

## **Spotlight Strategy: Build a Culture of Targeted and Ongoing Professional Growth**

### *Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center*

The administration at Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center (SCCTC) is committed to providing sustained professional development and support to instructors and para-educators (tutoring support staff). Administrative Director Dr. Alice Davis explained that when it comes to professional development, "It's easy to say we don't have enough time, but where you spend your time is the key."

In 2004-2005, based on her assessment that instructors needed additional support, Dr. Davis hired a consultant to conduct in-service sessions and assist instructors, individually and in group sessions. According to Dr. Davis, some instructors were skeptical at first, but the overall response was positive. For the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, SCCTC's professional development program focused on standardizing and aligning curriculum as well as integrating numeracy and literacy into the curriculum. As a way of sharing their work, many instructors posted their curricula and teaching materials on the SCCTC website under their class pages. Instructors also brought their lesson plans to in-service sessions and shared these with colleagues.

The schedule at SCCTC provides instructors with three 75-minute in-service times every week and one 135-minute period per month. In addition to their weekly in-service times, instructors at SCCTC have approximately 30 minutes at the end of the day, three times per week, when they are trained in new technology applications, can discuss challenges and concerns with fellow instructors and/or have time to prepare engaging learning activities for their students. A technology instructor has been assigned to this specific technology integration effort.

Additional support is provided to instructors who are new to SCCTC. To help them transition from industry to the classroom, they are provided with background materials such as a list of words and phrases commonly used in career and technical education. This list includes terms such as SOAR (Students Occupationally and Academically Ready), learning styles (the different ways students learn and identifying them), differentiated instruction, curriculum mapping, grouping for instruction, graphic organizers, classroom assessment strategies, cooperative grouping and many others. Models and samples of effective strategies will also be provided, many of which come from instructors at the SCCTC.

To provide ongoing support to teachers, Dr. Davis conducts weekly walkthroughs of classrooms and technical programs, and provides regular feedback to instructors on their individual successes and challenges. Dr. Davis also has an open-door policy which encourages all instructors and support staff to approach her with any needs, concerns or ideas for improvements.

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Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center is located in Dimock, Pennsylvania. As a part-time career and technology center, it enrolls 328 students in grades 10 through 12 and provides eight career and technical education programs. Susquehanna serves seven school districts.