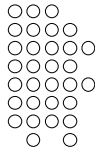


SENIOR SEMINARS SPECIFICS & EXAMPLES

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SENIOR SEMINAR: REVIEW OF SIX CORE COMPONENTS



- Pacing is faster than in most high schools
- Writing is emphasized with required editing, rewriting, and frequent feedback
- Grading expectations are clear and detailed scoring rubrics are used
- Learning objectives are tied to college readiness and identify key content to be mastered
- Habits of the mind are emphasized
- Feedback from external sources is part of frequent evaluation

SENIOR SEMINARS: ENGLISH



- Course might be team-taught with a writer, poet, or faculty member from higher education
- Content will emphasize analytical thinking and free exchange of ideas
- Student writing will be frequently critiqued
- Number of works read and papers written would be consistent with college expectations
- Final course evaluation will include a narrative component in addition to a letter grade--students need to understand where they must add skills or change behaviors to be successful in college

SENIOR SEMINARS: MATHEMATICS



- Senior Seminar may be problem based or have a problem component
- Designed to gear students toward more complex application and use of mathematical knowledge and reasoning to find solutions to real world problems
- Focus on an integrated application of knowledge the students have, but applying it to more challenging content
- Application of mathematics can show students that mathematics is an important prerequisite for study in many fields

SENIOR SEMINARS: SCIENCE



- Systematic connections should be made between science and mathematics
- Focus on key foundational concepts, laws, principles
- Organized around one or two problems that require application of physics, chemistry, biology, or mathematics
- Solutions would be presented for public view
- Study may emphasize understanding of interaction between science and society and may include vexing public policy questions
- Seminar approach may provide a positive, motivating experience for students who are historically underrepresented in the sciences

SENIOR SEMINARS: SOCIAL SCIENCE



- Designed to develop more integrated understanding of social science concepts
- Draws on content knowledge previously gained to comprehend current issues and topics through the lens of a social scientist
- Calls on students to collect, analyze, and interpret data on a social problem or issue, either current or historical
- Requirements will include making data-based presentations & suggesting solutions derived from analysis, not just opinion
- Products can be put to the test of public review & comment
- Key is the analytical approach
 - This senior seminar design could draw from civics, history, geography as long as analytical thinking is the key focus

CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE READINESS



- Developed by university faculty who teach first year courses
- Includes good examples of what students are expected to know and be able to do in entry level courses
- Valuable tool for high school faculty to share with their classes as they illustrate what will be expected of them in college
 - Should be used with college work samples (syllabi, assignments)
- It could also be used for faculty members to assess how the schools program would score based on their judgment of which performance level describes their students collectively

CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF OFFERING SENIOR SEMINARS



- Requires careful curriculum mapping to be sure objectives and content are articulated to connect with college readiness
- Curriculum must be referenced to college readiness standards
- Should not be an AP course, but could help students in AP courses consolidate their understandings of a subject area
- Dependent on close relations between the high schools and postsecondary institutions
 - Ideally seminars will be designed jointly by high school and post secondary faculty
- Seminars will give a reason for students to remain more engaged in academics
 - Students with no math, science senior year will struggle in college
- Can also provide placement information for local colleges