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EMBEDDED DUAL CREDIT COURSES: Is there any common ground? The Story of Embedded Dual Credit Government Courses Part Two of Three Parts

In the Spring of 1997, the two Political Science faculty members of Tomball College were asked to review an Embedded Dual Credit Government course from Cy-Fair ISD. What is particularly troublesome about this application is that the class was already in progress and the students had already signed up with the college district. If that was not academic integrity-challenging enough, the high school had sixty students (a number that is nearly impossible to believe in one high school meeting the stringent requirements of a truly Advanced Placement student population in the field of government). After many long and heated meetings and after repeated attempts at coercion, the faculty was told the following: that Houston Community College would approve the course if they did not, in fact, according to Dr. Joe McCann's memo to the faculty of 20 August 1997, HCC had "offered the course in the past," and that the faculty's refusal would hurt the District's chances of recruiting Cy-Fair to join the NHMCC District; that the Cy-Fair ISD service area, which was split by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board between HCC and NHMCCD ("our" area including Cy-Fair High School along with that portion of the Cy-Fair District northeast of Highway 290) might be completely turned over to HCC;

and that Cy-Fair might refuse to let NHMCCD use its facilities for classes in the future. The Political Science faculty held firm, still declining to approve the course.

But Cy-Fair did not have to approach HCC, Tomball College President Diane Troyer approached HCC on behalf of the Cy-Fair ISD and requested HCC to grant their Embedded Dual Credit for the course! During the 1996-97 academic year, the Tomball Faculty Senate completed a lengthy review of Embedded Dual Credit classes and passed a uniform procedure for processing all EDC proposals made to Tomball College. The Tomball Faculty Senate uniform procedure states that "After the assessment is complete, the department will submit a written response. . . . in one of the following ways: (1) accept the course as presented in the petition and agree to establish an embedded dual credit class, (2) reject the course and list specific reasons for rejection or (3) make recommendations to the public school as to how to make the application acceptable."

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The Tomball Political Science faculty contacted the entire District Political Science faculty who were then either just initially informed or finally understood the true nature of EDC courses. They agreed to meet immediately and develop a set standard or procedure to deal with these courses in the future. After a thorough review, a unanimous decision was made to support the Tomball Political Science faculty's decision concerning the Cy-Fair proposal and to refuse to participate in a second review of the application. The group did agree to accept the Tomball Senate EDC Procedure and to develop District uniform Political Science guidelines concerning content and other standards for any future EDC proposals which that did and e-mailed these decisions to the appropriate administrators.

Linda Stegall responded by saying, "I was somewhat surprised to read that the District Political Science Curriculum Committee was attempting to become involved in decisions regarding EDC courses. This has never been a charge to or responsibility of the Curriculum Teams and I don't believe it should be. . . . I would hope that you and other political science faculty would approach this positively and find way to make it work. Otherwise, we will never have an opportunity to reach this high school population

-- they will either seek dual credit through another college district or get 'AP' credit -- both of which we readily transfer in to meet our requirements . . . I very much believe faculty need to be involved in the process to assure outcomes are met and that academic integrity is upheld -- but I believe this needs to be done at the college -- not the district level." In response, AD Steve Davis, the District Curriculum Team Chair received an e-mail from Associate Chancellor Longnion stating, "Linda Stegall and the CESD had asked me a long time ago to not list 'Dual Credit' on the agenda for Curriculum Teams. . . I would say that every other curriculum matter comes before the team--just not that one!!!"

At the same time, the Tomball Faculty Senate made a recommendation, as described by FS President Pamela Womack: "Following the recent controversy over a potential EDC government course...our FS recommended that curriculum councils discuss specific discipline courses to determine as a group which courses are appropriate for EDC (taught by a high school teacher at a high school for both high school and college credit). In keeping with the recommendations of the curriculum councils, each college/high school partnership would then be responsible for determining the logistics of course offerings. We feel this is important because of the need for consistency as well as the need for mutual support. Action by the curriculum councils would preclude reinventing the wheel each time a partnership is formed as well as protect individual faculty members from being placed in such a difficult position."

Once again, Vice Chancellor Linda Stegall reiterated, "Decisions regarding dual credit courses should be made by individual colleges based upon mutual agreement between the college faculty and the high school faculty on content, evaluation, faculty credentials, etc." Because it would mean going "outside" the individual college, no action on EDC government courses was taken by the District Political Science curriculum team to develop uniform standards and guidelines.

At the next Executive Council meeting, however, the decision was made to have Montgomery College President Bill Law ask the Political Science faculty at Montgomery College to review the Tomball Political Science faculty's decision concerning the Cy-Fair EDC government proposal. (Like the District Curriculum Councils, this also was going 'outside' Tomball College, but for some reason this was deemed acceptable.)

President Bill Law informed the two Political Science faculty members at Montgomery of their colleagues' refusal to approve the proposal and that this was an attempt to overrule that decision. After consultation with other District Political Science faculty members, the Montgomery College Political Science faculty refused the review.

During Summer I Semester, the NHC administration held a faculty meeting where a lengthy discussion and review of past EDC procedure was considered and facts established. Every faculty member present was extremely concerned about what had been allowed to go on and they were assured that in the future a full-time faculty member of that discipline would be required to fully review and approve every future EDC course. However, Vice President Nockie Zizelmann stated that she would not "pull the legs out from under Aldine ISD." VP Zizelmann clarified: "The comment that I made referred to the fact that we have had a long-term partnership with AISD, and that we were going to jointly evaluate the program and change it to assure that it conforms to the District guidelines. The evaluation will be done this Fall. Both Sandy (Dr. Shugart) and I have assured you that no EDC courses will be offered by NHC without faculty participation and support."

To illustrate this new change in procedure, the Political Science faculty was informed that an AISD high school had planned to offer an EDC course this Spring and that VP Zizelmann informed them that it could not be taught because we had not had time yet to put the review procedure into action. However, shortly thereafter, and before any evaluation of the current programs and their assumptions were even

discussed, the Political Science faculty at NHC was asked to meet with AISD personnel to consider approval for a Nimitz High School Spring EDC government course, once again placing faculty in the awkward position of attempting to establish academic credit guidelines and safeguards for their discipline while in meetings with an understandably confused ISD faculty. These discipline guidelines and safeguards should have been established District-wide before any articulation discussions were ever held.

Apparently at some point in Summer II Semester, Cy-Fair ISD requested approval for a Fall EDC government course, which the Tomball Political Science faculty thought unusual since they were repeatedly assured by the Tomball College Administration that the Spring proposal would be a one-time stop-gap measure and no other approval would be forthcoming until the issue could be totally addressed.

Realizing there had been no change in the position of the Tomball Political Science faculty, some administrative personnel in either the Tomball College or the District made the decision to hire an outside Political Science consultant. The sole purpose of this consultant would be to review and approve EDC government courses. When the NHC and Tomball Faculty Senate presidents expressed their grave concerns, the outside consultant idea (which is also "outside Tomball College") was discarded in favor of asking the District Political Science Curriculum Team Coordinator to identify two Political Science full-time faculty to provide feedback regarding learning outcomes and suggestions on what should be added to the Cy-Fair course for comparability, in essence, to review the Tomball Political Science faculty's earlier decision. When questioned about whether this was going "outside Tomball College" and to the District Curriculum Teams, Linda Stegall stated, "I did not ask the District Political Science Curriculum Team to review the 'Tomball decision.' I did ask Steve Davis, the District Political Science

Curriculum Team Coordinator, to ask one or two government faculty if they would be willing to review. . . I am sure that Steve Davis will confirm that this request was not made of the District Political Science Curriculum Team and it is unfortunate that it was interpreted that way." Regardless of semantics, this was another attempt to go "outside Tomball College" in order to receive approval for the Cy-Fair proposal. At the District In-Service Day Curriculum Council lunchtime meeting, the entire District Political Science faculty voted unanimously on principle and academic integrity alone to refuse to review the (once again!) "in progress" Cy-Fair EDC government course. However, they did express their willingness to propose and develop a District standardized procedure and course guidelines for Embedded Dual Credit government courses.

Carrie Davis
Professor of Political Science
NHC

The Conclusion of the "Story of Embedded Dual Credit Government Courses" will be published in the next issue of the Advocate.

Do We Ask Less of U.S. Students?

A recent report from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) shows a much larger percentage of students from Japan, France and Germany taking and passing more demanding mathematics exams compared to the percentage of students in the U.S. The report looks at one possible explanation for the differing mathematics achievements -- expectations.

In order to analyze the expectations, the report looks at exams in each of the countries given at roughly the pre-high

school and pre-college levels. In the U.S. we do not test pre-high school, so the researchers used the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in eighth grade mathematics, and this is administered to only a sampling of students.

Also considered were college entrance exams in the four countries; in the U.S. this included the SAT, the ACT, and Advanced Placement Exams. In accessing the expectations of these different exams, the researchers noted that on the whole, the U.S. tests rely more on multiple choice items and focus less on demanding questions. Multiple choice, of course, encourages guessing and memory recall. So, the expectations placed on U.S. students seem to be less demanding than in the other countries considered.

Other findings reported by the AFT researchers are that the math exams in France, Germany and Japan are taken by a significant number of students, rather than the small sampling that take the U.S. NAEP, and that the questions reflect expectations well above U. S. standards. They found that the exams taken in these countries are aligned with specific national or state curriculum so that students are tested on what they are learning in school. Finally, there are specific and clear incentives and consequences attached to the exams taken in Japan, France, and Germany; of course this motivates the students to study hard in preparation for the exams.

Commenting on the findings in the report, the AFT President, Sandra Feldman says, "The difference is not just the tests. The difference is that these other countries all have systems of education aimed at getting more

students to higher levels of achievement."

This report suggests some areas to investigate, such as having a national curriculum and entrance exams so that educators may raise the mathematics standards for all. The authors of the report also encourage the developers of the national test in eighth-grade mathematics to think on the findings of this report as they work to ensure that the U.S. test meets "a world-class standard."

The full report What Students Abroad Are Expected to Know about Mathematics (#667NB2, \$10.00) is available through NCTM. Call (800) 235-7566 or e-mail orders @nctm.org.

(The information in the above article comes from "International Exam Comparison Shows U.S. Asks Less of Students" in NEWS BULLETIN, A Publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, September 1997)

Nell Newsom
Editor

SALARY NEWS

A recent article in the Houston Chronicle reported on San Jacinto College's board of trustees approving salary increases for employees. The following comparisons are worthy of note. Staff salaries at San Jacinto begin at \$18,369 for custodial, grounds and entry level clerks. The NHMCCD beginning salary for custodians (AO2) is \$11,913, groundskeepers (AO3) \$13,104, and general clerks (AO4) \$14,414. A San Jacinto faculty member with a master's degree and no experience begins at \$29,400 for nine months, while at NHMCCD that faculty member with a master's degree and no experience begin at \$30,131 (nine month salaries). An experienced faculty member with a doctorate at San Jacinto earns up to \$53,900.

Alan Hall
President

FAMOUS UNION MEMBERS



César Estrada Chavez - (1927-1993)

A man of great charisma and dedication, César Chavez organized the "fields" -- the migrant farm workers -- into a powerful union in the 1960's. They needed a decent wage, clean water, and safe shelter. Like many uneducated people, they worked for slave wages because they had no power. Chavez helped them find their power. He appeared on the cover of national magazines with Robert Kennedy and John Kennedy who walked alongside him and he farm workers. Idealistic college students boycotted

grapes in supermarkets across America. (I was one, 'still have NFWA button.) "La causa" was powerful, capturing the imagination of people much as the Civil Rights movement.

Chavez organized field workers, like himself, into the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in 1962. In 1966, the NFWA merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO, becoming the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Like many union workers in the past, Chavez saw the wrongs and became active in righting them. Even though Chavez became the nationally famous leader of the Chicanos, he insisted that his salary be comparable to a farm worker's. Many of our politicians and CEO's would do well to emulate Chavez in this respect.

Those who heard Chavez speak and saw him work say he was a spiritual man who really connected with the people. He is well loved and well remembered for his life--the greatest of gifts.

Nell Newsom
Editor

CALL FOR ARTICLES

We invite you to send us your opinions, your news, your questions and so forth. The Advocate is a forum for information and free interchange of ideas. Send your articles to Nell Newsom, Editor, ACAD 217, NHC, (e-mail at Ira N. Newsom@NHMCCD.edu), or submit to any of the following officers: Alan Hall, President, ACAD 217, NHC, Rich Almstedt, KC; Tim Howard, NHC, Donald James, MC; Allen Vogt, NHC, Mel McFadden, NHC; Mark S. Dial, District Office.

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