

**Title of Grant:** Standards for Higher Learning: Supporting Students' Transition from SOLs to College Level Critical Thinking

**S2008 – 95W-FF**

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**Abstract:**

VCCS faculty, all colleges and disciplines, discussed challenges/strategies in guiding students from K-12 testing to college-level academic habits. Panel discussion and rotation through four round tables— Research Summary, Experiences, Suggestions, and Questions—provides multi-faceted examination of this issue and new approaches for attendees to take back into their classrooms.

**Actual Outcomes:**

Benefits for Faculty: Faculty from all VCCS colleges were invited to pursue increased information, new strategies, and a community of colleagues with whom to consult in facilitating the high school/testing to college/critical thinking transition for students.

Benefits for Students: Students of all these faculty members and the colleagues with whom they share their experiences gained the support of aware, engaged faculty who are knowledgeable about the dramatic changes in learning and assessment modes and goals from high school to college, and are committed to working with other faculty and with their students to facilitate that transition.

**Other Colleges:**

All VCCS colleges were invited. Between registrants and panelists, the workshop was originally to include 7 colleges; Blue Ridge, Dabney S. Lancaster, Eastern Shore, Lord Fairfax, Germanna, Northern Virginia, and Patrick Henry. Folks from Northern Virginia and Patrick Henry had to cancel the week of the workshop, so ultimately participants from Blue Ridge, Dabney S. Lancaster, Eastern Shore, Lord Fairfax, and Germanna attended.

**Discussion and Critique:**

I would repeat the enthusiasm and participation level of workshop attendees; the discussion was very much a true discussion, rather than simply a response to panelists. It was clear that attendees had thought deeply and worked extensively with issues of college readiness. Workshop participants and panelists taught and learned in equal measure.

I would also repeat the general format, content, and overall mixture of attendees--having presenters and attendees from multiple academic disciplines and from faculty and administrators, along with discussion of information from research, college classroom practice, and high school classroom practice, added much to the discussion.

One change I would make would be to distribute some sort of materials--perhaps an abbreviated literature review or preparatory discussion questions--to attendees electronically a few days prior to the workshop. This technique would, I hope, ensure and perhaps even surpass the high level of engagement and discussion that developed throughout the day in any workshop.

### **Evaluation:**

I worked with the BRCC Institutional Research and Effectiveness Coordinator, to design an evaluation form for attendees to complete that included scaled responses rating various aspects of the workshop and open ended questions about the content of the workshop and possible areas for further research.

Responses were mostly positive. Of the scaled items, attendees gave a majority of positive ratings (1 or 2 on a 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree) on items including "The workshop was applicable to my job," "The content was as described in the announcement," "I would recommend this workshop to other faculty and administrators at my college," "The presenters were good communicators," "The presenters were knowledgeable on the topic," and "I would be interested in attending a follow-up workshop on this subject." The meeting space and the handouts also met with positive reception: "Excellent" or "Very Good" on an Excellent-Very Good-Good-Fair-Poor scale from most attendees who filled out evaluations.

The open ended questions were helpful in offering snapshots of the major conclusions attendees reached during the workshop and suggesting avenues for future research into college readiness and the high school to college transition.

### **VCCS Benefits:**

All Benefits are for VCCS Faculty and Students:

1. Attendees built connections with and learned from colleagues across the VCCS based on similar experiences with student readiness in and out of the classroom.
2. Attendees shared best practices and reflected on each other's experiences with college readiness.
3. Attendees received copies of a literature review summarizing recent research on college readiness issues nationally.
4. The workshop and the e-mail follow-up list that I will maintain will allow attendees and other interested colleagues who were not able to attend on the specific date of the workshop to continue this conversation and to continue sharing resources as we support our students' transition to college readiness across the VCCS.