Team Action Report Form

SMART 2011-2012 Academic Year & Summer Team Report
(Copy or save this form into a word processing document, update it, and submit it to Project SMART, beth.canale@oswego.edu)

Team Members:
SUNY Oswego: Long Peng, Jean Ann
Fowler High School: Kendal Salehieisa, Chelsey MacDougall, Dawn Kivlehan, Jim Gavigan

Team Name (For example, Delaware Elementary):
Fowler High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write the number of Teacher participants for each period.</th>
<th>Academic Year #s</th>
<th>Both Summer &amp; Year #s</th>
<th>Summer Institute #s</th>
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Team location and focus (For example, Delaware—ESL literacy)
Fowler High School- ELLs’ content area literacy in Global Studies

Data collected and analyzed on teacher learning (for example, faculty surveys, and teacher reflective journals).

This year we collected two types of data to find out what effect our project had on teacher learning. First, we collected teacher observation notes throughout the project and second, we collected teacher reflections at the end of the project during the teacher focus group.

Teacher observation notes were collected in order to reveal what types of teacher behavior teachers tended to value in themselves and other teachers. In (1) through (3) are the most significant responses.

1) Appropriate activities (i.e. serious explanation of concepts and vocabulary, show students the strategies they need to “unlock” English tasks in school) and materials (i.e. attractive, clear, effective - such as technology when appropriate) always help.

2) Appropriate teacher demeanor and behavior (i.e. gesturing and demonstrating appropriately, using an appropriate rate of speech, allowing students to try to express themselves before jumping in, reduce pressure by strategies such as taking turns so every student doesn’t answer every question, prompting with pictures, breaking down longer words, slowing down and checking for true understanding in multiple ways, being welcoming to newcomers, being cognizant of the need for “wait time”).

3) Knowledge of both the content of the lesson and the larger curriculum (i.e. be completely prepared, link lessons to one another, for example, this lesson to the last lesson, this lesson to the next lesson, etc.)

Upon the completion of the project, we checked on the teachers’ sense of what they themselves learned during the project. Teacher reflections during focus group on their own learning are summarized in (4) through (6).

4) Large student population compared to the number of ESL teachers (approximately 360 to 4) results in no time for ESL teachers to offer individual attention during the school day.

5) Classroom experience plays a big role in teaching teachers how to teach, but it’s easy to not actually do what you know you ought to do (i.e. ‘wait time,’ pre-teaching vocabulary, teaching overall strategies to unlock English tasks in the classroom). How can we help ourselves to actually do what we know we should?

6) Students do need to function well in school and pass the regents, but there is much more “out there” that the regular school curriculum is not focused on. When teachers are torn, they focus on the “high stakes” aspects of schooling (testing, etc.) and feel they must forego the rest, although they know the students need it.

Our sense from the data is that there was a change in the teachers from the beginning to the end of the project. Teachers began by pinpointing their own values about teaching. By the end they were articulating the tensions that they experience (“Why don’t I always do what I know I should do?”). In so
doing, they reflected on how they think and act, given their context. This reflection was important. Teachers and professors had co-constructed the project at the start, and new ideas and resources (such as a structured field trip for the students to SUNY Oswego) were introduced during the project. Teachers argued for this because they had a sense that they wanted to actually see their students in another context besides the high school. Given this opportunity, then, our sense is first, that teachers easily widened their perspective on what is important in teaching and second, that opportunities such as this one help teachers focus on and remember the implications of the fact that students as part of a larger society as well as part of a school.

Data collected and analyzed on student learning (for example, annual literacy assessments/NYS report card disaggregated data for 4th grade ELA, analysis of rubric scores on students writing samples each quarter for students in versus not in the program).

This year, we focused on two types of data regarding student learning. First, on the last day, we held a focus group for students that was designed to get at their perceptions of the project. Students had an opportunity to talk casually with teachers and professors, and their answers were recorded in the form of bullet points on paper right in front of them. They were invited to comment on two things: a) the benefits of the project from their point of view, and b) what would they like to see more of (our way of asking if anything could have been improved). Students offered whatever information they wished and no one insisted they provide anything more. Second, we examined their grades on the Global Studies regents examination (NB: our analysis will be completed when tests are taken and grades are ready-anticipated end June 2012). Our results follow:

Reflections during focus group for students are summarized in (1) through (5) below for the question about the benefits of the project. The answers that students came up with the most often are listed first.

1) Overall strategy of how to answer the document-based questions/other test-taking strategies
2) Focus on grammar and vocabulary
3) The experience of getting immediate feedback from someone who is your designated teacher
4) The affective abilities and supportive stance of the teachers
5) The field trip

The students asked for changes in the areas in (6) through (10). The answers that the students came up with most often are listed first:

6) Do activities that are more interactive (make it less dry)
7) Offer even more help breaking down DBQs so that students know what they are asking and how to answer them
8) Wanted to stay at SUNY Oswego longer, fun to be involved with the college
9) More vocabulary and more thorough definitions
10) More help with multiple choice questions

When all of the student data is taken together, a few central themes emerge. (1), (2), (7), (9) and (10) suggest that the students are very focused on their schoolwork, and that teacher attention to what they perceive to be the issues that trouble them are helpful. (3) and (4) suggest that the students feel a lack of individualized attention and appreciate the efforts teachers make to embrace and include them. (5) and (8) suggest that students are aware that an outside world awaits them, and they appreciate chances to engage with it. (6) suggests that students are active participants in their own learning, looking to be engaged in exciting ways with teachers. These data suggest to us that this new set of teachers and students are generally “in synch” with each other, and speak to all the work the teachers have done to be connected to their students as allies in English language learning and cultural learning about the US and
in the high school itself.

Our sense from the student data is that even modest efforts to interact, share information about English and the world outside of the high school are met with much enthusiasm.

Revised 4/19/12