

# Summary Notes from Breaking Ground: Connecting K-12 and Post-Secondary Educators

October 19, 2018

*The following document contains summary notes of the discussions and breakout sessions from Friday, October 19 PD Day, Breaking Ground: Connecting K-12 and Post-Secondary Educators held at Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, British Columbia. The notes are not exhaustive, but rather capture the key themes and feedback from the day.*

## Opening Exercise: What does successful student learning look like?

### Engagement

- attendance, connected, feel valued, belong

### Learning

- deep learning, transferable learning, student-led learning, progress on learning, what is measured is transparent

### Personal Awareness, Growth and Direction

- joy, being fearless, independence, self-awareness and growth, self-reflection
- well-being, positive coping skills – resilience after failure
- student ownership of trajectory – autonomous
- alignment of vision of success

## Assessment Breakout Groups

### Assessment: Discussion Themes

#### Learning Journey

- We take the student from where they are and move them forward. How does this transfer / how is it received at the secondary/post-secondary levels?
- How do we meet all the diverse needs in a class with multiple schools and students with different skill sets?
- Take students where they are and help them along learning journey
- At what points do students stop moving forward (grade, etc.) if they don't meet the learning outcomes?

#### Competencies

- What competencies are needed for success?
- What competencies will new students be bringing?
- Build competencies and confidence

#### Assessment Best Practices

- Triangulating summative assessments
- Time and capacity required for formative
- Multiple ways of assessment
- Set students up for success

## Assessment: Action items

### 1. Create Conversations between Secondary and Post-Secondary within Subject Areas

- English, Math, Computer Science, etc. including nature and types of assessment on each side of transition, alignment with [VIU's Graduate Attributes](#)

### 2. Discuss Assessing Collaboration and Collaborative Projects

- Such as how to assess collaborative/group work, assessing through conversation, teaching effective group behaviour, assessing collaboration process rather than the product, feedback on how they are functioning within the group, having separate parts of the whole to measure individuals, are the projects we design best done collaboratively?

## Minding the Gap: Seamless Transitions Breakout Groups

### Transitions: Discussion Themes

#### Share, Communicate and Collaborate More Between K-12/PSE

- Share best practices between schools, district, university
- How can high schools collaborate with post-secondary?
- Post-secondary needs to communicate expectations to high school (ditto)
- New curriculum high school students arriving September 2020
- New curriculum allows students to start the self-reflection process early! Should be continuous

#### Gaps in Transition to PSE

- Create student independence and autonomy and decrease parental involvement in school expectation
- Grade 12 culture – not used to failing (when come to PSE, they can fail), need to give students a way to learn from failure
- Students self-identity is wrapped up in the “A” – self-confident students need to know that failing is good
- Gap with students about university requirements: time management
- Recognize student must know how to ask for help
- Who helps high school students make choices (context of parents) for university courses /programs
- High school students – lack skills once in university to prepare for classes (not used to failing – causes stress, anxiety, depression, feeling of being overwhelmed)
- High school to post-secondary – students need to know of hard deadlines/no rewrites

#### Assessment

- Post-secondary need to pressure upper ministry admin for high school teacher to allow to assign Fs, zeros, fail students
- Time management, study skills – students may fail and not suffer consequences – now have to teach students accountability yet can't fail students
- Lack of understanding of expectations and assessments
- Students have diversity in learning – need flexible assignments/assessments
- K-9 – gradeless to end of grade 9

#### Admissions

- Grade 10-12 – grades! Difficult transition, pressure of transcripts for university entrance
- Program admission requirements may not align with new curriculum
- CASPer tool – personality assessment used by admissions at some universities (<https://takecasper.com/>)

#### Dual Credit

- Dual credit: e.g., criminology, biology
- Retention rates: will improve if students can 'dip toe in water' e.g., dual credit

## Transitions: Action Items

### 1. Connect High School and Post-Secondary (Educators, Students, Parents, Admin)

- Collaborate – continue purposefully – make it happen with K-12, and post-secondary and between school districts
- Make connections with high school students and grads intentional “what is your first year like?”
- Provide 3-hour online university 101 workshop for students and parents - Grade 12s need to know basics of university
- Acquire both stories – successful student and ‘failed’ student from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students
- ‘Mock’ university course in high school - safe way to experience university so doesn’t damage self esteem
- VIU has [university entrance courses](#) for unprepared students – need to share better
- Idea: VIU/Camosun/UVIC/NIC – ‘travelling road show’ – wksp based on themes from today, bring university students, share sample course outlines etc.
- VIU’s Launchpad to Success Online Course/Resources – share with high school teachers (Link: <https://learningmatters.viu.ca/pages/ready-set-go-launchpad-success-viu>)
- High school English teachers are collaborating with VIU on English requirements

### 2. Foster Resiliency in Students

- Both at K-12 and post-secondary – consciously foster resiliency – disconnect ‘self-identity’ with grade
- Teach kids how to be a human being – not a human doing
- Consciously connect students who ‘fail’ at PSE with high school students and support
- ‘Crash and burn at post-secondary’ – need to shift students mindset
- Create culture of independence at high school level (forgot pencil, book, etc.)

### 3. Idea for Dual Credit

- Dual credit students who graduate – dual student returns and helps grade 12 dual credit cohort, gets a course for free

## Diverse Learning Needs Breakout Groups

### Diverse Learning Needs: Discussion Themes

#### Self-Reliance

- Self-advocates, demonstrates grit
- How do we get parents to step back?

#### Student – Nurturing Student Agency

- High school – we need to train students in learning skills
- Canoe of life – learners engaged when learning – relevant, building on what I know, captures imagination
- How to encourage and allow new post-secondary students to self-advocate, e.g., introductory checklist
- How to get students to strategize their own self-advocacy at post-secondary

#### Communication and Continuity

- Identifying the ‘open doors’ - see post-secondary as broad doorway
- High school needs to promote that post-secondary won’t change their curriculum? but could still adapt?
- How do we develop a K-16 system approach whereby everyone works as a unit rather than pods?
- Transitions – exposure to post-secondary, tours, speakers, explorations, interest inventories
- Post-secondary assessment needs, Psychoeducational assessment? How long before they are stale?
- Strengthen communications and planning in transitions
- Inconsistent ‘supports’, goals between partners

## Practice and Expectations

- Adaptations and accommodations for all
- Flexibility to adapt, assumption to adaptations
- Supporting growth in instructors to support diverse student needs
- Align expectations of grading – K-12 and post-secondary
- Building confidence, taking students from where they are, letting them know they will be supported
- In high school we need to get them ready for deadlines/zeros

## Tools and Strategies

- Unidentified students using adaptability in high school – how will this translate to post-secondary?
- How do we get kids to ‘figure it out’?
- Understanding exactly their learning needs | Resources and documentation barriers
- Eliminate stigma of accessing
- Access to info – who do I go to?

## Next Level Ready

- Checklist | Adaptations | Articulation
- Post-secondary intake checklist of prompts of adaptations used in high school

## Transition from K-12 to Post-Secondary

- Universal Design for Learning – diversity and access for all
- Strength-based (not disability) context – family, experience, dreams
- Social / emotional skills
- A transition based on needs and or desires
- Clarify IEP expectations or need for getting them, e.g., how recent a doctor report needs to be
- Prepare students to advocate for themselves in post-secondary
- Normalize idea of diversity with an intro survey on accommodations early in post-secondary

## Diverse Learning Needs: Action Items

*Complications will arise with new mandate of K-12 accommodating any student who needs it without designation or diagnosis. When they arrive at post-secondary they need documentation and diagnosis to receive funding and many of the services. This change will affect PSE students with learning disabilities the most, as districts will not be completing updated psych. Eds. as they did in the past.*

### 1. Enhanced Communication and Action Plan

- Key between two sectors | (K-12) SPEDs contact (PSE) Disability Access Services (DAS) in advance
- Action plan needed for IEP/SLP so that post-sec knows what accommodations were provided and why

### 2. Tours for High School Students

### 3. Decrease Stigma of Needing Support for Learning

### 4. Teach Student Advocacy from Young Age in K-12

- have parents step back so student step up
- Include self-advocacy goal in IEP; start in grade 4 or 5

### 5. Personal Profile

- K-12 thought that if students had a personal profile on “My Blue Print” instructors at post-sec could see these students

## Math and Science Breakout Groups

### Math and Science: Discussion Themes

#### Successful Programs / Initiatives / Practices

- Open classrooms to share what we are doing – keep doing it (extend K-16)
- Professional learning communities and Pro-D that connects elementary – mid – high school – post-secondary (math specific)
- Dual credit / head start programs
- Flexibility / choices to follow interests – online, co-op, ROMS
- [Grandkids University](#) – exposing young children to math and science activities (among others) with grandparents at VIU
- Biology Career Night ([2018 Jan Info – old](#))

#### Preparing Students

- Teach students about how they learn and how to cope with anxiety and stress
- Advisors and /or Discovery Days highlight reality of post-secondary – no retakes / rewrites
- Gradual removal of support in high school to prep for post-secondary
- More opportunities to celebrate learning
- Time for communication / collaboration / mentorship
- Apprehension around sciences – what it looks like at university
- What are students lacking in first year science? How can we better prepare students for university mentally / academically?
- Resiliency/grit to encourage engagement
- Coping with good stress (learning how to deal with bad stress)
- How to foster independence – they need to experience failure and accept consequences – Discovery Days – advisors speak to reality of assessment and deadlines at university

#### Sharing and Collaborating between Sectors

- Get first year VIU students to send note to high school teachers of how what they learned did / did not prepare them
- Exit survey for those that drop class, program – what could have supported their success? (academic, social)
- Math specific high school – post-secondary discussions / workshop survey

#### Competency Learning

- Competency-based structure – trying to help students see value of it (vs content)
- Content-focus vs core competencies
- New curriculum – core-competencies, explicit content and competencies

### Math and Science: Action Items

#### 1. Enhanced Communication and Collaboration

- Laddering across elementary – high school – university
- Celebrate learning (not number, grades)
- Using Pro-D to shadow other classrooms

#### 2. Course Design

- Relevance through application
- Content integration
- Time (discuss, collaborate, explore)
- Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them | New teaching methods to allow failure and a growth mindset
- Different ways to show understanding
- Better teaching concepts | Flexibility to follow interests
- Field trips / real-life experiences

### 3. Support for Students

- Actively address coping skills and mental health issues/challenges
- Doing well / being resilient (working through the tough stuff)

## Student Engagement Breakout Groups

### Student Engagement: Discussion Themes

#### What Motivates?

- Finding their desires, interests (relationship)
- Emotion and purpose in designed learning experiences
- Feedback / assessment as key drivers in process
- Bringing passion and enthusiasm to the experience
- Blending of courses (cross-curricular approaches that are more meaningful)
- Rooting learning in experiential opportunities makes purpose visible

#### Where are the Challenges?

- Students taking too many courses (also working)
- Letter grades – students are very outcome oriented
- Maturity?
- Anxiety, trauma

### Student Engagement: Action Items

#### 1. Create Environment For Learning

- Permission to fail forward – teachers and learners
- Create an environment of trust to remove fear and anxiety
- Importance of connectedness – reflexive, reflective, how it connects
- Assessments / assignments with purpose, meaning, non-disposable ? Relevance
- Experiential learning opportunities / Connections (applicable to real world)
- Independent learning varied way to demonstrate learning | Creative / alternative forms of assessments
- Offering choice

#### 2. Focus on...

- Growth and development across the life span – what are they core skill sets in our digital age?
- Build relationships
- Trust (with students and parents)
- Enthusiasm for subject
- Be present
- Organization – time management
- Personal well-being – FUN!
- Self-motivation – make it real
- Inquiry – curious learners
- It's ok to fail, kids can't learn to stand up if we don't give them room to fall down
- Self care – self engagement
- Community connection – physical connectedness presence
- Being more productive
- Levelling responsibilities and life skills to capacity and independence / autonomy

## Closing Session: What Are Our Next Steps in Working Together?

### Continued Dialogue between K-12 and PSE (and Ministries)

- Having more opportunities to do this type of thing again (continuously? online?)
  - Between administrators
  - Between K-12 schools
  - Between K-12 and VIU/NIC
  - Between Disciplines
  - Between university and case managers about case management for disabilities
- Continue bridging the gap – collaboration between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Advanced Education

### Shadowing and Sharing Activities

- Have gr 12 shadow university students, have gr 7 shadow gr 8's, etc.
- Have university students (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year) go back to high school and share what learned/strategies for success
- K-12 educators shadow post-secondary instructors - can we create an ongoing relationship and share broadly
- Discipline-related educators collaborating/sharing more frequently (e.g., math teachers and PSE math educators)
- Disciplinary open houses – also cross-discipline
- University 101 Boot Camp – course, workshop offered by PSE to help onboard students to PSE learning
- Expanding dual credit – how can we do this to get more students engaged in PSE earlier

### Competencies and Graduate Attributes

- Align graduate attributes from VIU in K-12; resume / create trail of learning

### Students Sharing Learning

- Students who have gone up a level go back down and talk about experiences – peer mentoring

### Universities/Colleges Visiting High Schools

- What do we do at PSE, what do we offer and what is 'university/college' really like
- More preparation/communication activities

# Ticket out the Door: Feedback on Highlights and Impacts

Share two ideas, insights or positive thought you have had today

## Theme 1: We are thinking the same thing.

- It was very refreshing to have all the levels of educators right to the Ministry level and hear that we all have the same concerns and desire for action. | We are all wanting to bridge these transitions. I found no group stridently defending “their way”. The goal for all was to create a more seamless education K- PSE. | Great to hear my thoughts echoed, “We are not alone”. | How similar our key thoughts/concerns/priorities are. | It is nice to see that other people are having the same shared experiences as me (I am not alone). | Interesting commonalities re interests and challenges between institutions. | Great to hear different voices that are all looking at the same goal – student’s success.
- Teachers at different levels (elementary, high school, post-secondary) have similar concerns and think we need to do something about them. How can we get more teachers to involve in this theme? We all are busy, how to make time?
- Realized the question I had for post-secondary instructors of what they wanted in my students were the same as those my elementary colleagues had of me.
- There needs to be this ongoing discussion/work around collaboration and action between PSE and HS. It is refreshing to know that PSE instructors are invested in “minding the gap” and want to participate.
- Today was a great event. Thank you for focusing on next steps for continuing to make our system work better!

## Theme 2: We need to work together more.

- This feels like the beginning of a continuous dialogue. Let’s keep this going. | Need to continue the K-20 dialogue by having more opportunities for discussion between PSE and K-12, plus admin and current and past students – maybe do around Pro-D day in May so more VIU faculty can attend. | The conversation needs to continue and on a more regular basis. I would love to participate in such a group.
- Acknowledgement from elementary, secondary and post-secondary that greater efforts are needed to authentically collaborate and recognize the needs and strengths of students, colleagues and systems. Not a one-way street.
- Disconnect between post-secondary and public school with regard to adaptations, e.g., an undesignated child benefiting from adaptations, will not necessarily receive similar treatment as they move through the system.
- Transitions to post-secondary is a shared responsibility. Time needs to be set aside in the school year to assist with positive steps towards transitions. Both from elementary – secondary – post-secondary.

## Theme 3: We need supports for students and educators.

- People have good ideas – we just need the place to connect and the time and support to make change happen.
- Where are the government resources to support this transformation (K-12)? |Why is the government not providing the formal/medical screening required for students in K-12? (prevention)
- Find ways to create further opportunity for collaboration. Continue to work to get MOE and AVED to speak to each other re accommodations for student learning.

## Theme 4: We need to increase dual credit options.

- Continue to improve access and options of dual credit programs for high school students!
- Amazing networking. I am leaving with research to do in my school preparing to launch rich partnership in dual credit program with VIU.



### **Theme 5: We need to work on assessment.**

- How students view entitlements such as rewrites, late assignments, etc. in high school and how this carries over to post-secondary. High school teachers face a lot of challenges in preparing students for post-secondary.
- Permission to fail (first attempt in learning). Create an environment of trust, remove fear and anxiety. Choice and independence = learning. Start with 'why?'
- Post-secondary institutions are beginning to examine assessment practices so to better align them with K-12. | Post-secondary institutions need to be open to changing current assessment methods

### **Theme 6: We have competencies in common.**

- I came here looking to learn what others are doing to support the core competencies with their students and I'm leaving with a greater sense that we're all looking for those touchstones from each other. Collaboration is KEY. Communication is needed and vital going forward.
- One common element present in K-12 and 13-16 is the emphasis on attributes or competencies. This can be an avenue into deeper conversations about the learning continuum (desired outcomes) of skills | So fantastic to hear that university professors are speaking of and teaching to the competencies – graduate attributes.
- It was encouraging as an elementary teacher to see that our core competencies work is valuable.

### **What might you change/adjust/enhance in your practice, role or your courses/classes because of attending?**

#### **Theme 1: Reach Out, Communicate, Collaborate, Connect....**

- I am moved to seek out conversations with teachers outside of my elementary background in the future
- Reach out to post-secondary for collaboration | Develop relationships with my PSE colleagues to be able to speak about what are our roles and knowledge and where the gaps are for our students. | Connect with post-secondary staff and set up tours of their campus.
- I want to try and get my senior students to talk to my future classes about their PS experiences. Set this up for our school.
- Each week create time slots in my schedule to collaborate.
- I will learn more about how we connect (college level) with secondary schools to make student transition smoother.
- Develop more direct connections with post-secondary departments to assist students. Encourage my grade 12 students to shadow a post-secondary in their intended area of focus at their intended post-secondary.
- Encourage colleagues to share experiences with post-secondary – more dialogue to happen to have a better understanding of where students are coming from / going to.
- Considering a 'grade 7 grad competencies' list and considering more collaboration with high school prior to transition

#### **Theme 2: More Focus...**

- Flexibility: Getting students to evaluate their own learning and needs
- More focus on competencies and executive functioning – teach students to advocate for selves.
- Further developing and enhancing student portfolios.
- More focus on students tapping into a deeper motivation so they can make better choices and increase engagement.
- Accept each student where they are at. Move them forward in their learning.
- Going to ask my students what they feel they need (skills – academic and personal) to be successful in today's world.
- Spend some time looking at where students came from... where are they headed.
- I want to create a list, collaboratively, of graduate attributes for students at all transition points.

#### **Theme 3: Provide More Career Preparation**

- Providing greater focus on (and authentic experiences in) PSE career prep / college and university program prep.
- More time on talking about careers with students so they become more comfortable with looking towards the future.