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Third College & CERRC:
A University-Community System for Promoting Academic Excellence

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The purpose of this paper is to describe a model university-community system for the recruitment, retention and training of minority students at the Third College of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The unique feature of this model system is that it unites the resources of the university and the community in a joint effort to promote the academic advancement of minority students. The system is comprised of three essential elements: the participation of local communities; the collaboration of public schools at the elementary and secondary level; a slight, but important reorganization of how academic and support services interact at the University.

A major component of the model system responsible for coordinating available resources and focusing activities in each of these three domains is CERRC --The Community Educational Resource and Research Center. CERRC is deliberately located in both the University and the community so that it can function as a a medium through which the University, public schools and community groups can achieve common educational goals. On the basis of the work we have conducted thus far, we are convinced of the soundness of our formulation; thus, we are requesting UC system-wide support for a three year experiment that will allow us to demonstrate the feasibility of permanently establishing a university-community partnership whose aim is to promote the academic advancement of minority students at all educational levels. As I speak, my colleagues at UCSD are meeting with a representative of the Carnegie Coorporation to discuss joint UCSD-Carnegie commitments which will enable us to instantiate the experiment immediately.

The Third College-CERRC model system builds on research our colleagues

and we have conducted during the past six years in home, community and school settings in San Diego (e.g., Anderson & Stokes, 1983; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, in press; Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1983; Moll & Diaz, in press). From this research we have developed the following premises as the basis of this proposal:

1) The necessary resources are available to produce significant changes in minority students´ schooling at all levels of the system. These resources include the social and cultural practices of the communities in which we work, including an ideology that values education highly, and the material resources of community institutions and the public schools.

2) The University of California, as a publicly funded center of higher learning and technology, represents a potential ally of enormous importance to any efforts at educational improvement. It is not only as focal point itself for educational change but it can serve as a catalyst to create changes at other levels of the educational system as well as provide important resources for effecting these changes.

3) The educational problems of Latino students cannot be viewed in isolation from the educational problems of Black students, as well as other minority groups in this country. It is not coincidental that these groups suffer from similar educational disenfranchisement: they are products of similar socio-political circumstances. For minority groups to search for solutions independently would represent a flawed social analysis of the educational problems of each group and would truncate unecessarily inter-ethnic resources with which to achieve the mutual goal of providing optimal educational opportunities for their children.

4) The resources mentioned above can be utilized strategically to shape schooling practices at different levels in ways that make a significant difference in the students' performance. Our research has concentrated on changing the environments in which students are asked to learn, and in each case our formulation of an alternative pedagogy turns available resources into assets for schooling.

In the following pages we describe how these four points are formulated in the Third-College-CERRC model to achieve the goal of promoting educational achievement among minority students. Central to CERRC's strategy is an emphasis on creating educational success in "specific contexts" and making sure that the activities that benefit students in one context are linked through related activities to other contexts of importance for the students' advancement. We call these links "horizontal" and "vertical" integration of educational resources. Horizontally there must be cooperation between school and community, and between University support and academic services. Vertically there must be intergenerational assistance to create a working "pipeline" from the public school and the community that is able to provide a steady flow of prospective students to the university. The first step in this strategy however, is to create the circumstances where the resources of the community, schools and university can converge.

Situating educational change in the community

For the past two years CERRC has been conducting after-school programs in Latino and Black communities in San Diego. These after-school settings were created as part of long-term, community-based efforts to enhance the literacy

and numeracy skills of minority youngsters. What is equally important about these settings is how they function to help sustain multiple goals and interests as part of the same system. The work at each site is conducted in collaboration with University students, researchers and faculty members at facilites provided by community organizations or public schools. Each setting purposely capitalizes on children's interests in computers to teach them basic academic skills by using the machines as "tools" to create high powered literacy environments for the students (see Appendix A). Success in these activities enhances these students self-esteem and motivation.

Success in the after school settings also creates marked changes in the University students. They are enrolled simultaneously in one of Third College's field research courses. These courses divide the students' time between the study of theory, state-of-the-art research training in the social sciences, and special "field work" training to work in community sites. Essential to these projects is that it is the responsibility of the University students to develop strong enough skills in computer technology and its educational applications (as well as the teaching of reading and writing) to be of help to the younger students. In transforming others, the undergraduate students transform themselves.

In sum, through the concrete teaching and research activities vertical integration occurs (see Figure 1). For the elementary school students these settings are a place where they learn about and with computers and practice reading and writing; for secondary level and college students they are a place where they teach others and do research and at the same time equip themsleves for success at their own next highest level; for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows these sites represent dynamic contexts in which to develop

their own skills or advance their research; for UCSD faculty and CERRC researchers it is serves as a setting in which to train students and carry out research studies.

These community-based settings also serve as sites through which to organize horizontal integration. The work at each setting is made possible by cooperation from a variety of groups. The school district is interested in having their students receive an adequate education; the university wants to ensure that prospective minority students have a solid academic preparation and wants to provide service to minority communities. Community groups and churches are concerned with the quality of education of the community's children and with the return of their college educated members to work in the community. Families want their children to spend more time on academic activities and receive a good orientation and preparation to attend college. All of these groups contribute to the implementation of the after-school settings.

At present we have five CERRC sites, two of which are long-term after-school programs run by CERRC members. One is located in a black neighborhood at a local church that has donated building space, equipment and volunteers; the other is located in a Latino neighborhood at an elementary school that has agreed to let us utilize their classrooms and equipment. The other three sites are part on-going educational programs interconnected with CERRC. One is an after-school program in a predominantly Anglo working class neighborhood, run by UCSD colleagues associated with CERRC; a second site in an after-school program in a Latino barrio that is part of a church-run organization that has requested our assistance; the third site is a local elementary school that has asked help in organizing computer and video

activities for their students. This in-classroom project represents one of our attempts to apply under regular classroom conditions instructional practices we have been elaborating in the after-school sites. This constant process of exploration and experimentation with effective pedagogy in several instructional contexts is possible because we have established long-term, community-based sites explicitly designed for that purpose.

All five sites are inter-connected via computers so that the children and adults can send messages to each other and coordinate activities. In addition, three of these sites are presently linked internationally with students in other countries and in other states (more on this below), with which they produce bilingual and intercultural newspapers and videotapes which serve to analyze issues of relevance to the students' education. Thus, in all sites computers are used as an important medium to teach basic skills and as instruments of communication to coordinate activities and create new ones.

Coordinating resources at the University

Most of our work is possible because of the existence of a remarkable institution at UCSD: The Third College. Third College, as stated in the UCSD catalogue, is "dedicated to the establishment of a multiracial, multicultural academic community." From its inception more than a decade ago, Third College has struggled to meet these goals through an intellectually rigorous curriculum focused on social diversity as a positive force in American life. As such, efforts to establish university-community links are not seen by Third College as extra-mural efforts, but as central to carrying out its mission.

One of the early innovations of Third College was the creation of interdiscipliary programs that linked students to the surrounding communitites through field classes and intership programs. This activity has undergone a rapid expansion recently, in part owing to the advent of micro-computers, with new field-oriented courses appearing in the Teacher Education Program, Communication Department (formerly a Third College program), Psychology Department, and the Urban and Rural Studies Program.

These courses are one of the major mechanisms for creating both horizontal and vertical integration in the education of minority group children. Four of these courses are taught currently by CERRC members. Along the horizontal dimension, UCSD students carry their studies into the community as part of one of CERRC sites or in exploring new possible connections (e.g., some students have been exploring how to integrate research in community medicine and health as part of a new CERRC site; other students are doing the preliminary work for future, two-way satellite programming with other countries, more on this below). Along the vertical dimension, they work jointly with younger students and with doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars doing related research at these sites.

We should emphasize that these courses are not "merely" field courses. The students have to tackle a rigorous curriculum, including extensive readings in social sciences, take tests, and write research papers integrating their readings, lectures and field work. In addition, it is necessary for them to learn as much as possible about computers and how to operate them in order to tutor the younger students and to maintain the communications among sites, internationally, and among themselves.

We propose to offer a minimum of nine such courses, distributed among programs and departments of Third College, including Teacher Education, Communication, Psychology, and Political Science. At least two of the courses will be tailored especially for incoming first year students and will concentrate on pedagogy and mastery of writing and computers. The remainder of the courses, as they are now, will be offered to upper-division students as part of their major.

Integrating academic and support services.

The field work course are the backbone of our approach, but by themselves they are insufficient to ensure the academic success of minority students in the university. As part of the horizontal integration of resources at the university level we have implemented the beginnings of a new relationship between academic courses and the ample support services available to Third College students. Below, we begin with recruitment, describing supplementary activities to the existing Early Outreach Program. We then describe a series of "adjunct courses" designed to increase student retention. The plan consists of providing language minority (and other) students, in collaboration with the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS), with extra help in completing successfuly Third College's required courses. Consistent with our basic premise of contextualizing training, this help is fundamentally different from remedial courses usually offered to struggling students in that it provides the students' with the extra help in the specific context of a particular courses' requirements, and not as a prerequisite to taking required courses or divorced from the content that the students need to learn.

We then turn to suggestions for _vertical_ integration at the graduate and post-graduate level. As with the recruitment and retention efforts in which we take advantage of extant programs, here CERRC will coordinate efforts with existing graduate programs and training institutions at UCSD.

Recruitment: The Outreach program. Without doubt, UCSD has one of the most outstanding Early Outreach Programs anywhere. Serving about 6,000 student and their families, Outreach has been successful in increasing the number of entering minority students by placing heavy emphasis on motivational and informational services to secondary students and their families in San Diego and Imperial Counties. CERRC will supplement the Early Outreach Program through two related activities: academic preparation of elementary and secondary students and community networking activities. One of Outreach's limitations is that it cannot deal effectively with academic preparation because of limited resources for this purpose. CERRC's field work activities are one way to provide students with extra practice in basic skills, outstanding role models that interact with them regularly around academic tasks, and a regular connection to the University. In short, our vertical integration activities increases the pool of qualified students that are available for entering the University; this is what we called earlier creating a "pipeline" from the elementary and secondary levels to the university and beyond.

A second way that CERRC will contribute to recruitment is by expanding Outreach's resources to the broader community. For example, we are organizing a joint workshop and networking activity between parents of students in our projects and the Outreach program. The goal is to involve parents early in the planning for the future education of their children and provide them with

practical ways of helping with their children's current school work. Along similar lines, we will expand the local computer network to include other schools in order to place them in immediate and regular contact with Outreach personnel. We are also developing a program aimed at giving community members access to computers. We will begin by first involving family members in the students' projects and expanding these activities to reach the greater community (we are planning this project with a colleague in the Department of Literature). In short, we are taking full advantage of available resources to expand and prepare the pool of students and parents that can receive help from Outreach's highly successful program.

Course adjuncts. OASIS offers an excellent program of academic support services to UCSD undergraduates, in particular tutoring and workshops for students in lower division courses. However, minority students tend to view these services as "remedial" in nature and, consequently, do not take advantage maximally of what they offer. In order to increase utilization of OASIS and link that help directly to regular course work, CERRC has created, in collaboration with OASIS and UCSD faculty members, activities in which the course itself becomes the setting for the tutoring and training activities. Two examples follow.

A "writing adjunct" is offered as part of Third College's first year course in Communications (Comm. 20), a general education requirement of the College. The adjunct (called Comm. 20W) is offered for two extra units to students, specially minority students, wishing or needing intensive work in writing academic prose. Students meet weekly in a one-to-one conference with an undergraduate tutor trained by OASIS and by Communication. The tutor provides pre-writing preparation and immediate feedback on drafts of

three required papers. In addition, as part of the two extra units students receive for taking the adjunct, they are required to become competent users of the UCSD Computer Center's word-processing systems. The use of computers becomes integral to the course becasue it performs two important functions: word processing provides writers with the means to revise their writing with great ease, thus facilitating the writing process; messaging on the computer allows students to communicate rapidly and efficiently with their instructor, tutor, or other students. Messages may range from questions about the lecture material or readings, suggestions for discussions, conferences, or comments by tutors or instructors.

A second adjunct, organized in a similar manner, is the Spanish adjunct. This course is offered to students who wish to practice their Spanish oral, reading and writing skills for academic purposes. Students who enroll in this adjunct are required to read a series of articles written by Latin American or Hispanic scholars. These articles are selected specifically to supplement the content of the regular course the students are taking and to expose the students to relevant research in Latin America or Europe. Discussion of the readings and lectures is in Spanish, with the instructor (a fluent bilingual) providing the necessary support to help the students communicate effectively in their second language.

We propose to extend these course adjuncts to other important courses in the Third College curriculum; in particular, those courses that are part of the College's general education requirements that require a substantial amount of analytical writing as well as a learned understanding of complex social phenomena, social science research and other literature. The adjuncts, with their emphasis of providing training in the context of the

courses, will be extremely useful in directing and extending the critical thinking, writing, language development, and intellectual exchanges of language minority undergraduates.

Bridging to graduate study and beyond. Our final group of activities involves horizontal coordination at the highest level of the vertical "pipeline": preparing students for enter graduate study and to complete their studies, and helping in the training of post-doctoral scholars. We have enlisted the cooperation of a number of graduate programs at UCSD, all with a long-term commitment to training minority researchers, to prepare students for graduate work, and to provide rigourous theoretical and field research activities for pre- and post-doctoral researchers. A special focus of this work will be on innovative ways to intervene and influence educational practices in minority educational communities. This training provides CERRC and Third College with a way to combine research at the highest levels with the training of young students at the most elementary levels through the participation of both undergraduate and graduate students.

Without research at the top levels that concerns the education of students at the levels below, the vertical integration of resources would not be possible. Just as undergraduates provide constant role models for the younger students, graduate students and post-doctoral researchers provide role models for undergraduates. But perhaps more important, it is the emphasis on research by those at the most advanced levels of the educational system that injects vitality into the student "pipeline." That is, research is the leading activity of the training at all levels of the system; this system includes undergraduates conductng investigations with their younger peers (and with the assistance of their older "mentors"), and the elementary

and secondary level students conducting research on their surrounding communities, all in the service of academic achievement.

To ensure this crucial link across levels we propose to coordinate two activities: First, an educational bridge between the completion of undergraduate degrees and fomal entry into graduate study programs. We will institute a year-long program of combined academic preparation and field research experience, with an emphasis on applied research as a tool for practical problem solving in social and educational settings in the community. Our experience shows that such bridging activities enable minority graduates, who might not have appropriate preparation to gain admission, to enter programs of graduate study. An early emphasis will be on developing computer literacy skills as a medium for acquiring advanced academic skills. Complementary training will focus on strategies for becoming proficient in writing within their chosen disciplines. The program will also provide opportunities for career counseling and information about how to prepare for the graduate experience itself. Each student will be assigned a faculty mentor within the discipline of interest to guide their training experiences. The field research will be supervised by CERRC.

Second, pre-doctoral training for students already doing graduate work, as well as post-doctoral training for young scholars in the social sciences. This progam would include two related strands of activities. First there are seminars to expose the trainees to the latest and most advanced literature in the field and to discuss issues of relevance to their training with the program director. As part of the seminars tutorials will also be provided on data analysis, computer literacy, and writing. Second, there is research modeled on the apprenticeship system that will permit trainees to

delve deeply into their chosen line of research. This research will take place in on-going sites organized by CERRC researchers in the San Diego community.

Projected Outcomes

We have proposed a plan for changing the educational status quo of minority students at Third College of UCSD. The major outcome expected from this experiment is the establishment of a permanent university-community system that will increase the recruitment and retention of language minority students as well as improve the quality of their academic training. Throughout, we will combine the resources and efforts of the community, public schools and the university in the pusuit of the common goal of academic excellence. Measurable outcomes during the three years will focus on the academic perfomance of the students who participate in the project´s activities at all levels of the educational system. Given the importance of establishing the feasibility and validity of our approach, we propose to organize an interdisciplianry faculty research committee made up of outstanding scholars at UCSD and other UC campusues to monitor and evaluate the CERRC experiment. At the conclusion of the three years this committee will report to the chancellor of UCSD as well as UC system-wide the results of our efforts to implement a new, postive way of addressing the educational disenfranchisement of minority students.