



TCNJ

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Interdisciplinary collaboration and Community-Engaged Learning During Covid 19

Part of the Collaborating Across Boundaries Project

Kim Pearson, Monisha Pulimood, Diane Bates

AEJMC panel on high-impact practices

August 5, 2021



NSF Award #1914869



The challenges posed by the pandemic

- Coincided with NSF-supported CAB study
- CAB model relied heavily on in-person interaction
- Had to quickly develop strategies for interaction across classes
- Had to figure out how to do community engagement remotely
- Added a new variable to consider in reviewing our data and methods



Collaborating Across Boundaries to Engage Undergraduates in STEM Learning

PIs: Monisha Pulimood (Computer Science), Diane Bates (Sociology), Kim Pearson (Journalism)

Research Questions

1. Did the CAB model identify best practices for interdisciplinary, community-engaged pedagogies that allow faculty members to harmonize cultures that differ across disciplines and between the classroom and the community?
2. Is the CAB model an effective method of improving undergraduate STEM education across different majors, and for which majors is it most effective?
3. What combinations of courses are most effective for STEM learning in the CAB model?
4. Does the CAB model improve STEM learning among historically underrepresented student groups?
5. What types of combined community engaged learning (CEL) projects are best for improving learning outcomes for STEM and non-STEM majors?

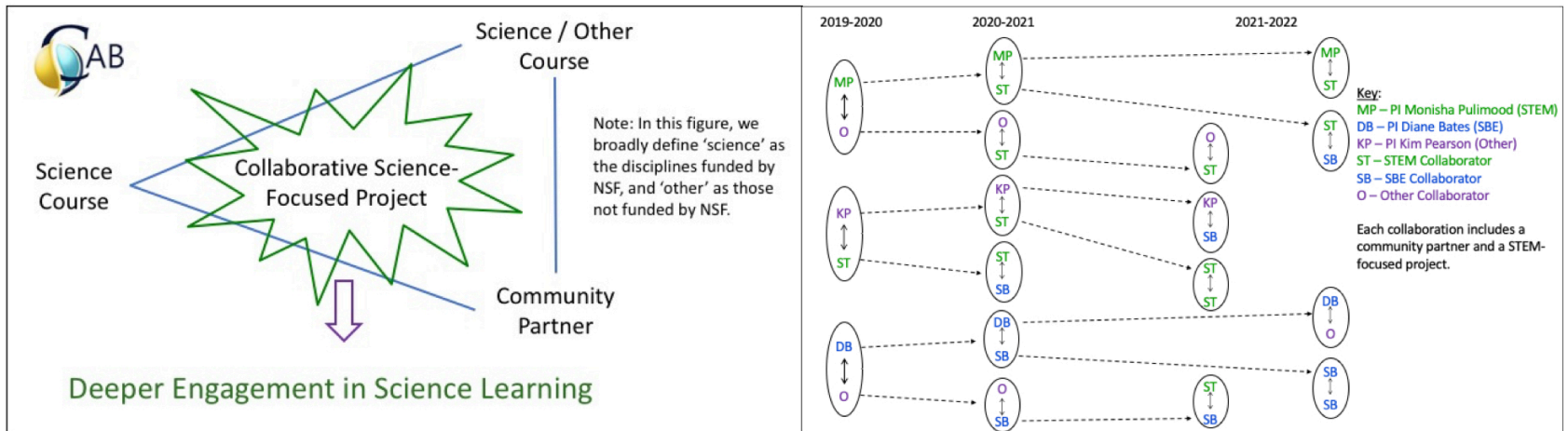


Figure 1: Collaborating Across Boundaries (CAB) Model

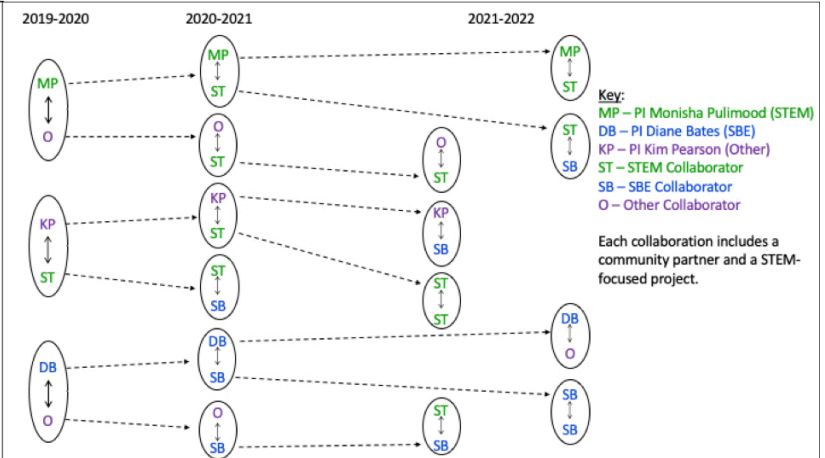


Figure 2: Expanding Disciplinary Group Collaborations

CAB journalism collaborations

- Spring 2020
 - JPW/AAS 321: Race, Gender and the News (18 students)
 - CS 315: Database Systems (38 students)
 - Community partner: NJ Sustainability Reporting Hub
 - Project - website redesign, content development
- Spring 2021
 - JPW/AAS 321: Race, Gender and the News (15 students)
 - ANT 341 Environmental Anthropology (23 students)
 - Community partner: FreePress News Voices
 - Project: How should the news media cover food justice?

Adjustments

2021 Spring

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1214-Collaboration Space for AAS/JPW 32
1 & ANT 341

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 Edit

Welcome to the Collaboration Space!

Why this space is here:

In order to improve undergraduate science education, this course is part of a National Science Foundation (NSF) study that will assess the effect of interdisciplinary community-engaged projects on student learning (in the sciences and beyond). (NSF includes such social sciences as Anthropology in its definition of science.) Accordingly, teams of students in Race, Gender and the News and Environmental Anthropology will collaborate across classes, to design and develop an innovative solution for a problem identified by the community partner.

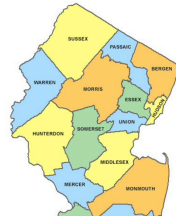
Spring, 2020: Zoom, adjustments in deadlines and grading

Spring, 2021:

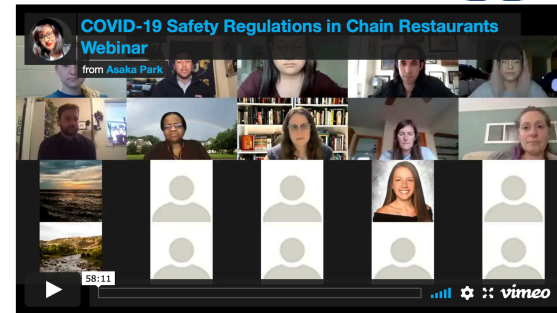
- Creation of “lab sections” (all CAB sections)
- Detailed project brief developed with partner and shared across classes
- Weekly team check-in/check-out surveys
- Weekly meeting between collaborating faculty

Outcomes

New Jersey Sustainability Reporting Hub



Select a county to view stories from NJSR newsrooms and other news sources



Spring, 2020

- Partner adopted some website redesign recommendations
- Reporting projects were less successful
- Student illnesses, shutdowns, tech problems were significant

Spring, 2021

- All five teams completed webinars, ethnographic interviews
 - <http://pearson.immtcnj.com/wordpress/snowball/how-should-the-news-media-cover-food-justice-issues/>
- Community partner distributing executive summary
- Students report greater self-efficacy in science literacy

Reflections for AY 2021-22

Useful practices to continue

- “Lab section” with project briefs, materials, check-in sheets
- Weekly partner faculty meetings
- Webinar assignment for complex topics

Practices to adopt/modify

- More explicit connection between the concepts to be learned from partner discipline and what we are testing? Further insights to emerge from data analysis, which is ongoing.

More information:

- CAB Portal: <https://tardis.hpc.tcnj.edu/cabportal/Home.php>
- CAB Portal Twitter: https://twitter.com/cab_portal
- Teaching partnerships story map <https://bit.ly/3xmCCAk>
- Research note: Diane Bates, et. al. "Interdisciplinary and community collaboration through the transition to distance learning caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic" Science Education and Civic Engagement, Summer, 2020, pgs. 10-12
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THANK YOU!