Puente Project Program Review Rock Project (Year 1)

Our rock project will be addressed within the Puente Learning Community of:
- English courses
- Psychology-Counseling courses
- Puente students and their families
- Puente mentors
- Puente gatekeepers and stakeholders

In addition, social, economic and to a limited degree, historical and political influences will be considered. We cannot address our Rock by being blind to issues that impact Puente students such as immigration status, second language acquisition, political representation in spheres of decision-making on and off campus, possession of “Social and Academic Capital” needed for college success; acculturation pressures, racism, stereotyping, etc. We intend to view the educational process that our students are undergoing through two lenses. On the one hand, through the lens that Emile Durkheim called “Functionalism” “the relationship between education and social change, the role of preparing young people to adhere to societal norms and the social system that develops in the classroom and schools”. And secondly, within Conflict theory, “that asks how schools contribute to the unequal distribution of people into jobs in society so that more powerful members of society maintain the best positions and the less powerful groups, often minorities, wind up in the lower ranks in society.” In our Program Review we do not want to ignore the larger issue of conflict theory, “the role education plays in maintaining the prestige, power, economic and social position of the dominant group in society”.

Rock Introduction
- How prepared are our entry-level students for college level work? What “baggage” or skills do they bring from previous academic institutions and experiences? What family and community experiences need to be considered as either negative or positive influences on educational success?
- How can we improve student success and retention in the first cohort?
- How can we institutionalize the Puente Project at the college?
- How can we get former Puente students to be more involved with each other as peer mentors to current students as well as in the community and at the college?

Impetus
- When Puente began at Chabot 25 years ago, although it has always served all students, it was developed as a way to address the difficulties Chicano-Mexican American students faced in transferring to four-year universities and colleges. This was made evident through a review of several thousand Spanish-Surname transcripts that showed that students did not complete English courses needed for
transfer and similarly, lacked counseling advice for transfer, and lacked culturally sensitive role models who had become successful in obtaining university degrees into a wide variety of professions. After 25 years, it is time to revisit what old and what new social and educational influences might be impacting Puente student success. This information would be essential for any educator to best address the needs of their students. By utilizing strategies to assess the academic and social background of individual students and the class as a whole in terms of skills, motivation, resources, expectations etc., we would be able to serve the students more effectively and increase success rates.

- Our goal is to have 100% retention in the first semester. Achieving this would allow for the program to maintain all the original students without having to add non-Puente students in the 2nd semester which can have a negative impact on class dynamics and motivation.

- Institutionalizing the Puente Program would guarantee support by the college and faculty. As Puente enters its 25th year, the program would benefit tremendously if the team were allowed to focus on new strategies to serve the students. So much energy is wasted each year on having to prove that the program is successful when that energy and time could be spent on revitalizing and improving this essential program.

- We have already submitted a Basic Skills Initiative Proposal to address this goal. Our plan is to get past, current and incoming Puente students involved in a tutorial that would focus on Language Learners. Because so many of our students have LL issues, providing a tutorial that facilitates leadership, peer tutoring and mentoring in a non-threatening environment would be an effective way for students to deal with this issue.

**Discussed...**

- **Teachers**: Frustration and guilt. Most instructors will admit that they are surprised/overwhelmed/or frustrated by the various levels of skill, motivation, and expectations in their classes. Instructors also feel guilty about the students they cannot reach because of baggage or barriers from past learning experiences that these same “guilty” instructors may not be aware of.

- **Students**: Frustrated by a high school workload that did not fully prepare them for college (depending on HS and courses taken).

- **Teachers** tend to accept the attrition rates even though they feel bad about them. It is almost an expectation that they will lose students throughout any given semester. **Students** are also fully aware that the classrooms and parking lots become increasingly empty as the semester goes on. They too look at it as a fact of college life.
Faculty and staff tend to assume Puente is fully institutionalized and supported by the college. They are shocked when they discover we have been at risk of being cut by the college for funding reasons at various points in our 25 years. Students tend to have heard of the program but many complain that they were not aware of Puente being offered until after they have completed their English or have already missed the first cohort.

Most instructors will admit that more attention needs to be paid to basic skills courses and programs across the curriculum. This is especially true for LL students in basic skills English courses where the options limited. Most instructors agree that there is a need for more research, support, funding and resources in this area. Students continue to be fairly unaware of their own LL issues and the importance of resolving these problems. Either students know they have issues and ignore it or hope it goes away, or they have managed to get to college without ever thinking it was a problem until that time. They are also confused about where to get help. Unless a student wants to go back to ESL, only English 107 is offered as a support class. The Language center is another good resource but students find that limited staffing and tutoring sections make it difficult to get the help they need.

Murky...

- Where to even begin? The scope of this seems so large and broad that even getting started seems overwhelming. What students, what levels, what focus? This is the biggest concern of approaching this rock.

- Is it even possible? With so many students in a class, it seems impossible to ensure success for each and every one. It would include meeting regularly with each student and encouraging him or her to stay motivated and be productive. This may be possible, but how can you be sure forces such as work, family and personal issue don’t interfere or take precedent over the academic support you provide?

- Support for a program is one thing, but institutionalizing would mean consistent and efficient funding and staffing.

- Getting students to commit to this extra work and time. Making sure they are consistent and focused would be another challenge.

Learn?
What are the biggest problems our Puente students face? What areas do they struggle with the most in terms of skills, motivation, and expectations? How are our students being prepared in these areas at their respective high schools? What types of
assignments, papers, and activities do they do? How do they compare with our entry level writing courses and expectations?

Why are these students unsuccessful or dropping out? Is there anything more the coordinators can do to intervene or assist the student prior to their dropping or not passing?

How is Puente supported at other colleges? What support, resources and funding do they get and how does it compare to ours? What fears or concerns does the administration have in institutionalizing Puente? How do the drawbacks/benefits compare?

What techniques or strategies would best serve the LL? How can we effectively train Puente students who have successfully dealt with LL issues to be tutors, leaders, mentors in this area? Work with ESL and Language Center to come up with activities and techniques to help in the peer tutoring.

Rock Inquiry and Design Ideas

#1

- **Participants/consultants:** Feeder/local high school teachers, students, administrators, current Puente students and Chabot English instructors; Professional & Experts in teaching ELL, Native English speakers, Immigrant students.
- **Tools/instruments:** We will need surveys, questionnaires, interview questions and sample assignments, exams and activities.
- **Timeline:** One school year to track how assignments evolve at the HS level during senior year.
- **Evidence/Data:** What percentage of our Puente students come from HS Puente programs and which come from regular classes, LL classes, honors or college prep English. This would help us narrow the scope of our study.
- **Assessment Strategies:** Current Puente students and local HS students could also serve as our “test students”. Current Puente students could review HS assignments and see how it compares to their assignments in Puente. HS students could do the same for Puente and entry level English assignments. Coordinators and other instructors would also evaluate material and assess how HS assignments and materials compare to Chabot’s 102 level English courses.
- **Resources/Support needed:** Time to visit, interview and survey teachers, and students at the HS level. Help with creation of interview and survey questions. Collaboration to help assess how HS materials compare to Chabot’s English 102 materials. Help with compiling all the data from interviews and surveys.

#2

- **Participants/consultants:** Coordinators, Current/Past Puente students, Puente Club, Chabot faculty and staff.
- **Tools/instruments:** Work with Print shop to update materials/fliers about Puente. Market Puente to other divisions and disciplines.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Evidence/Data:** Student surveys at the beginning, middle and end of semester about needs being met.
- **Assessment Strategies** Work more closely with counselor to identify “at risk” students early on. Use surveys as a way to identify at risk students and create individual “success” forms.
- **Resources/Support needed:** Coordinating time for Puente Coordinators must be reinstated so both team members can dedicate the time and energy needed to try and achieve 100% retention. This will give coordinators the additional time needed to work with individual “at risk” students while also dedicating the necessary time to all Puente students who are, statistically, “at risk” as a whole.

#3
- **Participants/consultants:** Chabot administration, Chabot Faculty and staff, mentors, past/current Puente students and other Puente sites that have been institutionalized.
- **Tools/instruments:** creation of surveys and interviews for current/past students.
- **Timeline:** six months???
- **Evidence/Data:** MOU between Chabot and UCOP, Puente success data from recent years at Chabot and statewide. Awards and recognition of Puente nationwide.
- **Assessment Strategies:** See Above
- **Resources/Support needed:** See above. Coordinating time for Puente Coordinators must be reinstated so both team members can dedicate the time and energy needed to revitalize this program. Both coordinators have had additional load added to their schedules to offset the cut to coordinating time, but we still have the same workload of two Puente sections. We have been put in a position of maintaining this program versus keeping it fresh. Institutionalizing Puente would mean maintaining the coordinating time so innovations and revitalization would be possible, and more instructors may be willing to teach it if this change were made which would also lend to fresh ideas.

#4
- **Participants/consultants:** Coordinators, Puente students (current/past and incoming HS), ESL instructors, Language center.
- **Tools/instruments:** A room/location, materials/handouts, tutor training.
- **Timeline:** Semester-by-Semester turnover to accommodate changes to schedules, workloads and effectiveness of each tutoring group.
- **Evidence/Data:** All members will be required to keep a journal to log the success of the tutoring groups. There will also be evaluations by Puente coordinators and we will meet with the facilitator of tutoring groups to discuss the groups’
progress. Surveys of how effective and helpful these groups are will also be administered.

- **Assessment strategies:** Coordinators and student facilitators will meet to discuss the surveys and journals logs. Coordinators will then meet with members or ESL or the language center to gain a better sense of how successful these groups were and how the can be improved.

- **Resources/Support needed:** See above.