Webster’s Revenge
Defining the College-Going Culture in Your School

College Talk
Clear, ongoing communication about college, so that all students develop a college-going identity.

Indicators:
- Newsletters, newspapers, posters
- “Your Educational Journey” campus-wide
- College Club for middle school students
- Essay contest based on college application questions

Based upon the work of Patricia M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA
Clear Expectations

Explicit goals of college preparation must be defined and communicated clearly, consistently, and in a variety of ways by families and all school personnel.

Indicators:
- School mission statement
- Four-year plans for all students
- Frequent communication with students about their college options
- Ongoing opportunities to discuss college preparation, define goals

Based upon the work of Patricia M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA

Information & Resources

Students must have access to up-to-date, comprehensive college information and schools must build college knowledge infrastructure.

Indicators:
- College-related periodicals
- PSAT/SAT/ACT materials
- Financial Aid materials
- College catalogs
- College choice guides
- CD ROMS on college planning

Workshops on test prep, financial planning, and high school coursework planning.

Based upon the work of Patricia M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA
Comprehensive Counseling Model

All counselors are college counselors and all student interactions with counselors are college advising opportunities.

Indicators:
• All high school counselors attend state college conferences
• Counselors at all grade levels have ongoing collaboration
• Counselors distribute college information to all students, faculty, and staff

Based upon the work of Patricia M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA

Testing & Curriculum

Students must be informed about necessary tests, must be given the opportunity to prepare for these tests, and testing fees must be taken into account.

Indicators:
• PSAT given on school day to all 10th graders, with fees waived
• Master schedules changed to make more college prep classes available
• Students learn organizational skills

Based upon the work of Patricia M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA
Faculty Involvement

Faculty must be active, informed partners with counselors, students, and families and professional development opportunities must be available.

Indicators:
- Classroom decorations and “college corners”
- College Talk in class time
- Mathematics teachers work with PSAT-takers
- Teachers understand their roles in college prep
- Teachers visit counseling office

Based upon the work of Patrina M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA

Family Involvement

Family members must have opportunities to gain college knowledge and understand their role.

Indicators:
- College Fairs for students and their families
- Evening/weekend parent workshops to learn about college preparation, financial planning
- Parents supported in their belief that their children are “college material”

Based upon the work of Patrina M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA
College Partnerships

Have active links between K-12 schools and local colleges and universities that can lead to field trips, college fairs, and academic enrichment programs.

Indicators:
- Students at all grade levels have visited local college campuses
- College dress days, door decoration contests, guest speakers
- Tutoring programs
- Pen pal program with college students

Based upon the work of Patrice M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA

Articulation

Students should have a seamless experience from Kindergarten through HS graduation, with ongoing communication among all schools in a feeder group, and work at one school site should connect with activities at other levels.

Indicators:
- Students hear a consistent message at all grade levels
- As early as kindergarten, students are seeing themselves as college material
- Middle schools connect with students as young as fifth grade
- High school and middle school counselors are pooling resources and making connections

Based upon the work of Patrice M. McDonough, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA
Visual Ecology:
What messages are conveyed by the visual environment of the school?

Sheri Bauman, Ph.D.
University of Arizona

Based on a presentation at ACA Annual Conference, Montreal, Canada, April 1, 2006
“A Safe and Welcoming Environment”
Using Visual Ecology Methods to Address Gender Messages in One Comprehensive High School

Laurie A. Carlson, Ph.D.
Nathalie L. Kees, Ed.D.
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Purpose

- Unobtrusively examine college-going visual messages in the school environment.
- Consider the influence of visual messages on the campus climate.
- Provide a foundation for collaborative program planning.

Why study the physical environment?

“Space, like language, is socially constructed; and like the syntax of language, the spatial arrangements of our building and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race, and class relations in society. The uses of language and space contribute to the power of some groups over others and the maintenance of human inequality” (Weisman, 1992).
• Premise: Student choices are influenced by what they see portrayed in the visual environment.
• Examples of Artifacts
  • Art
  • Signs and Posters
  • Display Cases
  • Classroom décor and bulletin boards
  • Graffiti
  • Architecture

• Images brought back to counselors and one administrator
• They were presented three times in succession without comment (slowly, quickly, slowly)
• Individual, written reflection pertaining to the themes Belonging, Safety, Equality, and Roles from Banning and Bartel’s taxonomy (Banning & Bartles, 1993) We suggest the theme of “college going”
• Focus group taped and transcribed
• Main points identified by researchers through the coding of written reflections and group transcription
Advantages of Visual Ecology method:

- Occurs in a naturalistic setting.
- The process itself is powerful and rigorous.
- Requires little resources.
- Has multiplicity of uses.
- Can be used longitudinally to document environmental culture and change.
A Framework for Action
developed by the
Pathways to College Network
pathwaystocollege.net

- High Expectations
- Academic Rigor & Support
- P-16 Alignment
- Social Support
- Data Use

High Expectations
The belief that all students can prepare for postsecondary education.

Strategies
- All students must have a plan
- College in the classroom and in the hallways
- Teachers and staff are key
- Must balance positivity of encouragement with the necessary support
- Families and postsecondary institutions
**Academic Rigor & Support**

Rigorous and challenging coursework along with strong academic support best prepares students for postsecondary education.

**Strategies**

- It’s never too early - Middle school
- Rigorous core curriculum
- Culture and the curriculum
- Critical thinking vs memorization
- Personalized learning environments
- Additional support

**P-16 Alignment**

Students understand expectations and are prepared for each successive year, resulting in preparation for postsecondary education.

**Strategies**

- Vertical Conversations
- Better alignment between state-mandated exams, college admission tests, and college placement exams
- College remediation and retention rates of students
- Early college programs
Social Support
Help students develop strong social networks that are supportive of academic and personal development.

Strategies
- Adult guides
- Structured peer interaction
- Timely interventions
- Transitional support
- Families and community organizations

Data Use
Understanding available data and gathering additional data on college-readiness.

Strategies
- Graduation and destination
- Graduation take two!
- Assess academic support
- Individual success
- Gap analysis
Context for Change
It takes a village to raise our standards.

Strategies

- Leadership that values every contribution
- Collaboration is key
- Professional Development around the college going culture
- Resources

A Framework for Action
developed by the Pathways to College Network pathwaystocollege.net

Website Resources
- Framework
- Tools
- Lessons Learned
- Resources & Links
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