



Colorado Association for Developmental Education

CoADE Executive Summary of Spring Conference 2015

March 13, 2015 over 70 developmental educators from across the state came to Front Range Community College Westminster Campus for the Spring CoADE conference. The theme of the conference was “Developing Connections Across the Curriculum.” The morning roundtable sessions, designated by course number (e.g., CCR 093, MAT 055, etc.), invited these educators explore the following questions about their course content and practice:

- How can we equip students with literacy practices and quantitative reasoning skills necessary to enter any course at our respective institutions confidently?
- How can we engage our colleagues across the disciplines to learn how the skills we teach inform the tasks students will tackle in their future coursework?
- How can we assist our colleagues to incorporate our knowledge of good scaffolding and process-based learning to help them get the results they want from their students?
- How can we solidify connections between instructional practices and student support services?

What we learned from each other

From the morning session, each participant shared how they were making connections across the disciplines. Below are some highlights.

- Creating a multiple discipline advisory board to find meaningful, disciplinary specific readings for course, assist in developing writing and

math assignments that expose students to how reading, writing and math are used in various disciplines.

- CCR reported faculty pull writing assignments from specific disciplines to include CTE program.
- Having guest lectures from faculty across the disciplines.
- Thematic courses where students study how different disciplines think about that theme. For example, a theme on family might include definitions from anthropology and biology.
- Teaching self-advocacy and exposing students to college resources. This included embedding advisors and writing center consultants in courses as additional support.
- Some math faculty discussed how they have conversations with faculty in sciences to understanding some common problems students have applying math concepts in their science courses. For example, one math faculty member reported that through discussions with chemistry faculty, they learned that students had difficulty with unit fractions and unit conversions. The math department then was able to incorporate more fraction work into their courses.

For the afternoon session, each roundtable was an equal blend of Math and CCR faculty. The goal of these roundtables was to encourage conversation across disciplinary lines and find the commonalities in the skills each discipline instills in the students. While many of the conversations started slow, the attendees reported they saw some important intersections between these two disciplines. Some of the takeaways included:

- Working together to teach students how to read math texts
- Working together to teach students how to parse out vocabulary in math word problems
- Working together to help students use statistics responsibly in argument papers.
- Working together to help students use self-reflection and self-assessment as a method to track their own learning.
- Working together to find intersections within our content. For example, have students read math related literature in math classes such as *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Imitation Game*

Continued Conversations

While the sessions provided solutions to many of the attendees, many questions regarding implementing the redesign remained. The CoADE executive board would

encourage you to continue the conversations and questions several attendees started at the conference. Some of the conversations and question included:

- Representatives from Front Range Community College reported that they were able to use “High Course Cost Fees” (HCCF’s) as a method to support supplemental services such as CCR specific Writing Center consultants and embedded advising. They reported that these fees, which students pay an extra \$5/credit hour for their developmental courses, came from CCCS policy. Many of the other attendees did not know these fees existed. As an executive board, we would encourage Math and CCR faculty to engage their administrators to learn more about opportunities to use HCCF’s to support student success.
- While the CCCS and CDHE implemented assessments to track implementation of the redesign and student success, many attendees reported a need for local assessment. As an executive board, we would encourage you to talk within your departments, to faculty across the disciplines, and your administrators to find methods of assessment that help support classroom instruction ensuring student success in CCR or Math and for every course students enroll.
- Further, to ensure we are all measuring the same levels of success, attendees wanted to engage the state-wide faculty groups and administrators to ensure that models were consistent across the state. For example, several attendees in the CCR 094 breakout session reported that the model employed at the different schools varied widely and impacted how faculty could best support students in these courses. Similarly, math faculty discussed issues with finding the right publisher-side content to support students. Moreover, there is no clear model to deliver a soft-landing program to support some of our most vulnerable students. As the executive board, we encourage you to work with your colleagues around the state to develop consistent in course content, but still find models that work for your particular contexts.
- Finally, attendees expressed concern about how to provide meaningful professional development for all faculty in light of accerelation and the need to provide students with content they could use across the discipline. As an executive board, we encourage you to continue to research and create professional development programs with an emphasis on teaching practices that help students develop critical thinking skills.

What's Next?

The session closed with a preview of the Fall CoADE conference held at Pueblo Community College on Friday, October 16, 2015 where educators will explore these connections on a practical level. CoADE announced that they will be soliciting proposals from faculty who are working with their colleagues outside their disciplines to promote literacy acquisition, quantitative reasoning skills, and helping students navigate institutional resources, and help students become self-advocates in their educational pathway. Further, we want to encourage our members and conference attendees to talk to department chairs and administrators outside our departments so that we can invite our colleagues across the disciplines to support all of our students.