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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and assessment of the second year of the QR Fellows program at Hostos Community College, and serves several purposes. First, it summarizes the activities of the QR fellows during the 2015-16 academic year, including faculty collaborations, presentations, and committee work. Second, this report connects the work of last year’s fellows with this year’s efforts. Finally, it is our hope that this report will offer some guidance and direction for the QR Fellows in the 2016-17 academic year.

Our report uses the Year One report (2014-15) as a starting point for discussing the work we accomplished during the 2015-16 year. Following the summary of our activities, we also outline the major outcomes of our work as well as some ideas and recommendations to facilitate the Quantitative Reasoning initiative in 2016-17. In hopes of making our resources accessible to next year’s Fellows, we have also provided an Appendix that outlines the steps we took to preserve our materials.

Remarks on the 2014-15 Report

The Year One report summarized the activities of last year’s Fellows and made several recommendations for continuing the QR initiative during the 2015-16 year. Last year’s Fellows deserve a lot of credit for the work they began: many of their recommendations were implemented, the most important of these being a designated work space for QR Fellows in room B-440 of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Per last year’s recommendations, the 2015-16 cohort of QR Fellows were involved with the General Education and Center for Teaching and Learning committees, advertised and sought out individual faculty consultations, and developed their own workshops and presentations. Through the Title V initiative, Scott Fisher also worked directly with the Peer Mentors program in the Fall ‘15 semester.

The 2015-16 fellows also explored new directions and opportunities for quantitative reasoning at Hostos. Thanks to the work undertaken the previous year, we found many faculty members to be particularly receptive to the QR initiative. If the main theme of last year’s work was raising
awareness of and finding opportunities for QR, this year’s theme was developing, preserving, and creating access to relevant materials. Taken together, the first two years of the QR initiative at Hostos have created a solid foundation for future work.

**Summary of Activities, 2015-16**

During the Fall 2015 semester, three Fellows, Scott Fisher (environmental psychology), Devora Geller (musicology), and Gowun Park (economics) along with Sarah Brennan (Executive Associate to the Provost) and Cynthia Jones (QR Coordinator, General Education Committee chair), comprised the Quantitative Reasoning Initiative. Devora and Gowun continued as QR Fellows for the Spring 2016 semester and continued to work with Cynthia.

A. QR Training (Fall semester): This year, CUNY implemented a Blackboard training workshop developed by the QR program at Lehman College. The QR training was an important starting place because it introduced QR as a concept and provided several best practices, activity ideas, and resources, including CUNY’s Numeracy Infusion Course for Higher Education (NICHE). A second component of QR training involved becoming familiar with the work undertaken by last year’s fellows. This proved to be somewhat challenging because most of the QR-related content that was uploaded to the CTL website was lost over the summer, and Fellows did not have access to some of the most useful materials (i.e., presentation notes, etc.) created last year. As a result, ensuring the preservation of materials and content developed this year became a top priority.

B. Website development (Fall semester): QR Fellows spent several weeks collating, evaluating, and developing content for a QR website. The site, which is available through the Hostos Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), pulls together a variety of resources and materials to assist Hostos faculty as they work to integrate quantitative reasoning into their classes. The site also serves as a reference and starting point for future QR fellows as they become familiar with the academic and professional climate at Hostos.

C. Faculty Collaborations and Activity Development: The QR Fellows led several meetings with individual faculty from a variety of disciplines to brainstorm opportunities for quantitative reasoning. The Fellows also worked extensively with Kate Wolf, Sandy Figueroa, and Lisa Tappeiner to develop new activities and lessons for their respective classes. Finally, Devora developed and pioneered three quantitative activities for use in her Introduction to Music for non-majors course at Brooklyn College. These activities have been shared on the QR page and in workshop presentations, and subsequently inspired some of the activities that were brainstormed in faculty collaborations.

D. Committee Work: The QR Fellows participated in the General Education and Center for Teaching and Learning committees, which, among other endeavors, helped plan the school-wide Earth Day celebration, Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE)
conference, and SPA Day. Devora also took part in a Teaching Using Groups focus group that is led by Sandy Figueroa and helped to coordinate the culminating event, a video conference on Team-Based Learning (TBL) between the focus group and some of the faculty at Brooklyn College, which took place at the end of the Spring ’16 semester.

E. Public events: The QR Fellows participated in several public events in an effort to reach out to faculty and students about the QR initiative. QR Fellows distributed fliers and networked with adjunct faculty during the Fall Adjunct Faculty Open House, and enlisted help from the CTL to distribute fliers during the Spring semester Open House. Fellows also gave a brief, TED-style presentation to students as part of Math Day in March and took part in Earth Day activities in April. Along with the QR Fellows from Brooklyn College, Gowun and Devora gave a presentation as part of the 2016 CUE conference.

F. Workshops: During the Fall semester, Scott and Gowun gave a mini-workshop on implementing a Telling Stories with Graphs activity. In the spring, Gowun and Devora developed and presented two professional development workshops on quantitative reasoning: “Introducing Numeracy” and “Assessing Quantitative Learning,” which together provide best practices for QR activities and strategies and ideas for assessment. In addition, Devora gave a third workshop in collaboration with Professor Figueroa on “Promoting QR Skills Using Groups.”

G. 2016 CUE conference (Spring 2016): The Hostos Fellows, in collaboration with the QR Fellows at Brooklyn College, gave a presentation on using group work and quantitative reasoning to promote equitability and greater student engagement. The session, titled “The Equitable Classroom: Using Quantitative Reasoning and Group Work to Promote Student Engagement,” pooled together and drew upon the significant and diverse experiences and resources of 5 CUNY QR Fellows. Together, we invited CUNY faculty to consider how to make our classrooms more inclusive and accommodating spaces for our students.

**Major QR Outcomes from the 2015-16 Academic Year**

**Faculty Development Workshops**

Like the Year One Fellows, we noted that our presentations often led directly to collaborations with faculty (and sometimes vice versa). While we felt that the presentations we developed were more specific than some of the CUNY-wide QR training materials, the workshops themselves were not well-attended. It is not clear whether the lack of attendance was the result of too much overlap with last year’s presentations, scheduling conflicts (we gave 2-3 workshops per semester, compared with 6-7 workshops/semester the previous year), or a mere symptom of larger issues with the CTL’s workshop programming, which saw especially low turnout this year. Regardless, materials for these workshops will be made available to future Fellows to adapt and continue to present for professional development purposes, whether as workshops or the basis of other kinds of presentations.
Creating and Preserving QR Resources

Creating and maintaining a QR page through the CTL website has been one of our most important contributions to the QR Initiative at Hostos. While the Year One Fellows created many materials for future use, these materials were not available to the current Fellows, partially due to changes to the CTL site over the summer that resulted in the disappearance of most of the QR resources. Given the magnitude of the Year One Fellows’ work, we felt we were at something of a disadvantage in not being able to access the materials they generated for presentations and collaborations. We were also motivated to ensure access to such materials going forward, most notably through a Hostos QR website. We spent several weeks at the beginning of the semester compiling the most relevant materials from the Blackboard training, our own experiences, the CUNY NICHE website, etc. for faculty to access and use in the creation of new lessons and activities. We very much see the website as a work-in-progress, and encourage the incoming Fellows and Hostos faculty to continue adding new resources and content next year.

Faculty Collaborations

Developing relationships with faculty through committee work, workshops, and consultations proved to be one of the most important and rewarding aspects of QR work this year. In addition to giving their own workshops, Fellows also attended workshops given by other faculty and WAC fellows. We found that the pedagogical approaches presented in workshops, focus groups, and committee meetings complimented and supported the QR initiative. In the future, it may be worthwhile to more actively seek out faculty who are giving workshops on themes of classroom engagement, accessibility, group work, etc., to see whether they might welcome a QR component.

A large number of one-off consultations this year resulted in only a small handful of significant collaborations. Sandy Figueroa and Kate Wolf worked most extensively with QR Fellows throughout the year on a combination of group work, Title V, and QR-related projects. Towards the end of the year, Fellows began working with Lisa Tappeiner to help develop some quantitative activities for the research portion of a First Year Seminar section to be taught over the summer. One of the activities they came up with involved using the library catalog to do some basic data collection, and it would be worthwhile to follow up during the Fall semester to solicit feedback in order to further adapt and develop this activity for other classes.

Recommendations and Ideas for 2016-17

We have outlined some recommendations and ideas mainly as a starting place for the QR initiative during the 2016-17 academic year. The most important goal for the Fellows going forward should be to help faculty develop a long-term vision for the place of QR at Hostos, and most of our recommendations help to support this objective. Looking back on the Year One
recommendations, only 4 of 7 were implemented during 2015-16, as current Fellows formed their own networks and opportunities to develop quantitative reasoning presentations and activities. With Cynthia and Sarah leading the way, we are confident that the incoming cohort of Fellows will create their own unique places at Hostos as well.

1. **QR Focus Group**: Our idea for a QR focus group is based partially on the ongoing collaborations between QR Fellows and interested faculty members implemented at other CUNY schools, and also draws on the successes of the Teaching Using Groups focus group at Hostos led by Sandy Figueroa. Ideally, next year’s QR Fellows would each partner with 1-2 faculty each semester to share best practices, successes/challenges, and provide ongoing support in developing and refining activities for the classroom. A QR Focus group offers several other benefits. It would provide some direction for next year’s fellows in terms of ensuring sustained collaboration with faculty (as opposed to one-off consultations); creating resources for sustained support of QR activities across the Hostos curriculum; and serving as a testing ground for new activities and presentations. The most fruitful collaborations could become fodder for conference presentations and/or pedagogical articles for submission to Touchstone or other academic journals outside of CUNY. Finally, a QR Focus Group would be an ideal space for developing relevant content to reach students in First Year Seminars and remedial classes, an opportunity that both cohorts of Fellows have recognized as important, but have not been able to sufficiently address thus far.

Based on the contacts we have developed during the 2015-16 year, we would recommend the following faculty for primary consideration: Clara Nieto-Wire (Mathematics), AJ Stachelek (Mathematics), Kate Wolf (Psychology), Lisa Tappeiner (Library), and Sandy Figueroa (Business Communications). Having a faculty cohort in place by the beginning of the Fall ‘16 semester would help facilitate the transition for incoming QR Fellows and allow the group to begin their collaboration immediately.

2. **QR Fellows should continue to add new materials and resources to the CTL website.** The QR page is as much a place for resources and ideas as it is a testament and archive of the work we have done and continue to do as Fellows.

3. **QR Fellows should continue to participate in the General Education and CTL committees.** Given Cynthia’s new role as co-director of the CTL and the interest in creating a liberal arts task force to promote GenEd competencies in 2016-17, QR Fellows will have some unique opportunities next year to help create and shape conversations about QR at Hostos. These committees are also an important place to network with faculty and are the best places to find colleagues who are invested in QR.

4. **QR Fellows should continue to develop presentations for public events and workshops.** The 2015-16 year saw several school-wide public events, including Adjunct Open House, Math Day, Earth Day, and hosting the CUE conference; next year promises
at least as many events, including a possible Gen Ed day. If Hostos adopts a Book of the Year (an idea floated in the CTL committee this year), developing related QR activities would be a great way to reach students and faculty from a variety of departments. Presentations and workshops are also an important way to raise awareness about the QR initiative at Hostos, and in many instances individual faculty consultations have been a direct result of an encounter at a public event.

5. **QR Fellows should continue to raise their profile by advertising their services and providing individual consultations with faculty.** In addition to participating in school-wide events and committees, next year’s fellows might consider developing a newsletter, either independently or in conjunction with the CTL newsletter; distributing flyers in advance of workshops, and giving presentations to department meetings.

6. **At least one QR Fellow should be retained for the following year to ensure continuity.** The WAC program at Hostos, as well as QR programs at other campuses, have ensured at least one returning fellow from year to year in order to provide guidance and continuity for the incoming cohort. Next year, Gowun will continue to serve as a QR Fellow at Hostos; we anticipate that her guidance and experience will greatly expedite the process of developing and implementing the 2016-17 QR agenda.

**Conclusions**

We attribute our success this year to the groundwork laid by the Year One Fellows, committed faculty, and ongoing mentoring and support from the CTL, Gen Ed committee, and the Office of Academic Affairs, all of which gave us the freedom to explore our place within the Hostos community and ultimately allowed our involvement to be as beneficial to us as to the faculty whom we served. Like the Year One Fellows, we have found the environment at Hostos to be especially welcoming and receptive to the QR Initiative. In fact, the welcoming environment, supportive administration, and faculty commitment to relevant, engaging pedagogy represent CUNY at its best, and truly make Hostos one of the greatest treasures of this system. Our recommendations above seek to capture and complement the strengths of Hostos; ultimately, we hope to pass the great energy and culture of pedagogy along to the incoming Fellows.

Sincerely,

Devora Geller
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