




Incorporating Active Learning Strategies in Student Learning

Presentation for SACSCOC 2018 Annual Meeting
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Presenters

- **Dr. Anahid Petrosian**
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs
South Texas College
- **Yolonda Jaramillo**
Director of Academic Assessment
HSI (Title V) Grant Director
South Texas College





Overview

- **Brief Overview of South Texas College**
- **FOCUS Academy**
 - History and Background
 - Academy Structure
- **Active Learning Classrooms**
 - Classroom Structure
 - Observation of Active Learning Strategies
- **Key Findings and Outcomes**
 - Evaluation Metrics and Study Participants
 - Quantitative and Qualitative Findings
 - Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations




Brief Overview of South Texas College
 Dr. Anahid Petrosian
 Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs



About South Texas College
Brief History

- Established in **1993**
- Serving Two Counties:
 - Hidalgo and Starr Combined Population of 1 million
- 6** Campuses and **2** Higher Education Centers
- Annual Budget** Over \$180 Million
- 3 Successful Bond Elections** with Community Approving Over \$250 Million
- Fall 2018 Enrollment Over 32,000 Credit Students**




Student Population

67% First in their Family to Attend College	94% Hispanic Enrollment	72% Students on Financial Aid (Excluding Over)	34% Full-Time Enrollment
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South Texas College
Programs

- Over 120 programs**
 - 33** Totally Online Programs
 - 4** Bachelor Degrees
- Dual Credit Students: Over 13,000**
 - 23** ISDs and **78** High Schools
 - 29** Early College High Schools
 - 6** Academies (STEM and CTE)




National Ranking
 Out Of 1,200 Community Colleges In The Nation

- **#1** In the Nation for Awarding Associate Degrees to **Latinos in STEM Fields** by *Excelencia in Education (2012-2013)*
- **#1** In the Nation for **Most Affordable Online College** by *SR Education Group-Online Education Publisher (2016)*
- **# 2** In the Nation for **Awarding Associate Degrees** in All Disciplines to **Hispanics** by *Community College Week (2016)*




Educational Highlights
 2017-2018 Academic Year

- STC was recognized as #8 in the Nation and #1 in Texas for assisting students in **economical mobility** (Equality of Opportunity Project, 2018)
- **Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program** approved by the Texas Legislature
- Designated as a **National Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Security (2017)**
- Established the **Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence**
- National winner of Excelencia in Education for the **Competency-Based Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Leadership Program (2017)**
- **Completion of Bond Projects – New Buildings**



**FOCUS Academy and
 Active Learning Classrooms**

Yolonda Jaramillo
 Director of Academic Assessment
 HSI (Title V) Grant Director



Background

Purpose Statement
 To provide greater access to our students, keep on the pathway, and ensure that they have the best learning experience possible in the classroom

- Received 2.5 million Title V HSI grant
- Ongoing study since 2014


Objectives

- Faculty Competence in Active Learning Teaching Skills
- Increase Student Engagement
- Improve Student Performance

FOCUS Academy

Structure

- Semester-long Academy
- 7 Sessions
- 64 Faculty Graduates per Academic Year
- Participate in Rounds Process as both the Observed and Observer




FOCUS Academy
Graduates by Cohort

Cohort	Goal	Graduated
Spring 2015	32	33
Fall 2015	32	33
Spring 2016	32	36
Fall 2016	32	36
Spring 2017	32	34
Fall 2017	32	30
Spring 2018	32	56
Fall 2018	32	25*
Spring 2019	32	36*
TOTAL	288	319*


Active Learning Classrooms (ALCs)

- **Tier-One Classrooms**
 - Document Camera
 - Mobile Furniture
 - Mobile Glass Boards
 - Mobile Instructional Desk
- **Tier-Two Classrooms**
 - Tier 1 Features
 - One Computer per Student Group Engagement Pod
 - Click-Share Feature




Active Learning Classroom Design

› **Before**



› **After**




Active Learning Classrooms (ALCs)

ALCs Established in 3 Years (2015-2018)				
Campus	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Total
Pecan	3	5	1	9
Mid-Valley	2		1	3
Starr	2			2
Nursing Allied Health	1			1
Technology	1			1
Total	9	7		16

Efforts to make all Tier 1 ALCs upgraded to the Tier 2 Design began Summer 2018 and will be completed in Spring 2019.


Key Findings and Outcomes
 Yolonda Jaramillo
 Director of Academic Assessment
 HSI (Title V) Grant Director




Evaluation Metrics

Study Design

- Faculty **Interviews**
- Student **Focus Groups**
- FOCUS Academy **Surveys**
- Active Learning **Classroom Observations**
- **Comparative Analysis** of Student Success



Study Participants



- **5 Faculty Interviews**
 - Teaching in both **ALC and traditional classroom**
 - Received **Faculty Professional Development** specifically for ALCs
- **5 Student Focus Groups**
 - Attended classes in ALC and traditional classrooms, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018
 - **Volunteered** to participate
 - **90 participants** total
- Faculty and students were selected by division and campus to create a fair representative sample

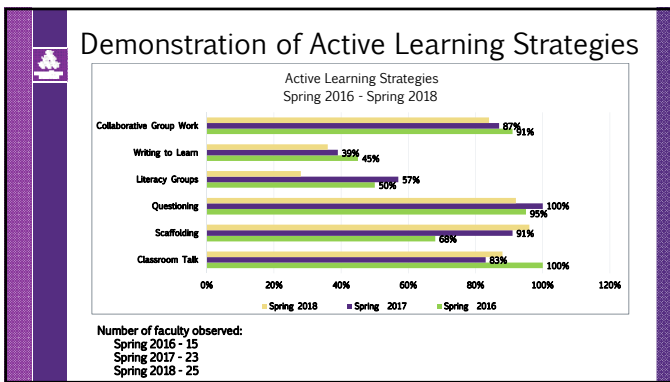
Faculty Competence in Active Learning Teaching Skills

Grant Requirements

- During Spring 2018 classroom observations, **at least 60% of the active learning strategies** identified in the lesson plan were demonstrated and observed

Findings

- 100% of the faculty** instructing in the Active Learning Classrooms met the grant requirement.
- In fact, **65% of faculty demonstrated more active learning strategies** than were identified in the lesson plan



Increased Student Engagement

Perceptions of Engagement in the ALC vs. Traditional Room

Faculty

- Eliminating the "front-of-room" effect increases engagement
- Mobile furniture** increases engagement between students and faculty
- ALCs support a greater **sense of community** among students
- Improved student attendance** attributed to ALCs

Student

- Increased engagement** with their instructor and fellow students in the ALCs
- The traditional classroom environment is a **barrier to engagement**
- Interactions with classmates created a **sense of belonging**

Increase Student Performance

Student Learning in the ALC vs Traditional Room

Faculty

- Student performance is **higher** in an ALC
- ALC **teaching techniques** engage students and impact learning
- ALCs positively contribute to **student learning**
- Meets the needs of **diverse student learners**

Student

- Improved performance linked to **student ownership** in the learning process
- Increased interaction attributed to **improved performance**

Comparative Analysis of Student Success

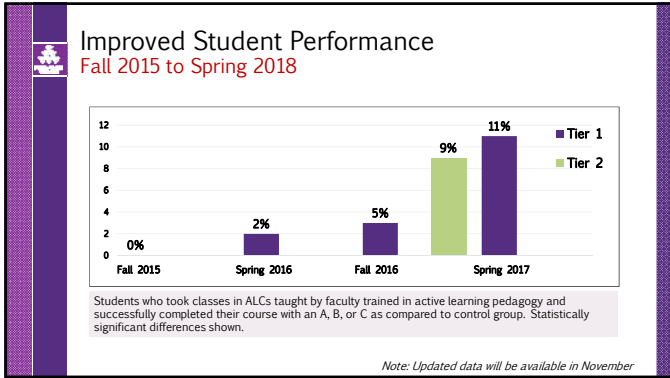
Data Collection Samples

SEMESTER	FALL 2015	SPRING 2016	FALL 2016	SPRING 2017	FALL 2017	SPRING 2018
# of Study (FOCUS) Sections	71	46	245	294		
# of Students in Study (FOCUS) Sections	1,638	1,033	5,112	5,869		
# of Comparison (non-FOCUS) Sections	71	46	275	322		
# of Students in Comparison (non-FOCUS) Sections	1,748	977	5,572	6,463		
Total # of Sections	142	92	520	616		
Total # of Students	1,748	2,010	10,684	12,332		

Comparative Analysis of Student Success

Data Collection Samples

SEMESTER	STUDY GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		TOTAL	
	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students
FALL 2015	71	1,638	71	1,748	142	3,386
SPRING 2016	46	1,033	46	977	92	2,010
FALL 2016	245	5,112	275	5,572	520	10,684
SPRING 2017	294	5,869	322	6,463	616	12,332
FALL 2017						
SPRING 2018						



Narrative Analysis

Recommendation

- Faculty identified FOCUS Academy as an important factor to successful ALC
 - Additional requests:
 - More opportunities to receive hands on technology training
 - More professional development pedagogy and andragogy training
- Students
 - More training on how to use the technology in the Active Learning Classrooms
 - Request to share content online to supplement in-class instruction

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Dr. Anahid Petrosian
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs



Lessons Learned

- **Require faculty certification** (FOCUS Academy) to teach in ALC
- **Promote ALCs and FOCUS Academy** to increase participation
- **Provide ongoing professional development** for Faculty
- **Conduct classroom observations**
- **Monitor and adjust** ALCs design based on feedback
- **Scheduling and observation** challenges





Faculty Testimonials



The **mobile furniture and technology of the ALC facilitate student engagement** and allow me to be more creative with my lessons. I am thinking outside of the box and my students' participation level is much higher than it was in a traditional classroom.

I wish all of the classrooms were like this. When I have to teach a course in a regular classroom, I feel it limits how I instruct and how my students learn.



It helps having a collaborative environment that encourages student feedback. **I can customize my instruction.** I know my students better and they know me better.

Student Testimonials



We're sharing with each other...learning from each other and with each other.

My performance is better because I get to interact with more people. If I have a question, I can reach out to another person in my group.

This is a **better learning environment** because everybody shares different perspectives.



I don't feel like a number, **we learn together as a team.**

We are a family. When you are learning from everybody, you are grasping things in a whole new manner.



Thank You!

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