



proposals due 11-15-08

Call for Proposals

The Faculty Inquiry Network seeks community college faculty to create a "community of practice"¹ united around a set of shared values for strengthening basic skills education. We're looking for faculty who hold a belief in students' capability and a willingness to change their practice to more effectively engage this capability; faculty committed to investing intentional time and effort to understand what students need to find their footing and thrive in the college environment; faculty who understand that what we call "basic skills" involve complex cognitive routines and affective dimensions that only seem simple after they have become second-nature; faculty who believe that effective basic skills education must go beyond delivering discrete, bite-sized skills and engage students in meaningful intellectual work; and faculty with a commitment to working in an open, transparent, and collegial manner.

Funded by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Faculty Inquiry Network will be comprised of teams from 15 colleges across California. At each college, a Faculty Inquiry Group will investigate a complex problem in basic skills education – a thorny, difficult question we need to grapple with to better understand how students learn, what's getting in their way, and how to reach them.²

The Network will be organized around regional hubs in the greater Los Angeles, Bay Area, and Central Valley regions. Over the two years of the project, participating campuses will receive grants to support their inquiries, extensive training and coaching, and the chance to learn from colleagues around the state. The project will also support campuses to "go public" with their findings by developing compelling web and/or video representations of what they are learning about students. Through these multi-media "windows" into teaching and learning,³ participants will enrich the state-wide effort to improve outcomes for students who arrive at the open doors of the community college system under-prepared for the demands of college.

¹ See Etienne Wenger's work at www.ewenger.com

² For a good overview on faculty inquiry, see *Faculty Inquiry in Action: Guidelines for Working Together to Improve Student Learning* and *The Promise of Faculty Inquiry for Teaching and Learning Basic Skills*, both available online through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, www.carnegiefoundation.org

³ For examples, see documentary from Chabot College, *Reading Between the Lives*, www.archive.org/details/ReadingBetweenTheLivesPart1.mp4; and "Windows on learning: Resources for Basic Skills Education." Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. SPECC Project. www.carnegiefoundation.org

Guidelines for Proposals

Colleges are invited to submit an Inquiry Proposal which focuses on an important problem or question about student learning. Proposals should outline the issues or questions the team would like to investigate, along with a design for how they plan to pursue this inquiry. Designs should include thoughtful plans for collecting and interpreting a range of relevant data – e.g. student work; interviews; videotaped Think Alouds; course success, retention, and persistence rates; the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE); and surveys measuring such affective variables as students' self-efficacy, self-regulation, and hope. Accepted proposals will feature student learning as the central focus of inquiry, and we encourage teams to imagine ways to include students as co-investigators with valuable insights to offer.⁴

In addition to Inquiries grounded in the traditional arenas of Math, English, and ESL, we are interested in proposals that examine basic skills learning in a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary way. Applicants might consider, for example, the interplay between one or more of the following topics:

- Expanding the definition of "basic skills" to include skills and habits of mind at the heart of disciplines outside of English and Math – e.g. thinking like a historian, reading like a biologist
- The affective dimensions of student learning (e.g. identity, academic sustainability,⁵ self-efficacy,⁶ emotional intelligence, community, math anxiety, fear)
- Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- Equity as an analytic framework and an intentional educational practice
- The role of metacognition in basic skills education
- The use of lesson-study as a methodology for collaborative faculty inquiry⁷
- Principles for creating powerful classrooms, e.g. 1) High Structure, 2) High Challenge, 3) Intensity, 4) Intentionality and Learning How to Learn, and 5) Inquiry and Assessment to Make Learning Visible⁸

Complete application materials will be available after October 10, 2008

www.chabotcollege.edu/fin

Questions? Contact Cindy Hicks, Chabot College, 510-723-6814 chicks@chabotcollege.edu

⁴ *Listening to Students About Learning*, available online at www.carnegiefoundation.org

⁵ *When Capable Students Fail: The Problem of Academic Sustainability*, <http://online.chabotcollege.edu/khern/>

⁶ See work by Albert Bandura, <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/self-efficacy.html>

⁷ Lesson Study Project www.uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp/

⁸ *Basic Skills for Complex Lives: Designs for Learning in the Community College* available online at www.carnegiefoundation.org