

Bakersfield College Critical Academic Skills Workshops (2008 – 2012)

Bakersfield College's Critical Academic Skills (CAS) Workshops were developed in response to a BSI workshop in Spring 2008 where a Butte College presentation described an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach. The Bakersfield College plan was to build a center that replicates Butte College's successful program. The CAS strategy involves diagnostic identification of basic skills student needs that could be addressed through one-hour free seminars addressing specific skills. This integrated strategy allows students to receive needed instruction, without committing to an entire semester-long basic skills course, while pursuing their own educational goals and pathways. Students are referred by individual faculty members throughout the semester as the needs become evident. Students then select workshops and attend outside of class without cost. The mission of the CAS workshop mission is to provide critical academic skills support for students across all programs and disciplines on campus. Topics are identified by faculty teaching transfer and basic skills courses and include sessions to develop English, math, study, and college survival skills. This hands-on and interactive approach to learning have created an environment where students leave every workshop with skills they can easily apply across disciplines and programs as well as help them to plan, organize, and successfully achieve their college goals. Students are able to hand-select from a wide variety of workshop topics in order to find those that fit their individual personal, remedial, and academic needs and to choose topics that fit their current course requirements in a safe and friendly learning environment.

CAS Student Learning Outcomes

1. Effective Use of Resources
2. Successful Application of Learning Strategies
3. Effective Use of Self-Assessment Strategies
4. Retention and Success

The Butte College program is centralized through their Center for Academic Success, offering 200 CAS workshops each semester. Students have the option of signing up 8 selected Critical Skills Workshops (pass/no pass, open-entry, open-exit), completing 8 homework assignments and attending three CAS faculty conferences to earn ½-unit of a credit course called the Critical Skills Study Hour (EDUC 10, 110, or 210). The Bakersfield College plan did not involve accumulation of workshop for credit or a centralized delivery center. The coordinator was appointed and faculty held 60+ workshops in the first semester. The enrollments on the main campus have increased by 100% since the pilot in Fall 2008. Some topics remain popular while others have been modified, added, or deleted depending on embedded survey and enrollment data collected with every workshop.

The CAS workshops started at out with a full schedule at both the BC main campus and at the Delano Center but due to lack of faculty with flexible hours to teach the workshops, adequate enough enrollments at Delano, a big funding cut in Fall 2011, currently workshops are offered only on the main campus. To ensure students know about the workshops, there is extensive advertising:

- The full workshop schedule is posted all over campus with bright calendars.
- The weekly workshop information is sent out each week via email to all faculty and posted all around the SS building where the workshops are held.
- There are also CAS signs posted throughout the inside and outside of the SS building with colorful logos and arrows directing students to the workshops.
- The schedule is available for students on the Inside BC announcements.
- The full schedule and description of the workshops is available on the Learning Center website: <http://bcacademicdevelopmentdepartment.weebly.com/cas-workshops.html>
- The direct link to the CAS workshop schedule is on the "Schedules" page of the BC website.

Data

CAS is improved and operated on data driven decisions. Attendance information including names, ID numbers, and faculty referral information is collected along with over 6,000 student surveys over the last 4 years. The student surveys, attendance records, and faculty feedback serve to guide decisions about topic modifications and changes to the schedule in order to better meet the needs of the students.

Current Survey Information

Over 100 faculty referred students to the BC CAS workshops for Fall 2011- Spring 2012. Over 620 student surveys were collected at the time of the workshops in Spring 2012. The results remain similar to all survey feedback collected since the pilot in Fall 2008. The majority of students (65%) are referred by a faculty member, 55% realized the need for review, others were referred by friends, EOPS, received extra credit or were required by the instructor of a particular course. 99% of attendees would recommend the workshop they attended to other students. Many students attended multiple workshops throughout the semester.

Information from 140 post workshop student surveys collected in May 2012 indicated that students: improved grades in 1 or more classes, improved ability to take a tests, improved study skills, improved essay writing, and improved ability to plan for transfer, graduation, or completion of other college goals.

Vocational CAS Workshops

The CAS program faculty are also dedicated to creating specialized workshops to meet the specific needs of vocational students on campus. For the last two years, new CAS workshops target the specific math needs for culinary art, welding, and automotive students. These needs became evident through SLO assessment and Program Review data. By working with vocational faculty, instructors modified the CAS curriculum tailoring workshops to provide content that better matched the SLOs in target courses. The vocational faculty indicated that the workshops have definitely helped students to contend with the math conversions they need to know for the various courses. Post survey indicates that the students also found the CAS workshops improved their success in the vocational courses.

Welding and Culinary Arts Post Workshop Results indicated that students improved their grade in 1 or more classes, improved test-taking, study skills, essay-writing, and ability to plan for transfer, graduation, or completion of other college goals.

Specific Examples of Culinary Arts Improvement included:

- Helped me better understand math in culinary arts
- It helped me to recall basic math skills I had forgotten before
- I learned culinary math better. I was able to understand.
- Refreshed my memory and how to do math problems.
- I improved my skills in fractions and converting.
- Helped me w/ relearning percentages, some conversions, fractions
- It gave me a better understanding of math used in cooking. It helped me organize myself and think things through as well as my problem-solving abilities.
- I learned more to help pass my classes.
- I understand the material so much better.
- The math was refreshing.
- Responses available upon request

Specific Examples of Welding Post Workshop Results included:

- To get brain rejuvenated to ways of thinking of math problems, to feel comfortable about not being stupid as I appeared to think I was.
- It helped me to understand the process and steps in mathematical equations
- Very helpful for students that have been away from school for awhile.
- Helped me with my calculator and math skills

- The workshop helped me understand the measurements on class projects and complete them to the right specs
- Adding and subtracting fragments is a big part of layout, blueprint interpretation. The ability to read a tape measure assists in identifying metal and thickness consumables. Not as easy as it could seem.
- It improved my ability to work with amperage settings and voltage settings
- It show(s) how to use these skills in the real world
- The welding CAS classes helped me finish my projects on time.

Responses shared by referring faculty:

- What topics do you think are most effective/pertinent to your area? “Parts of speech, proofreading, fragments, run-ons, commas, apostrophes.” “All topics related to grammar, writing, and MLA”
- What topics are lacking from our current offerings? “Essay Development; Argumentative writing”
- What student feedback have you received about the workshops? “They find them very helpful.” “Helpful; useful; quick and easy”
- What improvements have you observed for students who attend the CAS workshops? “Stronger grasp of grammar and mechanics”
- What assistance are you interested in for support of your basic skills students? Basic skills students need repetition of instruction, so offering workshops that reiterate the material being presented, as you are doing, in class is beneficial.
- Improvements? “More ESL oriented workshops – gerunds/infinitives, prepositions, articles, verb tense, word form, word choice, using academic language vs. colloquial language (which would be good for the general population as well).”
- Accolades? “Good variety of topics and schedule.” “The workshops are not only useful but critical to student success.”

Summary

The Bakersfield College CAS workshops (2008-2012) have become all but institutionalized. Plans are in place to track students from the workshop through other classwork before and after workshops and in comparison with students who do not attend workshops, but institutional research has not had time to complete this study. The enrollments have doubled on the main camps even with less funding. Faculty and students appreciate the added support for students’ basic skills needs across disciplines and programs, especially in an era where decisions for budget cuts negatively impact the majority of students on campus who lack the basic critical academic skills they need to succeed. The positive impact of CAS workshops on vocational programs is extremely pertinent, especially in addressing CTE program goals to increase success and retention rates through embedded remediation of basic skills.

Report Prepared May 14, 2012, by Dr. Kimberly Van Horne: CAS Coordinator (2008-Current) and modified by Janet Fulks for the BSI report Jan 2013.

Critical Academic Skills Seminars – Descriptions

http://bcacademicdevelopmentdepartment.weebly.com/uploads/1/7/8/7/1787454/cas_workshops_spring_2012.pdf

Sample Schedule for CAS seminars

http://bcacademicdevelopmentdepartment.weebly.com/uploads/1/7/8/7/1787454/microsoft_word_-_cas_spring_13_schedule.pdf

Bakersfield College Academic Development Department Website

<http://bcacademicdevelopmentdepartment.weebly.com/cas-workshops.html>