993, p. 5).

Ziegahn (2001) encourages the use of collaborative group learning as an approach that is culturally sensitive and fosters inclusion. According to Ziegahn, this approach "emphasizes the process of listening to and respecting others, understanding alternative views, challenging and questioning others, negotiating ideas, and caring for group participants" [¶ 16]. Collaborative group practices are also consistent with cultures that tend to be more collectivist as opposed to individualistic (Ziegahn).

Libarios (2002) promotes the use of collaborative learning practices and the development of learning communities with the Filipino student population in the community college setting. These practices are consistent with the value of social interactions and social harmony in the Filipino culture. Social networks are important and Filipino students do well in classrooms that value group work and social aspects (Libarios).

In a study of Hawaiian students, miscommunication between Hawaiian students and teachers stems from two different sets of values (Jordan, Hu-Pei Au & Joesting, 1983). The authors advocate for the use of group work consistent with the family dynamics of the Hawaiian culture, where students "quite naturally" turn to peers for assistance rather than the adult. In the Hawaiian culture, children collaborate with each other to solve everyday problems and do not confront adults unless absolutely necessary. The research also emphasized participation, observation and imitation as learning techniques rather than "verbal directing devices" (Jordan et al., p. 235).

Gregory and Hill (2000) conducted an experiment with multicultural community college students to determine factors that contribute to better learning outcomes. Among other factors, participation in cooperative learning environments contributed to higher grade point averages for students in the experimental group. The authors recommend faculty use groups for problem-solving and brainstorming activities in the community college classroom. They add that faculty members must create conducive learning environments that promote cooperative learning.

Cross-cultural adjustment

In another study, Crabtree and Sapp (2004) described a cross-cultural teaching experience in Brazil. A caucasian, U.S. professor taught a graduate level course to Brazilian students. Besides problems associated with cultural differences between the Brazilian students and the U.S. professor, Crabtree and Sapp discussed an effective teaching practice termed mutual cross-cultural communication accommodation. The process allowed the professor and the students to

adapt to each other by negotiating a learning environment. Through this process, the professor developed a wider repertoire of instructional and relational communication practices. For example, instead of resisting the importance of coffee breaks, the professor reconceptualized the coffee break as a learning environment. After reflection and an increasing awareness of culture and communication, students articulated concerns to the professor about the learning environment. The accommodation process was “one of synergies” and “intertwined cultural and pedagogical adjustments” (Crabtree & Sapp, p. 123).

METHOD

Additional information on teaching and learning at Guam Community College was obtained through focus groups with GCC faculty members and Pacific Island students. Several questions were posed about their experiences at Guam Community College. Four faculty members were asked the following two questions: What unique learning characteristics do your Pacific Island students present in the classroom? What specific teaching practices are effective in improving learning for Pacific Island students in your classroom?

Approximately 20 students were used in one focus group from the author’s class. The cultural makeup of the group consisted of Chamorros (n=9), Filipinos (n=8), and Micronesian (n=2) students. In addition, the author met with students leaders from the Micronesian Student Association (MSA) in an informal setting. For this second group, six students were present, including 1 from Yap and 5 from Chuuk. The Pacific Island students were asked the following two questions: What qualities, characteristics, or actions do you like your instructor to have or do in the classroom to improve learning? What qualities, characteristics or actions from your instructors get in the way of your learning?

Part of this project involved the development of a course related to assisting instructors to improve the learning practices for those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Using the research and results from this study, a course guide was developed and submitted for approval.

RESULTS

Focus Group with Faculty Members

The faculty members presented similar issues to those presented by the Pacific Island students. According to the faculty members, Pacific Island students appear to learn better when working in groups and when not required to speak in front of the entire class. They also notice that students write everything that instructors write on the board in their notebooks. However, the students often do not write when the instructor is lecturing. The faculty members attribute this to the processing of auditory information, especially by Micronesian students who are English Language Learners. In addition, the faculty members notice the students rarely make direct eye contact and rarely request for help, even when they obviously need help.

The faculty members reported needing to be sensitive to male and female interaction in the classroom. One faculty member related an incident where a female Micronesian student crouched down as she walked into the room. When asked later, the female student responded that there was a male from her island in the room. To be “above” the male would be against her culture and would bring shame to her family.

Faculty members report that they often repeat instructions, write key concepts on the board, and use groups during class time. They also do not require students to look directly at them or to speak in front of the class right away, but often wait until the end of the semester when

students are more comfortable. Faculty members are also mindful, especially with Micronesian students, to keep a respectful distance away and not touch, use overt gestures, or use a loud voice while speaking. For example, a hand on a shoulder is reportedly a major insult in the Micronesian culture. Many of the teaching practices used with Pacific Island students assist all students in the classroom and create a positive learning environment.

Focus Groups with Pacific Island Students

The responses from the students can be categorized into themes. One major theme relates to shame, especially with students from the MSA group. These students state they do not like to be singled out, either positively or negatively, in class and are embarrassed when instructors do this. According to the students, when instructors say negative statements in front of everyone, they feel they have let their families down. On the other end of the spectrum, when instructors single them out with positive statements, they are looked at as bragging which is considered shameful in their culture. The students also indicate there is a difference when others from the same island are in the class. They feel less shamed to be singled out when other Micronesians are not present. One student purposely does not turn in assignments until class is over because he does not want the teacher to praise his submission.

Another theme running through the students' responses is time. The students feel that college instructors speak too fast and require students to respond too quickly to questions and statements in class. This is difficult for the students since English is their second language, and they need time to process and translate instructors' questions and statements. They also prefer frequent repetition of directions and information. Furthermore, students report that instructors do not give enough time to complete assignments and do not always understand reasons instructors take points off or do not accept late assignments.

The students definitely prefer instructors who use hands-on activities to teach concepts, and use many different examples including personal experiences. Other strategies include using visual aids, repeating directions, and making learning fun. The students also prefer working in groups. The students stated that their classmates often explain things better than the instructors. In addition, for MSA students, if they are grouped with someone from their island, they can use their own language to help understand concepts. The MSA students report rarely approaching instructors for assistance because they do not feel comfortable. In their culture, questioning the teacher or looking directly at the teacher is disrespectful. The MSA students also stated that they do not like it when teachers assume they know about their culture and do not like to be grouped as one type. For example, the MSA students stated that many teachers assume that students from Yap and Chuuk are the same and teachers don't realize that even within Chuuk, students from the outer islands of Chuuk can be very different from those from the main island.

Characteristics of teachers that students reported as being helpful to the learning process include: humor, patience, kindness, availability, enthusiastic, interesting, creative, passionate, friendly, open-minded, and energetic. Teacher characteristics which students reported as hindering learning included: boring, mean, lazy, strict ("his way or no way"), unmotivating, rushed, shows favoritism, not educated in area, racist, and the use of a monotone voice.

Course Offering

As part of this project, a course guide for "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in the Vocational Classroom" was submitted for approval through GCC's curriculum process. In addition, a course permission form and syllabus were submitted to GCC's Office of Continuing Education. The course was approved and began on April 17. The course ends

on May 9 and an evaluation will be conducted at the end. A course permission form and syllabus were also submitted to UOG's Professional and International Programs. This course was approved for three professional graduate credits. Supporting documents for the course can be found in the appendix.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students' cultural identities influence learning (Neito, 1999). Consequently, education needs to consider the correlation between students' cultural backgrounds and learning. As Gay (2000) states, "if teachers are to do effective culturally responsible teaching, they need to understand how ethnically diverse students learn" (p. 147). The unique cultural composition of GCC students requires the College to invest in training and educating faculty members in best practices in addressing the unique cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom. The effective teaching practices presented provide a foundation for further research and training. Although many studies advocate the use of collaborative group learning, the parameters and the dynamics of such groups have not been adequately presented. Teachers are often left to determine those parameters and dynamics without supportive research. Specific guidelines and suggestions should be researched and provided on collaborative group learning with specific cultural groups. Teaching and learning will then be more effective.

Further recommendations include amending the GCC Board-Union agreement to encourage faculty members to obtaining training and education on culturally effective teaching practices. This could be part of the requirements for advancement-in-rank, or even conditions of initial employment. In addition, evaluation of the pilot course that is currently being offered should be completed at the end of the course, and such results should be used to improve the course content and delivery. This course provides a platform for training, and can also be done in mini-workshops or sessions to make it more accessible to faculty members.

CONCLUSION

A direct link exists between student achievement and culturally responsive teaching practices. Faculty must ensure the teaching practices are culturally appropriate and effective in improving student learning. Although many of the groups discussed in the literature review do not directly mirror the cultural groups on Guam, the basic assumptions of the research are applicable. In addition, the implications for teacher training programs and faculty development are clear. With the expected increase in diversity in the classrooms, teachers need the knowledge and skills to address cultural issues and to effectively improve student learning. This needs to be done in a way that still honors the student's culture. As Dr. Robert Underwood, President of the University of Guam, stated, "this hegemony of meaning which governs our multifaceted relationships in schools, teachers, and students . . . always seem to work to the disadvantage and towards the devaluation of traditional cultures" (McCauley et al., 1993, p. 17). Thus, obtaining knowledge about Pacific Island cultures, the effects on learning, and related teaching strategies is critical for improving student learning.

Multicultural education poses a daunting challenge for teaching and learning in today's classrooms. From preschool to college, the importance of multicultural education cannot be underestimated. This paper has expanded the knowledge of the relationship between culture and learning and describes the factors to consider in the relationship. However, teachers still have much to learn. As Gay (2000) states, teachers need to transform themselves by "embracing, with diligence and enthusiasm, culturally responsive pedagogy" (p. 212). Culturally responsive teaching is "an obligatory and necessary part of [teachers'] professional preparation and

performance" (Gay, p. 204). All students benefit from such teaching practices. Doing any less in the classroom is an injustice and paramount to the "intellectual genocide" (Samuda, 1975, p. 7) of multicultural learners.

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Utilizing COMPASS Data to Identify the Academic Needs of Guam Community College's Postsecondary Students

by Sally C. Sablan, Assistant Professor, Assessment and Counseling

ABSTRACT

ACT's COMPASS™ is the computer-adaptive assessment program that helps Guam Community College quickly evaluate incoming postsecondary students' skill levels in Reading, Writing, and Math. Currently, the Assessment and Counseling department utilizes the COMPASS Placement test to properly place students in appropriate English and Math courses. After the completion of the COMPASS Placement test, students were randomly asked to complete a needs assessment survey to determine days and times of day they prefer to attend classes. This data, along with data from 2005-2009 COMPASS placement test results per semester, was analyzed to assess the academic needs of the students and to assist with planning course offerings and scheduling of courses. Students were also asked if they are interested in taking English and Math courses either face-to-face or online to help determine if the College needs to add or increase the number of online courses being offered.

The purpose of this project is identify and inform the College of the academic needs of postsecondary students and to assist the College in planning Developmental and College-level English and Math course offerings and scheduling of courses. As per the ACCJC/WASC June 2006 report, "The data from the COMPASS instrument is not comprehensively used to inform the College of the academic needs of the students or to help in planning course offerings or scheduling of courses." To assist with filling this knowledge gap, the intended outcomes of the project are the following:

- 1) The College will have a compilation of the COMPASS English and Math Placement test results of students from 2005-2009 to identify the academic needs of GCC's postsecondary students
- 2) The COMPASS results from 2005-2009 may be used to plan developmental and college-level English and Math course offerings for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010
- 3) The results of the needs assessment survey may be used to assist with the scheduling of courses for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010
- 4) The results of the needs assessment survey may be used to help determine if more (if any) English and Math courses should be offered online.

Currently, the English department does not offer any courses online. The Math department currently only offers one (1) college course online (MA110a – Finite Math). The results of needs assessment survey in regards to preference for online courses may help determine if the course delivery systems in place are meeting the needs of our students.

METHOD

Participants

In Fall 2008, a total of 541 students completed the English and/or Math Placement Test. A total of 119 students were randomly asked to complete the survey and 100% responded. Fifty-six percent of the students who completed the survey were female, 40% were male, and 3%

did not identify their gender (Figure 1). Forty-four percent of the students who completed the survey were between the ages of 19-24, 35% were between the ages of 16-18, 13% were 25-34, 4% were 35-44, 1% were 45-54, 2% were 55 years or older, and 1% did not respond (Figure 2). Regarding ethnicity, 50% were Chamorro, followed by 38% Filipino, 3% Caucasian, 3% Chuukese, 3% Paulauan, 2% African American, 2% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Yapese, 1% Korean, 1% Ponapean, and 2% identified themselves as "other" (Figure 3). Eighty percent were new students, 13% continuing students, 6% returning students, and 1% did not indicate their student status (Figure 4). Fifty-five percent of the students indicated that the purpose of attending GCC is to pursue an Associate degree, 24% Certificate, 2% GED, 2% Adult High School, 18% indicated "other," and 5% did not respond (Figure 5).

In Spring 2009, a total of 354 students completed the English and/or Math Placement Test. A total of 112 students were randomly asked to complete the survey and 100% responded. Forty-nine percent of the students who completed the survey were female, 47% were male, and 4% did not identify their gender (Figure 6). Forty-five percent of the students who completed the survey were between the ages of 19-24, 20% were between the ages of 16-18, 13% were 25-34, 11% were 35-44, 7% were 45-54, 1% were 55 years or older, and 4% did not respond (Figure 7). Regarding ethnicity, 51% were Chamorro, followed by 29% Filipino, 5% Paulauan, 4% Chuukese, 3% Yapese, 2% Caucasian, 2% Korean, 1% African American, 1% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Chinese, 1% Vietnamese, 1% Ponapean, 1% Japanese, and 4% identified themselves as "other" (Figure 8). Seventy-one percent were new students, 18% continuing students, 6% returning students, and 4% did not indicate their student status (Figure 9). Fifty-three percent of the students indicated that the purpose of attending GCC is to pursue an Associate degree, 21% Certificate, 1% GED, 4% Adult High School, 20% indicated "other," and 6% did not respond (Figure 10).

Procedure

From April through August 2008, students were randomly asked to complete the survey after they completed the COMPASS placement test. During Spring 2009, from October 2008 through January 2009, students were randomly asked to complete the survey after they completed the COMPASS placement test. In addition to demographic information, students were asked to respond to the following questions.

What days do you prefer to attend classes?

- a) Weekdays
- b) Weekends

What time do you prefer to attend classes?

- a) Morning
- b) Afternoon
- c) Evening

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking an English course?

- a) Face-to-Face
- b) Online

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking a Math course?

- a) Face-to-Face
- b) Online

Data on the COMPASS Placement test results from 2005-2009 by semesters was gathered to assess the academic needs of GCC's postsecondary students.

RESULTS

Survey results from students who completed the COMPASS Placement test from April through August 2008 (for Fall 2008), indicated that 94% of the students would prefer to attend classes on the weekdays, and 6% weekends, while 2% did not respond (Figure 11). Fifty-eight percent indicated that they would prefer to take attend classes in the morning, 35% prefer afternoon, and 24% prefer evening, and 3% did not respond (Figure 12). Given a choice, 82% prefer to take an English course face-to-face, 17% prefer an online course, and 2% did not

respond (Figure 13). As for a Math course, 87% would prefer to take a course face-to-face, 12% prefer an online course, and 1% did not respond (Figure 14).

Survey results from students who completed the COMPASS Placement test from October 2008 through January 2009 (for Spring 2009), indicated that 95% of the students would prefer to attend classes on the weekdays, and 6% weekends, while 1% did not respond (Figure 15). Forty-five percent indicated that they would prefer to attend classes in the morning, 35% prefer evenings, and 33% prefer afternoon (Figure 16). Given a choice, 78% prefer to take an English course face-to-face, 21% prefer an online course, and 3% did not respond (Figure 17). As for a Math course, 81% would prefer to take a course face-to-face, 20% prefer an online course, and 2% did not respond (Figure 18).

The following tables are a compilation of the COMPASS Placement test results for English and Math. See also Figure 19 through 22

DISCUSSION

Data on the COMPASS English Placement test results from Fall 2006-2008 indicated that an average of 50 students placed into EN100B. With a limit of 15 students per EN100B course, there is a need for at least 4 courses for students who recently completed the Placement test. An average of 145 students need to enroll in EN100R. With a limit of 20 students per EN100R course, there is a need to have at least 8 courses. An average of 308 students need to enroll in EN100W. With a limit of 20 students per EN100W course, there is a need to have at least 16

| | | FA2005 | FA2006 | FA2007 | FA2008 |
|---------------------|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Feb. - Aug. | MA085 | | 90 | 74 | 238 |
| | MA095 | | 291 | 242 | 238 |
| | MA108 | | 71 | 91 | 57 |
| | MA110 | | 21 | 23 | 2 |
| | MA161A | | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| | MA161B | | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Grand Total | | 0 | 481 | 438 | 541 |
| | | | | | |
| | | FA2005 | FA2006 | FA2007 | FA2008 |
| Feb. - Aug. | MA085 | | 18.7% | 16.9% | 44.0% |
| | MA095 | | 60.5% | 55.3% | 44.0% |
| | MA108 | | 14.8% | 20.8% | 10.5% |
| | MA110 | | 4.4% | 5.3% | 0.4% |
| | MA161A | | 1.2% | 1.4% | 0.2% |
| | MA161B | | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.9% |
| | | | | | |
| | | SP2006 | SP2007 | SP2008 | SP2009 |
| Sept. - Jan. | MA085 | 78 | 62 | 43 | 181 |
| | MA095 | 185 | 181 | 137 | 142 |
| | MA108 | 68 | 46 | 56 | 27 |
| | MA110 | 17 | 26 | 17 | 0 |
| | MA161A | 6 | 7 | 3 | 0 |
| | MA161B | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Grand Total | | 355 | 324 | 256 | 354 |
| | | | | | |
| | | SP2006 | SP2007 | SP2008 | SP2009 |
| Sept. - Jan. | MA085 | 22.0% | 19.1% | 16.8% | 51.1% |
| | MA095 | 52.1% | 55.9% | 53.5% | 40.1% |
| | MA108 | 19.2% | 14.2% | 21.9% | 7.6% |
| | MA110 | 4.8% | 8.0% | 6.6% | 0.0% |
| | MA161A | 1.7% | 2.2% | 1.2% | 0.0% |
| | MA161B | 0.3% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 1.1% |

courses for students who recently completed the Placement test. An average of 84 students placed into EN110, which indicates a need for 5 courses.

Data on the COMPASS English Placement test results from Spring 2006-2009 indicated that an average of 32 students placed into EN100B. With a limit of 15 students per EN100B course, there is a need for at least 3 courses for students who recently completed the Placement test. An average of 105 students need to enroll in EN100R. With a limit of 20 students per EN100R course, there is a need to have at least 6 courses. An average of 218 students need to enroll in EN100W. With a limit of 20 students per EN100W course, there is a need to have at least 11 courses for students who recently completed the Placement test. An average of 54 students placed into EN110, which indicates a need for at least 3 courses for students who recently completed the English Placement test.

In Fall 2008, the Math department adjusted the Math placement test scores. Therefore, the data on the COMPASS Math Placement test results from Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 should be used to determine the number of courses that need to be offered for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010.

In Fall 2008, a total of 238 students placed into MA085, which indicates a need for at least 12 courses for students who recently completed the placement test, due to the limitation of 20 students per course. A total of 238 students placed into MA095 and the class limit for most MA095 courses is 30 students. Therefore, there is a need to offer approximately 8 courses. A total of 57 students placed into MA108, which indicates at least 3 courses need to be offered for students who recently completed the placement test, with the limit of 20 students per course. Only 2 students placed into MA110a, which indicates only one course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test. Only one student placed into MA161a, which indicates only one course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test. Only 5 students placed into MA161b, which indicates only one course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test.

In Spring 2009, a total of 181 students placed into MA085, which indicates a need for at least 10 courses for students who recently completed the placement test. A total of 142 students placed into MA095. The class limit for most MA095 courses is 30 students. Therefore, there is a need to offer approximately 5 courses. A total of 27 students placed into MA108, which indicates at least 2 courses need to be offered for students who recently completed the placement test, with the limit of 20 students per course. No students placed into MA110a, which indicates no course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test. No student placed into MA161a, which indicates no course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test. Only 4 students placed into MA161b, which indicates only one course is needed for students who recently completed the placement test.

When determining the total number of courses needed for Fall and Spring, the number of students who need to repeat the courses and number of students who will be eligible to enroll in the next higher level course need to be factored in. According to the June 2008 Guam Community College Assessment Report on General Education, approximately 17.4% of students enrolled in EN100B passed, 25.7% of students enrolled in EN100R passed, and 20.5% of students enrolled in EN100W passed. Additionally, the report also indicated that of students enrolled in MA085, approximately 40.7% passed and 38.8% of students enrolled in MA095 passed. The regarding Pass/Fail rates for EN110, MA108, MA110a, MA161a, MA161b were not collected during this study.

Based on the information above, the following is a breakdown of the probable number of students who may enroll in the following English and Math courses and the number of courses needed. The data is further broken down based on the survey responses of the students on the time of day they prefer to take courses.

ENGLISH FALL

| Course | Probable number of students | Probable total number of courses needed | Probable Morning courses needed | Probable Afternoon courses needed | Probable Evening courses needed |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| EN100B | 76 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| EN100R | 229 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| EN100W | 508 | 26 | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| EN110 | 129* | 7* | 4* | 2* | 1* |

ENGLISH SPRING

| Course | Probable number of students | Probable total number of courses needed | Probable Morning courses needed | Probable Afternoon courses needed | Probable Evening courses needed |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| EN100B | 73 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| EN100R | 222 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| EN100W | 500 | 25 | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| EN110 | 117* | 6* | 2* | 2* | 2* |

MATH FALL

| Course | Probable number of students | Probable total number of courses needed | Probable Morning courses needed | Probable Afternoon courses needed | Probable Evening courses needed |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| MA085 | 345 | 18 | 10 | 5 | 3 |
| MA095 | 399 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| MA108 | 112* | 6* | 3* | 2* | 1* |

MATH SPRING

| Course | Probable number of students | Probable total number of courses needed | Probable Morning courses needed | Probable Afternoon courses needed | Probable Evening courses needed |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| MA085 | 322 | 17 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| MA095 | 385 | 13 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| MA108 | 119* | 6* | 3* | 2* | 1* |

*Pass/Repeat rate not included

Based on the survey results, there is a need to offer at least one online and one weekend course for Math and English courses. However, which courses need to be offered online and on the weekend cannot be extracted from the data that was gathered.

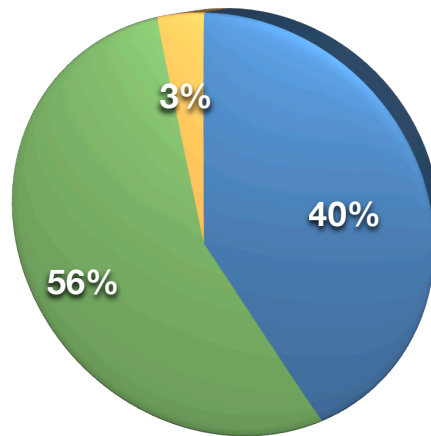
Limitations of this study

There are several limitations of this study. First, the rate of students who enroll in English and Math courses after completion of the Placement test needs to be considered. Second, retention rates need to be considered when planning and scheduling courses. Third, the rate of returning students (those who do not enroll for at least one semester) should be considered. Fourth, the data on the Pass and Repeat rates for EN110, MA108, and MA110a should be included in the analysis. Further study of these variables should be considered when planning course offerings and scheduling courses.

Fall 2008 survey results

Gender

| Gender | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Male | 48 |
| Female | 67 |
| No response | 4 |



- Male
- Female
- No response

Figure 1

| Age | Total |
|-------------------|-------|
| 16-18 | 42 |
| 19-24 | 52 |
| 25-34 | 16 |
| 35-44 | 5 |
| 45-54 | 1 |
| 55 years or older | 2 |
| No response | 1 |

Age

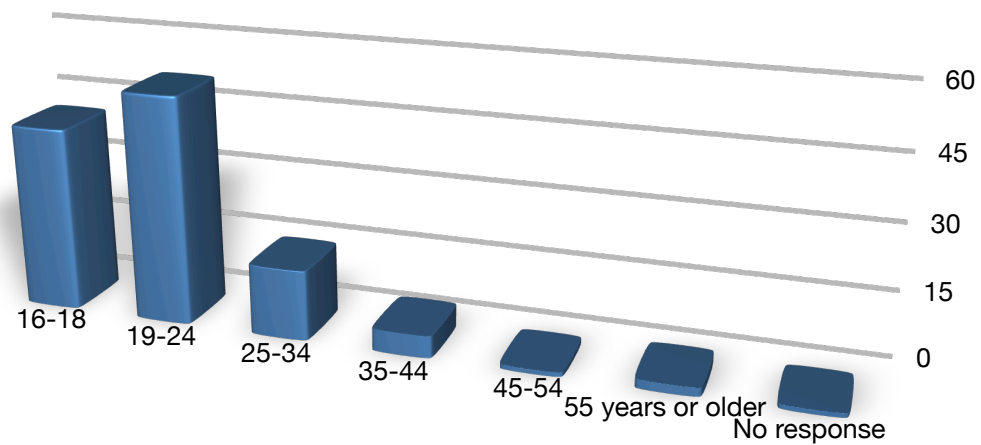


Figure 2

Fall 2008 survey results

| Ethnicity | Total |
|-------------------|-------|
| African American: | 2 |
| Caucasian: | 4 |
| Chamorro: | 59 |
| Chinese: | 0 |
| Chuukese: | 3 |
| Filipino: | 45 |
| Hispanic/Latino: | 2 |
| Japanese: | 0 |
| Korean: | 1 |
| Kosrean: | 0 |
| Palauan: | 3 |
| Ponapean: | 1 |
| Vietnamese: | 0 |
| Yapese: | 2 |
| No response: | 0 |
| Other: | 2 |

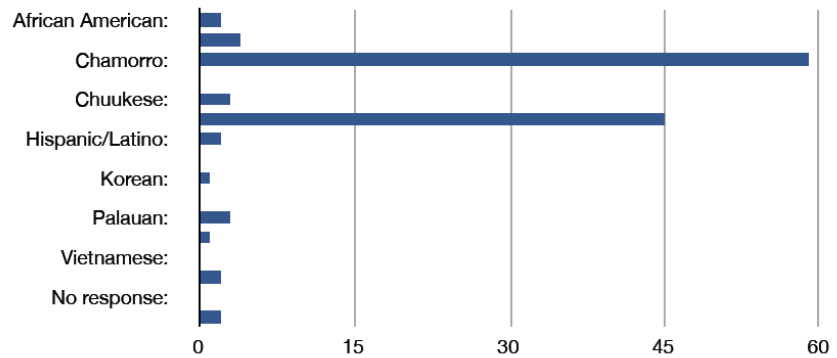


Figure 3

Fall 2008 survey results

Student Status

| Student Status | No. of responses |
|--------------------|------------------|
| New student | 95 |
| Continuing student | 16 |
| Returning student | 7 |
| No response | 1 |

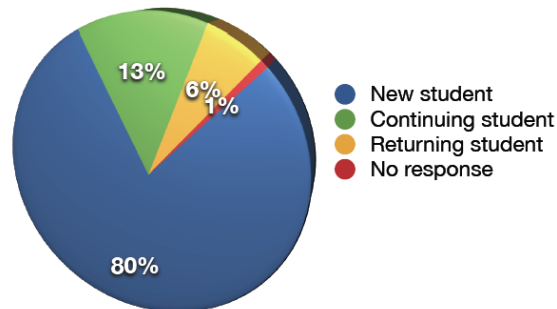


Figure 4

Purpose for attending GCC

| Purpose | No. of responses |
|------------------|------------------|
| Adult High | 2 |
| GED | 2 |
| Certificate | 28 |
| Associate Degree | 65 |
| No response | 6 |
| Other | 22 |

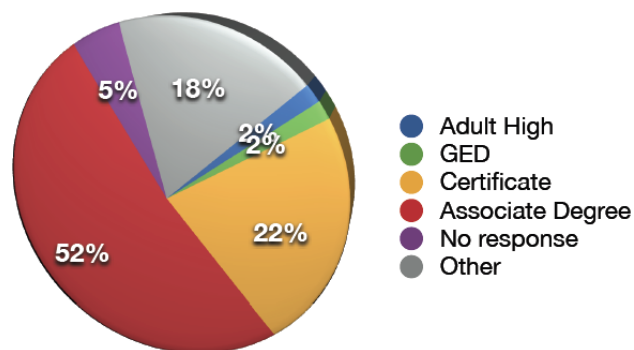


Figure 5

Spring 2009 survey results

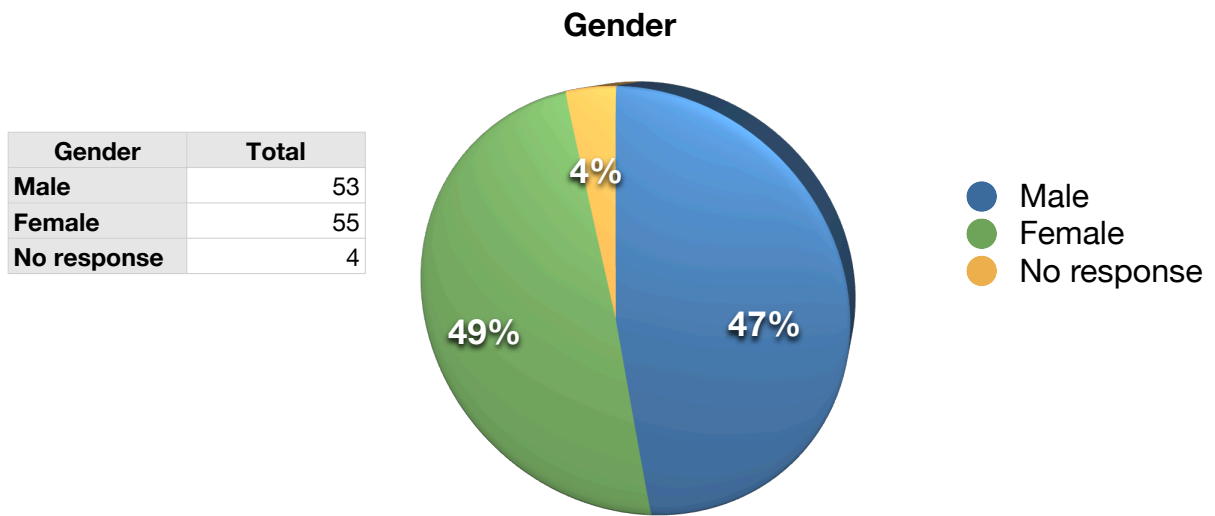


Figure 6

| Age | Total |
|-------------------|-------|
| 16-18 | 22 |
| 19-24 | 50 |
| 25-34 | 14 |
| 35-44 | 12 |
| 45-54 | 8 |
| 55 years or older | 1 |
| No response | 5 |

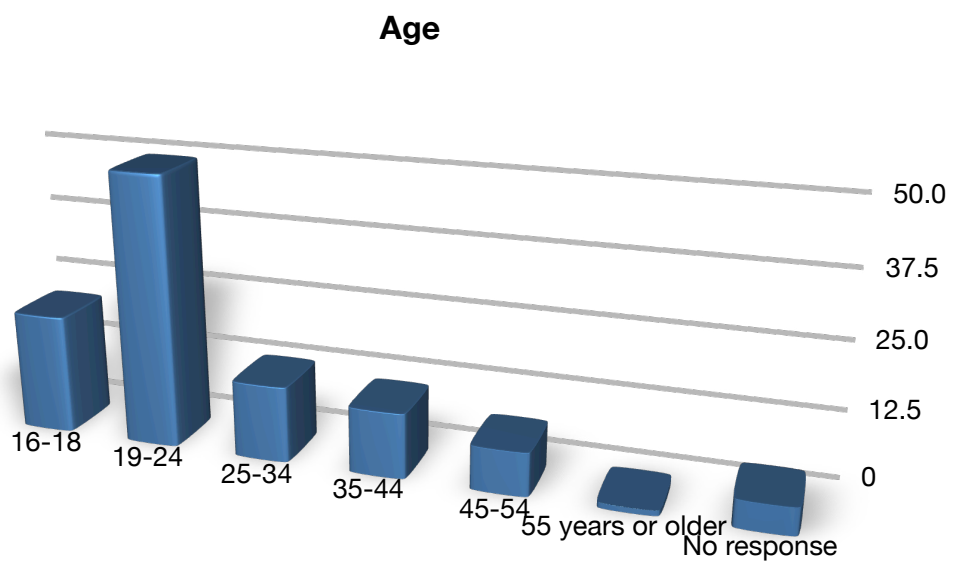


Figure 7

Spring 2009 survey results

| Ethnicity | Total |
|---------------------|-------|
| African American: | 1 |
| Caucasian: | 2 |
| Chamorro: | 57 |
| Chinese: | 1 |
| Chuukese: | 5 |
| Filipino: | 32 |
| Hispanic or Latino: | 1 |
| Japanese: | 1 |
| Korean: | 2 |
| Kosrean: | 0 |
| Palauan: | 6 |
| Ponapean: | 1 |
| Vietnamese: | 1 |
| Yapese: | 3 |
| No response: | 0 |
| Other: | 4 |

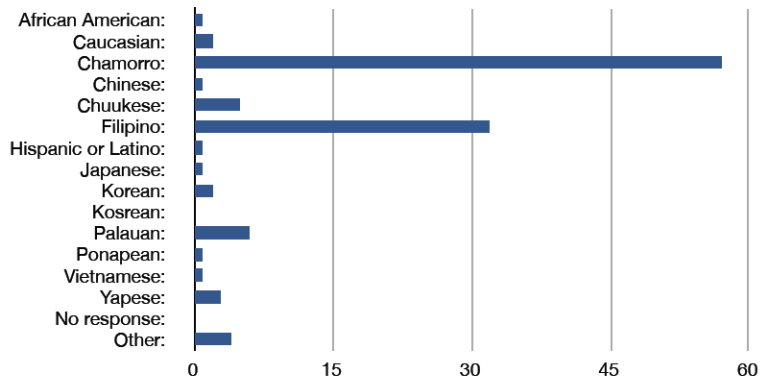


Figure 8

Student Status

| Student Status | No. of responses |
|--------------------|------------------|
| New student | 80 |
| Continuing student | 20 |
| Returning student | 7 |
| No response | 5 |

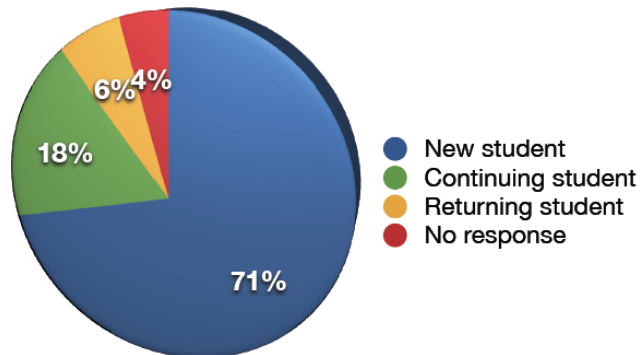


Figure 9

Purpose for attending GCC

| Purpose | No. of responses |
|------------------|------------------|
| Adult High | 5 |
| GED | 1 |
| Certificate | 23 |
| Associate Degree | 59 |
| No response | 7 |
| Other | 22 |

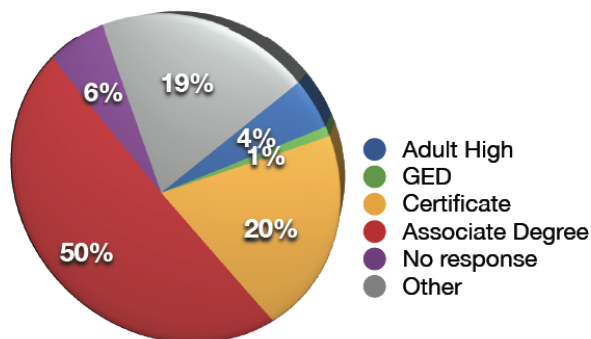


Figure 10

Fall 2008 survey results

When do you prefer to attend classes?

| Preference | No. of responses |
|-------------|------------------|
| Weekdays | 112 |
| Weekends | 7 |
| No response | 2 |

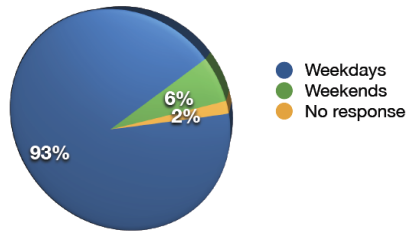


Figure 11

What time do you prefer to attend classes?

| Time | No. of responses |
|-------------|------------------|
| Morning | 69 |
| Afternoon | 42 |
| Evening | 28 |
| No response | 3 |

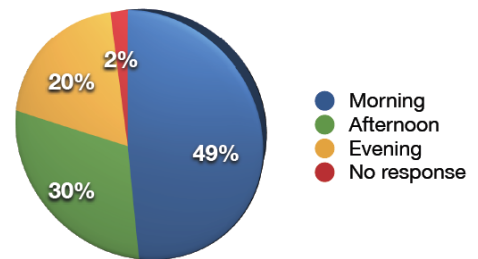


Figure 12

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking an English course?

| Preference for English | No. of responses |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Face-to-Face | 98 |
| Online | 20 |
| No response | 2 |

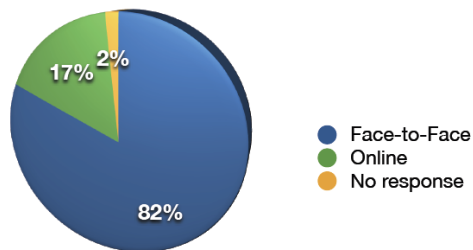


Figure 13

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking a Math course?

| Preference for Math | No. of responses |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Face-to-Face | 104 |
| Online | 14 |
| No response | 1 |

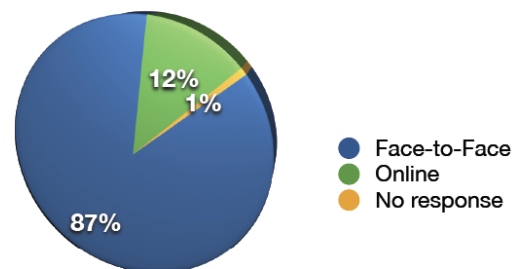


Figure 14

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking a Math course?

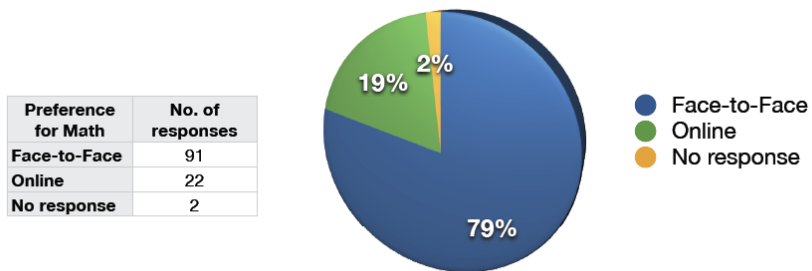


Figure 18

What time do you prefer to attend classes?

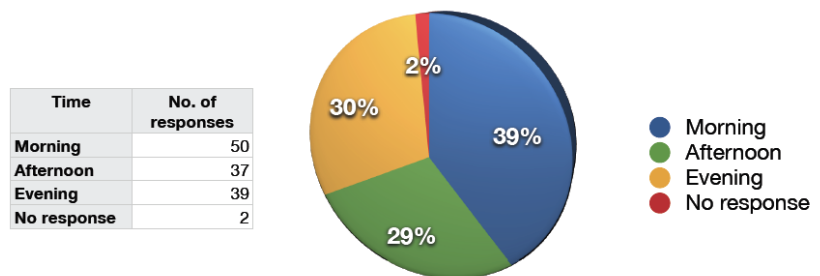


Figure 16

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking an English course?

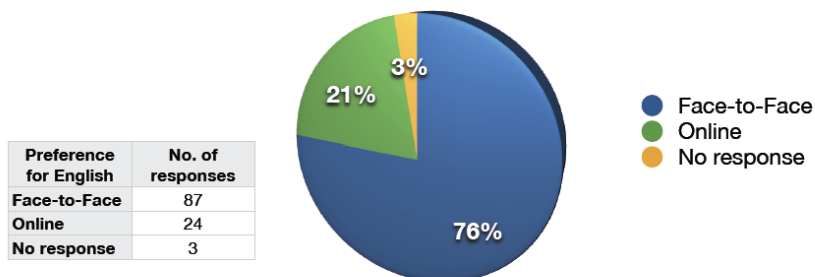


Figure 17

Given a choice, what is your preference in taking a Math course?

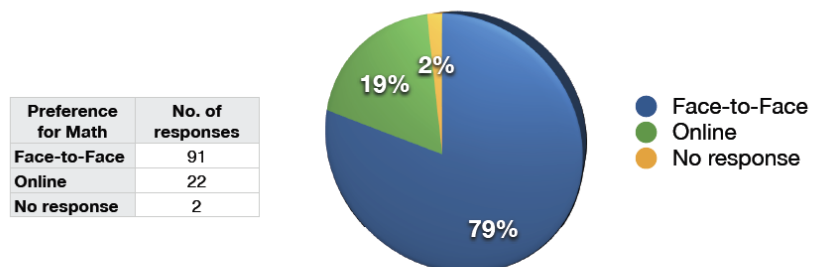
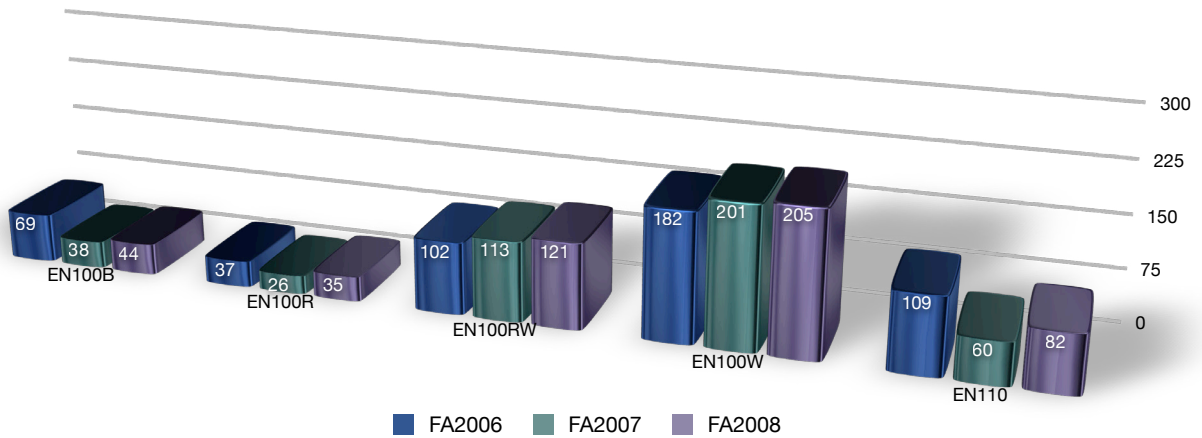


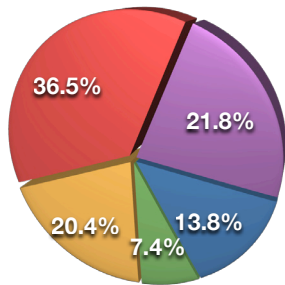
Figure 18

| (Feb-Aug) | FA2006 | FA2007 | FA2008 | Avg |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| EN100B | 69 | 38 | 44 | 50 |
| EN100R | 37 | 26 | 35 | 33 |
| EN100RW | 102 | 113 | 121 | 112 |
| EN100W | 182 | 201 | 205 | 196 |
| EN110 | 109 | 60 | 82 | 84 |
| Total | 499 | 438 | 487 | 475 |

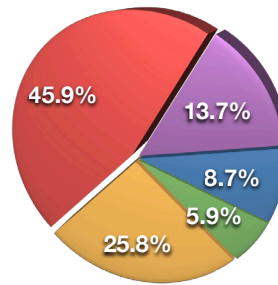
Fall English Placement



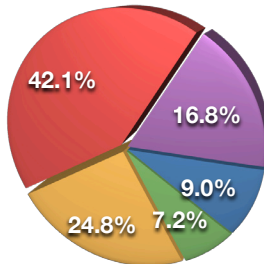
Fall 2006



Fall 2007



Fall 2008



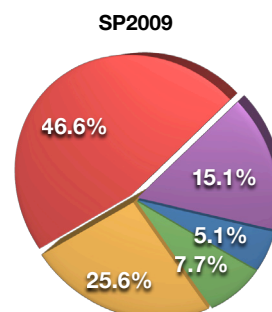
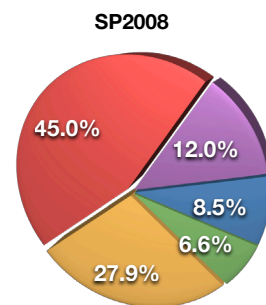
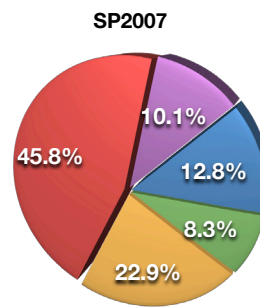
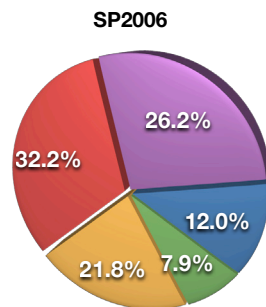
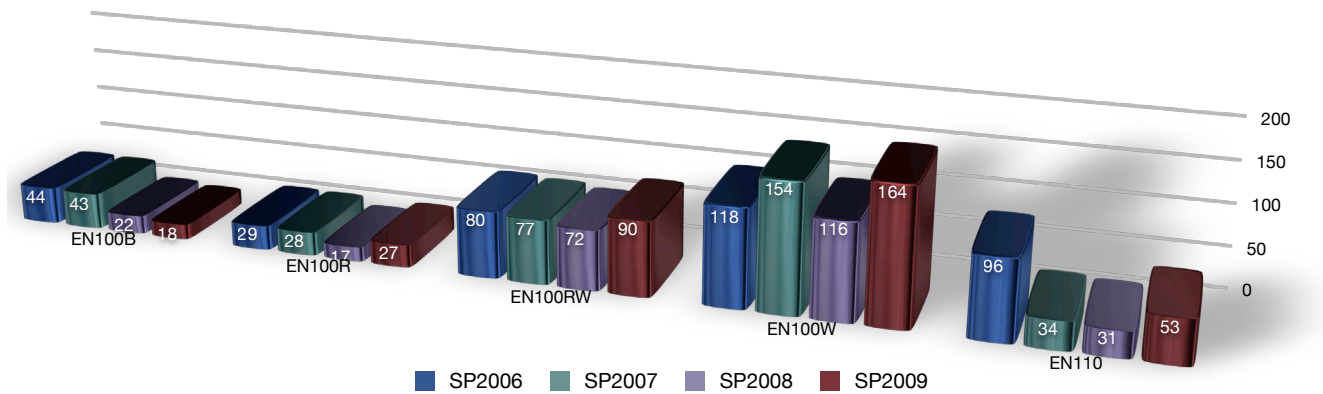
Compiled 03/1709

● EN100B ● EN100R ● EN100RW ● EN100W ● EN110

Figure 19

| (Sept-Jan) | SP2006 | SP2007 | SP2008 | SP2009 | Avg |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| EN100B | 44 | 43 | 22 | 18 | 32 |
| EN100R | 29 | 28 | 17 | 27 | 25 |
| EN100RW | 80 | 77 | 72 | 90 | 80 |
| EN100W | 118 | 154 | 116 | 164 | 138 |
| EN110 | 96 | 34 | 31 | 53 | 54 |
| Total | 367 | 336 | 258 | 352 | 328 |

Spring English Placement Results

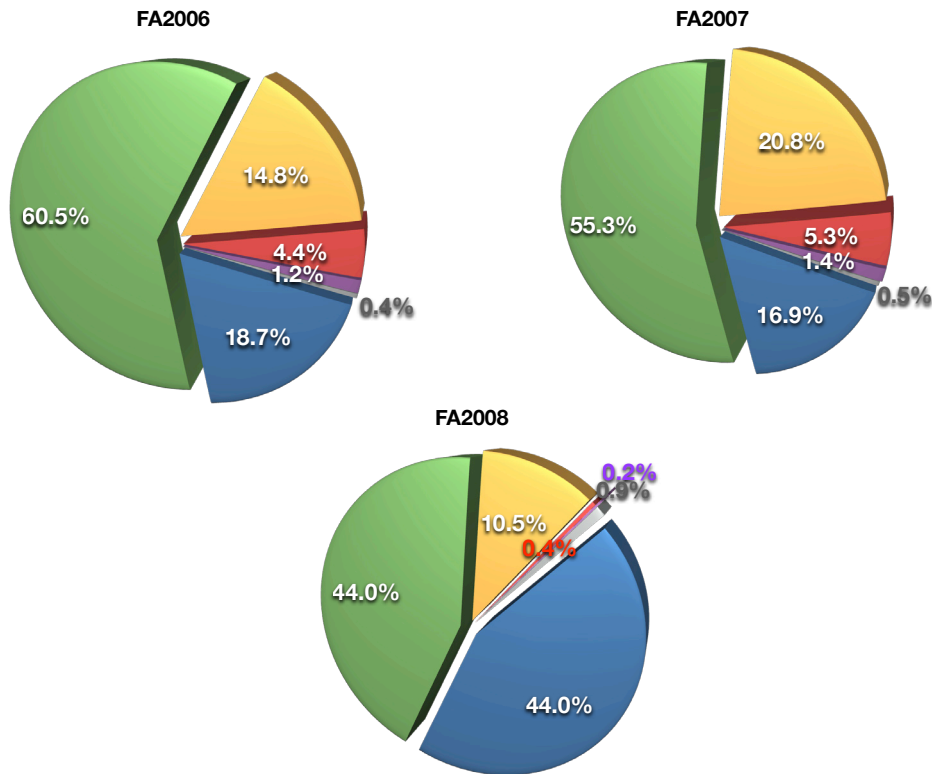
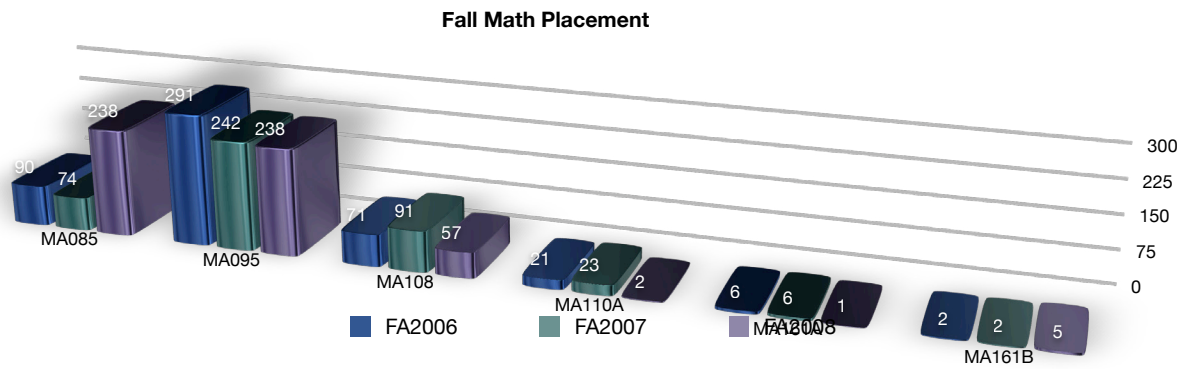


Compiled 03/1709

● EN100B ● EN100R ● EN100RW ● EN100W ● EN110

Figure 20

| (Feb-Aug) | FA2006 | FA2007 | FA2008 | Avg |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| MA085 | 90 | 74 | 238 | 134 |
| MA095 | 291 | 242 | 238 | 257 |
| MA108 | 71 | 91 | 57 | 73 |
| MA110A | 21 | 23 | 2 | 15 |
| MA161A | 6 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| MA161B | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 481 | 438 | 541 | 487 |

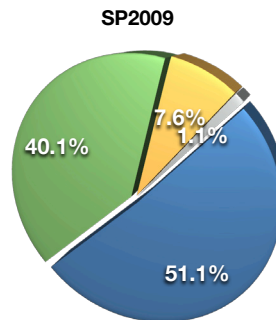
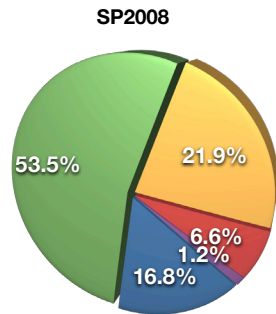
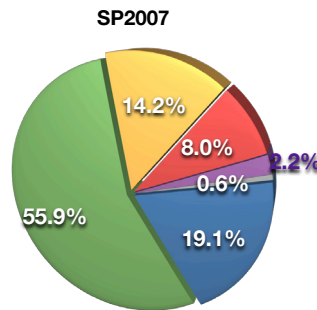
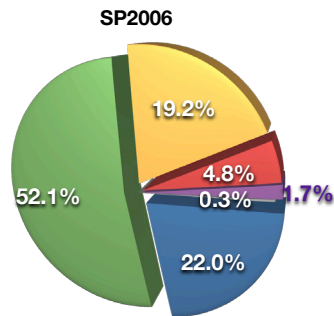
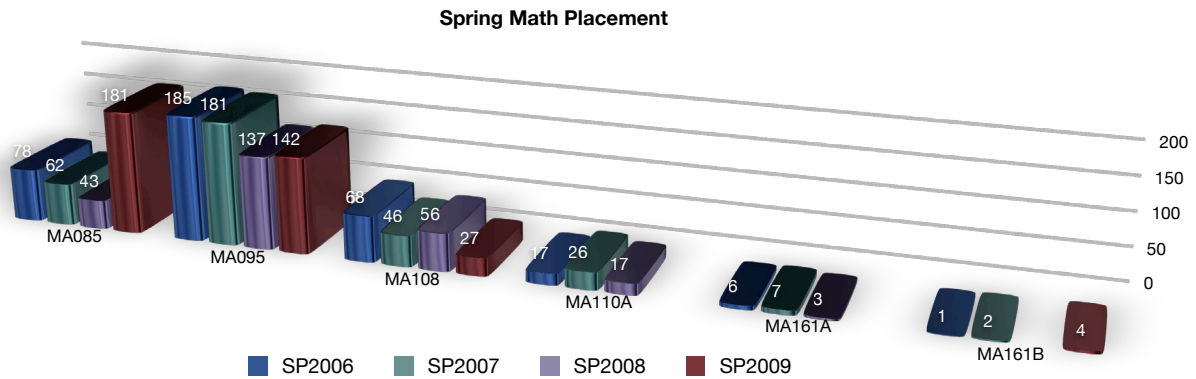


Compiled 03/1709

● MA085 ● MA095 ● MA108 ● MA110A ● MA161A ● MA161B

Figure 21

| (Sept-Jan) | SP2006 | SP2007 | SP2008 | SP2009 | Avg |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| MA085 | 78 | 62 | 43 | 181 | 91 |
| MA095 | 185 | 181 | 137 | 142 | 161 |
| MA108 | 68 | 46 | 56 | 27 | 49 |
| MA110A | 17 | 26 | 17 | 0 | 15 |
| MA161A | 6 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| MA161B | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 355 | 324 | 256 | 354 | 322 |



Compiled 03/1709

MA085 MA095 MA108 MA110A MA161A MA161B

Figure 22

Integrating Meaningful Participation of Adjunct Faculty into the Assessment Process

by Barbara V. Jacala, Program Specialist, Adult Education/GED

ABSTRACT

Often, adjunct faculty are unable to participate in college events because their position in the college is temporary. Consequently, there is not enough adjunct faculty input in the assessment process. The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of meaningful adjunct faculty participation in the assessment process. Undertaking an action research project enabled the Guam Community College Adult Education Office (AEO) to advance its goals to improve teaching and learning as well as to build its capacity for self assessment. Participants were Adult Basic Education (ABE) adjunct faculty who were invited to a retreat to assess and comment on the ABE curriculum; share strategies and lessons employed in their instruction through a demonstration; and commit to implementing innovative approaches in teaching their ABE courses. An account was given of an instructor who introduced innovative activities in his classroom with collaborative activities that use real life experiences. Student work was recorded and a general inductive analysis was made based on student learning gains derived from their CASAS pre- and post-test scores. Findings indicated an increased performance ratio for students in classes where faculty implemented innovative approaches to learning. Implications are discussed in terms of optimizing administrative support for adjunct faculty to integrate the meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process.

INTRODUCTION

Often, adjunct faculty are unable to participate in college events because they are teaching day classes elsewhere and their full-time commitment is to another institution. An action research was a suitable framework for the project because according to Ferrance (2000), it is a collaborative activity that is ideal among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or in looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Ferrance states that in action research, a reflective process allows for inquiry and discussion.

Further, due to isolation from being in a part-time job structure, Smith and Hofer (2003) report that Adult Basic Education teachers have limited formal preparation geared specifically to teaching adults, and they have limited opportunities for professional development and continued learning. "Typically, ABE teachers work under less than optimal conditions, lacking many of the supports that would help them do the best job possible."

A focused interaction over an extended period of time provided through an action research was determined as an appropriate method for AEO to integrate meaningful participation of adjunct faculty. In a discussion on professional development for adult education professionals, Jacobson (2006) relates, "In my experience, lasting changes in teacher practice occur in situations where teachers have the chance to really rethink how they frame their approach to teaching. Strategies come and go, but the philosophies that support them do not. For that reason, I see study circles, practitioner research, and project-based professional development as the most effective means of facilitating changes in teacher practice."

This report presents a synthesis of the implementation strategies to integrate the meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process. It presents how the retreat activity

was held to bring the participants together and results of implementation strategies are illustrated in student learning gains based on CASAS pre- and post-tests.

BACKGROUND

In the AEO, there is one permanent faculty assigned although there were 42 adjunct instructors employed to teach the Adult Education courses in SY 2007-08. Recognizing that success in a project to integrate meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process is unattainable without first securing a buy-in, the AEO called for a retreat to bring the participants together and engage them within a non-threatening atmosphere.

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

To integrate meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process, an all day Adult Education retreat of AEO staff, faculty and advisory members was held in March 20, 2008 at the Royal Orchid Hotel. The date was selected to coincide with Easter break since it is when the adjunct faculty are not teaching in their full time occupations. An inspirational speaker, a GED success story, was invited to share his post GED educational development. A guest instructor modeled an innovative teaching strategy. Each faculty member was asked to demonstrate and share one instructional strategy.

The major themes and trends of the implementation strategies are summarized below:

1. *Implementation timeframe*

AEO engaged meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process in SY 2007-2008.

2. *Program Areas (ABE, AHSD, ESL) targeted for Adjunct Faculty participation*

- One program area (ABE, AHSD, or ESL) and gradually phase in other areas
- One or two courses in each program area, gradually expanding from there

3. *Professional Development and implementation strategies*

Virtually all the adjuncts agreed to in-house workshops and inservice trainings to assist staff and faculty understand how to integrate basic skills content standards and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) competencies.

Additional Adjunct Faculty participation in the assessment process strategies included:

- Identifying core instructors/training team members;
- Utilizing core instructors as the primary training team to assist in rolling out implementation;
- Starting to assemble curriculum materials that reflect the CASAS competencies and underlying basic skills content standards;
- Running class reports by class to identify competencies that should be a focus for instruction in each classroom;
- Identifying the most frequently missed Reading and Math Competencies;
- Identifying relevant teaching materials;
- Assembling samples of materials for each frequently missed competency in a central location;
- Partnering to share resources and eliminate duplicating searches.

3. *Assessment method:*

In SY 2007-08, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) adjunct faculty was invited to a retreat where they were asked to assess and comment on the ABE curriculum. Each course level was reviewed to determine the instructional approach toward alignment to the CASAS ABE content standards. Adjunct faculty and regular GCC faculty teaching ABE and ESL shared strategies and lessons employed in their instruction through a demonstration. Handouts of the strategies were disseminated.

WORK PROCESSES AND RESOURCES

ABE Faculty Retreat

AEO sponsored a one-day workshop during Easter Break, in April 2007. It was to familiarize ABE staff, faculty, and advisory members with the concept of content standards and how they can be used together with CASAS competencies to enhance instruction. CASAS, which had been adopted by the college for monitoring ABE students, had developed reading and math standards for ABE. This served as the framework for student learning outcomes in the program. The question put to the participants was to comment on the relevance of the course guide to the curriculum and to classroom practice. AEO asked the group to provide feedback and suggestions for refining standards, especially in ways to reformat them for application in the classroom.

ATTRIBUTES AND PROBLEMS

- The retreat was an ideal forum for the participants. The date it was held was a “free” day since school was on Easter break.
- Continuity of effort was a problem since adjunct faculty employment, being temporary, did not ensure continued involvement in Adult Education. Instructors came and went according to their personal needs.

APPLICABILITY

Intended Outcomes of the Project:

- Adjunct faculty will become aware of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
- Adjunct faculty will become integral participants in reviewing and writing updated SLO's
- Adjunct faculty input will support the updating of ABE and ESL course guides.

Other Anticipated Outcomes for Adjunct Faculty involvement in assessment include:

- Attaining bench mark goals and targeted skill levels;
- Creating efficient, accurate instruction;
- Achieving National Reporting System (NRS) educational goals;
- Attaining follow-up core measures;
- Increasing student retention as a result of more effective instruction;
- Increased participation hours.

CURRENT STATUS

Themes from recommendations/concerns/remarks of participant adjunct faculty

To pursue the involvement of adjunct faculty, the AEO program specialist followed up on the application of ideas discussed at the retreat. While participants clearly understood the importance of content standards, they needed to experience its classroom application. Two math instructors took the challenge to incorporate contextual materials into their curriculum. They agreed to produce teacher made handouts and train students in study and test taking skills as well as read, review and comment on ABE course guides.

The CASAS content standards for math shared with the instructor were used along with the provided Workplace Essential Skills (WES) curriculum. Collaborative classroom activities were assigned to groups and students with high CASAS pre-test scores were chosen as group leaders. The intent was to keep up the students' interest, stimulate their thinking, promote networking skills and internalize the principles of the lessons. At the heart of the classroom activity was the team solution of a life skill from everyday situations.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Math learning objectives are met through mini-lectures and tutoring. The pedagogy is based upon active and “just in time learning.” The subject matter presented and researched by the students is whatever is needed to solve the given problem. It is constructivist in approach since it builds on individual and collective knowledge (both prior learning and experience and new learning) of each student and student team working in collaborative groups.

The instrument that drives the teaching and learning in this classroom activity is the BK Challenge (Burger King Nutrition chart). Before starting the activity, students as a class and in teams read the problem and review the chart, with the following questions in mind:

- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- How do we find out?

The problem scenario was first presented in class. The instructor encouraged the students to use the chart to identify the math questions that evolved as they got deeper into solving the problem. In their first activity the students had to devise a 3 meal-a-day plan with less than 650 calories per meal and no greater than 2000 calories/day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). They also had to present the costs of their solution. The math skills needed to solve this problem included comparisons, place values and estimations.

Their confidence in their learning and the teamwork of the students in their solutions were evident in the results - each meal had to be different and appropriate for each time of the day and had to include 3 items such as a drink, main meal and something else. A second activity was to design a 7-day 2000 calories/day plan using the BK plan.

The math instructor was amazed by the motivation, creativity, and persistence of the students. What he found most exciting was the engaged and active learning by students collaborating on the projects. Students did their own research and came up with their own solutions. Finally, the math skills were learned in a context of real-life workplace applications.

What was most challenging was adapting constructivist teaching style to the “just in time” teaching approach. Direct teaching of the math needed to be applied to the problem at hand. The instructor used some discovery activities for teaching math principles. He realized that the collaborative solving of problems is indeed constructivist learning and direct teaching facilitated that process.

What was most challenging for the instructor was the teaching of teaming skills. Students experienced frustration dealing with absentee team members and delegating and collecting work products, but they demonstrated great generosity and flexibility in handling these issues.

Five groups worked on the BK Challenge, meeting independently over two instructional days. The leading team successfully developed a total of 42 meal variations.

Other team projects continued to be developed. These included having student make up 5 mathematical problems based on the content presented in the workbook. Apart from developing the problems, the teams had to solve the other teams’ problems.

The instructor incorporated teaching soft skills in his lessons by creating timesheets for each student. The team leader was responsible in timing members in and out. At the end of the quarter the class hours attended was tallied and converted to grade points.

Goal setting was an issue closely tied to motivation and persistence. The instructor discussed short term and long term goals. A class blog <http://blog.newtechguam.com/> was created for students to submit their thoughts on their goals and reflect on them.

The instructor also invited community speakers from a banking institution and an insurance company to present math applications in their workplace. He brought his math class to a Guam Visitors Bureau meeting where they conducted a simple survey that they tallied and graphed.

The AVP SAGA Project, “Integrating the meaningful participation of adjunct faculty into the assessment process” to involve the adjunct faculty in the assessment of the program through the review, rewrite and evaluation of the courses is well demonstrated by the working relationship established between the adjunct faculty and the AEO.

Study findings indicate that adjuncts need to feel connected to the department and the institution. Regular informal sessions with the department foster a receptiveness to introduce innovations in the classroom. They portend the discussion of ideas, new findings and sharing of information. Constant flow of information through conversations, emails and phone calls must be kept open. Support with resource materials and a central location for work/study is also needed. Additionally, group training in seminars or workshops should be extended to adjuncts. So long as the adjunct faculty feels assured of department support, meaningful participation can be promoted.

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