Community College of Allegheny County

Achieving the Dream Newsletter

Focusing on Student Success

Students Set Goals Anew

By Nancy Persinger, Reference Librarian, North Campus Library

Students have achieved the important goal of entering college, and it is never too early for them to set their goals toward graduation and a rewarding life to follow. To reach these goals they must carefully plan for success as a student with graduation as their ultimate destination. But just how do they achieve such a plan?--By seeking a road map to success.

Candace Smigla at the North Campus Library has created an appealing display based upon the Roadmap project that visually displays the concepts of the project. Mrs. Smigla, who avidly endorses the Roadmap project, explains it this way: "To achieve their dreams students must complete milestones along the path to graduation. More importantly, students need to know where to turn for support and guidance in reaching their goals. CCAC provides a strong support system for our students, but unless students are aware of the available help, they cannot utilize it."

Further, Candace offered this, "The concept of the Roadmap project, coupled with a visually appealing brochure perfect for spatial learners, succinctly provides the information students need to succeed. A particularly significant fact regarding the Library is that we have the opportunity to reach many students from all programs and majors each day. Being enthusiastic about this project, I wanted to create a library display emphasizing the key points of the Roadmap project to serve as an effective communication tool that would reach as many Library patrons as possible, both within and beyond the North campus community." Ergo, we invite all to come in to the Library to observe Candace's intriguing *Roadmap to Success in the College* display.
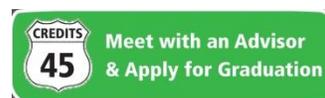
You will find more information about Roadmap at this CCAC site: https://www.ccac.edu/learning/
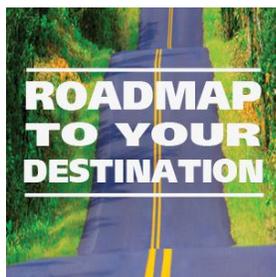
Important Dates

10/20/14 – Priority registration

10/28/14 – Spring registration

Classroom Tip – Ask students to identify their location on the map. Have them pick one task to complete and write a reflection about why they chose the activity and how it will help them achieve their goals.

Flipped Math 080 Spring Success!

The typical success pattern for MAT 080 - Arithmetic Fundamentals shows a cycle of mid-to-upper 50s in the fall and low-to-mid 50s in the spring. The Flipped Math 080 initiative at North and West Hills is bucking that trend with higher success rates. The Flipped 080 model is a learner-centered approach where students are responsible for reading the textbook and watching video lectures before each class. They work on problems and ask questions in the classroom. The flipped model puts more responsibility on students and increases the likelihood of content mastery and future success. The model was adopted by faculty at North campus in an effort to accelerate the completion of developmental math courses.

Fifty-four percent of MAT 080 students college-wide successfully completed the course in spring 2014. The success rate at North was 80% and at West Hills 78%. (Table 1)

Flipped 080	*MAT 080*	
Spring 2014 Cohort	# Enrolled	Success
North	70	80%
West Hills	50	78%

Table 1

The report produced by Planning and Institutional Research contained additional good news that supports the theory of content mastery. Students who successfully completed Flipped 080 in fall 2013 were more likely to enroll in MAT 090 in the spring. And the Flipped 080 students were more likely to be successful in MAT 090. The MAT 090 success rate at North was 68% and at West Hills 63%. (Table 2) Thirty-six percent of the North and West Hills students who attempted MAT 080 in the fall successfully completed the developmental math sequence in one year compared to 26% college-wide.

Flipped 080	MAT 080		MAT 090		
Fall 2013 Cohort	# Enrolled	Success	% Enrolled	# Enrolled	Success
North	156	65%	52%	81	68%
West Hills	103	81%	60%	62	63%

Table 2

Stephanie Swindle, Math Department Head at North campus, states, "Moving forward in future semesters, North campus and West Hills are committed to our approach for MAT 080 and look forward to watching the seeds of "learning how to learn" grow and flourish at CCAC not just at North and West Hills but at other campuses as well."

CAT Best Practices

The ATD newsletter periodically features a CAT Summary to highlight best practices in classroom assessment at CCAC. This example features several important aspects of assessment. First, good classroom assessments provide learning opportunities, and this example requires students to analyze their mistakes. What a learning opportunity! Second, the follow-up activity, in this case a quiz, shows that students were able to achieve a level of competency on the learning outcome. Third, the alignment between the learning outcome, the assessment and the result is clear.

Faculty Name	Kalina White
Campus	Allegheny
Date	8/29/2014
Discipline/Program	Biology
Course	Bio 175, Microbiology
What learning outcome are you assessing?	Identify, define and use the basic principles of microbiology and recognize the ubiquity of microorganisms. (Specifically, the differences between the Gram positive and Gram negative cell envelopes.)
Describe the learning opportunity you provided	Lecture on prokaryotic cell structures

to students to help them achieve the learning outcome.	
Classroom Assessment Technique Used	Students were divided into groups of 3-4 and asked to make a table of differences. They then copied their tables on the board. The four tables were compared.
What did the assessment data reveal about student learning?	All four tables were different. Key items had been left off of each one, but not the same key items. Spelling errors were profuse. 100% of the tables had at least one error or omission.
How did you use the results to improve learning?	The entire class compared the tables on the board to the one they had developed. Missing items were added and spelling errors were corrected.
Evidence of Improved Learning	86% of the students successfully answered an embedded question on the quiz. Average quiz score was 70%.

Please consider completing a CAT Summary Sheet for one of your classroom assessments and submit it to aslcommittee@ccac.edu.

Newsletter prepared by,
Mary Kate Quinlan
Director of Learning Outcomes and Achieving the Dream
mquinlan@ccac.edu