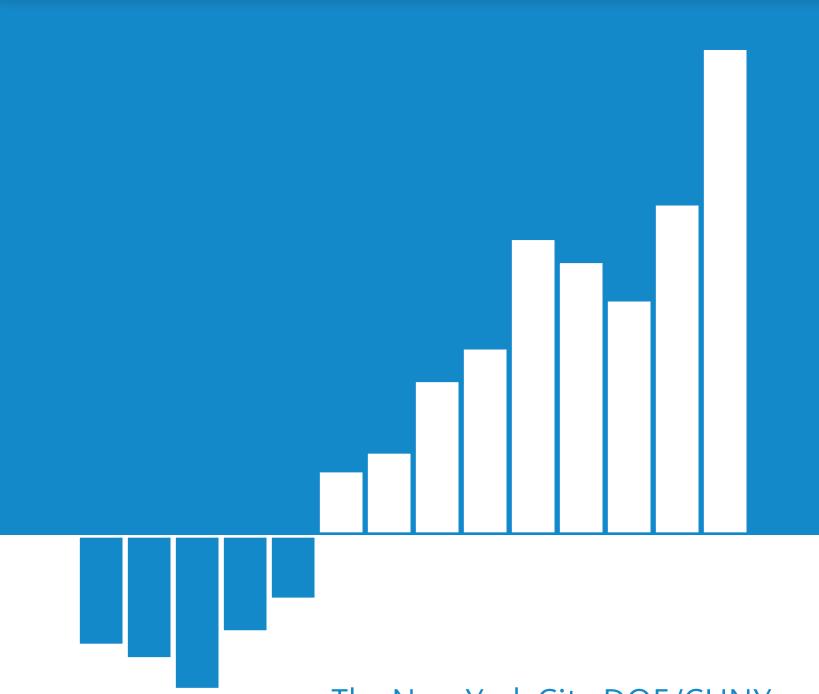The New York City DOE/CUNY
Library Collaborative:

Bridging the Gap Between
High School and College

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Summary

This white paper presents the progression and the processes of the New York Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP), a collaborative of high school teachers, college faculty, and librarians, formed to build upon the new Common Core State Standards designed to help students develop and become more adept at reading critically, conducting rigorous research, and being better prepared for postsecondary success. This paper presents CCRP as a model to be replicated, modified and strengthened. The DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative is central to the development of the model and shares its successes and hard-learned lessons in its steps to recruit, engage, and facilitate collaborative methods for improving educational outcomes.

The Challenge

Educators across the country are defining and deploying innovative strategies to engage students and to build foundations for academic and professional success in the 21st Century. The imperative is driven by high school dropout rates and by graduates who are not equipped for the rigors of college-level studies or career/trade educational programs.

The challenge is to position high school graduates as college students who will be expected to acquire knowledge, analyze and evaluate information, explore ideas (in depth and in a logical manner), draw conclusions, and test theories. Students must be equipped to think creatively and critically and to conduct meaningful research that leads to understanding through discovery. Unfortunately, too many of our students graduate from high school without these skills because traditional curricular testing has emphasized content knowledge. High school assignments often guide students step-by-step through the learning process so that when students reach college, they often struggle without close support and direction.

In 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) took a significant step toward ensuring students graduate from high school equipped to take on the challenges of academic and career pathways. The NGA and CCSSO introduced the Common Core State Standards to strengthen foundational literacies that are the key to high school graduation and success beyond high school.

"For years, the academic progress of our nation's students has been stagnant, and we have lost ground to our international peers. Common Core State Standards were developed to provide clear and consistent learning goals to help prepare students for college, career, and life. But while the Common Core is informed by the highest, most effective standards from states across the United States and countries around the world, they do not define how the standards should be taught or which materials should be used to support students." (http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards). As such, they require translation and application that educators must now define.

At this juncture, communities of educators – high school teachers, college faculty, and librarians – have an imperative to create pathways for students' achievement of the new Common Core State Standards. The logical question from educators is what types of instruction help students develop the skills needed to close the gap between high school and college? And how does this educational community create pathways to the achievement of those core standards?

The Opportunity

NYC Department of Education (DOE) is the largest public school system in the United States with 1.1 million students presenting every variation of opportunity and challenge. And NYC's high schools feed the City University of New York System (CUNY) at a high rate: 75% of freshmen students enrolled in CUNY enroll after attending NYC public high schools. CUNY and the NYC high schools well-understand their shared objective to engage and support students to achieve the skills they need to succeed in college. Though the NYC high school graduation rate has been improving, 56% of all first-time freshmen and 79.3% of students entering CUNY's six community colleges in the fall of 2012 required remedial coursework. Education reform at this level is acutely challenging, as the two institutions cover 302.64 square miles, serve over 1.3 million students, and employ more than 100,000 people.

To take on the challenge and the opportunity, The Department of Education (DOE) and the City University of New York (CUNY) formed the DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative to launch a Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP) of high school teachers, college faculty, and librarians invested in bridging the gap between high school and college. The CCRP model works to bring these experts together for community-building conversations that build upon the new Common Core State Standards to revise high school curricular units of study.

The Collaborative Model

The Collaborative believes the focus of the Common Core State Standards will help to close the gap between high school graduation and first-day college realities for two reasons. First, the standards focus on thinking, not content, and increase cognitive demands on students from year to year. Secondly, instruction designed to address the Common Core must be rigorous, preparing students for the faster-paced and higher content level courses in college. Yet it is important to emphasize that rather than looking to "pre-packaged" curriculum, the Collaborative believes that meeting the Common Core challenge demands collaboration among educators across institutions and disciplines to align curriculum and instruction to students' sense of wonder and curiosity—and to good old-fashioned inquiry.

The Collaborative also promotes the principal that librarians play an instrumental role in the implementation of the Common Core. "In most schools, it's the librarian who teaches the higher-level skills that equip students to access, evaluate, and synthesize information—information that they use to speak and write with accuracy and authority when they produce evidence and draw conclusions for discussions, debates, or written assignments."[5] From this standpoint, the educational community is empowered by librarians as critical resources for closing the foundational gaps between high school and college.

After a presentation on the CCRP at the *Uncommon Approaches to the Common Core Conference* in Albany, New York, a question was asked that stood out from all the others because it goes to the heart of the CCRP's work: How can educators ensure all students are college- and career-ready when the diploma is in hand? The CCRP's response is two-fold: through the use of the Common Core State Standards which are designed to be implemented in a way that prepares students for college and careers and through collaboration between educators and librarians across institutional levels.

The strength of the Collaborative is centered on the educators and librarians who bring diverse perspectives and experiences. As the "intermediary unit" between the university and the school system, the Library Collaborative was particularly valuable for linking experiences and professional connections with "in the trenches" members whose primary work as educators spans the high school to college spectrum inside and outside librarianship. These library-based members use their professional experiences and knowledge to develop and guide the high school to college curricular alignment process through rigorous planning, facilitation and documentation.

DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative Member Profiles

Curtis Kendrick, University Dean for Libraries and Information Resources at CUNY. As a senior member of the University's Office of Academic Affairs, he works in concert with the Council of Chief Librarians and other University administrators to further enhance library system funding, resources, programs and services.

Leanne Ellis is his system-level counterpart for the K-12 side. As a member of the DOE's Office of Library Services, she provides professional development, administers grants, and offers school-based consultation to school librarians and teachers across New York City.

Lisa Castillo Richmond is the Executive Director of Graduate NYC!

Sharae D. Brown is the Project Manager for Graduate NYC!

Robert Farrell is an Assistant Professor in the Library Department at Lehman College, CUNY, and coordinates the college's information literacy program.

Alison Lehner-Quam is the Education Librarian at Lehman College's Leonard Lief Library.

Nathan Mickelson is an English Faculty Member of the Stella and Charles Guttman Community College at CUNY.

Meghann Walk is the Library Director and social studies faculty member at Bard High School Early College-Manhattan.

The Library Collaborative's goals were:

- Developing a scalable, collaborative model that enables teachers, professors and librarians to revise and create curricular units that aid the high school to college transition and, in the process, build lasting professional relationships;
- Establishing roles for librarians to lead change within their institutions;
- Demonstrating the ability of librarians to work effectively across two large and complex organizations and within multiple disciplines.

To achieve the overarching goals, the DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative piloted a series of curriculum revision workshops, and beginning in 2012 created communities of practice among high school librarians, college librarians, disciplinary teachers at city high schools, and disciplinary faculty at nearby CUNY colleges. These workshops evolved to become the CCRP, which demonstrated that librarians can and should play a central role in building a "pipeline" between institutions to develop a library-centered model of educational reform that:

- positions librarians as a core part of curricular development;
- respects the professional expertise and experience of librarians and subject educators;
- promotes cross-institutional understandings and partnerships through a sustainable forum;
- breaks down traditional institutional and disciplinary divisions through the development of personal relationships; and
- integrates information literacy instruction through development of high school units aligned to Common Core standards.

A series of working sessions with faculty and librarians started in the spring of 2012, initially focusing on three disciplines (English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science) with the intent of creating workshop materials that would eventually be used with a pilot team of faculty and librarians in the fall of 2012. These working sessions continued throughout each spring with a new focus based on input from faculty and librarians who participated in the pilot.

Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP)

The Collaborative chose to produce professional development working sessions focused on curriculum work that links institutions to achieve their goals. The Collaborative decided against creating a "toolkit" or prescriptive models that dictate what revisions must be made. Rather, the Collaborative chose an approach that honors the (sometimes messy) collaborative process and the expertise of librarians and faculty. The Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP) model connects educators through in-depth discussions about the academic challenges students face in college. It creates structured opportunities for educators to do the hard work of aligning high school units with college course expectations.

The process requires strategic agendas to successfully facilitate the conversations and work. It also requires responsive thinking on the part of the organizers. For example, a turning point in the Spring 2013 working session came when the facilitator suggested college faculty bring in examples of the articles they expect their students to read, and the types of assignments they expect students to do. The documents gave high school teachers insight into the learning activities, reading demands and

assessments students can expect in college. As a result, one English teacher became aware of the need to incorporate literary analysis and more demanding writing requirements into assignments.

The CCRP provides a workshop model that is effective because it outlines a process establishing how librarians contribute to this essential work. The CCRP places the librarian at the center of the work to link multiple disciplines and institutions through the information literacy skills continuum. The librarian can locate samples of complex informational texts; suggest where to integrate critical reading approaches and argumentative writing into assignments; and can explain how to analyze texts with graphic organizers.

Participants leave the working session knowing how to turn to librarians for support in identifying materials for instruction and developing assessments. The CCRP experience mirrored the findings of a Yukawa and Harada study of the practice-based professional development partnering librarians and teachers, "Participants characterized the relationship as a partnership of equals, with teachers providing subject expertise and intimate knowledge of their students and librarians providing information literacy expertise, knowledge of resources, technology expertise, and guidance to students through the conceptual and emotional challenges of the research process." [7]

Chart 1

Librarians & Common Core Instructional Shifts

3 Key Instructional Shifts

The English Language Arts and Literacy Standards Librarians as Student Achievement Partners

1: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts

2: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text

3: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary

based on PowerPoint slide from: schools.nyc.gov/CCInstructionalShiftsLiteracy.docx

"If we always do what we've always done, we will get what we've always got."

Adam Urbanski
Vice President for the American Federation of Teachers

The goals of the working sessions can be categorized into two overarching themes: 1) developing community and 2) concrete work. The first sessions created a learning community through conversation, developing a feeling of shared purpose and trust. The following sessions were spent in CCRP working sessions to bridge the academic gaps between high school and college.

First Round Revision Working Sessions

In the initial Spring 2012 series of working sessions, three groups focused on three disciplines (English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science). Each working group met twice. The first session focused on conversation to share ideas and experiences. The second session was spent on revision of educational units. This meant a lot of work for the participating librarians, but not much time for actual revisions. Therefore, the Collaborative redesigned the model for a second series during Spring 2013.

Second Round Revision Working Sessions

The Spring 2013 series partnered a high school librarian, a subject teacher, and an English Language Arts teacher with a college librarian, a subject professor, and a writing professor for five working sessions. The first two sessions focused on the theme of fostering a cohesive learning community across the institutions that had a shared purpose. The participants spent time developing a common understanding of educational goals and values, expectations regarding college readiness, as well as the challenges each faced in their own institution. For these sessions, the facilitator posed questions and guided discussions that allowed for digression and discovery with the ultimate purpose of articulating a set of shared goals that could guide the curricular revision process. Given the real difficulties educators face, there was a tendency for groups to focus on the obstacles to achieving educational ideals. But facilitators redirected the discussion and found ways to keep the group positive and productive. Some of the discussion questions included:

- What are some of the goals/learning objectives you personally feel you need to achieve with your students? Do your personal goals align with the goals mandated by your institution? If not, how are they different?
- What are the primary issues, realities, and challenges we face in meeting these learning objectives?
- What teaching techniques or activities can be used to accelerate the acquisition of critical skills that students are missing?

The following three working sessions focused on building communities of practice. The participants' time was devoted to thinking through the learning outcomes of a single high school curricular unit and revising the structure and content of the unit in light of those outcomes.

Common Planning Time & Consultancy Protocol

It is hard to overstate the significance and the challenge of common planning time. Multiple studies, most focused on middle school, have identified a positive correlation between instructors' common planning time, school climate, and student achievement.[8] Cook and Faulkner's 2010 study identified three factors that promoted effective use of common planning time: a common vision and mission, clearly defined goals, and effective building level leadership.[9]

In the case of the CCRP, the challenge of effectively using common planning was multiplied by the fact that the aim was to cross building lines and bring together educators who did not yet necessarily share a common vision or clearly defined goals. Thus the initial working sessions, described above, helped establish this common vision (and, at times, better clarify roadblocks). As for defining goals, it was important to Collaborative members to respect the expertise of all working group participants. Therefore, the Collaborative chose to focus the CCRP on curriculum revision. Revising a unit of the high school teachers' choice balances the need for focus with the need for participant ownership of the process. The Collaborative does not pre-define the shape that curriculum revisions should take. Rather, it relies on the diversity of expertise to be found in working group members, skillful facilitation, and the Consultancy Protocol Method.

The group utilized the Consultancy Protocol Method to facilitate the revision process. The Consultancy Protocol provided a structure whereby the high school teacher introduced the unit and gave the context for the reading and writing assignments. Then, as participants read over the unit, they wrote down questions and comments on post-it notes. The facilitator worked with the group to categorize the questions and comments. This method helped to achieve two goals: it focused initial unit discussions in a constructive manner and laid the groundwork for the direction of the revision process that took place in the remaining sessions.

Thus during the third working session, participants spent time analyzing both the college and high school level reading and writing assignments brought in by the instructors to see where the expectation gaps might be. The discoveries and decisions made by the group in that session set the course for the kinds of work done to revise the unit in the last two sessions.

Immediate Results: The Revised Unit

The resulting product of the second CCRP working session was the beginning of a redesigned curricular unit. The unit was structured to help students to learn content and at the same time become more adept at reading critically, and think in ways that are necessary for success in college research assignments.

The working group decided that the curricular unit should include a number of short, progressively more complex reading assignments that could be scaffolded into the curriculum. The team worked together and selected readings that would be included in the unit. The team also created a set of graphic organizers that the high school teacher could use to help support students in their reading. By the end of the last session, the unit had an approach to revision that positioned the high school teacher and school librarian to continue the revision process for subsequent use in the classroom in the second pilot Fall 2013.

During the third CCRP series (Spring 2014), the revision process was made more challenging because the science unit was from a Regents based course. The New York State Regents Exams are requirements for all high school students in multiple subject areas based on the New York State Standards. As a result, these courses have a tremendous amount of content to cover in a limited amount of school days. The CCRP's approach was to reframe the earth science unit to start from a place of student inquiry. The students were to be tasked with different roles – geologists, seismologists, city planners, etc. – in the study of the earthquake activity of their neighborhood. This approach allowed sufficient time for content delivery, but changed the students' purpose in learning about the content from simply test preparation to authentic application of learned knowledge. In addition, more complex readings assignments were selected by the team to further bolster background knowledge and reading comprehension.

THE CCRP AS A MODEL

The Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project (CCRP) is a model of success that can be duplicated by educators and librarians across the country. In practice, any group engaging in this kind of process will necessarily follow its own unique course. It is a given that every group of educators and librarians working together are going to be bringing distinct perspectives to the table. One of the CCRP's guiding ideas is that participants should work together as a team to determine their own goals and approach the curriculum revision process in their own way. Working session organizers and facilitators need to be flexible and open to whatever emerges from the community of practice.

Community of Practice: Roles and Expectations of Participants

The CCRP arose out of needs of the New York City educational communities and the intent of the DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative to develop a scalable, library-centered model of educational reform that could be recreated across the country. The resulting CCRP model enables teachers, professors and librarians to revise and create curricular units that aid the high school to college transition and, in the process, build lasting professional relationships. Within this community of practice, librarians have the opportunity to work effectively across organizations and within multiple disciplines to campaign positive educational reform.

The Library Collaborative's larger community of practice is replicable as a model for institutional partnerships. The Library Collaborative sees this model as an opportunity to come together in a way that respects the professional expertise and experience of librarians and subject educators and promotes cross-institutional understandings and partnerships through a sustainable forum. The work of conversation and curriculum revision provides an opportunity to break down traditional institutional and disciplinary divisions through the development of personal relationships.

A successful community of practice depends on the members' continued focus on the purpose and objective as well as the members' expertise, experiences and resources. In *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Wenger identified actions that cultivate communities of practice that applies to the development of a library collaborative:

- Design the community to evolve naturally. The nature of a community of practice is dynamic so they should be designed to support shifts in focus while maintaining true to the community's goals.

- Create opportunities for open dialog within and with outside perspectives. While the core members and their knowledge are the most valuable resource, it is also beneficial to look outside of the community of practice to understand the different possibilities for achieving the goals outlined by the community.

- There should be opportunities for members to shape their learning experience together by brainstorming and examining the conventional and radical wisdom related to their topic and goals.

- Foster a regular rhythm for the community. Establishing a thriving cycle of activities and events allows for the members to regularly meet, reflect, and evolve. It is vital for success that there be a consistent level of engagement by the members to sustain the vibrancy of the community, yet not be so fast-paced that it becomes unwieldy and overwhelming in its intensity.[12]

Intentionally Forming a Community of Practice: Participants

At the core of the model for Community of Practice are two librarians, one from high school and one from college. The librarians are primarily responsible for recruiting the other working group participants. Librarians serve to draw in others from specific communities of practice by providing both resources and planning. Librarians offer information literacy, the Common Core, and other pedagogies such as inquiry learning and Problem Based Learning.

When possible, these librarians help identify two subject instructors from each institution:

- an English Language Arts teacher
- a Social Studies or Science teacher
- a college writing professor, and
- a faculty member from a field that complements the high school subject teacher.

The high school teachers bring pedagogical experience, an understanding of content requirements, and a familiarity with the high school environment. The teachers also bring a rather extraordinary willingness to rework their curriculum, a willingness that demands sensitivity on the part of group members.

College faculty bring knowledge of college expectations and examples of readings and assignments from their courses. They also understand the challenges students face making the transition. Ideally, they also bring interest and experience in teaching freshmen.

Finally, the Library Collaborative highly recommends using a facilitator and a documentarian. Curriculum development is hard work, especially with unfamiliar collaborators. The role of facilitator is essentially to help educators focus on what they can control and to link big-picture questions to concrete pedagogical practices. A documentarian keeps notes and summarizes the developments of each meeting. These summaries help maintain coherent connections between sessions and give participants an objective view of working session developments.

Community Commitment: Time, Energy & Resources

Forging communities of practice is not the work of a single afternoon. Neither is curriculum development. The formation of the CCRP community and the essential work of curriculum development to address the education gap between high school and college requires a long-term commitment of the community members. In the first iteration the CCRP chose broad and multiple disciplines, each with its own working group, rather than deeper sessions with a single working group partnering two disciplines. Although the librarians felt empowered to continue working with faculty, the sessions themselves did not result in a completed product.

In the second iteration of the working sessions, a new structure allowed for five 2-hour sessions. This change resulted in a far more significant product by the end of the sessions. In addition to the sessions, the community members needed to do some independent work that is a natural outgrowth of curriculum planning. This work included:

- looking for texts that fit new curricular needs;
- finding teaching tools the group might adapt;
- continuing to think over workshop developments in the course of regular teaching;
- having the documentarian turn the session notes into polished overviews.

Time must be made to organize all aspects of the community as well as recruit community members and event management.

"I believe the librarian is an integral role in all educational settings. I would like to continue the work with the library longer than the allotted time."

Assistant Principal/Teacher
Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, NY

Formation of a strong community is essential to success. The recruitment of members is time consuming. As the NYC DOE and CUNY are such large systems, the Collaborative found it helpful to have a project assistant to manage the details of the CCRP sessions. Fortunately for the project, Collaborative members were well placed to do the work of recruiting librarians and reaching out to higher-level administration.

Another key member of the community is the facilitator. The group met with the facilitator before and during the sessions for planning and debriefing meetings. In addition, a documentarian attended all of the meetings and turned the session notes into polished overviews that are quickly disseminated to the community.

To encourage continued commitment and involvement, utilizing technology allows the community to meet regardless of geographical distance. Email is a regular part of the Collaborative's communications, as are conference calls, which often include the librarians from the working groups. However, regular in-person contact is absolutely necessary for both the Collaborative Curriculum Revision Project working groups and for the Library Collaborative itself. Working together in person creates and sustains the communities of practice on which the model is built.

Recruiting Participants

Recruiting teachers, faculty, and librarians to participate in workshops and commitments to multiple meetings poses unique challenges. Educators are always pressed for time, and in a metropolis like New York, geography and transportation can be an obstacle.

The Collaborative decided early on that school librarians would be the key to finding enthusiastic participants. Once a school and librarian were identified, the librarian and principal leveraged their relationships with disciplinary teachers. This allowed librarians to build upon collaborative teacher relationships, and in some instances, to forge new ones based upon the goal of advancing student learning through curriculum revision.

The City University of New York (CUNY) is comprised of eleven senior colleges and seven community colleges located across the city. Most often, the school serves as the geographic starting point because of the quality and interest of the school librarian, and the commonality of students served across the institutions. One of the key goals of the project has been to conduct these sessions across different types of schools and colleges in distinct geographical areas to maximize the impact of the work. The first working sessions were done with a campus high school with a school library that services multiple schools in one building along with a senior college in a middle class area of Staten Island. The second iteration took place in a large, historic high school with a developed relationship with the senior college across the street in Harlem. A third series (Spring 2014) partnering a comprehensive high school in the Bronx that

serves a high, underprivileged student population and a local community college in which many of the attending high school's graduates need remediation support was recently completed.

In all cases, the Collaborative tasked the school and college librarians to recruit the faculty and teacher partners in-house, in order to initiate the collegial partnerships among educators and across institutions that are so vital to success of this work.

75% of first time freshman students at CUNY attended New York City public high schools	
City University of New York Statistics	**New York City Department of Education Statistics**
22 Colleges	Over 1,800 schools
260,000 Students	1.1 Million Students
250 Librarians	700 Librarians or Teachers assigned to the Library

Team Collaboration

Team collaboration is vital to the success of the community. The following is a look at the work of the CCRP community. The Collaborative believes this model of collaboration was successful and would work for other programs hoping to bridge traditional institutional barriers.

In the second iteration (Spring 2013) of the working sessions, the CCRP working group met five times for two hours each on consecutive Thursdays after the high school class day had ended. Sessions were held within walking distance from both the college and high school campuses. The facilitator circulated an agenda and supplemental materials in advance of each session. After the first session, the agenda and session goals were agreed to by the team at the conclusion of the previous session. In general, the sequence of discussions was:

1) developing a shared understanding of goals, challenges and teaching strategies;

2) introducing the existing high school curricular unit and reviewing related college-level expectations;

3) identifying opportunities to align the unit with college-level expectations;

4) creating activities to integrate engagement with complex readings; and

5) refining the revised unit and considering implementation.

The sequence of the work developed organically after the first meeting. Participants shared the ultimate goal of revising the high school curricular unit but were flexible in determining how to accomplish the work. Open and supporting discussions of challenges common to the high school and college classroom in the first session led the team to generate a list of experiences that would benefit students in the areas, including:

- staged research assignments;
- assignments that seek authentic connections to students' everyday lives;
- opportunities to explore multimedia formats such as podcasts and blogs; and
- integrated practice of information literacy skills.

Reflecting on this list of experiences, in turn, led the team to the idea of introducing scaffolded exposures to complex secondary readings as a way to enhance the high school curricular unit.

College faculty shared sample texts from their courses as a way to help the team brainstorm the types of secondary readings that might extend students' engagement with the unit's primary text. Through discussion of these sample texts and the challenges students might face in reading them, the team determined that secondary readings might supplement the unit by providing:

- historical background;
- lenses through which to engage specific thematic content;
- insight into the author's perspective; and
- models of critical analysis and argument.

Choosing an appropriate secondary reading for the revised unit and developing a graphic organizer that would lead students to active reading followed from discussion of these four areas of enhancement.

Three factors made it possible for the team to approach curricular revision in this way:

- a commitment from participants to openness and to appreciate inquiry;
- focused guidance from the facilitator;
- detailed notes that carried the previous session's discussion forward.

The participants' collegiality kept the sessions focused on students and their experiences with assignments and texts. Since each session was limited to two hours, it was important that the facilitator actively shape discussion by turning the group back to the work of revising the unit. Participants read the session notes to prepare for the subsequent week's session. This meant that the team could move forward each week by building on previous work rather than rehashing prior discussions.

Agenda for Community Success

After conducting several iterations of working sessions, the Collaborative learned there are a few key things the sessions had to accomplish.

First, establish a rapport among the participating educators. Arriving at a set of shared understandings and sense of common purpose is necessary if there is going to be serious and potentially difficult discussions about expectations and student preparedness at the high school and college levels. Trust and good will are essential characteristics of productive communities of practice and the first task is to build both.

Second, it can be very easy for educators coming from challenging teaching environments to focus on the negative aspects of the situations. Getting participants to talk about ways of empowering themselves to accomplish their educational aspirations is key.

Third, revising a curricular unit takes time. The amount of time busy educators have to invest in these working sessions is limited since they take place during the academic year while participants are actively engaged in their day-to-day work of teaching and librarianship. The Collaborative learned from their project's first iteration that two sessions just didn't allow enough time for teachers, faculty, and librarians to think about the similarities and differences between their institutions and practices in both theoretical and practical ways. Additional sessions were needed to provide college faculty with time to talk about the kinds of assignments given to first-year students, high school teachers to present their unit, and all parties to consider and adjust the alignment of both.

Therefore, for their second iteration of working sessions, the Collaborative proposed four, 2-hour sessions, which in the course of the session expanded to five sessions. The following is a breakdown of the five sessions that can be used as a model agenda for community success:

Session 1 – "Thinking Session" – Share and discuss educational values and goals; articulate realities and challenges that face participants when attempting to meet their goals.

Session 2 – Identify and share best practices in teaching to address challenges to meeting goals established in Session 1; high school teachers present curricular unit; group "parks" their initial reflections/questions about unit on large notepads, for discussion in Session 3.

Session 3 – Review and discuss reflections/questions from Session 2; college faculty present an example assignment (including any readings) for comparison; group considers relationship between the two and articulates initial thoughts about possible ways to bring high school and college assignments into alignment. "Homework" assigned: participants will bring in materials/ideas to next Session that might be used to tweak high school unit.

Session 4 – New materials/activities for and approaches to unit considered; participants collaboratively develop any additional support objects (for example, a graphic organizer) that might be needed; revisions to unit are considered at a granular level.

Session 5 – Critically reflect on suggested revisions, additions to unit, support objects; participants consider the place of the unit within the larger objectives of the class; participants reflect on implications of the group's work for first year pedagogy/assignment design at the college level.

The Collaborative found this five-session structure worked much better than the original two session approach. Even so, participants and organizers alike were still left with the sense that there was more to do to fully revise the high school unit and to fully consider how first-year college assignments might be improved to support students coming from the high school. Therefore, future iterations will unfold over two semesters, including sessions following implementation of the revised curriculum so that college and high school educators can continue to solidify their community of practice.

The Working Session Facilitator

A Good Facilitator

Facilitating working sessions is never easy. A good facilitator not only needs to be able to help a group establish a positive and productive dynamic, he or she must also know enough about the topics under discussion and each group member's practical challenges and desired results to help accomplish the collective task.

The Collaborative understood there were some unique challenges when it came to hiring a facilitator. The facilitator needed to be familiar with the day-to-day realities of high school and college education and to be familiar with some of the basic barriers students face when transitioning to college. The Collaborative knew that the facilitator would need to know enough about the Common Core and implications for both high school and college teaching. The third variable that made the selection process even more difficult: finding someone who had an understanding of librarians and how their insights and expertise can be leveraged to help students develop college readiness.

The Facilitation Experience

During the first pilot, the Collaborative gained many valuable insights using a professional facilitator with experience in the development of communities of practice with educators from urban public high schools and colleges. For the second series, however, the Collaborative felt that a librarian would be best positioned

to link the communities of practice to specific resources for the unit revisions. Further, a librarian with practical experience working with urban school and college populations would be an ideal facilitator. Therefore, the Collaborative decided to turn to one of their DOE/CUNY Library members.

Robert Farrell, a librarian at Lehman College in the CUNY system, had taught philosophy and freshman composition courses at the college level. Perhaps more importantly, he had worked with CUNY freshman for over a decade, both at his library's reference desk and through library instruction. He was also a member of the DOE/CUNY Library Collaborative from its inception and was intimately familiar with the project's goals. Although he had no formal training in facilitation, his experience teaching seminar style courses allowed him to create a collegial, collaborative learning environment within the workshop sessions and he was able to integrate the participating librarians into the discussions in important ways. Going forward, the Collaborative plans to train others, preferably individuals with a combination of classroom and library experience, to serve as facilitators. This training will begin late Fall 2014.

Community Assessment

The CCRP working sessions have been "works in progress" from day one. While all the Collaborative members have brought expertise to the CCRP, none of them had ever tried to get librarians, teachers, and college faculty in a room to talk about educational values and revise a high school curricular unit. This was uncharted territory. The Collaborative knew the work was important and they would have to continually assess, reconfigure and move towards the best approach for accomplishing it. Careful assessments of the community and sessions have been crucial for improving both the structure and logistics.

The Collaborative assessed the working sessions on four levels through a variety of methods. In each iteration, working group participants were provided chances to offer reflections about the session's content, activities, and organization before the end of each individual session. This "real-time" feedback allowed the facilitator to take into account participants' states of mind and any gaps or needs they felt the next session should address. Having immediate assessment of the sessions allowed the Collaborative to improvise and responsively improve the working sessions and gave the facilitator an opportunity to directly shape the sessions as they unfolded.

Following the end of the working sessions, the Collaborative sent out surveys tailored to each group of CCRP participants. These surveys were designed to have participants reflect on the mechanical logistics of the sessions — the quality of the scheduling and payment processing, the facilitation, and the location — as well as their sense of the value of the sessions from each of their professional perspectives. The Collaborative had thought that the dialogues and collaborative work would be eye opening for participants. Open-ended survey questions gave participants a

chance to share how they planned to translate what they learned from the sessions into their professional practice. The surveys were created using the online survey product SurveyMonkey and were sent out several months after the working sessions concluded to give participants a chance to incorporate what they had learned back into their schools.

The Collaborative also looked closely at the extent and quality of the curricular revisions following the completion of the working sessions. In post session phone meetings, members considered how the structure of the sessions either facilitated or hindered the completion of the curricular revision task by looking at what concrete revisions were suggested and which of those suggested made their way into the unit. During the second iteration, more concrete and more extensive revisions were made due to the increased number of sessions. The Collaborative was able to follow up with the participating teacher and librarian to see if the revised unit had any impact on student learning. The school librarian and participating teachers were able to provide concrete examples of student work based on the new unit, which provided direct evidence of the benefits to students of the work.

Finally, the Library Collaborative assessed themselves. Following each session, the Collaborative met by phone to reflect on the session and plan for the next meeting. The diversity of the committee, staff, and facilitator allowed them to look at the session from multiple perspectives. The insights arrived at through these discussions supplemented the "real-time" feedback of participants giving the CCRP the flexibility to develop their working sessions on the fly. Key to this was the detailed descriptions of the working sessions provided by their documentarian, Nate Mickelson, an instructor at CUNY's Stella and Charles Guttman Community College.

Debriefing and Setting Goals Post-Session

Making the visible work of the interdisciplinary, inter-institutional curriculum teams run as smoothly as possible requires significant behind the scenes effort. As organizers, this work falls to the Library Collaborative.

Like the CCRP, the Collaborative is itself inter-institutional. At last count, Collaborative members worked in seven different locations spread throughout New York City. Organizing the organizers is no small feat. The group originally met in person. These face-to-face meetings were, and are, key to establishing group rapport and refreshing commitment when energy fades in the face of everyday responsibilities.

Yet the everyday responsibilities and the geographies involved dictate that while meeting face-to-face is preferable, meeting virtually is more possible. This is especially true for the meetings to debrief, reflect, and plan on-going working sessions.

Of course the Collaborative works through email, but conference calls also help retain the flexibility and responsiveness that real-time discussion allows. As these sessions are relatively unscripted, intended to help participants find their own path forward, flexibility and responsiveness are of the utmost importance.

As key players of the CCRP working groups, the school and college librarians sometimes joined the conference calls. This gave Collaborative members an opportunity to get their sense of how things were going, and also to learn what work was happening between sessions.

The calls usually opened with the facilitator and documentarian reviewing events from the previous session. After that, meetings often revolved around how to more effectively facilitate the discussions, especially as the group moved towards decision-making and curriculum development. Sometimes these calls allowed the Collaborative to make seemingly small but pivotal decisions, such as asking the college professors to bring in a sample assignment from their course, or to bring post-its so that ideas wouldn't get lost and could be referred back to as needed.

Student Assessments

With grant funding, the Collaborative will initiate the process for formal approval (required by both the NYC DOE and CUNY) to track students who experience the revised curriculum and compare their college remediation and success rates to a control group. Ultimately, hopes for improved college success lie in the spread of meaningful collaboration between high schools and colleges in ways that enhance curriculum broadly.

In high school, however, the question of "doing better" is trickier than it might seem. Will the students perform better on new Common Core aligned standardized tests? Much remains to be seen about the quality of these tests. In any event, a passing familiarity with research undergirding the Common Core exposes why any single standardized test is a problematic measure. Text complexity has a highly subjective component, dependent on a students' background knowledge. Therefore, while of course the hope is students who experience the revised units will perform better on these tests, the focus is more on the fact that the revised curriculum is indeed Common Core aligned.

This emphasis reveals another complexity. As K-12 educators know, Common Core alignment often requires a shift in what students are doing. Therefore, asking whether they are doing things better is less helpful than asking whether they are doing better things. Are they reading the kinds of texts colleges demand? Have we scaffolded to support this experience? Are they learning strategies to write analytically? Are they gaining greater experience using library and research resources?

"I am aiming next year to get a handle on projects across all departments with estimated time frames, and use that information to prep both text sets, and scaffold scholarly articles."

High School Librarian
A. Philip Randolph High School in Manhattan

...asking whether they are doing better is less helpful than asking whether they are doing better things.

Librarians have a special fondness for this last question. However, it is important to recognize that high schools cannot shoulder responsibility for teaching everything. In fact, one of the more refreshing outcomes of the CCRP model has been that participating college professors became more cognizant of limits schools face, including limits on time, resources, and the constraints imposed by external demands (such as the above-mentioned standardized tests). Improving student success is a shared endeavor. Recognizing and acting on this insight ultimately enriches education for all our students.

Participation Benefits

The majority of K-12 and college educators work in building silos with top-down reforms as the norm. Any shift in instructional practice turns into a compliance checklist, more often than not because of the lack of professional support, educator buy-in, and time in which to successfully implement change. The CCRP working sessions seek to connect educators across institutions and disciplines by delving into the difficult tasks of analyzing curricular units and college syllabi as a community of practice. Participants not only identify the gaps in academic expectations between institutions, but suggest ways to revise curricular units to become more college aligned through resource selection, instructional tasks and expectations, and scaffolding tools.

As a result, high school teachers come away with concrete steps on how to implement their revised unit and to apply the same critical lens to the rest of their instructional practice. This is in line with Huberman and Levinson's findings on school-level outcomes for university-school connections: "Reviewing first the school-level outcomes, practice improvement usually meant that local schools used collaborative projects with the university to broaden their curriculum, diversify instructional materials, and improve instructional skills. Usually, a school's practice improvement was the sum of individual teachers' benefits from a series of in-service courses or projects."[13] College faculty gain a clearer sense of the academic levels of their incoming students in order to adjust instruction and support to help these same students succeed. Librarians understand and know how to partner with teacher and faculty colleagues to take their instructional units and practice to the next level.

Long Term Goals: Measuring and Tracking

The overall goal of the CCRP working sessions is to design scalable communities of practice focused on curricular unit revision and sustainable professional relationships. The hope is that by working together to modify high school units for immediate classroom implementation, participants value the process of collaborative dialogue and analysis and continue the collaboration once the sessions have ended.

To that end, the Collaborative developed surveys for each participant to collect reflections about the process and the work. They examined the notes from each session and the final reports to inform changes to subsequent working session iterations. They also plan follow-up communication to the participating school librarians to assess their opinion of the impact of the working sessions on their practice and collaborative relationships.

Going forward, the Collaborative is planning more in-depth surveys, interviews, and virtual collaboration to increase evaluation rigor of site sessions.

Getting Global 'Buy-in'

The ultimate goal of these working sessions goes well beyond the revision of a single educational unit. The aim is to create new communities of practice where high school teachers, college professors, and librarians work together to revise curriculum, develop new pedagogical tools, and new teaching practices. Outcomes also need to be shared as final reports and through conferences. Of course, structural support is crucial to maintaining and extending the new community of practice. Tying this work to existing initiatives can help secure that support.

Next Steps for the Library Collaborative's CCRP

The Collaborative has a long-term vision and lofty goals for real institutional and curricular change. To continue their work and to achieve these goals the Collaborative needed to expand their reach and required more funding. At the same time, Graduate NYC! (GNYC) was looking to expand its curriculum alignment work between CUNY and DOE. Graduate NYC! is a collaboration among the NYC DOE, CUNY, and several community-based organizations to double the number of young New Yorkers who complete college degrees at CUNY by 2020. The mission of GNYC is to drive policy and practice change to impact the college outcomes of the more than 1.5 million students in K-12 schools and in colleges across New York City. The two have teamed up to share project management and grant writing expertise that leveraged $50,000 from the Teagle Foundation for scaling up the CCRP. The funds from the Teagle Foundation will allow the Library Collaborative and GNYC to create four working groups that will involve:

- 8 high school teachers
- 8 college faculty
- high school and college librarians
- 4 documentarians
- 4 facilitators

"I found the entire process useful, both from a personal and professional standpoint."

9th grade English Teacher
Staten Island College High School

The curriculum revisions will impact approximately 600 students. The first school cohort will begin curricular revision work in Spring 2015 with unit implementation planned for Fall 2015; the second cohort will begin work in Fall 2015 with unit implementation occurring in Spring 2016.

As a result of the Teagle funding, the CCRP will be able to conduct more rigorous assessment of its work. The following chart was a part of the Teagle Foundation proposal. The chart provides a concise overview of CCRP Project Goals, the Methodology used to achieve the goals, the Timeframe for the time of recurrence, and Data Analysis, which lists the assignment and measure.

CCRP Goals	Methodology	Timeframe	Data Analysis
Goal 1: Revise high school curriculum units to better prepare high school students to meet the greater demands of the Common Core State Standards, college-level inquiry and research expectations, thus ensuring higher college readiness and completion rates.	Document Review (ex. unit and lesson plans, student work samples)	Following working group cycles	CUNY/DOE staff collaboratively develop rubric
Goal 2: Develop and nurture communities of practice among high school teachers, librarians, college instructors, and education administrators where stakeholders work collaboratively to enhance student learning experiences and achievement at both the high school and college levels.	Observations of sample of working group sessions Administrator interviews Participant surveys	Ongoing over time At the end of each school year At the beginning/end of each working group cycle	Content analysis, explore patterns of responses Content analysis, explore response patterns Changes in pre and post Likert-scale responses and open ended responses
Goal 3: Provide a roadmap for supporting changes in how high school staff and college staff work together with librarians as part of communities of practice to develop rich curricula units that prepare students for the demands of CCLS and of college.	Document review: working group agendas and documentarian notes	Following each school year and finalized after the conclusion of the final curriculum implementation phase.	Changes in practice over time – changes in expectations and curriculum units over time; develop "portraits for promising practices"

In the short term, the CCRP will empower educators directly involved in the working sessions by helping them to increase student college readiness and achievement. The intention, however, is for the sessions to serve as successful models of the curricular unit revision process and college alignment. The only way to close the academic gap between high school and college is for institutions to form long-term working partnerships to build on institutional strengths and define shared expectations for students conceptual knowledge, reading and writing abilities, independent research and inquiry, and critical thinking and argument.

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Appendix

Summary Logic Model for DOE CUNY Library Collaborative – High School to College Transition Project

What are the broad long-term desired results of your project?

GOAL: To successfully develop a scalable, collaborative model that enables teachers, professors and librarians to align curricular units to aid the high school to college transition and, in the process, build lasting professional relationships.

Project Activities: Using the resources listed below, what activities are you carrying out to achieve your project goals?

Pre-workshop readings

- One article on Common Core – values & highlights
- One article on inquiry and independent learning in discipline
- One article on reading in the disciplines
- Explanation of what a unit is
- A College Syllabus for a first year course in the discipline
- A College Assignment for a first year course in the discipline
- A Sample High School Lesson/Unit in the discipline

Pre-workshop conversations and reflective writing using CUNY Academic Commons

Directed conversation in workshops

Project Outcomes: What measurable benefits (to your internal and external stakeholders) do you expect over time as a result of your project activities? What are the broad long-term desired results of your project?

A revised curricular unit that can be used within school classrooms.

- Units will be aligned with Common Core Standards
- Units will aim to develop skills needed by first year college students
- Units will align better with college curriculum
- Units will incorporate complex texts in classrooms
- Units will involve use of library and teacher-librarians for the development of information literacy skills

Sustainable professional relationships between school and college instructors.

- Teachers and college faculty will remain in touch after workshops.

Sustainable professional relationships between teachers and librarians.

- School librarians will continue to work with teachers to revise curricular units.

Cultivation librarians to become facilitators of curricular development.

- School librarians will gain insight into college readiness and thereby be in a position to work with other teachers on curriculum in a variety of subject areas.

Increased awareness among college faculty of challenges facing high school education.

- Faculty will be in a position to rethink or even revise existing assignments in light of new insight into graduating high school seniors.

Increased collaboration between CUNY and DOE.

- This project will serve as an exemplary model for inter-institutional collaboration on high school to college transition issues.

Project Resources: What resources are you investing in this innovation to achieve your project goals? (human, financial, organizational, and community resources)

- DOE, CUNY leadership
- DOE, CUNY Librarians
- DOE, CUNY Teachers and Faculty
- CUNY Academic Commons
- Hired facilitator
- Hired documentarian
- Conference room with computer/projector
- Materials (Readings and other supplementary materials – curricular units)
- Print and other electronic resources – copies of report from first workshops to be provided to participants in second workshop
- Time
- Funding

Timeline

- Winter 2010 – initial meetings and discussion
- Fall 2011 – project outline developed
- Spring 2012 – project participants determined
- Spring 2012 – pilot workshops held

- Fall 2012-Spring 2013 – initial assessment of curricular units and relationship building
- Spring 2013 – second pilot workshop held
- Fall 2013-Fall 2014 assessment of curricular unit
- Spring 2014 – third pilot workshop held
- Fall 2014-Spring 2015 grant funding allows for four workshops to be held; participants determined, facilitator and documentarian training begins

Impact Hypotheses:

Actor/agent (who) ...result (what)

1. Pre-workshop readings and/or online discussion will help establish the parameters and basic vocabulary of the first workshop.

2. Participants in first two workshops will acquire a mutual understanding of high school and college teaching challenges and a sense of what kinds of learning high school can facilitate first year college success.

3. Use of CUNY Academic Commons by participants to engage in inter-workshop "homework" will lead to increased group effectiveness in second workshop.

4. Participants in third through fifth workshop will revise an existing, curricular unit aligned with common core and informed by previous discussion that can be used in upcoming academic year.

5. Participants will see their counterparts as resources on whom to draw after the workshops.

6. Teachers will see teacher librarians as partners in common core curricular revision process.

7. Teacher librarians will use knowledge gained in the workshops to develop new working relationships with other teachers in their schools.

8. College faculty will use knowledge gained in the workshops to consider revising existing course assignments and teaching methods.

Indicators/Measures	Hypotheses								
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Content analysis of workshops	X	X							
Content analysis of CUNY Academic Commons discussions			X						
Examination of curricular unit				X					
Survey of participants	X	X			X	X			
Follow up interview									
Reflective writing					X				

Outline for Workshops

I. Thinking Session – 2 hours

Goal:

Participants become acquainted with the "ends in view" each keeps in mind – their educational values and the realities of their situations – when undertaking the design of a curricular unit or assignment.

Questions:

1. What does a thinker really need to be able to do to succeed in college in your discipline? (habits of mind, socio-cultural skills, content knowledge, reading/writing/reflecting practices, other skills) What are the factors for success?

2. Out of these factors for success, which do students struggle with at the high school or college level?

3. What role does inquiry play in your discipline? What are the components of successful inquiry? What about inquiry into texts, reading?

4. What challenges do students face when attempting to grapple with complex texts?

5. What activities/exercises are conducive to developing the factors for success in the first year of college? Given that students are often behind where they should be, are there teaching techniques that can expedite their skill acquisition?

6. What realities might hinder ideal practice?

7. What makes a good assignment? [For our purposes a good assignment might be defined as one that takes into account the answers to the above questions.]

II. Practical session – 2 hours

Goals:

Articulate pedagogical and other practical and implementable strategies to address challenges and achieve ideals.

Present and offer initial response to curricular unit.

Questions:

1. What specific activities would you do in your classroom to help students successfully meet the learning objectives in the first year of college? Why would you choose these activities?

2. What teaching techniques or activities can be used to accelerate the acquisition of critical skills that students are missing?

3. What are some of the obstacles or challenges to implementing these techniques or activities?

4. Do these approaches and activities align across institutions? Are there meaningful and significant gaps in how material/skills/content is presented and learned during high school and first year of college?

5. How do we help our students build their skills in these areas?

6. As we assess our students' reading, writing, and inquiry skills, how can we do more than diagnose the problems that students are having? How can we help them name their next steps? And take their next steps?

7. How does our school team move a curriculum that has been mostly literature-based toward incorporating more non-fiction? What are some good, interesting, yet challenging non-fiction pieces to use that will help our students develop the reading/inquiry/thinking skills that we value?

8. How can we facilitate student transition from school assignments with built in supports to the independent work characteristic of college on their own?

9. If we want to help students read and write more analytically, how can we find readings that are great analytical essays and can serve as examples of the writing we are asking our students to improve toward?

10. What are some things we can do in our units or lesson plans that will incorporate the kinds of reading, writing, and inquiry skills to help students succeed in college and beyond?

III. Practical session – 2 hours

Goals:

Offer initial response to curricular unit.

Consider college level assignments as end in view for thinking about high school unit.

Begin revising high school unit.

Questions:

1. What kinds of reading and writing are expected of entering college freshman?

2. Is the high school unit aligned with the expectations of college instructors? Can it be?

3. What revisions to a unit would make the most sense in light of a college assignment?

IV: Practical session – 2 hours

Goals:

Read and analyze critical articles about the unit topic.

Develop a graphic organizer to be used across unit.

Identify other places where complex texts can be integrated.

V: Practical session – 2 hours

Goals:

Review graphic organizer draft – consider revisions.

Review updated unit and consider use of organizer; explore additional complex, non-fictional texts.

Consider how readings/writings using organizer might be used in relation to final essay assignment.

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