A Report on the Professional Educator Faculty Engagement (PEFE) Project's Introduction of School-to-Career Project Pedagogy in Educator Preservice Programs in California

By Joseph Scarcella, Ph.D., jscarcel@csusb.edu and Joyce Podevyn, jpodevyn@csuhayward.edu

In July 1998, with funding from the California School-to-Career Interagency Partners, California State University, Hayward (CSUH) planned, initiated, and implemented a statewide network of professional educators, including its School of Education faculty members. With a statewide Advisory Group, CSUH created the guiding principles, characteristics, and plan for a higher education, K-18 network of faculty to enhance STC in California. The group requested teams of university and college deans of education and their K-18 partners to develop contextual learning plans that enhance the preparation of teachers and counselors through contextual teaching and STC efforts. The project was marketed throughout California as an opportunity for K-18 preservice faculty development with release time, benefits, and collegial opportunities. After distributing a request for proposals, five K-18 teams were selected to participate in Year One, with six to eight members per team in regions throughout the state offering preservice programs. Orientation forums for project faculty were conducted during the statewide School-to-Career Academy in Burlingame in July 1998. Teams from the San Diego, San Francisco, San Gabriel, San Jose, and San Francisco East Bay areas completed contextual/experiential projects in teacher, counselor, and/or administrator preparation programs by September 1999.

After a second marketing effort in winter and spring 1999, nine applications were approved for Year Two funding—including projects from San Francisco, San Gabriel, San Jose, the San Francisco East Bay, San Marcos, Mendocino, Long Beach, San Bernardino, and Dominguez Hills. They started in September 1999 and ended in September 2000.

In July 1999, Year One teams presented proceedings of team activities at the Fourth Annual Summer School-to-Career Academy in Palm Springs, showcasing the integration of team learning into the members’ core work. Project teams continued to document and share revisions in teacher, counselor, and administrator curricula accomplished as part of the project.

A Year Two project orientation in July 1999 was held in Palm Springs, where teams were introduced to the project’s processes and procedures and completed planning their projects. Year One teams, principal investigators, and advisory group members shared their expertise with Year Two teams.

The project also presented at the Sixth Annual Tech Prep Conference at Disneyland in February 2000 and at the Partnership Academies Conference at Burlingame in March 2000. (A report from Year One teams is available at www.edschool.csuhayward.edu/pefe.) Year Three team recruitment took place in spring 2000, from which eight teams were selected for the project’s final year. Year Two and Year Three...
teams met on July 19, 2000, in San Diego at the Fifth Annual School-to-Career Academy, discussed their accomplishments, and made collaboration plans. The Domínguez Hills and San Bernardino teams also presented their accomplishments to Academy participants.

At the end of the PEFE project in September 2001, an evaluation paper and dissemination product were written, documenting the results of the three years of teamwork to integrate STC in California’s professional preparation programs. (Contact Joyce Podeyn at jpodeyn@csuhayward.edu to receive a copy.)

PEFE at CSUSB

Since 1994, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) has actively worked with K-12 educators in San Bernardino County to implement the concepts of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. Professional development seminars have been conducted with teachers and some counselors, administrators, and parents in the areas of Career Guidance and Counseling, Technical Reading and Writing, Consumer Economics and Literature, Computer Science, Math, and Science in Telecommunications. While resulting in increased knowledge about applied and experiential learning, they have not resulted from intersegmental teams collaborating on common methods. Nor have they integrated technology into pedagogical delivery.

Started in 1999 with funding from the California School-to-Career Interagency Partners through the PEFE project, the PEFE San Bernardino team combined the need to implement a contextual learning action plan in San Bernardino with PEFE’s project goal of integrating STC in the preparation of K-12 teachers, counselors, and administrators. In its first year, San Bernardino’s project aimed to create a steering committee and three intersegmental (K-18) and multidisciplinary teams (of teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents) to create a regionally directed website of information and resources for contextual teaching and learning activities. CSU San Bernardino manages this website, connecting it to preserve programs and tailoring its organization to the needs of these programs.

This project instituted blended preserve programs at CSUSB’s College of Education that incorporate service- and work-based learning activities for elementary education students. Students are introduced to and motivated by classroom teaching that connects rigorous academics to their STC-related interests and aspirations. Single- and multiple-subject teacher education faculty and students meet the world of work through job shadowing, internships, paid and nonpaid work experience, field trips, apprenticeships, and mentoring opportunities.

On October 21, 1999, the project convened a Contextual Learning Summit. The intersegmental K-18 steering committee scheduled a meeting of 23 K-18 educators—including representatives from postsecondary, secondary, and elementary schools, plus counselors, administrators, and parent groups—to both review the current status of professional development activities in San Bernardino and create a website of information and resources for contextual teaching and learning delivery. This regional project models how contextual teaching and learning activities accessible via the web can enhance academic education.

Phase One of the San Bernardino County PEFE Contextual Learning Action Plan was implemented throughout the project year. Its activities included forming both an intersegmental K-18 steering committee that created the website mentioned above, and three intersegmental teams (led by CSUSB faculty) that created, demonstrated, and posted the website’s contextual teaching and learning activities.

In May, 1999, Phase Two of the Action Plan commenced, planning for implementing in October, 2000, a blended program that incorporated service- and work-based learning activities for elementary education students by the CSUSB College of Education. An STC presentation and the PEFE grant were introduced to the College of Education faculty. Shown how classroom, school-, and work-based activities connect to academic education and their usefulness in pedagogy, the faculty saw how single- and multiple-subject teacher education students can affect the world of work through job shadowing, internships, paid and nonpaid work experience, field trips, apprenticeships, and mentoring.

Evaluating the Website

The team met bi-monthly throughout the year to complete this project. The steering committee created an email survey and conducted electronic focus groups in the website’s discussion forum. The evaluation’s findings addressed the question, “What is the relationship between the use of the Contextual Teaching and Learning Website on K-18 educators and school-and work-based learning activities?” After several online discussions related to the topics, the focus group completed over two dozen interactive STC website links (all of which may be found at http://soc.csusb.edu/jsscarcella/stc-stc.html). This website—available to adminis-

The PEFE focus group created over two dozen interactive STC website links—all free to students, teachers, counselors, and parents.

Continuing Efforts at CSUSB

Service Learning in pre-service programs is currently underway at CSUSB’s College of Education, as is a blended program incorporating service- and work-based learning activities for elementary education students. Students who participated in developing the activities and artwork found under the examples of the STC contextual learning activities are presenting their works to elementary students and instructing them through various learning objectives.

A Contextual Learning Course is being offered under CSUSB Extended Education this winter. If it succeeds, a certificate program will follow.