



ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CTL Re-visioning Project – Final Report

Prepared by: Rey Rivera 1/12/2011

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Project Overview

During the fall 2010 semester a qualitative study was conducted to organize and interview employee groups across Estrella Mountain Community College (EMCC) in order to obtain employee input on the long-term direction of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The project entailed working and coordinating with groups of faculty, administrators, and staff to identify employee development needs, identify resources or partnerships to meet those needs, and establish recommendations for the organization and structure of the CTL. The research, findings, and recommendations of this semester-long project are contained within this report. The project support team and a brief overview of the various project components are described below.

Project Team

Principle Investigator: Rey Rivera, Ed. D., Mathematics Faculty

Project Support Team: Bryan K. Tippett, Ed. D., Vice President of Academic Affairs
Joyce M. Jackson, M.B.A., Dean of Academic Affairs
Rene Willekens, Ed.D., Dean of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness
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Project Methodology

Review of Pertinent Literature

Community colleges work to integrate differing staff groups in ways that most other institutions do not. They are concerned about the improvement of institutional functioning and student success.

Community colleges focus on:

- Faculty remaining current in changing academic/vocational areas and technology
- Improving college relationships with the community they serve
- Increase graduation and transfer rates of their students
- Improve employee morale
- Responding to legislative and societal changes (Gillespie & Robertson, 2010, p.310).

Faculty development in community colleges is becoming a concern because faculty at these institutions are increasingly held accountable for student learner outcomes, adjusting to a learner-centered focus, and learning to incorporate technology in the classroom. Faculty at community colleges are being asked to teach effectively in a far more diverse classroom environment than at any time in the past (Eddy, 2005). Frances (1975) defined **faculty development** as a primarily classroom-based, individualized endeavor: a “process which seeks to modify the attitudes, skills, and behavior of faculty members toward greater competence and effectiveness in meeting student needs, their own needs, and the needs of the institution” (p.720). This definition was expanded by Lewis (1996) to encompass three areas of effort:

1. Personal development (self-reflection, vitality, and growth)
2. Instructional development (course and student-based initiatives)

3. Organizational development (program, departmental, institution-wide efforts)

Based on a review of the pertinent faculty and staff development literature during the summer and fall 2010 semesters the following research questions were generated.

1. How would you describe to a friend the function of the EMC CTL?
2. What would you like for the CTL to do for you personally?
3. What would you like for the CTL to do for your division or department?
4. What would you like the CTL to do for the college as a whole?

Employee Focus Group Interviews

According to Krueger and Casey (2009) the goal of a focus group is to find the range of opinions of people across several groups. Focus groups are used to gain understanding about a topic so decision makers can make more informed choices (Krueger and Casey, 2009, p. 8).

Employees across the college were interviewed in focus groups in order to obtain input on the long-term direction of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Seventeen focus group interviews consisting of 110 EMC employees were completed for the project. These interviews included Residential Faculty from all divisions on campus, Adjunct Faculty, Southwest Skill Center employees, MAT employees, PSA Employees, Safety Officers, and M&O employees.

CTL Site Visits and Interviews

In addition, site visits to the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI), Gateway Community College CTL, and Mesa Community College CTL were conducted to compare and contrast various model CTL programs in the district. Additionally, exemplar Learning College CTLs were contacted and interviewed to validate emergent themes in this project. Dr. Wendi Dew, Faculty Director of the Office of Faculty Development at Valencia Community College and Nancy Kammerer, Associate Dean of Organizational and Staff Development at Richland Community College, were both interviewed for this project.

Findings

CTL Impressions

CTL Atmosphere

Many of the interview subjects indicated that the CTL was “not for me.” The impression was that the CTL focused primarily on online/hybrid course creation and support and neglected other teaching modalities. For example, a focus group indicated “The CTL is an all E-Learning center...if you need any other training, such as pedagogy, you often have to go another campus in the district.” Another focus group summarized their discussion by stating “The CTL needs to be more inviting...needs to keep in touch to what is occurring in the classroom. Right now [the CTL] has no clue what is happening in the classroom.” Also, several focus groups indicated that the CTL needs to develop a system to fairly give support to individuals/divisions as it seemed that support was only given when convenient or to certain faculty/staff.

CTL Function

The CTL mission states that the “CTL provides a supportive environment for faculty to experiment, explore, develop, implement, and share ideas and experiences for the advancement of student learning.” However, one of the major themes that had agreement from many focus groups was the current function of the CTL. Agreement was reached on the following areas: Hybrid/Online Course Development, Blackboard Training, and Event Hosting. For those employees that utilized the CTL, the sentiment was that the CTL was fulfilling its mission. For example, one focus group summarized their online training by stating that the CTL was the “core place on campus for online learning and support...the online learning hub.” Another indicated that the CTL provided Blackboard training, information on usage, and support for courses. Finally, several focus groups mentioned that the CTL was “a great layout for events and guest speakers” and that the CTL was “a versatile learning space for faculty and students.”

Personal Development

CTL Staff

Several focus groups indicated that the CTL needed to have an instructional technologist on staff. For example, one focus group summarized the need for an instructional technologist by stating “I would like to come in with an idea or problem and have the CTL staff help me to fix it or solve it...in the past that used to happen.” Other subjects stated that they preferred to receive one-on-one assistance with their technology needs. As one subject stated, “I would like to have someone like [previous instructional technologist] that can provide one-on-one assistance on how to use technology.” Thus, an instructional technologist that can provide one-on-one technological assistance was a priority for many focus groups.

Peer-to-Peer Interaction

Another major theme that emerged from the focus groups was the need to have a space on the EMC campus where faculty could gather, experiment with technology, and work on ideas – “a place where teachers teach other teachers.” As one focus group stated, “CTL should have space to allow faculty to congregate for ‘coffee break’ talk” or as another group mentioned a place where faculty can have “spontaneous conversations with other faculty.”

Sharing of Ideas

Another personal development theme is centered on the need for the CTL to be a place where faculty can share ideas. As several focus groups stated, “The CTL should have people who attend conferences share new technology/pedagogy with other faculty.” Additionally, several focus groups mentioned that the CTL should utilize internal faculty resources. As one group stated, “EMC Faculty give seminars at other colleges but not at EMC... we need to utilize internal specialists.” Other focus groups stated that the CTL should encourage employees to share ideas by having brown bag lunch series, lunch and learns, etc.

Instructional Development

Faculty Development with an Emphasis on Pedagogy

A theme that had a resounding presence was the need for the CTL to provide a strong pedagogical presence for faculty and employees. As one focus group stated, “Make the CTL a pedagogical center, not a delivery system.” Many divisions expressed frustration that the CTL did not have more pedagogical professional growth events for face-to-face courses. As one group stated, “Faculty need to learn how to teach.” Additionally, many focus groups indicated that they wanted the CTL to research and investigate the best practices of teaching and learning and provide opportunities via workshops/events that would enable faculty and staff to incorporate ideas into their teaching environment.

Although there was a strong pedagogical theme, many focus groups did not want the CTL to deemphasize technology. Rather they wanted the CTL to broaden technology training beyond the Hybrid/Online environment and make “technology training opportunities relevant to the classroom” regardless of teaching modality.

Scheduling of Events and Workshops

Several focus groups mentioned the need for the CTL to schedule workshops/events at optimal times for faculty/staff. For example, one focus mentioned that the CTL workshops should be scheduled “early in the semester” so that faculty would be able to plan for new ideas before semester courses began. Another group mentioned that “CTL events need to be planned at times convenient for all faculty, not during times that faculty are teaching.” Thus, by offering a variety of workshops at the beginning of the semester and at various times throughout the semester, a majority of faculty/staff would be able to attend and utilize information for the teaching/learning environment. Finally, several groups indicated that the CTL should partner with the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI) to offer more MCCC workshops/events on the EMCC campus.

Types of Workshops

Many focus groups stated that they wanted more of a breadth and depth of workshops catering to the needs of all employee groups. Here is a sample of the types of workshops requested:

- Technology with classroom integration
- Student Engagement/Active Learning
- “How to” professional growth workshops: travel, sabbaticals, conferences, etc.
- Quick one-on-one workshops
- Blackboard training and support
- Wikis, blogs, etc.
- Student retention and preparedness
- Video creation and presentation
- Grant writing
- Assessment

Organizational Development

Campus-Wide Communication

Several focus groups stressed the need for the CTL to create a website to better serve the EMC campus and provide transparency for the services the CTL has to offer. As one group stated, “The CTL should have an online menu of services and a list of staff contacts for services.” To accomplish this transparency one suggestion was the creation of a campus-wide calendar of events allowing for the advertisement of professional development events. Additionally, the creation of an online request of services similar to the EMC Helpdesk Request system would create a structure for tracking technology/training/service requests and provide an opportunity for the CTL staff to be assigned to specific projects.

Determine Professional Development Needs of Divisions

According to many focus groups, “The CTL should be in communication with all division on a semester basis...this could occur using tools like Survey Monkey.” This would allow for the CTL to determine the professional development needs of each division and develop strategies to meet those needs. As one focus groups summarized, “Implement a process to solicit and use divisional feedback regarding ‘What we would like the CTL to do for us’ at consistent intervals throughout the year.”

Create a Repository of Information

Another theme that was mentioned consistently was the need for the CTL to create a repository of information where faculty and staff can house ideas, projects, assignments, etc. that enhance pedagogical techniques in any instructional modality. This repository would be similar to the MCLI Exchange but on a campus level. In addition, the repository could house short training videos on items such as Microsoft Office, Blackboard, etc. As one focus group summarized, “The video website could help faculty learn software or other technology and would minimize the need to have workshops and/or free up CTL staff to work on other projects.”

CTL – Hub of Learning and Innovation

Several focus groups stated that the “CTL should be the heart of learning at EMCC” or that the “CTL should be the driving force for innovation as EMCC moves towards becoming a Learning College.”

Several strategies mentioned were:

- Monitoring technology trends, identifying technology for EMCC exploration, and making technology relevant to the learning environment. Examples include:
 - Utilizing free technology workshops from companies such as Promethean or Smart Board.
 - Video creation, streamlining, and usage (e.g. embedding videos in Blackboard)
 - Podcasting
 - Cell phone applications
- Coordinating internal and community partnerships to enhance student and employee learning opportunities. Examples include:
 - Identifying internal experts to provide workshops/events for EMCC employees
 - Creating partnerships with governmental entities to provide training, certification, or simulation opportunities for various employee groups
- Centralizing district-wide training and development opportunities for all employee groups. Examples include:

- Hiring the Best
- EOLT training
- Navigate Maricopa
- Covey Series
- Talent Management
- CPR Training
- Security and Law Enforcement Training and Certification Courses
- New Cleaning Equipment and Chemical Usage Training

Providing such training and development opportunities on campus would lower the need to drive to attend events throughout the district. If these professional development events cannot be brought to campus, then webinars or videoconferencing may be used to supply EMC employee the same opportunities offered employees across the district.

CTL Structure and Leadership

CTL Structure

The structure of the CTL was a theme repeated by several focus groups. As one group stated, “The CTL needs to be completely reorganized. The focus should be on improving learning, not just offering more hybrids and online courses.” Pedagogy and technology were two spheres of professional development that were consistently mentioned. Thus, having personnel that can work within those areas and provide leadership and vision to address faculty and staff development needs should be a college priority. As one group summarized, “The CTL function needs to be clearly defined and communicated so that the function meets employee expectations.” If the leadership of the CTL is a faculty member, then several groups indicated that such a structure should adhere to the EMCC College Plan. Finally, several employee groups recommended that the CTL Advisory Committee membership should be expanded to include MAT and PSA representation. The supplementary members would provide input the professional development needs of staff (non-faculty) as EMCC becomes a Learning College. As one group stated, “If EMC is moving towards a Learning College, then the CTL needs to ensure development opportunities for all employees.”

CTL Leadership

The majority of focus group participants believed that the leadership of the CTL should be faculty driven to allow for “a momentum of ideas” to occur. The characteristics of such a faculty leader are summarized below:

- Current in Research
- Understands the EMCC student population and the college culture
- Great Communicator
- A visionary with respect to pedagogy and technology

The leadership of the CTL should be a residential faculty member who can draw from their community college teaching experience and plans to return to the classroom. This leader should be recommended by faculty and serve three to five years. Several focus groups believed that the CTL should have rotational leadership to allow for different ideas/perspectives.

CTL Comparisons

The following table provides a quick overview and comparison of all the CTLs researched for this project: Mesa Community College (MC), Gateway Community College (GWC), Valencia Community College (VCC) in Florida, and Richland Community College (RCC) in Texas. All CTL Directors interviewed for this project are faculty with a background in instructional design with the exception of the RCC director who is an Associate Dean in charge of organizational and staff development. Additionally, the majority of the CTLs had administrative instructional technologists with the exception of VCC which has two faculty instructional technologists reporting to a faculty director.

	Gateway	Mesa	Valencia	Richland	EMCC Interview Results
Leadership	Faculty Director	Faculty Director	Faculty Director	Associate Dean	Faculty Leadership
Reports	Instructional Technologists (MAT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Learning BB Training 	Instructional Technologists (FAC/MAT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Learning BB Training 	Assistant Directors (FAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-learning Adjunct Training 	Learning Specialists (PSA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling Transcripts 	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogy E-Learning Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogy E-Learning Technology 	Curriculum open to all employees	36 hours of required professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogy E-Learning Technology Training

Gateway Community College

Gateway Community College's (GWC) CTL is run by a faculty director who reports to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. The faculty director has a background in instructional design and instructional technology. Reporting to the faculty director are an office coordinator (PSA) and two instructional technologists (MAT). The role of the office coordinator is to schedule events/reserve space at the CTL and act as point of contact to triage faculty questions or requests. The two instructional technologists split the following duties: e-learning coordination, Blackboard training and support, technology workshops, and a Title V grant program to fund faculty projects.

Mesa Community College

Mesa Community College's (MC) CTL is run by a faculty director who reports to a Dean of Instruction. The faculty director has a background in instructional design. Reporting to the faculty director are an office coordinator (PSA), an instructional designer/technologist (FAC), a faculty professional development coordinator (MAT), program analyst (MAT) and two systems administrators (MAT). The MC CTL staff performs the same roles as the GWC CTL staff, but they have the capability of developing educational software.

The CTLs at both MC and GWC are focused on the following three pillars of faculty development: pedagogy, technology, and E-learning. Additionally, each CTL Director expressed that the success of their CTLs depended on their focus on faculty and the creation of a welcoming environment.

Valencia Community College

Valencia Community College's (VCC) CTL is run by a faculty director who reports to the Chief Academic Officer at Valencia. The faculty director has a background in instructional design. Reporting to the faculty director are two Assistant Coordinators that focus on adjunct training and development and hybrid/online training. Over the past twelve years, Valencia has focused on creating professional development curriculum centered on seven essential competencies: Assessment, Inclusion and Diversity, Learning-Centered Teaching Strategies, LifeMap, Outcomes Based-Practice, Professional Commitment, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Information about these competencies and professional development curriculum can be found at the following website:

<http://valenciacc.edu/facultydevelopment/>

VCC's CTL determines the professional development needs of their respective divisions and builds courses to reflect those needs. VCC creates its professional development curriculum a year in advance by obtaining input from divisions across the college in the spring of each year, partnering with divisions to assist in the development of courses over the summer, and implementing the courses the following academic year. Because each division assists in building the curriculum, the professional development courses have high attendance and faculty leave the courses with something tangible to implement in their classrooms to improve student learning.

Richland Community College

Richland Community College's (RCC) CTL is run by an Associate Dean who reports to the Chief Academic Officer at Richland. Reporting to the director are Learning Specialists that schedule the courses offered in the RCC professional development curriculum and provide a transcription service for employees to self-report attendance at these courses. Every RCC employee must complete 36 hours of professional development every year. Topics may include Intercultural Competence, Richland College Convocation, Faculty Conference Day, Technology Skills, Cooperative Learning, and Assessment and Continuous Improvement. Information about these courses and professional development curriculum can be found at the following website:

<http://www.rlc7.dcccd.edu/thunderwater/>

RCC's CTL encourages college divisions to create workshops that will meet divisional needs. Also, workshops created in this fashion are eligible to be counted towards the 36 hours of professional development requirement for faculty and staff. RCC has developed an online reporting system that allows employees to keep track of their professional development hours via an online transcript. The transcript must be included in all yearly evaluations of faculty and staff.

Recommendations

In January 2011, the CTL Advisory Committee was tasked with the following action items:

1. Expand the CTL Advisory Committee to include all employee groups. All current divisional faculty representatives will remain on the committee (i.e. faculty will not lose representatives).
2. Expanded CTL Advisory Committee will establish the core components of a professional development curriculum for all EMCC employees.
3. The core components will serve as the foundation for defining the CTL structure, leadership, and staffing needs.

Based on the findings in this report and the corresponding college-wide surveys used to validate these findings, the researcher has the following recommendations to assist the CTL Advisory Committee complete its action items. The CTL Revision Project Online Survey conducted by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE) has validated several of the recommendations stated below (see Appendix B).

Recommendations for Core Components

CTL Atmosphere

The CTL should invest in creating informal lounge areas for faculty to have “spontaneous conversations” with other faculty. The need to share ideas with other colleagues was a dominant theme in this project and the CTL should explore funding opportunities through EMCC’s Title V Grant to create informal teaching/learning space for faculty and staff.

Pedagogy and Technology

From the faculty focus group interviews, faculty expressed the need for the CTL to research and investigate the best practices of teaching, learning, and technology. This mirrors the findings of Gillespie & Robertson (2010) that stated faculty development should focus on the enhancement of e-learning skills and face-to-face skills. The table below lists some of the strategies that Gillespie & Robertson (2010) recommend.

Face-to-Face Skills	E-Learning Skills
Active Learning Methods	Hybrid/Online course creation
Class Formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modularized courses • Accelerated formats • Learning communities 	Emerging Technology and Interfaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wikis • Blogs • Games • Simulations
Appropriate and engaging use of technology	Real Time Connectivity

Enhanced Lecturing	Streaming Video
Brain Research	

The focus group interviews identified hybrid/online course as a current strength of the CTL. Thus, the CTL Advisory Committee should focus on creating core components of faculty development curriculum involving pedagogy and technology recognizing the unique needs of each area, but striving to find common ground as well.

Types of Workshops

Based on the core competencies and input from instructional divisions the CTL should create opportunities via workshops/events that would enable faculty to incorporate ideas into their teaching environment. Ideas for workshops/events have been detailed in this report (See Instructional Development – Types of Workshops); however, here is a brief list based on CTL Revision Project Online Survey (see Appendix B):

- Student Engagement
- Active Learning
- Student Retention and Preparedness
- Quick one-on-one workshops
- Technology with classroom integration
- Technology experts (e.g. Slates, Smartboards, etc.)
- Video creation/presentation
- Assessment workshops

Additionally, the CTL should schedule internal experts to conduct workshops/events to share their pedagogical/technological expertise and ideas gathered from conferences or the classroom.

Learning College and Professional Development Curriculum

As EMCC moves toward becoming a Learning College it will need to create an environment that fosters “professional development programs that prepare all staff and faculty to become more effective facilitators of learning” (League, 2010). The CTL Advisory Committee will need to grapple with the dichotomy of professional development needs of the faculty and staff of the college. The focus group interviews and the CTL Revision Project Online Survey (see Appendix B) found that faculty placed an emphasis on pedagogical and technological professional development needs that focused on improving student learning in the classroom. However, MAT, PSA, Safety, and M&O professional development needs focused on career advancement and/or training to improve workplace skills or obtain job required certifications. While Valencia Community College has a professional development curriculum dedicated and open to all employees, the other CTLs interviewed in this study focused primarily on faculty development. Thus, the CTL Advisory Committee will need to determine whether a combined professional development model will be best at EMCC and how to balance faculty and staff development needs.

Recommendations for CTL Leadership and Structure

CTL Leadership and Structure

The focus group and CTL Director interviews indicated that the CTL leadership and staff must accommodate professional development activities in two arenas: pedagogy and technology. Gillespie & Robertson (2010) state that In order to achieve these development activities, institutions are adding instructional designers and instructional technologists to assist faculty. These specialists help faculty rethink and rework both course applications and delivery (p.316). Several model CTLs were interviewed for this project and the most common leadership structure was faculty director with an instructional design background working with instructional technologists to meet faculty professional development needs. Gillespie & Robertson (2010) state that instructional designers/technologists are continually scanning for new tools, strategies, ideas, and training to assist faculty and the organization in meeting the intergenerational learning needs of today's students (p.315). Thus, the CTL Advisory Committee should strongly consider adopting a structure to meet EMCC employees professional development needs.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe to a friend the function of the EMC CTL?
2. What would you like for the CTL to do for you personally?
3. What would you like for the CTL to do for your division or department?
4. What would you like the CTL to do for the college as a whole?

Appendix B

Summary of Online Survey Results

Category By Largest Responders	Top Priorities	Top Workshops/Activities	Top Employee Training Sessions
Faculty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase number of technological and pedagogical workshops 2. Create faculty learning spaces 3. Hire an Instructional Technologist 4. Create Information Repository 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Engagement 2. Active Learning 3. Student Retention and Preparedness 4. Quick one-on-one workshops 5. Technology with classroom integration 6. Technology experts (e.g. Slates, Smartboards, etc.) 7. Video creation/presentation 8. Assessment workshops 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MCLI workshops 2. Brown Bag Lunch-n-Learns 3. Webinars and Videoconferencing
MAT & PSA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer more MCCCDC training and developmental opportunities 2. Increase number of technological and pedagogical workshops 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MCCCDC Software training (e.g. HRMS, CFS, etc.) 2. Technology brown bag series 3. Student Engagement 4. Student Retention and Preparedness 5. Computer Training (e.g. MS Office) 6. Video creation/presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management Training 2. Career Advancement Training 3. Webinars and Videoconferencing 4. Navigate Maricopa 5. MCLI Workshops 6. Public Speaking Series