



HIGHLIGHTS

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STRENGTHENING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE STUDENT SUCCESS: Highlights from the 2007 CCSSE Workshop

CCSSE workshops promise to engage teams of college representatives in identifying ways to foster student engagement – all for the purpose of supporting student learning, retention, and success.

More than 212 representatives from 88 colleges across 31 states attended the 2007 CCSSE Workshop in Austin (TX) in May 2007. The workshop began with four break-out sessions highlighting strategies for examining and working with CCSSE results. After attending one of the four breakout sessions, attendees had the opportunity to attend a special luncheon discussion with three community college students. The workshop concluded with an inspiring focus session led by Vincent Tinto, a distinguished professor at Syracuse University and a leading national expert on student success in higher education.

What follows is a brief description of each of the workshop sessions:

Breakout Session One: CCSSE 101

This session provided an overview of the CCSSE Institutional Report of survey results. The majority of the session attendees were first-time CCSSE participants who were unfamiliar with the format of CCSSE reports. The facilitators walked participants through the Institutional Report binder, starting with overview information and summary reports and concluding with college-specific reports and explanations of detailed appendix tables. The session also highlighted available communication tools and strategies available on the CCSSE Web site that can be used to convey survey results to internal and external audiences.

Breakout Session Two: CCSSE Advanced

The CCSSE Advanced workshop began with a

discussion of the CCSSE validation research study, including methodology used and final analysis results. Major findings establishing links between student engagement and a variety of educational outcomes were presented.

A small group activity with the purpose of better understanding student behaviors pertaining to CCSSE benchmarks followed. Workshop participants worked in small groups with the task of reviewing a benchmark report and using the data on the report to develop focus group questions. The activity ended with a discussion about each group's results, which led to further exploration on the topic of benchmarking – what it is, why it's used, and why it's important. Ideas on how others have used benchmarking and suggestions on how colleges can reach for excellence using CCSSE benchmarks were shared.

Breakout Session Three: CCSSE Web site

The CCSSE Web site breakout session was conducted by CCSSE's Web development team for attendees interested in using the Web site for breakout analysis beyond what is provided in the Institutional Report. Session participants learned that CCSSE's Web site enables users to conduct real-time data analysis on the current CCSSE Cohort data set. They were guided through the process of analyzing the CCSSE Cohort by institution- and/or student-level variables on the public search section and were oriented to the individual college profiles on the site. Next, participants were led to the Members Only section and learned how to conduct more in-depth analysis to explore differences between their colleges and other groups of institutions.

Breakout Session Four: CCSSE in Action Strengthening Engagement in the Classroom

Anne Kress, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Santa Fe Community College (FL)

The focus of this session was to assist participants in

using student and faculty responses from the CCSSE and the CCFSSE (Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement) to guide the iterative development of institutional changes, and through doing so, to build a college culture of inquiry, evidence, and engagement. Because of her experience with administering the CCSSE and CCFSSE, reviewing and working with the results, and using those results to implement change at the college, Kress was able to answer the question she set forth at the beginning of the session: “Why benchmark student perceptions?” As one workshop attendee said, “Anne Kress and Vince Tinto were ‘real’ in their presentations. They shared what has worked for them. They didn’t share a theory of what we should be doing.”

Plenary and Luncheon

Special Discussion: *Making Connections with Entering Students*

During the workshop luncheon, Arleen Arnsparger, Project Manager, MetLife Foundation Initiative on Student Success, interviewed three community college students—Channa Taylor, Abraham Robles, and Danny Holmes — from St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, Texas. The focus of the conversation was on the power of relationships in connecting the students to their college and their learning. The students spoke at length about the importance of the relationships they formed during their earliest experiences at the college, and how those connections related to their academic successes.

Focus Session: Engaging Under-Prepared Students

Vincent Tinto, Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Higher Education Program, Syracuse University

Building on the conversation with the three community college students—which made evident that connections and relationships do impact academic success—Tinto also focused on the importance of community college students making connections and being involved.

He first discussed promoting student success by creating conditions that set high expectations, that offer students various types of support and feedback, that present them with ways to be involved, and that, most importantly, ensure they are learning. Tinto went on to address settings and strategies that can facilitate these conditions, such as learning communities, problem-based and cooperative learning, and supplemental instruction.

What participants report they enjoyed most about the 2007 CCSSE Workshop:

- Opportunity to engage in dialogue during the sessions – and not just listen to a presentation
- Interaction with peers and ability to ask questions during the workshop
- Meeting and discussing with colleagues from a wide variety of community college settings
- Opportunity to hear other methodologies for dealing with learning communities, collaborative learning, etc.
- Good combination of information and involvement of participants
- Tinto presentation—Wonderful opportunity!
- CCSSE in Action session!
- Opportunity to hear from students
- Registration process and staff—superb
- CCSSE Web Tools—awesome

Registration for CCSSE and CCFSSE 2008 is now open!
To join, visit www.ccsse.org

Deadline: November 1st