

## Group C: Powerful Teaching and Learning

### Focus Group Leaders:

Johnson, Kara, Math Teacher

Kreitz, Greg, Health Teacher

### Focus Group Members:

Allen, Jim, Computer Teacher

Anderson, Vicki, Counselor

Arnold, Kathleen, Parent

Bovee, Jeff, English Teacher

Carbo, Tamara, Special Education Aid

Frankenberger, Leslie, Special Education Teacher

Genda, Chris, Custodian

Gonzalez, Albert, Security

Guilloty, Angel, Math Teacher

Hague, Karin, Science Teacher

Hamilton, Marsha, Book Depository Clerk

Hampton, Mindy, Science Teacher

Hathaway, Lorraine, English Teacher

Holladay, Kris, Art Teacher

Hwang, Christina, Science Teacher

Jackson, Vance, Student

Kellogg, Linda, Special Education Aid

Lambeth, John, Security

Laird, William, History Teacher

Lewis, Michael, Science Teacher

Lexin, Audra, Special Education Aid

Ley, Debra, German Teacher

McGrady, Jill, English Teacher

Moore, Jason, Student

Paez, Rosie, Switchboard Operator

Polizi, Michele, Secretary

Radford, Steve, Health Teacher

Williams, Lisa, Physical Education Teacher

Walsh, Pat, Special Education Teacher

Wells, Crystal, Student

Yancy, Ryan, Math Teacher

**Structure and Process**

In the month of October of 1998, the focus group leaders were chosen and began work on gathering evidence for Focus on Learning. Focus group leaders and other members of the staff attended WASC training sessions to assist them in this process. On December 2nd, the first official Focus on Learning Group Leader meeting was held and the first group meeting was established for December 10th. Another group meeting was held on January 22nd, 1999, and another on February 18th. Throughout this process, work was conducted on ESLRs and evidence was gathered for the Focus on Learning self-study. In the 1999-2000 year, the focus groups met on September 10th, September 24th, October 8th, October 22nd, December 10th, January 14th, February 25th, and March 10th, prior to the visitation, and are scheduled to meet for follow up work on March 24th, April 28th, May 12th, May 26th, and June 10th.

***Criterion C1: To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results? To what extent do teachers use a variety of strategies and resources including technology, to engage students actively and help them succeed at high levels?***

The staff at Lancaster High School utilizes a variety of teaching strategies and resources to assist its students in achieving its Expected Schoolwide Learning Results by providing them with challenging learning experiences as a matter of schoolwide policy, as spearheaded by the District.

Through the Antelope Valley Unified High School District’s involvement with the International Center of Educational Leadership (ICEL), the subject areas of English, Math, Social Science, and Science have created and implemented District-approved curricular standards of student achievement that align with the ICEL’s Application Model.

Every ESLR adopted by LnHS can be found in one or more of these subject area standards.

Lancaster High School staff members assisted with the creation of these standards in each curricular area. These standards were placed into districtwide lesson development this year. Furthermore, the staff is provided with numerous opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills through district and site inservice days. Professional development is available through attendance at workshops, visits to other sites, professional collaboration, and memberships in professional organizations. Many teachers continue in university programs and stay abreast of current educational trends through professional journals and state documents.

Other departments than the core classes listed above utilize district-adopted curriculum guides which align with state frameworks to provide challenging learning experiences for students. With the encouragement of Lancaster High School’s administration, staff members attend inservices and conferences to stay abreast of curricular changes and learn new methods of incorporating the curriculum into student learning experiences. Some of these conferences included the Computer Using Educators (CUE) conference, the California Consortium for Independent Study state and regional conferences, and the California Arts Education Association conference. In this regard, Lancaster High School supports the “trainer of trainers” concept, in which a limited number of teachers from a given department may attend a conference, but they will then relay the information learned from that experience back to their colleagues.

For the past two years, the District has emphasized the importance of uti-

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lizing technology as a tool to enhance student learning experiences. Again, this aligns perfectly with the ESLRs adopted by Lancaster High School. To assist teachers in the utilization of technology, the District has offered a teacher laptop program. Teachers are provided with a laptop computer in return for 60 hours of professional growth training classes and the development of technology-based student-centered projects, created in conjunction with curriculum specialists. LnHS currently has approximately half its teachers involved in the teacher laptop program with the number continually growing.

Teachers at LnHS utilize many teaching strategies to assist its students in achieving the ESLRs. Strategies include lecture, note-taking, demonstrative lessons, diversely constructed collaborative groups (sometimes constructed using Gardner’s theory of the seven intelligences), partners, portfolios, notebooks, journals, oral presentations, use of videotapes and videodisks, computers/computer software, overhead projectors, data projectors, and problem solving activities and projects. Some classes, such as LnHS’ progressive Interactive Math Program, have higher order thinking skills designed so intricately into the program that they are utilized virtually everyday as a matter of course, as well as cross-curricular skills such as a writing and scientific knowledge.

In this same vein, Lancaster High School has pushed its teachers to develop and implement integrated lessons and projects between the curricular areas utilizing many of the above strategies. LnHS teachers have attended workshops given by Roger Taylor and Lynn Erickson, both experts in the field of interdisciplinary instruction. Teachers involved in the student laptop programs and the freshman Houses are actively involved in integrating curricular learning into rigorous, relevant, and reality-based learning experiences.

Collaboration between the various subject areas is found especially among the visual and performing arts. For instance, the Lancaster High School Eagle Corps marching band is this year performing a collage of music entitled “A Pirate’s Life for Me!” featuring music from the motion picture *Hook*. As part of the production, the band has constructed a bandstand to place the percussion instruments upon. The bandstand is designed to resemble a pirate ship equipped with mast, bow, and stern. The band provided the materials for the bandstand, and the Art classes collaborated with them to create the actual bandstand. Plans are also underway for Band and Drama to work together on the production of a theatrical musical; the Art classes will once again collaborate with the creation of sets and costumes. Other areas of collaboration include English teachers who occasionally work with the History and Science departments on research projects involving a writing component. The Careers in Art’s and Multimedia Productions academy and the freshman Houses similarly work within their teams to create cross-curricular lessons.

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The English department also collaborates with the guidance counselors in the implementation of their Comprehensive Guidance Program.

Educational technology has also been a hallmark of Lancaster High School since its inception four years ago. The school construction includes many cutting edge technological features, the mainstay being found within its 27 inch television, patched to a fiber optic Dynacom system, which links all classrooms to the school's Library Media Center. In addition, teachers have in-class access to an audiovisual room containing ten VCRs, two DVDs, and six Laserdisk players, along with a multimedia library from which lesson plans can be supported or built. The classrooms can also share feeds and video conference, as well as work directly with the school's on-campus television production studio. All teachers have use of a classroom computer for themselves as well as students, and most have use of a television scan converter that allows them to incorporate presentation software and the Internet into their classroom lessons.

In addition to computers in the classroom, LnHS has four computer labs that are accessible to teachers and students during class time and are available for student use before and after school, and during break and lunch. Each lab has at least one laser printer and scanner, and one of the labs is Internet capable, providing for research opportunities that supplement the school's software collection, including such programs as The Electric Library, Grolier's Encyclopedia, Microsoft Bookshelf, Encarta Encyclopedia, and Cartopedia Atlas. Multimedia programs allow students to create presentations on diskette, which can then be shown to their classes by using the teacher's computer and DynaCom hookups.

Lancaster High School is fortunate to house its own television studio. This facility is used to provide students with learning experiences such as student produced community programming (*Highlife*) and schoolwide informational televisions programs (*EagleVision*).

This year, Lancaster High School, in conjunction with the Antelope Valley Unified School District, instituted a Laptop Program as part of a Microsoft/Toshiba partnership. The student laptop program has over one hundred students enrolled in grades 9-11, with programs in place to help students rent laptops if their family's financial situation prevents them from purchasing one on their own. Laptop students are grouped in several academic areas which focus on student centered projects, self-directed learning, higher-level thinking skills, problem solving skills, research skills, and techniques involving the use of technology as a tool, with an emphasis on real world applications. All of this is done with the use of laptop computers as learning platforms. The computers aid students with advanced research tools such as the Internet, state-of-the-art presentation opportunities, and links between students, teach-

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Four computer labs are accessible to teachers and students during class time, before and after school, during break, and lunch.

ers, and the world via electronic communications, both in and outside of the classroom setting. Teachers and students collaborate in Science, English, History, and Health classes in grade level teams.

The students at Lancaster High School receive challenging learning experiences in career information as well. The counseling staff at LnHS instituted a Comprehensive Guidance Program (CGP) to provide students with school-to-careers experiences. This CGP supports the District emphasis to provide each student with career competencies that are specific to grade level. The CGP also encompasses the Career Center which provides students with information to help with the planning of their futures. There, students are able to gain access to various guest speakers from the educational, military, and business communities. Technology utilized in the Career Center also allows students to conduct online research of colleges, financial aid, scholarships, and careers, as well as to research various jobs which relate to their talents and interests.

This concept of career planning is taken to its apex in the form of Lancaster High School’s Senior Project, which consists of three phases. The first phase is a research/reflection paper in which students select an area of interest to research and explore. LnHS students are strongly encouraged to choose a subject which is related to their planned career following graduation. Students are required to obtain a mentor to guide them and verify that they have spent at least 15 hours working on the project. The project’s second phase has the students create a physical project— anything from video taping the student teaching a class for a day to a quilt the student has created. Phase three consists of the students presenting their project to a panel of five adults (consisting of community members, faculty, and administration); students discuss what they have accomplished and learned from their project. Students also explore current careers in the area of interest they selected. The Senior Project acts as a bridge from school to career and meets the District-adopted Bridge requirements for their senior year.

Opportunities for specialized and advanced training are also available at Lancaster High School. The Careers in Art and Multimedia Productions (CAMP) Academy is currently in place and growing. This school-to-career program gives students extensive hands-on and practical experience in fields which emphasize art and multimedia applications, preparing them for success in the world of work.

CAMP also features career training and exploration utilizing field trips, guest speakers, and portfolio review. Students from a variety of backgrounds are served through CAMP, such as Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), Special Day Class (SDC), and Honors students. Career training and the art or multimedia interest are combined with core class cur-

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riculums to produce a variety of projects. Besides this varied integration, CAMP students benefit from a cross-curricular approach which allows their progress to be tracked better and interventions to be coordinated between common teachers.

Honors and Advanced Placement classes also prepare Lancaster High School's higher achieving students for advanced education in a University environment.

A Regional Occupational Program (ROP) supplements the school's regular class load. Retail Merchandising, Careers in Fashion, Principles of Marketing, Child Development, and Careers With Children complement core courses for those students who wish to pursue careers in those areas. Students may also attend ROP classes offered at other campuses, such as the Health Academy classes at Palmdale High School, or auto shop classes at Antelope Valley and Quartz Hill High Schools.

The newest program at Lancaster High School is an Industrial Technology offering in Aviation Maintenance. This program is centered around a developing partnership between LnHS, Antelope Valley College, and the Industry's Aerospace Alliance.

This philosophy of preparing students for the future extends into sports activities as well. The District recently adopted a Character Counts curriculum and trained most of its coaches at a one-day Character Counts Seminar. The goal is to provide information and training to coaches on what is desired of students when pursuing victory with honor. The Josephson Institute of Ethics led the inservice, instructing the coaches on the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. This aligns with the District's four work ethics of Trustworthy, Responsible, Respectful, and Fair; it also supports several of Lancaster High School's ESLRs, particularly in the areas of "life-long learners" and "responsible citizens." Both the District and Lancaster High School feel it is the duty of sports leaders (coaches, administrators, and officials) to promote sportsmanship rather than gamesmanship, and to enhance the mental, social, and moral development of its athletes, as these are the pillars that lead to lifelong success, which is much more important than success in a single high school event.

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*Criterion C2: To what extent do all students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills and integrate academic applied content? To what extent does collaboration occur 1) among staff, 2) between staff and students, 3) among students, and 4) between school and community?*

### **Learning Opportunities**

Teachers in every department have had positive learning experiences in their classrooms that emphasize higher order thinking skills. Teachers integrate various projects and activities into their lessons to provide students with content that will prepare them for the future. Learning is experienced through a variety of means, ranging from research papers utilizing word processing and oral presentation skills, to physical activities, to information conveyed through guest lecturers and field trips.

Specialized and advanced training opportunities—most obviously found in the Careers in Art and Multimedia Productions (CAMP) Academy—are currently in place and growing, with the Aviation Maintenance Academy currently under development. Regional Occupational Programs and Work Experience similarly place students in real-world situations.

Lancaster High School’s Senior Project similarly presents an opportunity for all students to excel. This project requires extensive research and community mentoring for all students. It also ties together four years worth of career competencies as introduced by the Comprehensive Guidance Program and reinforced in English and other classes.

The more gifted or talented students on the LnHS campus have the option of taking several advanced classes. These classes include Honors English 9 and 10, Advanced Placement English 11 (Language and Composition), AP English 12 (Literature and Composition), AP Spanish, AP US History, AP Civics/Economics, AP Calculus AB, AP Chemistry, AP Biology, AP Psychology, AP studio art, and Honors Integrated Math Program 3. Several more Advanced Placement and Honors classes are planned to be phased in within the next few years. Results from LnHS’ Advanced Placement and Golden State Exam takers have proven to be very encouraging.

After-school programs include four Gifted and Talented Education programs (GATE) throughout the District, half which were initiated by Lancaster High School staff and students and are offered on the LnHS campus. These two GATE programs are focused on Art and Music, respectively.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration among staff members can be found in staff meetings, department meetings, and WASC meetings. Oftentimes, decisions are made by the staff as well. For instance, the bell schedule is designed and then voted upon by the staff every year.

Freshman students also belong to Houses in which freshman teachers have House meetings to discuss the students in their “House.” Each House is composed of a team of core subject teachers who meet with the same group of freshman both in and outside of their classrooms to help their students with their academic and social needs. Integrated projects are part of the House concept.

Teachers use the email system to communicate with coworkers about concerns in the classroom. This occurs at both the campus and district levels. Many teachers within departments meet to develop lesson plans together, particularly within the sciences and other areas where teaching timetables are maintained throughout the department. Staff across the district also meet together for curricular meetings, staff development days, and professional growth classes. Other collaborative projects include the Laptop Program, District Mathletes, exit exams, CAMP Academy, and AP Conferences.

Collaboration occurs among staff members, students, parents, administrators, counselors, and psychologists on a frequent basis during student IEP meetings. All of the above individuals collaborate to determine the best possible educational plan for a student. Similarly, on at least one Friday of every month, parents of students in need of extra attention are invited to join their children’s teachers for a roundtable discussion of their child’s school progress. Oftentimes, counselors participate in these discussions, and occasionally the school psychiatrist, administrators, and/or sports coaches join in as well.

Collaboration between staff and students occurs on a daily basis in the classroom. Many teachers on campus offer office hours where the students can come in for questions and tutoring. The school also offers a tutoring program which emphasizes peer help, in addition to the assistance offered from the adult facilitator.

Many teachers currently work with students as advisors of clubs on campus. The sports program also offers an opportunity for teachers and students to work together outside of the classroom setting. A total of 44 coaches currently support work with Lancaster High School sporting teams, with over half of them being staff members.

Computer labs located throughout the campus are open to students before and after school, lunch, and snack. Lancaster High School computer labs are staffed with experienced lab technicians to provide the students with guidance as they work on their school assignments.

Advanced training opportunities are found in the CAMP Academy and future Aviation Maintenance Academy.

The Senior Project fuses four years of career competencies introduced by the CGP and reinforced in English and other classes. Gifted or talented students have the option of several advanced classes.

Four district after-school GATE programs; half were initiated at Lancaster High School.

Collaboration among students occurs in the classroom in the form of group presentations and projects in classes such as Math, Healthful Living, Art, Drama, English, Science, and others. Students also communicate and collaborate with one another in student government classes, Academic Decathlon, after school peer tutoring, Yearbook, and Matheletes. Indeed, collaboration is incorporated into the curriculum and standards of most classes, just as it has been incorporated into Lancaster High School’s Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.

Several opportunities exist for Lancaster High School students to serve the community. Regional Occupational Programs and Work Experience classes allow students to maintain a job while earning high school credit. Several of the clubs on campus also offer work opportunities, such as the Leo Club and the Associated Student Body leadership program, each of which works with homeless shelters, assisting with food drives and Thanksgiving baskets. The Student Government also sponsors events such as blood drives and Walk America activities.

Parent volunteers work with the school on a regular basis. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator is maintained on site. In a more official capacity, parents serve on the Parent Advisory Committee, which meets once a month with the principal and assistant principal to discuss issues such as curriculum standards, schoolwide programs, and other matters; they also work with the principal regarding new policy issues which he feels would benefit from community input.

Other areas of parent involvement include the Bilingual Advisory Committee, which involves students and parents in the ELL program within the school. The Careers in Arts and Multi-media Productions (CAMP) academy uses community advisors on a counsel to judge portfolios submitted to the academy by students hopeful of joining CAMP. With the implementation of the senior project, 500 members of the community will help Lancaster High School to judge projects; numerous community members also mentor seniors throughout the project.

Collaboration among staff members is found in staff, department, and WASC meetings.

Freshmen belong to Houses; House teachers discuss their students during regular meetings.

The staff meets for curricular meetings, staff development days, professional growth classes and collaborative projects.

Collaboration occurs among staff, students, and parents during student IEP meetings.

Parents of students needing extra attention are invited to join their child’s teachers for a roundtable discussion of their progress.

The school offers a tutoring program which emphasizes peer help and assistance from an adult facilitator.

***Criterion C3: To what extent do students routinely use a variety of resources for learning and engage in learning experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom?***

Since opening its doors five years ago, one of the main focuses of Lancaster High School’s educational program has been to provide and foster student learning outside the classroom. The staff of LnHS has emphasized the importance of community involvement to its students on a continual basis through lesson activities, extracurricular participation, community speakers, and involvement with local businesses. This exposure to the community provides for student growth outside of a “textbook” curriculum.

Community involvement also helps students to achieve Lancaster High School’s Expected Schoolwide Learning Results. Teachers routinely design activities/projects that require students to utilize research sources outside the traditional classroom. Student projects in many classes routinely contain information on careers and real world work experiences. Students are afforded additional learning experiences in the creation of their projects and presentations utilizing the technology and associated programs/software available at LnHS. Teachers often require that work be performed using software such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and the like, which are considered to be standard to the world of work.

Many Lancaster High School students actively participate in activities that extend into the community. The use of community resources fosters student exposure to real world experiences. Job shadowing, apprenticeships, and community projects providing learning resources and experiences to LnHS students include:

- Salute to Youth
- Athletic Competitions
- College Information Night
- NASA Partnerships
- Red Cross Blood Drive
- Grace Resource Center activities
- Leo Club activities
- ASB community activities
- March of Dimes Walk-America
- Work Experience
- Regional Occupations Program
- Key Club
- Jones Intercable Partnership
- Careers in Arts and Multimedia Productions Activities

Student collaboration occurs in classroom group presentations and projects.

Parents volunteer on a regular basis; the Parent Volunteer Coordinator is a district paid position.

The Parent Advisory Committee discusses curriculum standards, schoolwide programs, and other matters monthly with principal and assistant principal.

High School students on campus. Internet access is available to students in the form of a computer lab and teacher workstations in most classrooms; the Student Laptop Program also offers an exceptional technological opportunity to many students. The Career Center provides numerous sources of information regarding job and college opportunities to students, both in written and electronic form, as well as through staff knowledge; the Career Center and Counseling department are also instrumental in providing guests speakers in topics ranging from college to the military to corporate businesses. Career Academies provide similar functions both in and outside of the classroom. Club activities, such as Mathletes, Academic Decathlon, and Speech Club offer learning experiences that mesh knowledge with the excitement of personal and team competitions. Peer tutoring and peer helping are similarly encouraged so that students will learn the skills necessary to be sources of support for themselves.

The LnHS Library Media Center offers a variety of resources as well:

- Electric Library
- Discovering Biography
- Encyclopedia of Careers
- Grolier’s Multimedia Encyclopedia
- Discovering Authors
- Exploring Poetry
- Exploring Shakespeare
- World’s Best Poetry Online
- Discovering Science
- SIRS Researcher
- American Reference Library
- Discovering Multicultural America
- Discovering U.S. History
- Discovering World History
- Government Reporter

Among the learning resources and experiences available to Lancaster High School students within the community are:

- Lancaster Public Library
- Antelope Valley College
- Saddleback Butte State Park
- Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve
- Ripley Desert Woodland Reserve
- Devil’s Punchbowl County Natural Area

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Students actively participate in activities that extend into the community.

- Edwards AFB/Dryden Flight Research Center
- Antelope Valley Indian Museum
- City of Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery
- Boeing Plant 42
- Antelope Valley Hospital/Medical Center
- Lancaster Performing Arts Center
- Antelope Valley Fairgrounds
- Civil Air Patrol
- LACO Sheriff Explorers Program

A variety of learning resources and experiences are available to LnHS students on campus.

