**Math and ELA Vertical Alignment Team (VAT) Meetings Minutes**

**February 20, 2015, 4:30-6:00 pm, STAC 2.130**

**Attended**: Virgil Pierce, Thane Stroop, Esther Rodriquez, Howard Price, Kyle Sherman, Abraham Jimenez, Martha Ocanas, Leslie Schlieper, Manuel Rodriguez, Daniel Testfay, Boye Sanchez

**Absent**:

**Taking Minutes**: Laura Hinojosa

1. **Meeting called to order at 4:53 PM.**
2. **Welcome and Introductions**
   * Introductions given by Dr. Pierce
   * UPDATE- MOU being signed that allows students who pass exam eligibility to go to Region 2 institutes, as well as Region 1
     + Currently the only region who has done this
     + UTPA, UTB signatures have been received and will have STC sign soon
3. **Overview of charge – The HB5 grant requires the formation of a regional vertical alignment team in mathematics and English that will meet three times each semester to discuss the results of the HB5 mathematics course and make improvements as needed. We will be reviewing the course, course objectives, instructional methodologies, and data collected from the first year’s implementation of the College Prep Mathematics courses.** 
   * Mandate to follow up with HS to assess course and look for improvements
   * Main charge is analyzing English and mathematics courses
     + Goal is for both committees to come up with recommendations for summer and next year
     + Are their improvements that can be made for course and data collection?
     + Recommendation: A lot of seniors are taking TSI now, Recommendation for juniors to take TSI earlier in junior year so we can have a target group. Encourage schools to take TSI by end of junior year at least.
   * **Next Meeting places and Times: March 13th,4:30-6:30 & June 12th or earlier**
   * Time and Day best for meetings
     + March 13th @ 5:00 PM @UTPA STAC
     + A teacher has a problem with June 12th due to European trip with students.
     + Date moved to June 8th, Monday, 10:00 AM @ UTPA STAC
   * If individuals know of other teachers using the courses, invite them to the next meeting in order to receive their input.
   * Or if individuals want to know more about this course, invite them to come to next meeting for them to receive information.
4. **Have a person take notes at the meeting**
5. **Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.**

**MATH VAT 2.130**

1. **Meeting called to order at 5:25 pm.**
2. **Update on the Course Implementations** 
   * Review of the Course Packet.
   * If answers were given through online homework system – we have answers from students. (WW)
   * 32 districts signed MOU.
   * 70 courses are on online homework system.
   * There are much less than 70 who gave exam.
   * Who’s implementing? Who isn’t? Why are they not implementing?
     + Data that is being gathered
   * What kind of data do we need teachers to report to us in order to see what improvements we need to make?
   * Biggest problem- Web work isn’t aligned with textbook.
     + Suggestion: focus effort on aligning homework system with textbooks. There are online textbooks that could be used.
     + Get some high school teachers involved in development

* What kinds of data should we be trying to collect?
* What kind of improvements they would like to see?
  + Feedback from instructor – receive feedback every 6 weeks in order to compare and to see if they are on the right track rather than at the end of the semester after final exam.
  + Help the disconnect from high school to college, by adding more assessment throughout the process
* What thoughts they have?
  + Why didn’t Brownsville teachers report? Participation wasn’t as great. Need to find out why it happened.

1. **Virgil Pierce – Observations from follow-up workshop**
   * Technology is hard to use and hard to learn.
   * # of students who passed course A took the TSI and passed it
   * It has been observed that course A is all that is needed for TSI
   * Questions for the committee.
     + What kind of things can we gather from the observations?
     + Can we make a recommendation about what to do with students who are college ready after Course A?
2. **Manuel Rodriguez, Thane Stroop, Martha Ocanas – Observations from the classrooms.**
   * Email being sent to Dr. Pierce about software issues.
   * Implementation of course: Tutoring type- broke program into parts, and then gave them 3 wks. to do each section. Then went 1-1 to teach misunderstood concepts. In the end caused problems because they began becoming experts.
     + Week 1- Introduce each section
     + Week 2-Tutoring fashion
     + Week 3- Exam
   * Chapter 4 seems to be where everyone get stuck.
     + Suggesting to students to work through chapter 4 and then take TSI
   * Set aside money or fundraise money for students so that teacher can have account to give $12 for use for TSI when students don’t have the money.
     + Consistent flow of TSI testing for money
     + Reinforcement that instructor is just liaison and Dr. Pierce is actual instructor to keep mindset that students are in college class.
     + More face time by recruiter or AIGs to visit class to reinforce what they are trying to implement in class.
   * Skill development as part of course OR counseling services after they have passed course A.

**Things heard by other teachers:**

* + Haven’t heard anything

**Are administers interfering or not?**

* + Administrators not taking active stance.
  + Things have gone wrong in communication.
  + Huge exodus from classes from Manuel Rodriguez.
  + Positive search at the end of the semester, but then students weren’t enrolled for second semester. Other students had scheduling conflicts. Scheduling conflicts deflated class size.

1. **Data Collected to date – Final exams for Course A and Course B**
2. **Further Steps?**

Will be interviewing teachers, asking questions through interview team.

1. **Additional Notes:**

* Right template for translating data is going to be important.
* Grades were put into semester exam and registrar uses that information to gather information.
* Martha Ocanas will be asking registrar to find out what system is being used for grading and data information to be collected within her campus. Will report back at next meeting.
* Align the parameters to decide what students will take the course.
* Run numbers on school to find out how much this is costing them.
* Career advising?
  + Would it be useful to implement it in the course?
  + What kind of technology is available in the classroom?
* Changes in training??
  + Immerse instructors in the course work in order to gain feedback in order to know how they are doing while teaching the course.
  + Computer availability
* Next meeting
  + Have survey results
  + Will have done interviews
  + Will have transcripts of those interviews
  + Numerical data will be coming in
  + Abraham: To look at if there’s anything missing within the course

**Questions for teachers in interview:**

* Asking administrators and teachers when they are giving TSI test.
* Ask question about how can communicate web work instructors and dr. pierce.
* How they are actually using software? And if they are using it? If they are? How? Compare it with success that teacher may be having?
* Alignment b/w web work and textbook
* Question about using other software
* Ask administrators about the commitment towards preparing proper technology placed for these classes. What kind of technology is available?
* What kind of support they are getting from the rest of the school?
* What’s being done for special population students?
* To what extent does scheduling conflict effect enrollment in class?
* Who pays for the TSI exam?
* Was there enough connection between you and the person of higher education? Do you think it would be helpful?

1. **Meeting is adjourned at 6:27 PM.**