

University of Massachusetts Boston

ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones
Collection

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

5-31-2011

Building a Learning Community for Dental Hygiene Faculty

Nancy Baccari

University of Massachusetts Boston

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone



Part of the [Dentistry Commons](#), and the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Baccari, Nancy, "Building a Learning Community for Dental Hygiene Faculty" (2011). *Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection*. 15.

https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone/15

This Open Access Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact scholarworks@umb.edu.

**BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR DENTAL HYGIENE
FACULTY**

A Synthesis Project Presented

by

NANCY J. BACCARI

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

June 2011

BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR DENTAL HYGIENE FACULTY

A Synthesis Project Presented

By

NANCY J. BACCARI

Approved as to style and content by:

Peter Taylor, Associate Professor
Chairperson of Committee

Nina Greenwald, Associate Professor
Member

Peter Taylor, Faculty Advisor
Critical and creative Thinking Program

c. 2011 by Nancy J. Baccari
All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR DENTAL HYGIENE EDUCATORS

May 2011

**Nancy J. Baccari, B.S., Westbrook College
M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston**

Directed by Associate Professor Peter Taylor

Have you ever felt isolated in your work environment that left you feeling perplexed and stuck only to find out that colleagues felt the same way you did but had no idea to work around it? Through this practitioner's narrative, I journey through my struggle of teacher isolation to my action plan to make it better. Finding a way to identify my feelings, strengths and weaknesses and move towards change to improve my own work environment describes my CCT experience. This new awareness changed the way I see myself as a leader and also gives me a new appreciation for the thinking styles of others.

The main part of this synthesis project is a faculty learning community process framework. The framework is my way to retain and use some of the skills, habits and knowledge I have been exposed to through my CCT experience. My framework outlines the process of building a faculty learning community for dental hygiene educators, like me, who often feel isolated in their work place. The framework is a road map outlining initial steps, planning, implementing and evaluating a faculty learning community. The philosophy of my faculty learning community will create a safe, trusting environment where participants will develop in a new way through new ways of thinking, sharing, inquiry and reflection. It is intended to be a

reminder of the values and habits of mind I have acquired, that will assist me in keeping the concepts of CCT active and alive within me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Robert Schoenberg, Arthur Millman, Carol Smith, Nina Greenwald, and Peter Taylor, for their insight, wisdom, patience, kindness and passion for what they do every day as educators.

I also want to share my gratitude to my peers in the CCT program for being supportive and caring especially in this synthesis project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
III. BUILDING A FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY..	31
FIGURE 1. Meeting norms.....	4
FIGURE 2. Supportive listening.....	5
FIGURE 3. Action Research.....	6
FIGURE 4. Dialogue.....	7
FIGURE 5. Supportive communication.....	8
FIGURE 6. Dental hygiene faculty learning community questionnaire	9
IV. CONCLUSION.....	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	63

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1. P

Appendix 2. P

Appendix 3. P

Appendix 4. P

Appendix 5. P

Appendix 6. P

CHAPTER 1

How I Came to Focus on the Need for a Faculty Learning Community

One of the challenges facing community college dental hygiene educators today is the need for purposeful and collaborative engagement to learn, share, research, reflect, and celebrate in a safe, trusting, and supportive environment. As a 20 year dental hygiene faculty member at a Massachusetts Community College, I often feel isolated from my colleagues in terms of opportunities for sharing and learning. When I became a part time dental hygiene clinical instructor in the 1980's, there was no formal learning community for new faculty. It was trial by fire and the results on some days were dismal. Later, I was appointed to a full time faculty position and at that time, the college supported a Teaching and Learning Center for faculty. The Dean of Professional Development initiated a faculty learning community for newly hired full time faculty. At that time, due to a heavy teaching workload and continuing my graduate school education, I decided it was not conducive for me or for the group that I participate.

Recently, I became the department chair of the dental hygiene program at the college. As the program's leader, I was responsible for organizing groups, monitoring and meeting time lines, motivating and collaborating with faculty, ensuring institutional and external reports were accurate and met the standards for accreditation. Through my experiences and positions at the college, I have had opportunities to collaborate with my peers and have experienced periods of isolation. Historically, I recognize that part of the culture of teaching can be isolating. As a result of my experience as a teacher and need for purposeful collaboration, my objective is to study existing faculty learning community frameworks, network with experts in learning

community development, understand the roles of the FLC facilitator and participant and create a framework that will respond to and empower myself and dental hygiene colleagues needs.

Though there will be challenges to work around such as faculty schedules and commitments, interest and institutional support, I believe a platform for teachers to share ideas and experiment with teaching and learning strategies, like a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) would relieve isolation and foster change in a positive work culture.

The learning I acquired in the Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) Graduate Program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston helped me to develop my role as an educator and professional. My studies support my desire to share my journey with my peers and colleagues to help create change in teaching and learning by empowering dental hygiene educators. My Master's program experience at the University of Massachusetts ignited the idea that led to this synthesis project.

As I look back on my professional development, I am amazed on how I have grown. In reaching out to my colleagues I know my feelings are not unfamiliar. Feelings of isolation and need for collaboration have been replaced by creativity, outreach, and control. Understanding and accepting that educators work in isolation and need a collaborative work environment is the first step to becoming empowered. By empowerment, I mean taking action to change, modify or improve conditions that will affect a positive outcome. Educators as a group work in environments that are isolating. The effects of the classroom environment, fields of specialization and the institution's physical structure accrue and limits faculty growth and development over time.

The path to limiting faculty isolation is a major project that is time consuming, challenging to generate, and risks low participation. Fortunately, experts in the field of FLC

share their expertise and experiences in developing a positive faculty development community for learning.

Over the last twenty years the importance of learning communities has been well received.

Although learning communities are found on many college campuses across the country, faculty learning communities are not as common. The primary audience for learning communities has been focused on students. One academic institution in our country that has pioneered faculty learning communities for a quarter of a century is Miami University of Ohio.

Understanding faculty learning communities and formulating strategies to help dental hygiene educators overcome isolation and foster a community of learners is the intent of this project.

Overview of chapters

Chapter 2 focuses on key ideas and strategies identified in current literature to build successful faculty learning communities, reduce faculty isolation, and to promote a safe and trusting environment for collaboration, reflection, and deep learning and appreciating each participant's contribution and successes. Through these ideas and strategies a positive and engaging learning environment and each faculty member's contribution is valued and appreciated. Further, these strategies will impact faculty development, student learning, and institutional effectiveness. The strategies used to develop a FLC include:

- an overview of dental hygiene community college faculty;

- a history of, definition and goals for a faculty learning community;

- types and examples of FLC on college campuses;

challenges and constraints;

the selection and role of the FLC leadership and participants;

building trust and collaboration,;reflective process in a FLC and appreciative inquiry.

These strategies will be reviewed for inclusion in my FLC proposal.

In Chapter 3, I set a framework for a specific FLC, the major goal of which is to raise awareness of faculty isolation of dental hygiene educators. My motivation for this project is to use the skills and knowledge I have attained to become an effective change agent and to help overcome isolation of faculty members and encourage a productive community with shared trust for dental hygiene educators. My personal and professional development as a colleague and facilitator has come from my review of current literature on building faculty learning communities (Chapter 2), the application of critical thinking, appreciative inquiry, and The Dialogue Process . Through these experiences I anticipate affecting positive change for faculty and student learning by creating a framework that explains recommended and essential concepts for a successful FLC experience. It is my intention to share this framework with my dental hygiene colleagues in other community college programs.

Chapter 4 includes my future direction in presenting my faculty learning community proposal to my college administrators and colleagues. The presentation to administrators is included in the appendices. The formal presentation to my dental hygiene colleagues is in its early stages and will need some modification before I am able to present it as an opportunity to my peers. In this last chapter, I also reflect on the impact the courses in the Critical and Creative Thinking program has had on my thinking and motivations. This transformational journey I have been taking in personal and professional development will be shared as a story indentifying the concepts and strategies necessary to include in my own faculty learning community. I hope this

synthesis project will motivate other dental hygiene faculty to consider the benefits of a faculty learning community that encourages a shared habit of mind in their workplace.

CHAPTER II

FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITIES: WHY, WHAT AND HOW

This chapter reviews some of the literature on faculty learning communities (FLCs) and community college teachers: Why are they needed—what problems do they address? What benefits are attributable to them? What are FLCs? How are they put into practice? At various points I insert information about my own situation and experience at a Community College and give specific attention to my field of Dental Hygiene (DH) education. The chapter provides the background for the FLC proposed in the next chapter for DH faculty.

Why FLCs—What problems do they address? What benefits are attributable to them?

Faculty, especially community college faculty, often feel isolated, in part because of their heavy workload, and are asked to take on responsibilities without training or mentoring. An FLC responds to these problems by creating opportunities to inquire, experiment, share, and learn from one another in support of collegial relationships.

Problems

Feelings of Isolation

In higher education, there is limited research in discovering the causes of faculty isolation. Masey, Wilger, and Colbeck (1994) interviewed about 300 faculty from different types of higher educational organizations, not including community colleges, and found 3 contributing factors that minimize opportunity for faculty collaboration. The three limiting factors are

1. Fragmented communication patterns
2. Lack of resources that limit opportunities and also discourage interaction
3. Traditional evaluation and reward systems that further strain faculty member's relationships.

Of these three factors, fragmented communication is the most prevalent. Fragmented communication has several contributing factors such as individual communication skills, personal values, and lack of availability. The availability factor is evident in my teaching schedule and affects communication with my colleagues. Presently, I am responsible for the administration of the dental hygiene program. This in turn affects the opportunity for and quality of face to face communication with colleagues as well as students. I experience greater self reliance and increased isolation and look to make connections with colleagues but it is more challenging now. Strategies to improve face to face communication include planned meetings and being more visible when on campus such as dropping by colleague's offices and common areas. These strategies result in better, less fragmented communication, increased collegial relations, and stronger communities. One way I regularly connect with my colleagues is thru email. While email has its limits, the benefit of email and its accessibility outweighs its limitations. This is not to say faculty who teach strictly on campus have less fragmented communication with peers. In fact, having experienced both, I place more effort now to connect and communicate with colleagues through planned meetings as well as informally, such as dropping by a colleague's office.

Woods (1991) research verifies that teachers do not learn best in isolation: "The learning that happens in the classroom as teachers interact with their students must be combined with opportunities for sharing these experiences with other teachers involved in the same process."

Heavy Workload

As a group, community college faculty is often isolated from one another due to heavy teaching work loads, followed by office hours, student advising, and college service. For example, my teaching schedule accounts for twenty hours of classroom time per week. In addition, there is division, departmental, and faculty senate meetings as well as college service obligations. While I enjoy the learning process and the brief and limited relationship building each of these contexts provides, I would not be willing to forfeit any, given the opportunity. However, I strongly support and recognize the need for ongoing learning and purposeful collaborative opportunities for teachers and yet realize the obstacles such as limited time and energy, personal responsibility, administrative support, and value of professional development. I will need to consider these in developing a FLC for dental hygiene educators.

Dental hygiene (DH) full time faculty members have many responsibilities. These include teaching and learning, advising, mentoring and collaborating, college service, meeting institutional and external accreditation standards, and preparing a cohort of students each year to meet program competencies and required licensure examination benchmarks. It is for this heavy workload, time, and feelings of isolation that I have to set out to create an opportunity for DH faculty to inquire, experiment, share, and learn from one another in support of collegial relationships.

Taking on responsibilities without training or mentoring

Part-time faculty teach an increasing share of the courses in community colleges (for reasons not addressed here). The trend was reported in the late 1990's by Schneider (1998) who

found that the use of part-time employment rose 18 percent while full time employment fell 1 percent between 1991 and 1995. (In my department there are now nine full-time faculty and twenty seven part-time faculty members. In the past year we have had an increase of 50% in part-time faculty with a loss of one full time faculty member as she became a Dean.)

There is anecdotal bias against part-time faculty, but Grubb (1999), after extensive research of teaching skill of part-time faculty, proved that part-time faculty taught as well as full time faculty. He states those community college part-time faculties enrich college campuses as they have and bring more direct ties and experience from the community to the learning space. What is evident is that part-time faculty members tend to lack teaching methodology skills and therefore have a small toolbox of creative teaching methods in part due to their limited interaction and isolation with full-time faculty.

I vividly remember my first experience as a part-time faculty member in 1983. I was given a predecessor's syllabus and off I was sent to teach my first course. The chalkboard and pages of manuscript on the lectern were my salvation for 15 weeks. I remember my first evaluation from the Dean suggesting that I not talk to the chalkboard! My college degrees had not included study in teaching methodology, classroom psychology, course preparation, and the like. In addition, there was no mentoring program for new teachers or learning communities in existence at that time. I had to wait for my annual teacher evaluation to learn about gaps in my teaching and learning methodology. Actually, I could and should have taken a course in educational methodology but at the time I didn't realize that is what I needed. It took many years to realize that I was feeling isolated in a scholarly way.

Marcinkiewicz and Doyle (2004) write that a new faculty should not be "trial by fire", but instead mentored and supported in an organized framework to learn organizational structure

and teaching skills by seasoned expert colleagues. I like many others before me would have benefited from collegial support and relations. That is not to say a faculty learning community or mentor program benefits novice teachers alone because certainly as a 20 year teacher I experience isolation and look for more purposeful collegial interactive opportunity. Today as I mentor new faculty, I am grateful for the opportunity and am motivated by it.

In short, although there may be shortcomings in the teaching of some part-time faculty, the learning institution—the college—bears some responsibility to provide opportunities for part-time and full-time faculty to collaborate. I will develop a faculty learning community as an opportunity for dental hygiene educators to create, grow and develop together in a safe trusting environment.

Benefits

According to Miami University's mathematics professor and FLC expert, Milton Cox, FLCs contribute measurably to faculty retention and satisfaction, intellectual development, and greater civic and academic contribution; they heighten focus on student learning, assessment, and learning objectives; and they serve to introduce and strengthen scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Lenning and Ebbers (1999) emphasize that building communities of learners creates an environment that can potentially advance a whole society. Palloff and Pratt (1999) offer the following. The purpose of FLC is to emphasize learning and collaboration in order to stimulate learning for individuals and groups. In addition, FLC's aid in "social and survival aspects of community" Participants of a faculty learning community share, learn, and applaud the ideas and accomplishments of colleagues. The concept of recognizing and appreciating another's great

work is identified as Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which is discussed further under the “How” of FLCs.

Benefit to community college students

I will provide insight into the premise; faculty learning communities attribute to student success. One attribute of a FLC that benefits students is higher level learning. Faculty who routinely engage with colleagues in a FLC bring a higher level of learning into the teaching and learning environment. Some of the collaborative practices used in a learning community include brainstorming, inquiry, and tolerating ambiguity can easily transfer to their students in the classroom.

Students are expected to demonstrate certain outcomes by graduation. These skills include; analysis, self and peer evaluation and reflection. Collaboration lends itself to preparing students to be competent in these higher level skills. Teachers who share, inquire and reflect with colleagues in a FLC environment are most likely to create and use collaboration as a mechanism for learning in the classroom. As a result, it would be expected, the student would successfully demonstrate and be motivated to further develop, apply and share these skills with others in their life.

To see how these benefits to faculty and students might be realized, we need first to review what FLCs are.

What are FLCs?

History of Early Learning Communities

The earliest movement of learning communities occurred at the turn of the 4th century B.C. The Greek philosopher, Socrates used the method of inquiry known as the Socratic Method to promote truth. Payne says the Socratic method of inquiry tests an individual or group's courage to accept criticism and to act on that criticism in seeking truth. In this method, a person or group presents a hypothesis and invites inquiry in the form of rational criticism from colleagues. As a result of rational inquiry, the individual or group will either do away with them if they fail, or revise and refine the hypothesis.

In addition, the Socratic Method promotes the skills used in community building and collaboration, peer support, and acquisition of lifelong learning skills. These skills include collaboration, trust, dialogue, listening and desire to learn the truth. Historically the Socratic Method is a valuable practice for today's FLC to promote community and learning through inquiry.

[xxSimply the descriptions of the people – all that is needed is something to show where the person is coming from and why we should listen to them. E.g., “In the 1920’s philosopher Alexander Meiklejohn created the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin....”]

Later, in the 1920's Alexander Meiklejohn, philosopher and former Dean of Amherst College, at the University of Wisconsin created the Experimental College. This college had several unique guidelines and opportunities for students and faculty to reside and learn together by asking sharp questions to gain “intelligence in the conduct of their own lives.” **[xx give references for any**

claim or quote – help the readers by not making them do the work to follow up what you’re saying]

John Dewey, a philosopher, stated education should foster equality, growth of individuality, and widens the scope of the student’s interests so as to break down distinctions of social class. Further he stated students should be engaged in active learning by doing rather than by watching. His philosophy impacted progressive education and experiential education while dismissing authoritarian teaching methods. Dewey’s learning by doing is a hallmark in today’s education movement.

Joseph Tussman of University California at Berkeley created a similar two year undergraduate program modeled after Meiklejohn’s coming together to determine the truth of things. His experience shows that this type of learning community is challenging to successfully implement at an institution where graduate schools exist. The reason for this, Tussman says is it is difficult to recruit faculty who are willing to put aside their specialty for two years, and agree to engage with students through a central reading list that includes for example, the Bible and Homer, where students and faculty read, reflect, compare and grapple with dilemmas of the past to the present to develop a meaningful purpose and understanding of life.

Relevant History at Middlesex Community College

At Middlesex, Phyllis Gleason, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs has built several faculty learning communities (personal communication, November 2007). She brings attention to the different needs of seasoned and new faculty. Her vision recognizes a cohort type of FLC for new faculty. FLC for new faculty has predefined design, structure, and purpose and is directed by a facilitator who is a seasoned faculty member or seasoned administrator. To me, the purpose

of a new faculty learning community is to orientate faculty to the college's core values, teaching and learning, human resources, and cultures of the organization. Whereas FLC for seasoned faculty are self directed with shared leadership. In this model the design, organization, and implementation is organized by a facilitator, usually an experienced faculty member or administrator. On the other hand, for most other types of FLC there is shared leadership among the participants and the community is self-directed.

Middlesex Community College has also embraced the concept of Student Learning Communities (SLC) and actively invites this opportunity to its campus. In the summer of 2007, several faculty and staff traveled to Evergreen State College in Washington to meet and collaborate with their SLC experts. The following fall 2007 and spring 2008 these MCC faculty launched an effort to educate faculty through information sessions and personal correspondence to engage professors interested in a new way of teaching and learning. I attended one of the sessions which showed parallels between SLC and FLC. Both communities use collaboration, shared goals and objectives, and rely on collegial relations.

Relevant History regarding Dental Hygiene FLCs

In my research, there is no evidence of past or present dental hygiene faculty learning communities. In the 1970's, a DH FLC was launched in the northeast region of the United States but was short lived. A colleague informed me about this DH educators learning community but I was unable to uncover its goals and accomplishments as well as reasons why it dissolved.

Today, there is no known formal FLC for DH educators in the northeast region of the country.

Definitions of FLCs

Milton Cox (1994) an early advocate of FLC is the Director at the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching; Professor of Mathematics, Miami University, Ohio, and editor-in-chief, Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, founder and director of the Lily Conference on College Teaching. A pioneer in faculty learning communities, Cox's definition of a faculty learning community is nationally recognized in college and university Teaching and Learning Centers and is explained as:

A group of trans-disciplinary faculty, graduate students and professional staff group of size 6-15 or more (8 to 12 is the recommended size) engaging in an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, transdisciplinarity, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and community building.

I identify with the following points of Prof. Cox's definition. First, the inclusion of active and collaborative engagement in the process of teaching and learning reduces the incidence of faculty isolation by building trust and promoting meaningful collaborative exchange. Active and collaborative engagement is a collective approach to learning. Dental hygiene faculty often speak of the need for engagement with colleagues and a FLC is an effective mechanism for meaningful collaboration. Some examples of collaborative active learning include problem-based learning, peer assessment, and reflection and discussion. Each one of these examples is an opportunity to experience meaningful study, observation, and experimentation. The outcomes of active and

collaborative engagement in a FLC include personal growth and transformation, change for the greater good, and sustainability of the learning community.

The concept of active and collaborative engagement parallels D. Lee Fink's (1999) idea of active learning using experience and dialoguing. Fink's idea of experience involves two actions, the act of doing and the act of observing. The learner, in the act of doing, will "do the learning". For example, dental hygiene students will role play patient interviewing skills, followed by direct patient interviewing in a clinical setting. The second concept is observation. Observing an expert dental hygienist interviewing a patient or watching a video of patient interviewing are examples of Fink's observation component. His third and fourth components include dialoguing with others and dialoguing with self (reflection). Speaking with and listening to others in small group discussion is an example of dialoguing with others. Reflecting on one's own thinking supports dialoguing with self. Each one of these components supports learning, builds trust, supports assessment, and builds community.

Judith Warren Little's research in teacher collaboration aligns with Cox's philosophy of collaborative engagement. Little (1990) found that when teachers engage regularly in authentic joint work focused on explicit common learning goals their collaboration pays off in the form of high quality solutions to instructional problems, teacher confidence, and remarkable gains in student achievement. Little directs her research further to probe reasons why faculty avoid active learning with colleagues. This will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

In terms of Cox's advocacy of a one year commitment to a FLC, I respectfully question the reality of a one year time frame and the potential of attracting interested faculty. A one year commitment may be unrealistic for DH faculty due to heavy teaching workloads (3-4 courses per semester), limited availability and energy. Perhaps a semester long commitment to a FLC may

be more advantageous and attractive to community college faculty. Surveying potential participant's availability will guide the FLC facilitator to build a sustaining faculty centered learning community.

A faculty learning community is a special kind of "community of practice," defined by Wenger, a leader in the field, as: "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." Wenger's definition correlates closely to Cox's definition of a faculty learning community as both experts value visualization, sharing, caring, interacting, and change.

Paloff and Pratt (1999), professors in the School of Education at Capella University, MN, and educational consultants define a learning community as a group of people with common interests and objectives. They note that, "since the advent of cyberspace, these communities no longer have to be geographically co-located and do not have to meet face-to-face. These communities must, however, be flexible enough to meet the needs of their members." Online collaborative opportunities will be included in the framework of my FLC to encourage sharing and creation of ideas.

Peter Senge, lecturer, author and founding chair of the Society for Organizational Learning (1990) says "when two or more people, pursuing common goals, make meaning together and become aligned through dialogue, critically analyze the systems in which the team functions with the intent of realizing a shared vision of a preferred future which he calls team learning." Senge (1990) defines the Learning Organization as the organization "in which you cannot *not* learn because learning is so insinuated into the fabric of life." Also, he defines Learning Organization as "a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create."

Some other learning groups used in the literature that are synonymous to Learning in relationships include learning organizations, learning communities, team learning, community of inquiry, communities of practice, or teaching circles to name a few. Each of these share common characteristics such as ongoing interaction, sharing of new ideas and information, value of learning together, and being open to experience of others. Some major differences include processes of learning, structure of leadership, and selection of participants. The common outcome is personal, professional and organizational growth.

Types of Faculty Learning Communities

FLC are organized around a need, issue or opportunity. According to Milton Cox (1991) there are two types of FLC: cohort-based and topic-based. Seasoned faculty and teaching fellows are examples of a cohort-based FLC. The seasoned FLC participants are longstanding faculty members with years of teaching experience while faculty with 1-3 years of teaching experience would participate in a new faculty cohort.

A topic-based FLC attracts faculty who have a need to learn more about a certain idea. Some examples of a topic-based type include Student learning or Diversity in the classroom. In this FLC, faculty participants will have a wide range of teaching experience adding to the enrichment of the learning process.

Kay McClenney, Director of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement in the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin asserts faculty from different experiences and specializations see that the following are priorities for professional development;

- * definition and assessment of learning outcomes

* examples of alternative teaching strategies that can be effectively employed in theory-based and typically lecture-intensive classes, particularly in the liberal arts and sciences; and (assuming a disposition to move away from the lecture as the dominant instructional mode).

* engaging students, particularly in making group work, work.

The University of Georgia's Center for Teaching and Learning Center has offered the following topic-based faculty learning communities (<http://wwwctl.uga.edu/flc>):

* Non-Western Ways of Knowing and Thinking

* Globalizing the Curriculum: Trends, Driving Forces, Cross-Cultural Exchanges

* Beyond Reading: strategies to aid student engagement, comprehension, and retention of core texts

* Digital Storytelling

* Emerging Technologies and Higher Education

* Tapping into Our Interdisciplinary Qualitative Research Traditions

* Integrated Course Design

* Facilitating Critical Thinking in Lecture Classes

* Creating a Culture of Sustainable Water Use

A group of professors from Texas A&M facilitated and designed an engineering cohort FLC. Their definition of a FLC is “a sustained model for professional development” (xx 2002).

In the design phase, the facilitators conducting a needs assessment of engineering faculty members' assessing their needs, interests and goals by way of survey. The survey responses

serve as a lens in which FLC designers can identify individual needs, interests, and goals of potential participants which will direct the design, implementation and evaluation of the community. I agree with the FLC facilitators at Texas A&M regarding the importance of securing and weaving participant feedback into the design, implementation and focus of a learning community as a means for sustainability.

How are FLCs put into practice?

To implement a FLC, it is necessary to have a vision, goals, and qualities to aspire to.

A Shared Vision

A shared vision is a necessary component for a FLC. Walker, Asst. Prof of Ed. Research and Floyd, Asst. Prof of Higher Education Leadership states:

Often, organizational behavior is concerned with the relationships and learning that occur within an organization such as an institution of higher education. Of importance, is enabling individuals to understand where they fit into a group and how their contributions add to the organizational behavior and learning. Further, this can provide an environment that is more conducive to assisting individuals in determining the importance of what they are doing, what they are learning, and how to use their learning to support the organization.

Bosserman's model (1987) of shared learning bases its framework on systems thinking.

Systems thinking present an organization as a network of connected entities, where more emphasis is placed on relationships rather than on individual units separate one from another (Capra 1996; Senge 1990). Systems thinking in Bosserman's model are used to help the

community to comprehend the idea of a shared vision and how the vision can be communicated to all stakeholders. Communicating and sharing a community's vision and purpose with all stakeholders is necessary for change. FLC's embracing the process of systems thinking focuses on the relationship building of FLC and stakeholders. In addition, Bosserman's model has several goals. One major goal is to create an environment of connection. Participants connect by talking and sharing. Open communication, trust, and a shared vision encourage commitment to the community. A committed participant will contribute to and serve the group to facilitate change.

Goals of a Faculty Learning Community

There is great variation of goals for FLC. The self-directed and cohort FLC lends itself to more autonomous decision-making. While there is a facilitator in place, participants are responsible for and direct their own learning (Von Glasersfeld 1989), set goals through collaboration and practice community decision-making.

A participant-facilitator will guide the first meeting and then join the ranks as a participant for the longevity of the FLC. This type of FLC encourages participant flexibility and renegotiation. It is important for the community to be open to change.

Goals of the cohort-based FLC may include, building collegial relations, reducing isolation, creating a community, improving individual thinking skills, teaching skills or learning skills, promoting leadership skills, and creating an organizational change to improve the community. Community learning and sharing is one tool to support goals of the FLC.

As previously mentioned, a directed FLC is fully organized at the first meeting. A facilitator is responsible to set the agenda, develop clear goals, organize supportive resources to

guide participant learning, and measure how effectively the goals were achieved. Directed FLC is best suited for the needs of the first year or newer faculty. For example, orientating new faculty to the organizational culture or preparing novice faculty members to deal with difficult students are two ideal directed FLC.

Topic-based FLC is like the directed type as both leave little decision making to the participant. The facilitator, in this venue, is more like, a director than an equal ranking participant. According to Miami University's mathematics professor and FLC expert, Milton Cox, FLC's contribute measurably to faculty retention and satisfaction, intellectual development, and greater civic and academic contribution; they heighten focus on student learning, assessment, and learning objectives; and they serve to introduce and strengthen scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

A shared vision is a necessary component for a FLC. Walker, Asst. Prof of Ed. Research and Floyd, Asst. Prof of Higher Education Leadership states;

“Often, organizational behavior is concerned with the relationships and learning that occur within an organization such as an institution of higher education. Of importance, is enabling individuals to understand where they fit into a group and how their contributions add to the organizational behavior and learning. Further, this can provide an environment that is conducive to assisting individuals in determining the importance of what they are doing, what they are learning, and how to use their learning to support the organization”.

Qualities to aspire to in FLCs

Cox (1991) presents ten necessary qualities for learning, personal and professional development and community building:

1. Safety and Trust. In order for participants to connect with each other, there must be a sense of safety and trust. This is especially true as participants reveal weaknesses in their teaching or ignorance of teaching processes or literature.
2. Openness. In an atmosphere of openness, participants can feel free to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of retribution. For example, in the Community Using Difference to Enhance Teaching and Learning at Miami, participants were able to discuss ways that other participants or colleagues offend them.
3. Respect. In order to coalesce as a learning community, members need to feel that they are valued and respected as people. It is important for the university to acknowledge their participation and financially support community projects and attendance at related conferences.
4. Responsiveness. Members must respond respectfully to each other, and the facilitator(s) must respond quickly to their participants. The facilitation should welcome concerns and preferences, and when appropriate, share these with individuals and the community.
5. Collaboration. The importance of collaboration in consultation and group discussion on individual members' projects and on achieving learning outcomes hinges on the group's ability to work with and respond to each other. In addition to individual projects, joint projects and presentations should be welcomed.
6. Relevance. Learning outcomes are enhanced by relating the subject matter to the participants' teaching, courses, scholarship, and life experiences. All participants should be encouraged to seek out and share teaching and other real-life examples to illustrate them.

7. Challenge. Expectations for the quality of outcomes should be high, engendering a sense of progress, scholarship, and accomplishment. Sessions should include, for example, those in which individuals share syllabi and report on their individual projects.
8. Enjoyment. Activities must include social opportunities to lighten up, bond, and should take place in invigorating environments. For example, a retreat can take place off campus at a nearby country inn, state park, historic site, or the like.
9. Esprit de Corps. Sharing individual and community outcomes with colleagues in the academy should generate pride and loyalty. For example, when the community makes a campus-wide presentation, participants strive to provide an excellent session.
10. Empowerment. A sense of empowerment is both a crucial element and a desired outcome of participation in a faculty learning community. In the construction of a transformative learning environment, the participants gain a new view of themselves and a new sense of confidence in their abilities. Faculty leave their year of participation with better courses and clearer understanding of themselves and their students. Key outcomes include scholarly teaching and contributions to the scholarship of teaching.

Wenger complements this list by pointing to three characteristics important in a community of practice: the domain, the community and the practice. The domain means having or developing a shared interest with a group. Examples for dental hygiene include facilitating creative thinking in dental hygiene theory or using multiple intelligence to improve student success. The second characteristic relates to community by active and collaborative engagement where members share ideas, practice new skills in a safe trusting environment. The third relates to outcomes and the results of this participation, the shared repertoire of new skills developed such as terminology, attitude, and routines.

Let me elaborate on some of the qualities either listed above or implied by them.

Collegiality and Collaboration

Historically teachers have worked within the school community in isolation. Recently, more attention has been made in building connections for teachers. In order to discuss collegial relations it is important to know what is meant by the terms ‘collegiality’ and ‘collaboration’. Many definitions exist for each concept yet often they are used interchangeably. A dictionary meaning of collegiality as “power shared equally among colleagues engages a discussion of the term. Fieldings (1999) explains collegiality as having a communal aspect. Cooperation is an association of persons for common benefit where collaboration is to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.

John Dewey, founder of progressive education, is based on the premise that learners and teachers work together “doing” the learning experience. Dewey impressed the idea that humans have a natural attraction toward collaboration. The literature overwhelmingly supports the practice of the Progressive education model of “learn by doing”. Dewey’s model exists in many types of school based learning communities. Some examples include individual classrooms, student learning communities and faculty learning communities as a way to improve teaching and learning strategies.

Little (1982) found that teacher collegiality is associated with the success of the school and consistency of professional development opportunity. Collegiality is a term which includes teacher practices such as talking about teaching, planning together, sharing of ideas and materials, giving feedback and observing one another teach and offering and seeking support (Little 1990). The benefits of collegial relations require the following. Teachers and those

supportive of teachers must commit time, give support to colleagues and open their teaching practice to others for collegial purposes. As we know, teachers spend most of their day in the classroom teaching and learning with students. Meeting with colleagues for serious collaboration takes extraordinary planning. In addition, sharing ones work and craft whether strong or weak takes courage. In 1971, Saranson suggests teachers keep their classroom practices private to hide the gap between expectations of teachers' performance and the reality of the classroom. Fullan (1982) explains that the quality of teacher interaction is strongly related to a teachers risk taking of new ideas or practices. In what ways do community college's support collegial relationships? Little (2003) states that there is little research that actually goes into the professional learning communities to observe, weigh, and understand dynamics affecting teacher development opportunities.

This higher level of collegial practice of inviting colleagues into the classroom to observe teaching practice cannot be achieved until lower level practices such designing materials and lesson plans frequently together occurs.

The quality and quantity of collegial relations is dependent on many factors one of which is trust. Trust is built slowly and carefully with frequent interaction. For collegial relations to form an established level of trust is crucial. Later both will coexist and realize a positive rewarding teaching practice, diminished if not absent level of isolation and high level of student engagement and learning.

Research in teacher collegiality and collaboration is vast. Continued and expanded research is warranted in the following areas to better understand collegiality and collaboration:

1. Direct observation and study of teacher interactions
2. Identifying and studying forms of collaboration teachers engage in

3. Personal relationships among teachers and it's affect on collaboration
4. Identifying beneficial forms of collaboration for improving teaching and learning.

Efforts to improve the quality of collegial relations are evident on college and university campuses. The process requires time, a skillful facilitator, an engaging learning environment, and motivated participants who want to improve their teaching practice and learn with others.

Team Learning

Team learning is at the heart of the learning organization, where two or more people, pursuing common goals, make meaning together and become aligned through dialogue, critically analyze the systems in which the team functions with the intent of realizing a shared vision of a preferred future (Senge 1994). The concept of social learning, Senge says, is crucial to learning organizations and deserves more attention in faculty/dean searches, academic departments and within the college or university community.

Social learning is an integral part of relationship building. Faculty learning communities value sharing of knowledge, experiences while improving the practice of teaching and learning collaboratively.

The result of team learning affects community college students and faculty. For students, it means higher level learning, matriculation into a four year college or university, promotes life-long learning, supports future work and partnerships, and instills the necessary qualities of team building required in the community and workplace.

Appreciative Inquiry

Participants of a faculty learning community share, learn, and applaud the ideas and accomplishments of colleagues. The concept of recognizing and appreciating another's great work is identified as Appreciative Inquiry (AI). This idea was developed by two professors David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva of the Weatherhead School of management of Case Western University in the late 1980's. Cooperrider's basis focuses on factors contributing to the successes of a system rather than the ever present problems of an organization. In 1990 he worked with the US Agency for International Development to improve AI and since then organizations like GTE, Nokia, McDonalds, NASA, British Airways and British Petroleum have used AI as a spring board for change. The most widely used AI model today is the 4D model (Rita F. Williams 1996) which focuses on change through discovery, dream, design and destiny. AI can be used in FLC as a way to increase job satisfaction, revitalize mid career or tenured faculty, and improve student learning. Cooperrider and his associate Diana Whitney provide the following definition of AI in their booklet (2000):

Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system "life" when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an "unconditional positive question" often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. In AI, intervention gives way to imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis there is discovery, dream, and design. AI assumes that every living

system has untapped, rich, and inspiring accounts of the positive. **Link this “positive change core” directly to any change agenda, and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.”**

A major goal of AI then is to promote at least a 2:1 ratio between the balance of positive and negative “images” within the collective mind of the organization. (Cooperrider, 1990).

In reviewing the literature, a case can be made for using AP for a FLC for DH educators at a community college. Historically community colleges have supported a positive approach to faculty development by offering sabbaticals, providing funding for faculty to attend professional conferences and organizing professional development opportunities on campus. I interviewed our Assistant Dean of Professional Instructional development Phyllis Gleason who introduced me to the philosophy of Appreciative inquiry. I knew Phyllis was an integral planner and organizer of our college’s Professional Day sessions. During the interview she shared her experience of Appreciative Inquiry. This concept was new to me yet seemed a compelling venue for my FLC. Gleason had just finished professional training in Appreciative Inquiry and recognized its positive attributes in creating positive change. AI is like problem solving only it begins with looking at how well it works rather than not. Gleason shared that AI is especially moving for mid career faculty as a way to revitalize and promote change. She went on to say that mid career faculty are often forgotten groups who need development by way of FLC. Most FLC today, Gleason reports, center around new faculty.

In my plan for DH educators, there will be new, midyear career and post tenured faculty who will have the opportunity to join the FLC. Some of my colleagues hold thirty years of teaching experience and a few having five years of teaching experience. Each one will bring

his/her accomplishments, reflections, and knowledge to share and contribute to the personal and professional development of the group.

The AI is an easy process to understand. There are training sessions in AI which I will investigate and I have asked Phyllis Gleason if she would provide mentoring to me as I move forward in developing my faculty learning community.

Leadership

The opportunity for faculty collegiality in a FLC is related to the leadership and characteristics of faculty members. This section describes the types of leadership surrounding a FLC.

There are different levels of leadership affecting FLC. First, organizational leaders such as the college or university president as well as a dean are looked upon to support faculty member professional development by allocating resources for and encouraging participation in collegial activities. In addition, it is important for administrators to engage in and share experiences of their own learning and professional development with faculty members as a means of communicating the value of professional development and life-long learning.

The second level of leadership is the FLC facilitator. Although a misnomer, a facilitator is different than a leader. A facilitator temporarily assumes a “leadership” role in an organization whereas a leader is expected to assume the full responsibility of leading. The role of the facilitator will be further examined in this section.

The third type of leadership is the future leader which organizations and communities need. FLC, by design, offer potential members who desire to become facilitators an opportunity to actively learn and experience pertinent leadership skills.

The FLC leadership may include a director and most often a facilitator. The director's role is strictly a leadership one and will not be presented in this paper. The facilitator's role is multidimensional and has three key domains. The three domains are champion, coordinator and energizer. (Petrone, 2004) Flexibility is a key attribute that enables the facilitator to move freely in and out of each domain depending on the community's needs.

For example, when members have identified a topic to investigate the facilitator would gather books, articles, and website sources in order to understand the topic and to offer the group ideas and recommendations. Subsequently, members will bring in evidence-based information to share with the community clueing the facilitator that a coordinator role is needed. The facilitator's role requires understanding of motivating people, being a change agent, and comfortable moving in and out of roles such as guide, learner, teacher, mentor, and facilitator. In addition, a facilitator is encouraging yet accepting of roadblocks and temporary barriers such as time and lack of resources. In addition, the facilitator creates a congenial yet challenging environment for members to grow and develop personally as well as professionally.

As a coordinator, the facilitator handles the logistics and framework of the FLC. Management and organizational skills are needed to be an effective coordinator- facilitator. The college can provide support to the facilitator through professional development or mentorship.

Member participation is perhaps the most challenging role of the facilitator. The first FLC Milton Cox facilitated at Miami University in Ohio, was smooth sailing. He learned through his second FLC that each group is made up of individual personalities and experiences and that there is not one recipe for guaranteeing a highly effective learning community. The second FLC presented a learning experience that strengthened his repertoire of facilitator skills. One of those

skills learned was to allow space for personal and group decision-making for methods used to achieve outcomes.

The facilitator is aware of when to transition between his/her role as the community develops. The facilitator will self assess the needs of the community and check in with the participants to assess and confirm their needs. The challenge for the facilitator is to move in and out of the role based on the cues and needs of the community.

Selection of Participants

Selection of faculty for a faculty learning community can be structured as an open opportunity for all interested faculty or it can be a selective process. Miami Universities Teaching and Learning center has different sets of criteria for selecting participants. Here is a set of criteria for the selection of participants for one of Miami Universities FLC.

- * Commitment to quality teaching, level of interest in and commitment to participation in activities of the community, need, openness to new ideas, potential for contributions to the community, and plans for use of the award year
- * Participation needs approval of applicant's department chair
- * Appropriate committees select participants

In addition, interested participants complete an application as part of the Miami University FLC selection process. The FLC application, designed for part-time faculty applicants, asks for a short response to the following questions:

1. Why do you wish to participate in this community?
2. What do you believe is the main issue regarding part-time faculty at Miami?
3. Please indicate areas in which you can contribute to the work of the Community.

4. Please feel free to add any other remarks.

The complete Miami University FLC application is found in Appendix .

Creating Climates for an FLC

Coinciding with limited time due to teaching schedules and work load is the effectiveness of individual and team communication skills. Communication climates as described by Gibbs (1961) indicate defensive characteristics which clearly lean toward isolation and fragmented communication and supportive characteristics which are conducive to building and maintaining collegial relations. The attributes stated in the table below effectively support the promotion of collegial relations needed for a sustainable faculty learning community. Table 2 below illustrates Gibb's (1961) 6 dichotomies that make up defensive and supportive climates.

Table 2

Summary of Gibb's Defensive and Supportive Climates

Communication Climates	
Defensive	Supportive
<p>Evaluation –</p> <p>passing judgment; questioning standards, values, motives</p>	<p>Description –</p> <p>being non-judgmental; presenting information without calling for or implying changes in others.</p>
<p>Control –</p> <p>trying to do something to another and change the attitudes and behaviors of others.</p>	<p>Problem-orientation –</p> <p>defining mutual problems and seeking solutions without inhibiting others' goals, decisions, or progress.</p>
<p>Strategy –</p> <p>using manipulation, trickery.</p>	<p>Spontaneity –</p> <p>being free of deception; having no hidden motives or agendas; honest and straightforward.</p>
<p>Neutrality –</p> <p>showing a lack of concern for others' welfare or concerns.</p>	<p>Equality –</p> <p>having mutual trust and respect; engaging in participative planning without undue influence of power or status.</p>
<p>Superiority –</p> <p>showing an attitude of superiority in position, or intellectual ability which arouses feelings of inadequacy in others.</p>	<p>Empathy –</p> <p>respecting the worth of others; identifying, sharing, and accepting the problems, feelings, or values of others.</p>
<p>Certainty –</p> <p>showing dogmatism; the need to be right.</p>	<p>Provisionalism –</p> <p>willingness to experiment with one's own behaviors, attitudes, and ideas.</p>

Challenges in building a FLC

Faculty learning communities have been growing on college campuses over the years. The benefits of FLC have been documented in the areas of job satisfaction, collegial relations and professional development. There are challenges to be faced in developing a FLC such as

attracting faculty, gaining college support, and sustaining the momentum of this active engaging learning experience.

As a teacher, I have embraced the opportunity to improve my own teaching practice. I have used a variety of professional resources such as teaching and learning centers, university workshops, and self directed learning. My proposed dental hygiene faculty learning community will support my own personal and professional needs and those of my colleagues who value ongoing professional communication to share experiment and appreciate ideas to improve and change our teaching and learning skills and environment.

CHAPTER III

INVITING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

It was not until I became a full time community college teacher that I realized feelings of isolation and a need for purposeful collegial collaboration with my colleagues. As a teacher, I am isolated from my peers for most of the day. I do not know what others are doing and am unable to provide or receive regular support from colleagues.

Although I appreciate the professional development opportunities I receive, such as biannual college professional development sessions and annual professional dental education meetings, I see an opportunity to expand professional development for myself and my DH colleagues. My vision is to create a sustainable FLC that will reduce feelings of isolation, promote a safe and trusting environment for collaboration, reflection and deep learning, while appreciating each participant's successes. My intent is to attend to needs of my colleagues as well as my own and to provide a congenial place where we can explore share, honor, and build new and strengthen existing collegial relations.

As a result, the FLC will complement other professional development opportunities by promoting professional relations, help teachers acquire personal and professional skills and develop teaching strategies and tools for better communication and learning. It is the responsibility of all participants to serve as teachers, students and models in order to create a working culture for personal and professional growth and development.

In my studies in the critical and creative thinking program, especially in courses like critical and creative thinking, action research, problem-based learning and dialogue, I have created a framework for a faculty learning community. This framework will serve as a model for dental

hygiene educators as well as for other faculty interested in launching a learning community of their own. I will present this framework in this chapter.

FLC Design/Purpose

The purpose of this FLC is to offer an understanding of teacher isolation for dental hygiene educators. Through examining ways of moving towards better teaching practices communication, deep learning and reflection, the FLC will discover ways to change the work environment. This FLC model may be used for other faculty interested in launching a learning community of their own.

The FLC design can be implemented as it is or modified according to need, time, and goals of the group participating in the FLC. It is my hope to make this FLC a reality in my area and to share my experience with other colleagues at professional dental educator meetings and college campuses.

My FLC Mission Statement and Values

My FLC mission statement extends the college's mission in the areas of professional development, student learning and research. The mission statement of my FLC is:

The dental hygiene faculty learning community will enhance teaching practices and consequently students' learning outcomes by providing a safe supportive active, academic environment to evaluate teaching through collaboration, appreciative inquiry, critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection.

Empowerment for growth, nurturing personal connections through collaboration and mentoring, and cultivating creativity and innovation are the core values emphasized in my FLC as well as Middlesex Community College/ .

Alignment of FLC/College vision and principles

The college I work at appreciates and values empowerment, personal connections, creativity and innovation. The college mission statement and strategic plan and guiding principles clearly indicate these values. It is important for the FLC facilitator to research and build the values of the college into the FLC's framework. These documents are easily found on the college website under the header of Planning, Performance and Assessment. When determining support, administrators will look to see how a new innovation, like a FLC, complements the college's strategic plan. Presentations to administrators should include a review FLC experts results, and alignment of the institution's goals and values to the FLC framework. A FLC presenter should prepare to answer administrator questions around financial needs, time and space needs, how the proposal supports the college's mission, benefit to students, faculty, the college and the community.

FLC Meeting Space

Though there may not be a dedicated FLC meeting space available, there are several options on the college campus. Classrooms, conference rooms, the library, and teaching and learning centers (TLC) are viable options. Some participants prefer to meet in close proximity to their offices while others might prefer a meeting space away from the daily work environment.

A TLC is a good choice to consider as a meeting place. On my campus, the TLC offers a wonderful space that is furnished with comfortable sofas and chairs, round tables, soft lighting, a library, and information technology. The TLC can be easily reserved for meetings in the morning, afternoon, evening or weekends. Depending on the needs of the FLC, the meeting space can rotate from a structured space of a classroom to a more relaxed option of a TLC.

I plan to rotate the meeting space to accommodate our needs. For brainstorming sessions, a classroom with round tables and chairs will be used, and the TLC will be used for presentations and guest speakers.

Understanding the Problem of Isolation

Isolation is not new to the teaching profession. Though a school is a social environment, the organizational structure is divided into small separate compartments known as classrooms. After spending many years behind the door of a classroom and teaching specialized courses, I, like many others at times, feel isolated. My proposal is to reduce feelings of teacher isolation for myself and my peers by initiating a faculty learning community.

General Planning for the FLC

The director and facilitator are responsible for developing the general plan. The general plan has four major content areas. The areas include; initial steps, planning, implementation, and evaluation to support and guide the FLC. Modifications to the content areas will occur naturally as the group moves forward and grows collectively. The following pages highlight some of the major steps in each of the four main content areas.

Major Content Area I – Initial Steps

The initial steps include research, networking, and surveying. I will begin with a detailed discussion in the following areas; needs assessment questionnaire, administrative dialogue and informal interviews with target population.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

To gain a clearer understanding of the target population, I created a FLC needs assessment (NA) questionnaire while studying in the Critical and Creative Thinking program's Action Research course. The purpose of the questionnaire seeks to understand dental hygiene faculty interest in a FLC, knowledge of FLC, and desire to set time aside from an already busy schedule for FLC meetings, research and study.

The needs assessment includes a faculty questionnaire and an informal interview process of the target population to assess faculty isolation, interest in joining a FLC to improve teaching practice and student learning, and the desire to learning with and from others. The faculty survey includes a broad range of questions including demographics, learning preference, teaching pedagogy, collaboration, and participation in a faculty learning community. The survey is presented on the following pages.

Dental Hygiene Faculty Learning Community Questionnaire

Background Information

Number of years teaching dental hygiene _____

Number of years practicing clinical dental hygiene _____

Highest degree you have attained BS MA MS PhD

Are you a tenured faculty member _____ YES _____ NO

Section I LEARNING

A. Place a check in the box that describes your preferred way to study

- 1. I learn best by studying independently.
- 2. I like to collaborate with others *after* I have studied.
- 3. I prefer to collaborate with others *prior* to independent studying.

B. Please read each statement and indicate the number of your choice.

1 = first choice 2 = second choice 3 = third choice 4 = fourth choice

- _____ 4. I learn best by reading.
- _____ 5. I learn best by discussing information.
- _____ 6. I learn best experientially.
- _____ 7. I learn best by listening.

Please indicate any additional learning preferences you use which were not provided.

Dental Hygiene Faculty Learning Community Questionnaire

Section II TEACHING

Please circle your responses

- 8. I currently team teach..... YES NO
- 9. I have taken a course in course syllabus construction YES NO
- 10. I have an interest in team teaching.....YES UNSURE NO
- 11. I'd like to learn more about effective teaching methods.....YES UNSURE NO

Section III INTEREST IN COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS

Please indicate the number of your choice next to each statement below				
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 12. Working collaboratively with colleagues is important to my personal and professional development.
- ___ 13. I would like more opportunities to collaborate with colleagues.
- ___ 14. I would like more opportunity for online collaboration with colleagues.

Section IV. Open ended response

- 15. List 1-2 reasons for your interest in joining a dental hygiene faculty learning community.
- 16. List 1-2 contributions that you might make to a dental hygiene faculty learning community.

Thank you for your timely response.

In a meeting with the Dean in our area, I introduced the purpose and benefits of my synthesis project and shared how my experience as a part time and fulltime faculty led me to indentifying a need for a FLC. I discussed how faculty isolation affected my teaching skills and thinking, and I explained how a FLC would help me, as well as my colleagues, improve teaching practices and learning.

Next, I presented the needs assessment (NA) and asked the Dean if she would review it. Further, I asked about institutional requirements regarding my project, who in the institution needs to know about the project, and what type of approval is needed before I begin.

Administration of the Needs Assessment

After this administrative review, approval was granted and I administered the needs assessment to 15 of my colleagues. A printed copy and an electronic version of the survey through Survey Monkey (this program compiles qualitative and qualitative analysis) was sent to each colleague. The results of my needs assessment showed over 80% of my dental hygiene colleagues believe that the concept of a FLC is positive and interesting. In addition, the analysis showed due to an already challenging work load, attending another meeting would be difficult, but 86% said they would consider it. Two faculty members with over 20 years of experience cited a lack of interest and would not be interested in participating.

Informal interviewing with Target Population

After collecting and making sense of the data, I asked three faculty members to meet with me for an informal interview. Each one was agreeable and I scheduled the interviews within one week. During the interview process, I captured solid qualitative data around sharing and building new ideas with colleagues and a profound interest to improve student learning and teaching practice. Three key questions I used for the informal interview process included:

1. In what ways would learning with colleagues assist your development as a teacher and learner?
2. Describe the quality of your interactions with colleagues around teaching and learning
3. Describe your needs for improving development and student development and learning

I learned from a senior colleague it appeared to her my FLC proposal was geared towards new and mid career faculty. Another senior colleague offered the following opinion, “With my experience in the classroom and professional development, I am not clear on how this opportunity would benefit me.” I suggested the FLC could potentially support expert faculty in several ways. The FLC experience could open future professional writing and speaking opportunities and research or mentoring opportunities for the senior faculty members. In addition, expert teachers love to share their work and engage in challenging questions with colleagues but lack a space to do this. My FLC will provide a rich working space to empower new and mid career faculty and reinvigorate experienced faculty.

Another question raised by faculty was around release time or stipend. Although stipends are typically offered to faculty who participate in faculty learning communities, at this time a stipend is not planned. I am looking for colleagues, like me, who find learning, sharing and exploring together to be rewarding.

Through these informal interview processes with seasoned faculty, I gained new insight of how to improve my approach of introducing a FLC program and attracting late career faculty. The senior faculty provided me with new thoughts and directions to consider in the needs assessment and planning stages of my FLC. In future FLC surveys, I will modify the introductory narrative by providing more detail of the benefits for long standing dental hygiene faculty.

Major Content Area- II Important considerations in the Planning stage

The overarching goal of my FLC framework is to invite DH faculty to experience a journey of personal and professional growth and development through collaboration, creative and critical inquiry, collegial relations, and teaching pedagogy and practice.

The planning phase is a road map to set the course of the FLC. Building a FLC framework is both innovating and challenging. The framework, below, will direct the FLC and facilitate the FLC program. The framework is easily adaptable to other academic programs or groups. The framework I will use was developed by Milton Cox from Miami University, Ohio.

The components of Cox's framework include;

- Mission statement and a set of core values that extend the institution's vision
- Administration of FLC
- Connections (building community)
- Affiliated Participants (consultants)
- Meetings and activities (curriculum and methodology)
- Scholarly Process
- Assessment
- Recognition

It is important to have an understanding of effective facilitator and participant dispositions as these qualities will support attainment of FLC goals. A detailed discussion of the facilitator and participant dispositions follows. Later, I will discuss the role of the external and internal affiliate partners and the professional development needs of the facilitator.

Dispositions of the Facilitator

A leader who takes enjoys challenge and change and taking charge of creating a trusting environment for teaching and learning makes an effective FLC facilitator. The role of the FLC facilitator is multidimensional.

To be effective, a FLC facilitator must be able to tolerate climates of distress and navigate an environment that invites uncomfortable questioning. The facilitator assesses the pulse of the FLC and will move the participants towards meeting the goals. The ability of the facilitator to fluctuate the role of leader and participant is a skill that comes with humility. Leaders are not only role models for future leaders but are catalysts for improvement. The facilitator is respectful and flexible, yet mindful of the shared vision, goal and focus of the FLC.

The facilitator values that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts as the purpose of a FLC is sharing and creating in a community (Kurt Koffka 1935). FLC facilitators are forward thinkers who embrace change and innovation. They are charged with conducting needs assessments, development of a vision and goals followed by planning, directing implementation, and evaluation.

The initial organizer of a FLC is typically an administrator or an individual like me and will assume the role of a FLC facilitator and change agent. The facilitator is responsible for carrying out the details of the framework of the FLC. A needs assessment is created and administered and a mission statement and goals are developed. This is followed by initial interviews and meetings with stakeholders. Next, the facilitator recruits of participants, and for a

first time FLC, it is recommended that the facilitator hand select participants, secures funding and institutional support. The FLC facilitator who is flexible, patient, mindful of the community, and open to change, will create a trusting and open work space for professional development.

Disposition of the FLC Participant

Participants who value collegiality, sharing teaching and learning stories, respect and are open to the experiences of others are fine participants for a FLC. Other common attributes conducive to the nature of the FLC community are humility and ability to reflect.

While it is easy to identify these colleagues, there are several reasons why it is difficult to recruit them. One is the lack of time due to a heavy teaching work load, academic and clinical advising, college service, faculty and committee meetings, research to stay current in the standards of his/her specialty as well as the standards of our external accrediting body, the American Dental Association.

Affiliated Participants

A faculty learning community needs a support system to sustain itself. External and internal supports are necessary for a FLC. The affiliated supports include the institution as an entity and the administrators including the President, Provost, and division Dean, who oversee faculty development. The institution provides financial support through grants, funding, and professional development. When requesting financial support the first places to study to frame a request is the college mission statement, the strategic plan and the student learning outcomes. Our college's health careers division has funds to support areas in professional development, textbooks, and stipends.

The dental hygiene program supports the FLC not through funding but by faculty participating in it.

Other external supportive professional agencies, including the Massachusetts Dental Hygiene Association, the American Dental Hygiene Association and the American Dental Education Association, provide funding opportunities for innovation and faculty development.

Professional development needs for the Facilitator

Mentoring or training to support the facilitator must be part of the preplanning phase of a FLC. Fortunately for me, on our campus, we have an engaging teaching and learning center, faculty who have trained at Evergreen State College to develop and implement student learning communities. In addition, we have an Assistant Dean of Professional Development, trained in Appreciative Inquiry, who has developed a faculty community for new college faculty. Also, the exemplary FLC work of Milton Cox of Miami University is highly regarded nationwide. Cox's research on FLC can be seen at his website, units.muohio.edu/flc/. The website contains detailed information on selecting FLC participants, types of FLC's, criterion, building communities, the facilitator's role, and many more related concepts that empower a FLC facilitator or developer.

Major Content Area – III Implementation

The implementation stage is the action that follows the planning. Implementation is the most energizing and requires the most energy. The facilitator needs to manage meeting mechanics, and assessing participant's habit of mind which is equally important but often more challenging.

I came across a Jacques Murphy's idea of the psychological phases of implementation (pragmaticmarketing.com/publications/topics/07/the-four-phases-of-implementation).

This concept is called the “Four Phases of Implementation” and will help the facilitator prepare for the habits of mind that present through the implementation phase.

The initial psychological phase of implementation is filled with excitement and fun - Oh Boy! Oh Boy we have a new group that will help improve teaching practice and support collegial relations. The second phase, Oh No! is a messy phase and should be as short as possible as participant morale plummets. Participants are thinking “I can’t believe how much effort and work this requires to improve my teaching practice and relations” Am I going to be able to effectively contribute and find the time to meet? The facilitator must be ready to counter the feelings of this stage and move the group forward to the Oh Well stage. Oh Well is when the participants resign themselves that this is difficult and is going to take a lot of work. The Oh Wow stage includes thoughts like, “Oh Wow! Did you see how Dialogue is a useful tool for building collegial relations? How did we ever meet without using this communication process in other meetings? The Oh Wow stage builds morale and renews energy and excitement.

Now, I will present the methodology for building community, effective decision making, and evaluating problems through the knowledge and wisdom I gained from my professors, peers and course work in Critical and Creative Thinking program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston and from Phyllis Gleason, Assistant Dean of Professional Development at Middlesex Community College, MA. The concepts include critical thinking, the dialogue process, problem based learning and reflection.

Using Critical and Creative Thinking concepts in a FLC

What better way to understand implementation than by reading an example of a FLC meeting where the concepts of CCT are evident.

The Dialogue Process

If you assume that dialogue is the same or very similar to discussion then I will provide an excerpt from the course description that clarifies the intent of the dialogue process.

“Dialogue allows us to become more aware of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and emotions that limit our thinking and our responses to the world”

One of the most memorable classes I took in the CCT program was The Dialogue Process with Allan Bradford. Alan is a master of Dialogue.

The exploration of beliefs, assumptions, and emotions require trust, respect and honesty from me, the facilitator so the group feels comfortable to move forward. For this reason, it is important for me to create a container that is safe, relaxed and comfortable. At the beginning of FLC meetings everyone will be seated in a circle so that when one person is speaking they can be seen and heard allowing for effective interaction. In the center of the circle will be a chair and on the chair will be a stick, not just any stick, but a talking stick.

At the first meeting, I will welcome everyone and thank them in advance to begin the journey of transformation then I will give a brief overview of the mission, principles and rules of the FLC. The facilitator explains and shares a pre self assessment survey as an evaluation tool. A similar post survey is used at the end of the session giving participants an instrument to reflect upon after the session. I will ask the participants to share their reflection at the end of the session as a mechanism to build trust, sharing and reflective practice. The facilitator, like the participant,

takes an active role in the learning activities and dialogue. It is important for the facilitator to be approachable to all participants and sensitive to his/her non verbal communication.

The goal of the first FLC meeting is to make way for a challenging, emotional, moving and hopefully energizing journey leaving a positive Oh Boy! moment. I reassure the group to share what they are able to. I then offer a description of the dialogue process and take the lead by picking up the talking stick. The person holding the stick is the only one who can speak. There is no time limit for speaking, nor does the speaker need to feel hurried. In most instances the speaker will hold silent to reflect before continuing. The participants focus on the speaker's words and feelings while consciously working to leave judgment and bias aside. The speaker determines when to return the stick to the center of the room for the next speaker. Typically there is a fully charged period of silence as the participants accept and reflect on the speakers words before the next person gets out of their seat to take the talking stick. The dialogue experience is one of the most powerful and it becomes more powerful as the group develops.

The topic of the dialogue may be a thought, emotion, or idea. There is no set topic for dialogue, the facilitator will prepare a topic for the first few meetings to acquaint and create an atmosphere where everyone feels it is safe to have their voice heard.

Problem Based Learning

The FLC is a safe place for participants to raise problems, issues or concerns that they be having in their work. One method of approaching problems is Problem-based learning (PBL). I experienced PBL in the CCT program with Nina Greenwald. Key to PBL is to begin with real world ill defined problems, ambiguities, gaps and missing information where the facilitator (teacher) serves as a guide on the side in creating an environment for self-directed learning. In PBL there is a role shift between teacher and student. The student takes charge of his/her learning. The teacher uses questions to lead the student to meaningful learning. The responsibility of learning rests with the learner and is often very deep.

One ill defined problem expected to be raised in my FLC is, “Why do teachers feel isolated from their peers?” The next step will be for a group of 2-3 to work together “to define the problem, identify gaps and missing information, hypothesize probable resolutions and pursue meaning and understanding”(Greenwald, 1999, p.16).

The FLC facilitator sits in on PBL teams’ discussion to gain an understanding of where and how the group is moving towards meeting the objectives of their problem. The facilitator steers the team by asking thoughtful questions and monitors the collegiality of the group as consensus building is difficult. The facilitator does not directly solve or offer resolutions but instead will guide from the side.

Member-member differences often arise in PBL teams. Teamwork is challenging and often uncomfortable for individual members. Personal judgment, beliefs and values often interfere with group dynamic. The facilitator’s disposition and skill will diffuse, redirect and reenergize group difficulties.

Team members often get stuck in the process of PBL. The facilitator is attentive to the needs of the team. If a team is struggling in the beginning stage of PBL, the facilitator will ask how the problem originated and what is the significance of the problem? as a way to move the team forward. Guiding questions in the resolution-finding stage include, what resolutions do we know about and what are the results. The facilitator continually guides and provides clarification and encouragement so the team stays on course.

Appreciative Inquiry

So much of our energy focuses on problems, who to blame, and quick fixes that at times is quite overwhelming and in the long run – only temporarily resolves the problem. In the midst of this negativity and stress we often lose sight of the good things we do. Recognizing and appreciating the success and good work of others deserves much more attention than the occasional pat on the back or job well done. The objective of Appreciative Inquiry is appreciating and sharing the good works with others.

One way to foster communication in a FLC is using the concept of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The premise of AI looks at two things; what works well in a team when it is soaring. For example, in two consecutive years a dental hygiene programs' board exams outcomes achieved a 98% pass rate. Using the AI concept, faculty will identify and study what contributed to this exemplary outcome. Honoring individual faculty achievements and more importantly recognizing the organization's contribution brings a higher level of collegiality and ownership of achievements. It also reduces feelings of isolation and offers individuals an opportunity to be part of a whole.

An example of where AI can be used is in the following example, recently faculty were feeling distressed as more responsibilities were being added to an already stressful schedule.

It wasn't until a faculty member unleashed her emotions to colleagues that spearheaded the beginning of a study to look at the system. It is important for the organization to allow time for faculty to tell their story. As a result, the individual feels respected, colleagues offer support and a healthier work environment is realized. The next step is for the group to reflect on the time when faculty were all happy in the work environment and what made it that way. A safe trusting environment using AI, will affect change in personal and professional development that will in turn strengthen collegiality. I will incorporate Appreciative Inquiry into my FLC as a mechanism to support team building.

Critical Thinking

Free writing promotes critical thinking and learning by enabling learners to identify what they know, and resurrect information they forgot they knew. It allows learners to share their ideas with others and build upon new ideas. Free writing can be topic driven or unfocused where you write about whatever you want. Write and pass is a form of free write way where you document what you already know about something. The process begins with writing down everything you know about a topic like teacher isolation. Then after a few minutes you pass your list to a colleague and that person has to add new ideas to the list. Eventually the list of ideas is shared with the group. In the first month of FLC meetings, I will alternate between free writing and write and pass and later leave it up to the group to decide.

A critical thinking disposition is open-mindedness. To be openminded requires serious thinking of other points of view and reason from ideas with which you disagree (Ennis 1987).

As the FLC moves forward to the implementation phase, I will present a learning activity to demonstrate these two dispositions of critical thinking.

Reflection

In CCT classes, a 5-10 minute free write exercise is a good way to get people focused on writing. In the beginning it was very challenging to keep the pen on the paper and write about anything I wanted. For me, writing in this manner was uncomfortable. Perhaps because there was no guiding question or idea given to write about or fear from not doing it right.

For the last three years, I was physically, but not emotionally away from my CCT study due to a new job and greater work responsibilities. When I came back to UMASS this winter the first writing group session I attended began with a free writing exercise. For a minute I felt tense, it took a few times to get my mind flowing and the pen moving on the paper. I knew it would be okay and it was.

Reflection is a guiding practice in my FLC. I believe through reflection our thinking becomes deeper and we develop higher order skills for judgment. Critical thinking is a core skill for reflection. I will incorporate reflection in many FLC sessions and as an evaluation tool to assess the outcomes of the community. Written and verbal reflection activities will give participants the opportunity to look back to see how far we have come. I have used journals in the past when I was sick. I still pick them up as a way of connecting to where I am now.

Major Content Area- IV Evaluation

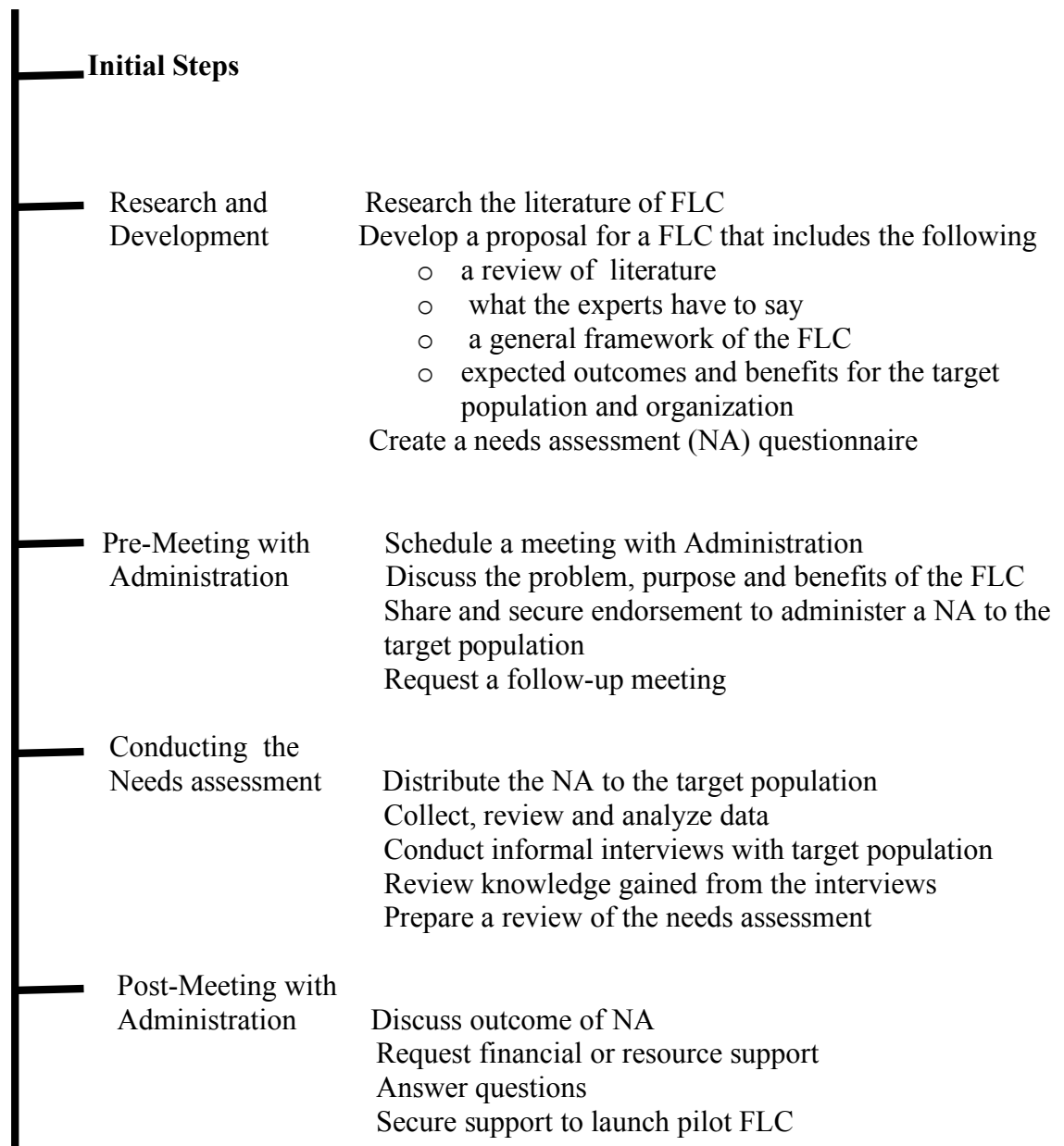
Although an evaluation tool to assess my FLC is not developed, I have identified key areas I want to examine. For instance, I need to learn about participant feelings, attitudes, and dispositions as a result of this experience. I plan to survey and informally interview participants to evaluate their level of development as a result of the learning and their level of satisfaction as a whole. In addition, I will secure feedback on the learning activities around free writing, PBL, dialogue and critical thinking. The last FLC session will be spent on free writing and dialogue around these areas of interest.

I will write a reflection on my experience as a first time FLC facilitator. I will look closely at the goals and objectives of the FLC, my feelings and attitudes as a facilitator and my assumptions during this journey.

A post meeting with administration will be scheduled to share the outcomes, future direction and opportunities for a new FLC.

FLC Process Framework

The FLC process framework gives direction and is a snap shot of progression and order. My framework is outlined below and continues on the following pages.



The planning stage of the framework contains a list of actions and foundation so that everyone knows what will happen and what is expected of them. The plan gives everyone involved a sense of worth and makes them feel like part of the group.



Planning

Select leadership and determine style of leadership (shared or limited)

Decide on recruitment method for participants (volunteer, selective)

Define role of facilitator and participants
Secure resources (financial, personnel, supplies professional development for the FLC facilitator,)

Reserve meeting space and determine meeting time

Develop an action plan- identify a set of goals, principles and rules

Study the FLC goals, principles, and rules and be prepared communicate them

Develop authentic learning activities to support the goals and principles of the FLC

Prepare an agenda template for FLC meetings to include the following content

- Time, meeting place, participants

- Participant preparation

- Facilitator preparation

- Methodology(s) to be used to meet FLC objectives

- Expected outcomes and assessment

Problem finding: identify potential limitations

Develop evaluation tools and time to assess the goals and objectives of the FLC.

Pilot a FLC meeting and modify plan accordingly

Implementation stage of the framework is the most energizing and requires the most energy. The agenda for FLC first meeting is outlined below and uses the concepts of CCT program as a mechanism to move through the four phases of implementation, enhance collegial relations, improve teaching practice and increase student learning. The first meeting will introduce free writing, dialogue. Future meetings will engage skills and experiences in appreciative inquiry critical thinking, and problem based learning.



**Implementation
Stage**

First FLC Meeting Outline
Welcome and Introductions

Communicate the goals, principles and rules and result of needs assessment (strengths and weaknesses)

Introduce the process for and purpose of each of the following

- * free writing
- * dialogue process

Engage and experience free writing, check in and dialogue

Question of the day; What is teacher isolation?

Free write on the question of the day

Check out

Direction and preparation for next meeting

The evaluation stage of the framework takes stock of what we have learned and the changes we have made that have influenced ourselves and others. Evidence collected through the FLC process will be assessed to determine how well participants developed personal and professional skills, attitudes and habits of mind

**Evaluation
Stage**

Process of assessing outcomes

- * Criteria to assess outcomes

- * Selected samples of evidence

 - Written reflection

 - Interview

 - Surveys

How the FLC supports faculty (participants) in meeting FLC goals and objectives

Do changes to the sequencing and concepts need to be modified, changed, or improved for participants to develop and achieve the expected outcomes.

What we learned about participant's achievement

Write a final report of the outcomes of the FLC and distribute to participants and administration

Invite administration and participants to an exit meeting to discuss the process and the product

Revise time line plan based on this experience for a next phase of FLC

Recognition by the college community

Chapter 4

Moving forward

At the onset of this project, my expectation was to have a faculty learning community (FLC) in place by the completion of my synthesis. Although my FLC has not formally organized at this time, I have in place a framework to support a sustainable faculty learning community that supports my premise to limit teacher isolation and provide a safe trusting place for faculty to come together to support one another's personal and professional development.

I have met with administration to share the goals, objectives of my FLC and discuss how the FLC supports institutional goals, educator's learning of teaching pedagogy to improve student learning and success and limit teacher isolation through appreciative inquiry, dialogue, action research, and critical thinking.

Several of my dental hygiene colleagues are eager to begin working together. Although limiting factors exist, like time and external award, dental hygiene faculty are prepared to adjust schedules for research and monthly FLC meetings. I plan to survey faculty around meeting times. The outline for a FLC meeting for dental hygiene educators is outlined in the *Appendix*.

While the dental hygiene faculty learning community was developed for dental hygiene faculty, I believe this learning community framework can be used for any academic discipline that are so moved to support faculty development, limit isolation and promote learning.

Through this journey, I have learned more than I ever expected about my own thinking, organizations and systems, and the process of change. The process of moving towards change requires understanding, risk taking, collaboration, self assessment and change. Change, with the best intentions and promising outcomes, is sustainable by incorporating the principles of problem based learning and critical thinking. I have come to appreciate the need to devote more time for

growth and development. As an individual who welcomes challenges and forward thinking to find solutions swiftly and efficiently, I have realized that I will be more patient and sensitive of other's decision making process. I have a few colleagues who model these skills brilliantly. I am very fortunate to be in their professional circle.

Over the past three years, I assumed the role of the department chair of the dental hygiene program. In this tenure I learned much about the college infrastructure, strategic planning and assessment and experienced, planning, implementing, collaborating and networking with individuals and groups both within and outside the college. This experience has impacted my approach to change and enhanced my vision to see things through a wider lens.

With much reflection, I will relinquish my administrative position and return to a full time teaching position which will allow me the time to move forward in planning and implementing my FLC.

The following pages, from Milton Cox's website, are helpful for a first time FLC facilitator

Meeting Norms

Note: The following norms are only suggestions. Discuss with your team and determine the norms your team will adopt. They should be specific to your group and supportive of the team's mission.

1. **Everyone is equal in discussions.**
2. **Decisions reached are by group consensus.**
3. **Maintain focus and pace (no side bars, cell phones, etc.).**
4. **Produce the work together and share the success.**
5. **Everyone thinks strategically.**
6. **Everyone engages in constructive disagreement.**
7. **School Improvement Team/Principal/Superintendent/School Board makes the final decisions.**
8. **Support the team, school and "district" decision.**

Appendix VIII

Specified Roles

Team Leader:

"Keeper of the vision" who plans, informs, directs, supports and evaluates the progress of the team's mission

Facilitator:

Keeps the discussion focused and moving along, intervenes if a discussion fragments, prevents anyone from being dominant or passive, brings discussions to a close at the end of allotted time. See "Questions a facilitator can ask..." in Appendix XI.

Recorder:

Takes notes, records agreements and actions.

Minutes should have:

- uniform style,
- date and time of meeting,
- place of meeting,
- members present (and any guests),
- statement of decisions made,
- tasks assigned,
- deadlines for tasks and
- individuals responsible for tasks

Timekeeper (can be combined with facilitator's role):

Keeps track of allotted time on agenda and makes sure the meeting begins and ends on time.

Questions a Facilitator Can Ask to Improve Discussion

To open discussion:

- Could we clarify this topic?
- What do you think the general idea or problem is?
- Would anyone care to offer suggestions on facts we need to better understand the problem or topic?

To broaden participation:

- Now that we have heard from a number of our members, would others who have not spoken like to add their ideas?
- How do the ideas presented so far sound to those of you who have been thinking about them?

To limit participation:

- We appreciate your contributions. Would some of you who have not spoken care to add your ideas to those already expressed.
- You have made several good statements, and I am wondering if someone else might like to make some remarks?

To focus discussion:

- Where are we now in relation to our goal?
- Would you like for me to review our discussion to this point?
- Your comment is interesting. However, I wonder if it is on target for this problem.

To help the group move along:

- I wonder if we have spent enough time on this phase of the problem. Should we move to another aspect?
- Have we gone far enough? Should we shift our attention and consider other areas?
- In view of the question before us, should we consider the next question?

To help reach a decision:

- Am I right in sensing agreement on this point?
- Since we tend to be moving in the direction of a decision, should we consider what this will mean if we decide the matter in this way?
- What have we accomplished in our discussion up to this point?

Appendix A

Appendix XVII

Meetings

Three Most Common Complaints about Meetings:

- The meeting continues even though it is no longer necessary.
- No decisions are reached at the meeting.
- The meeting ends late.

Basic conditions for effective meetings:

- accessible meeting room;
- ample, comfortable seating;
- table space for all;
- refreshments (if the team determines desirable);
- sign on door saying, "Important meeting in progress" and
- sufficient copies of any printed materials for each member and guest.

12 Key Points for Better Meetings:

1. Have an agenda focused on your mission.
2. Limit discussion time on each subject.
3. Train team members.
4. Don't feel you have to cover every issue at one meeting.
5. Postpone unplanned topics until another time.
6. Have a master calendar of meetings.
7. Make sure an action is assigned to each issue. Include a person responsible, timelines for completion, and a method to determine effectiveness.
8. Clearly identify follow-up items in a post-meeting memo describing who is to do what, when, where, how and with whom.
9. Use follow-up phone calls or memos to see if help is needed for the completion of any project.
10. Have a back-up plan.
11. If unclear, don't hesitate to send a recommendation back to committee.
12. Keep minutes. Administration should request and review. Post them in lounges, workrooms, on Web site, e-mail to staff, etc.

FLC Presentation for Stakeholders

Introduction

- ✚ Overview of faculty learning communities (FLC)
- ✚ Trends in faculty learning communities
- ✚ Comparison to student learning communities

Overarching Goals

- ✚ Develop a Dental Hygiene FLC
- ✚ Support self assessment and best practices
- ✚ Promote change to improve faculty and student performance.

Goals and Objectives

- ✚ Support professional development
- ✚ Support institutional mission and goals
- ✚ Create an authentic learning experience for faculty
- ✚ \ Promote reflective practice

Goals and Objectives

- ✚ Improve student learning
- ✚ Improve and expand teaching pedagogy
- ✚ Implement Appreciative Inquiry

Milton Cox

(video clip)

- ✚ Expert in FLC
 - ✚ Miami University, Ohio
- Link:

My FLC proposal

A group of 5 to 8 dental hygiene faculty who are committed to studying, sharing, experimenting, and evaluating new pedagogy as a group to improve student learning, and support faculty personal and professional develop through sharing and reflection.

FLC Presentation for Stakeholders

Support Systems

- ✚ Institutional
- ✚ Health Career Division
- ✚ Dental Hygiene Department
- ✚ Professional agencies

Impact on Students

Impact on FLC participants

Philosophy of Learning

- ✚ Critical thinking
- ✚ Reflection
- ✚ Action research
- ✚ Dialogue Process

Dental Hygiene Faculty Learning Community Agenda

Meeting time:

Place:

Meeting Facilitator:

Time keeper:

Recorder:

Prepare for this meeting by:

Please bring with you:

Materials provided:

By the end of our meeting we will have:

FLC Objectives- AY 2011 2012

After each program objective is the institutional goal (s) to which it is related.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

AGENDA			
What	Who	Time	Notes/Agreements
Introductions	All		
Recognitions, announcements	All		
Overview and Topic of Interest		2min	
Free writing		8 minutes	
Dialogue Process		20 minutes	
Plan for study of topic of interest		10 minutes	
Set Groups		30 minutes	
Group meeting			
Action Steps			
Meeting Evaluation			
+ (what went well)		Δ (what would you change)	