**Beautiful Idea:**
La Mariposa: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum

**Co-Developers:**
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**Project Description:**

Borrowing from research and the Kingsborough Learning Communities Model, ASAP seeks collaborative partners to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum entitled *La Mariposa*. The curriculum begins in the fall (2010) and is administered to the fourth cohort of ASAP students enrolled in block courses; it is theme-based and focuses on the transformation of the pupa, into a butterfly, as a metaphor for the freshman experience of transitioning students into motivated and high performing undergraduates.

This proposal focuses on the agreement between ASAP and VPA192. In addition, as a means to create a comprehensive learning community, the expanded vision for *La Mariposa* includes collaborations with English, Biology, Math and other courses amenable to the theme.

This collaboration aligns in and out of class support for students, integrating advisement, counseling, SSD 100 and the ASAP seminar. It is also aligned with the student learning outcomes developed by the Humanities Department for VPA 192. It is sustainable at the conclusion of the grant, because once created, it won't add substantial work.

Additionally, as the fourth cohort of ASAP students most likely will not have access to ASAP distributed laptop computers, we intend to explore the use of smaller mobile, handheld devices as tools for learning, engagement and empowerment.

**Narrative**

Public speaking is the most common fear in America; students who are already questioning college may feel overwhelmed when faced with speeches. In fact, most students who do not pass VPA 192 do so because they do not show up to give speeches. To support students in their persistence, encourage accountability and increase retention, we propose a collaboration incorporating resources across the college: VPA192, SSD100 and the mandatory ASAP seminar – a weekly workshop facilitated by ASAP staff consisting of a career and employment specialist and student academic advisors, who work together to increase student preparedness and address motivational issues.

This COBI grant facilitates an opportunity to create an interdisciplinary curriculum entitled *La Mariposa*. The curriculum is theme-based and focuses on the transformation of the pupa, into a butterfly, as a metaphor for the freshman experience of transitioning into high-performing college students. In VPA192, students are exposed to people who transformed society and are challenged to share their own narrative through a series of speeches.

This collaboration aligns out of class support for students, integrating advisement, counseling, SSD 100 and the ASAP seminar. It is also aligned with the student learning outcomes set by the department and developed for VPA 192. It is sustainable at the conclusion of the grant, because once created, it won't add substantial work.

**Goals and Anticipated Outcomes**

**Goal 1. Delivered through the ASAP Seminar**

To expand on the learning community model established in ASAP by creating an interdisciplinary curriculum called *La Mariposa* focused on transforming freshman into college students who are able to
articulate their ideas, applying various strategies to solve academic, social, personal and other real world situations.

**Goal 2. Delivered through SSD100***

To provide students with additional opportunities to focus on public speaking as a means to develop confidence and build self-esteem; to reflect on communication as a critical resource to insight, inform, motivate, challenge, pursued and to inquire; to provide students with a supportive environment to practice low-stakes public speaking.

*In collaboration with the counseling center, ASAP has specified a specific curriculum for use in developing academic, social and emotional learning for ASAP cohort IV. SSD100 is not a public speaking class; however, as effective communication is a primary part of college life, significant time in SSD100 is dedicated to the facilitation of effective speech and communication.

**Goal 3. Delivered through VPA192**

- To address all the departmental student learning objectives
- To expose students to the role of public speakers in transforming society.
- To articulate transformative personal experiences
- To combine personal experiences with research and present personal narratives of transformation

**Anticipated Outcome:** ASAP has a high percentage of students either not doing high-stakes speeches or doing them very late. By incorporating several low-stakes assignments, creating a group rehearsal space in ASAP Seminar, and aligning the VPA 192 course with SSD 100, we hope to increase the retention rate of Cohort IV.

**Evaluative Measures**

The project will be evaluated through a comparative analysis of aggregate data from cohort IV VPA 192 participants and another group of VPA 192 students. We seek to understand the impact of learning communities on student performance, retention and understanding.

**Support in the Literature**

*Learning communities, as defined by Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gabelnick (2004) refer to a variety of curricular approaches that intentionally link or cluster two or more courses, often around an interdisciplinary theme or problem, and enroll a common cohort of students. They represent an intentional restructuring of students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning, and foster connections among students and their teachers, and among disciplines. At their best, learning communities practice pedagogies of active engagement and reflection. (p. 20)*

Kingsborough Community College, Learning Communities at Kingsborough, Retrieved December 2, 2009, from Web site http://www.kingsborough.edu/faculty/learning_communities/index.htm

**Timeline for Implementation**

The project is implemented at the beginning of the Fall 2010 semester for the fourth cohort of ASAP students.