An Articulation Model for Secondary and Postsecondary Faculty: Improving the Student Transition to College-level Work—Wyoming School-University Partnership

Abstract and Selected References

A school-university partnership provides the structure for a promising practice engaging secondary and postsecondary faculty. Hierarchically flat, the collaboration invites faculty to focus on ways students can become more successful in the transition to college-level work. The initiative targets five core content areas: English/language arts, mathematics, life sciences, social studies, and world languages. Participants examine student work, share the language of instruction, build instructional and curricular connections, learn more about and discuss national standards, and form positive working relationships.


National and Local Challenges Create the Need for a New Practice

National Challenges
Policy makers call for seamless preK-16 education in the U.S.
Secondary and postsecondary institutions feel pressure to create structures that improve academic transitions and reduce remedial courses.

Local Challenges
The state’s Hathaway Scholarship Program ensures postsecondary opportunities for all of the state’s high school graduates, based on GPA and ACT scores.
At the University of Wyoming, 25% of first-year students are on academic probation after the first semester.
Wyoming legislators want to reduce the number of developmental courses at the state’s seven community colleges.

Need for a New Practice
The U.S. education system has never been seamless.
Faculty across levels value autonomy and independence and resist top-down pressures and external initiatives.
Structures for teachers to collaborate across levels do not exist.
In western states like Wyoming, libertarian values held by many result in resistance to national mandates such as the Common Core State Standards’ initiative.
Incompatible scheduling across levels (school year and school day) disables opportunities for face-to-face meetings or regular collaborations.

Planning teams construct agendas, identifying key courses, teaching materials, and learning expectations.

Annual meetings focus on five core content areas in the state’s Hathaway Success Curriculum: English/language arts, mathematics, life sciences, social studies, world languages.

The Missing Middle Ground: Dispositions that Foster Horizontal and Vertical Collaboration

Content-level meetings unpack assumptions about courses, syllabi, assignments, and terminology (e.g., present a claim, present an argument, use the scientific method)

Collaborations produce common language and clarify the language of instruction and assessment helpful for students’ transitions to college-level work.

Meetings showcase renewal, diverse voices, democratic practices, and teacher decision-making.

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