

DCCCD Retention Best Practice Submission Form

Across the district there are many successful practices that contribute to the retention of students. As the district begins to develop a greater emphasis on its retention strategy, all locations are asked to identify and submit information about successful retention programs and activities. Please complete the following information on selected practices.

College/Location:

The Retention Best Practice is primarily supported by what college/location area:

Instruction Student Services_____ Administrative_____

Combination of areas: (Please list)

Contact Person: **Phyllis Cook or Martha Timberlake**

Retention Best Practice Title: **Connections Study Skills Workshops**

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math_____ STEM_____ Honors College_____ Other **Student Success across disciplines and course levels**

Retention Best Practice Executive Summary: approximately 50 words (Please use additional pages for a detailed description)

Connections Study Skills Workshops cover a range of both general and content specific topics (i.e., reading a textbook, writing and grammar, test preparation, test anxiety, time management, creative thinking, managing money, applying for financial aid, studying math, etc.). Each workshop is 50 minutes long, and sessions are offered during the day and in the evening. Students may register in advance, and a waiting list is maintained once the registration for a session is full. At the end of each workshop, students are given a participation verification form.

Please describe the evaluation measures utilized to support this initiative as a best practice. **We compared success rates of students in government classes who attended 3 or more Connections Study Skills Workshops with success rates of students in the same classes who did not attend any workshops.**

Provide a summary of the results, including data (such as trend lines over time) to show how it impacted retention and is a best practice.

For two semesters, the participation in Connections Workshops by students in Kathy Yates' government classes was tracked for QEP. A strong correlation between attending workshops and student success was identified. In Fall 2005: 79% of students who attended 3 or more workshops passed with an A, B, or C; 21% received D, F, or

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W's. In contrast, only 29% of students who did not attend any workshops passed with an A, B, or C; 70% received D, F, or W's. In Spring 2006: 89.7% of students who attended 3 or more workshops passed with an A, B, or C; 10% received D, F, or W's. Only 50% of students who did not attend workshops passed with an A, B, or C; 50% received D, F, or W's.

Data has not formally been collected on the classes since the end of that QEP cycle; but, anecdotally, we know the program continues to work and the instructor continues to incorporate attendance at Connections Workshops as part of the grading process for her classes. In addition, faculty (fulltime and adjunct) from across multiple disciplines (English, History, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology, Psychology, Developmental Writing, Developmental Mathematics, Accounting, Economics) routinely refer students to the workshops each semester. As a result, more than 1000 students attend Connections Workshops each year.

What would be needed to replicate the practice at other DCCCD colleges?

To assure faculty buy-in and support for integrating the workshops into their courses (as required or extra credit assignments), a person or team of people can work with faculty to identify the study skill needs of students on campus as well as content skills that might be reinforced in workshops. Then someone would need to create a schedule of workshops, design the individual sessions, and determine appropriate methods for advertising and having students sign up for them.

Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):

Hiring or reassigning a person to coordinate the program, including identifying appropriate topics, creating schedules, advertising, hiring staff and recruiting volunteers (particularly faculty, advisors, counselors, financial aid staff members, etc.) to facilitate sessions.

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