Redesigning ACA

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The Old ACA 115

- We use ACA 115
  - Lecture: 0; Lab: 2; Credit: 1

- Originally ENG 111A covered some of the ACA 115 content

- ACA 115 replaced ENG 111A but was a corequisite of ENG 111
Old ACA 115 - Problems

• Course sequencing
  – Students not always enrolled in ENG 111 and ACA 115 at the same time
  – ACA 115 was not being taken during the first semester or first year

• Course content
  – No uniformity
  – Vast difference between sections of what was taught
Old ACA 115 – Problems cont’d

- Instructor Quality
  - Instructors weren’t selected based on desire to teach the course or knowledge of course content
  - Instructors may not have had an interest in course content or necessary knowledge of BRCC
- Not staffed until just before or just after start of semester
  - Led to confusion for students and faculty
Redesign Process

• Ad Hoc Committee began Fall 2011
  – Chaired by a full-time faculty with experience teaching ACA
  – Representative from each instructional division
    – Basic Skills
    – Student Services
    – Institutional Advancement
    – Library
Redesign Process, cont’d

• First, determined course learning outcomes
  – Demonstrate knowledge of the behaviors and attitudes used by successful students.
  – Demonstrate knowledge of the behaviors and attitudes used with effective life skills.
  – Identify the resources available on campus.
  – Demonstrate knowledge of personal and technical skills needed to be successful in online courses.
  – Recognize the basic norms of college culture and community.
Redesign Process, cont’d

- QEP focused on online learning
  - Wrote a learning outcome focused on online literacy
- Which ACA was the best one to offer?
  - Contenders: ACA 111 and ACA 115
  - ACA 111 did not offer enough contact hours to cover all outcomes
- Pre- and post-test written to cover all course outcomes
  - Good way to collect data for future reports
Redesign Process, cont’d

• Used previous 115 course as a starting point (didn’t want to reinvent the wheel)
• Decided which previously taught units helped teach newly determined outcomes
  – Course Units: life skills, classroom skills, library, online readiness, college culture & community
• Removed extraneous content
• Added necessary content
Redesign Process, cont’d

- Old textbook was not well liked by faculty or students
- Worked with Bedford St Martin’s to create a custom textbook based on the Gardner college success textbooks.
- Selected chapters from multiple Gardner books and added custom BRCC content
  - Letter from the President, campus resource guide, map, contact information
Redesign Process, cont’d

- Used research of First Year Experience courses
- Led to decision to include a common read
  - All sections to read the same book
  - Campus-wide activity related to the common read
  - Created activities and assignments specific to the common read
Redesign Process, cont’d

• Outside instruction
  – Library
  – Student Services
  – NCWORKS
  – Student Success Center
Redesign Process, cont’d

- Created “Master Course” in Moodle
  - All instructors invited to add assignments, classroom activities, and faculty resources to each unit
  - Master course used as the template for all ACA 115 courses
    - All courses now web-assisted and have a Moodle shell with this content
- Goal: continuity from section-to-section
Implementation

- Fall 2013 first semester with new ACA 115
- Professional Development Day (Feb 2013) presentation to all faculty with information about the upcoming changes
- Training prior to start of semester
  - All ACA faculty invited to attend
- Staffing focused on full-time faculty and strong adjuncts
  - Must have a genuine desire to teach the course
- Deans supported by allowing full-time faculty time to teach
Implementation, cont’d

- Advising:
  - Asked advisors to register students in first semester of college
  - Not allowed to put blocks on student registration

- Tried program-specific sections
  - Online section for students in our online-only programs
  - Section for students in our Applied Technology programs
Implementation, cont’d

• Common Read:
  – 1st year: *Becoming Odyssa*, Jennifer Pharr Davis
    • Local author, overall Appalachian Trail speed record holder
    • Fall activity: gave a talk, book signing, and led a hike at Dupont State Park
    • Spring activity: talk (different topic from Fall), book signing, led a class on hiking tips
    • Book well-received by some students, not by others
Implementation, cont’d

• Common Read:
  – 2nd year: *The Other Wes Moore*, Wes Moore
    • Activities TBD

• Common Read Assignments:
  – Some instructors spaced the assignments out throughout the semester
  – Some instructors struggled with how to incorporate the common read
How it’s Working Now

- ACA Redesign Committee became ACA Advisory Committee
  - Provide oversight to course, select new common read, develop future ACA courses
- Instructors lined up well in advance of semester
  - Strong full-time faculty and adjuncts
- Continual editing and revising
Data and Feedback

- Students were least successful in 2nd 8-week classes
- Hybrid classes had lowest enrollment
  - Students didn’t understand the hybrid concept
- Some outside instruction was not well-received by faculty and students
Future Changes

• ACA 122 offered Fall 2014
  – Carefully redesigning 115 makes the development of 122 much easier
• Revamping outside instruction
• Possible expansion of ACA offerings
  – ACA 112 – Intro to Distance Learning
  – ACA 220 – Professional Transition
  – ACA 120 – Career Assessment
Challenges

- Funding
  - No full-time ACA instructor
  - No consistent funding for common read activity
  - No funding to provide common read book to instructors

- Perception
  - Still viewed as a workload filler by some instructors
  - Viewed as an unnecessary class by some students & instructors

- Problems with some program-specific sections
- Hard time selling some faculty and students on the common read
Questions?

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