

Designing Curriculum to Support Students

Cuyamaca College

Their Approach

In anticipation of the changes that AB 705 requires in supports for students in transfer-level English classes, as part of its Guided Pathways redesign, Cuyamaca offered professional development based on practitioner-level equity data plus ongoing equity training. This allowed Cuyamaca to focus on:

- developing competency in equity-minded teaching,
- sharing effective practices, and
- strengthening bonds among instructors and other college staff.

What They Did

Reviewing their own confidential course-level equity data, instructors were asked to reflect in teams of two on their strengths and weaknesses as equity-minded teachers, and then to develop goals to address concern or build on strengths. These workshops allowed varying levels of confidentiality and let instructors set their own benchmarks for successful change.

In thematic seminars informed by the data, equity experts shared foundational equity-minded teaching strategies, applicable readings, and sample activities. Based on what they learned, instructors made additional pedagogical and curricular changes. Along with other data, including from student surveys, the seminars and subsequent changes that instructors made informed development of a new model for professional development that Cuyamaca is now scaling across its campus.

What They Learned

Their own data surprised many Cuyamaca instructors. It is too soon to assess the full impact of structural, pedagogical, and curricular changes in transfer-level English courses, but the completion rate for transfer-level English has improved. Instructors were reminded that they are lifelong learners, and that equitable outcomes will require changing curriculum and teaching practices.

Cuyamaca also learned:

- It is important to clearly define and continually review the meaning of “equity-minded classroom” on a department-wide basis
- Honest conversations are facilitated by creating a safe space for instructors to discuss equity issues in their own teaching practices—as well as systemic issues
- Combining meaningful data, honest dialogue, and collaboration creates a foundation for transformative change

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