Reflect, Reflect, Revise:
Improving Programs to Better Support Students

Luke Carman
Student U, Durham
Welcome to studentU
Luke Carman
Middle School Coordinator
Share Your Brilliance
Afternoon Brill
Student U.
where teachers are students,
and students are teachers.
Student U History

12 Years
Founded in 2007

550 Students
Rising 6th Graders through College Graduates

20 Full-Time Employees
Plus 60 Part-Time School-Year Staff & 75 Seasonal Summer Staff
Our Why: The Problem Statement

As a result of structural racism, poverty, and other systemic injustices, first-generation college-bound students face significant personal and institutional obstacles to educational success. This situation prevents our community from reaching its full potential. Our work must be rooted in this reality.
Student U’s Mission

The mission of Student U is to empower students in the Durham Public Schools to own their education by developing the academic skills and personal well-being necessary to succeed in college and beyond.
OUR GOAL:

ACADEMIC SUCCESS + FINANCIAL SECURITY + PERSONAL WELL-BEING + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT = EMPOWERED STUDENTS
OUR APPROACH:

Student Selection → Middle School Program → High School Program → College Success

Family Engagement + Individual Academic and Social-Emotional Support
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

Summer Academy
- Academic Classes
- Electives
- Field Trips
- Community Building

Year Round Program
- Academic Support
- Clubs
- Continuing to build peer relationships

Family Engagement + Individual Academic and Social-Emotional Support
THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

**Summer Enrichment**
- Summer Academy
- Internships
- College Tours

**Year Round Support**
- In-School Advocates
- Tutoring & Test Prep
- Creative Mentorship

**Experiential Learning & Mentorship**
- Enrichment Scholarship Fund
- U-Prep Days

Family Engagement + Individual Academic and Social-Emotional Support
THE COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM

College Promise Retreats
- Financial Aid
- Summer Experience
- Work-Life Balance

Routine Check-ins
- Check-In with College Success Coordinator
- College Promise Fellowship

Family Engagement + Individual Academic and Social-Emotional Support
OUR EXAMPLE:
YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING (YRP)

YRP - “Year-Round Programming”

- Our after school program that serves 150 Durham middle schoolers, from 2:30 - 6 pm, Monday - Thursday
- Students come from 15 Durham Middle Schools, are aged 6-8th grades (both charter and public)
- Students: Majority qualify for free/reduced lunch, majority are first in their families to attend college.
| YRP 0.0  
(Summer only years)  
2007-2013 |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Program Only</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning with 6th graders, adding a grade each year</td>
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<td><strong>During The Year</strong></td>
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<td>Communication and visits to schools, but no Student U daily programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 - 2:45</td>
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<td>2:45 - 4:30</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 - 3:05</td>
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<td>3:05 - 3:20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 3:20 - 3:50 | **Study Rotation 1:**  
|            | - Schoolwork Rooms (for work with tutors)                                |
|            | - Solo Space (for independent Academic work)                             |
| 3:50-4:30 | **Study Rotation 2:**  
|            | - Schoolwork Rooms (for work with tutors)                                |
|            | - Solo Space (for independent Academic work)                             |
|            | - Collaboratory (for collaborative activities)                            |
|            | - Small groups (pull-out intervention for students who need it)          |
| 4:30 - 4:55 | **Free Time:**  
|            | - 1 schoolwork room remains open                                          |
| 5:00 - 5:45 | **Enrichment:**  
|            | - Monday: Family Time                                                    |
|            | - Tuesday/Thursday: Clubs (taught by ALL external instructors)            |
|            | - Wednesday: Wellness Wednesday (active / artistic / athletic activities)|
|            | - Always: 2 schoolwork rooms remain open                                  |
| 5:45 - 6:00 | **Dismissal**                                                             |
**GOALS FOR OUR SESSION**

- We **ENGAGE** fully in this session.
- We’re able to pick our heads up out of the day to day in order to **DREAM FEARLESSLY**.
- We use the time together to **APPLY** what we’ve learned from this conference.
- We leave with a **SPECIFIC PLAN**, to change in our programs.
- *We will not upheave/overhaul everything we do*
A HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS

STEP 1
RESPECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS
COLLECT INPUT

STEP 2
DREAM FEARLESSLY
THINK BIG ABOUT PURPOSE AND PLANS

STEP 3
DISCOVER YOUR BEST SELF
DESIGN YOUR CHANGES

STEP 4
ENERGIZE YOUR COMMUNITY
GET A THUMBS UP

STEP 5
SHARE YOUR BRILLIANCE
IMPLEMENT CHANGES

STEP 6
ACHIEVE GREATNESS
REVISE ON THE GO

REFLECT AND REPEAT
Input sources:

- Who would you survey?
- What kind of reflection with Staff do you want?
We collected:
- Student + parent voice in surveys
- Part-Time Staff voice in reflection
- Observations throughout our programming with all staff
- Full-Time staff voice / former staff in informal conversations, reports

We Learned...
- Students didn’t feel like academic time was valuable
- Our academic, college-age, inexperienced staff were much better at tutoring and working 1 on 1 with students than teaching full lessons
- Our partner organizations were really valuable
- We needed more structured time.
Quick Write:

- Who do you need to collect information from?
- What information do you need to collect?
- What do you already know?

- What do you think stakeholders would say about your programming?
What is the purpose of your programming?
Our purposes at Student U:

- We are building a Durham where all students can succeed.
- At YRP, we need to help students be successful. In middle school, academic success is heavily influenced by grades, and grades are heavily influenced by 1) completing work and staying on top of things, 2) keeping organized.
Set an ambitious goal:

- What changes must you make to IMPACT your day to day?
- Put all your ideas on the table, no matter how big or small
OUR EXAMPLE:
YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING
(YRP)

Our Goals at YRP:

OLD GOAL:
YRP is a safe space for our students to go each day after school that is academically rigorous, encourages students to explore new ideas and skills, and creates a culture rooted in love and high expectations, and fosters a college-bound mindset.

NEW GOAL:
As, Bs and/or GROWTH:
- Students will complete their homework and academic enrichment activities efficiently and correctly, allowing them to make academic growth.
- Students will develop healthy studying and organizational habits.
- Students will participate in a culture rooted in love and high expectations.
- Students will explore and discover their passions, interests, communities, and themselves.
OUR BRAINSTORM PROCESS:
YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING (YRP)

Brainstorming Process:
- Take a morning (1-2 hours), and throw all your ideas on the table
- Don’t think about the reasons things won’t work right away
- Continuously return to your Why/Purpose, and your goals
- Brainstorm MORE than once
Ch-ch-ch-changes:

- Think about what is reasonable to change
- What does your timeline need to be?
- Do you have the right people in place for this?
**OUR EXAMPLE:**

**YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING (YRP)**

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**We needed to change our schedule**

Different kinds of work in different rooms:

1. schoolwork support with tutors,
2. independent work,
3. collaborative learning activities.
4. Targeted, small group intervention

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**We needed to rely on our community:**

- Tutors: ARAC at NCCU and Duke
- Clubs: Durham Arts Council, Atypical: Hub Farm - 1x/week, Jr Iron Chef 1x/week
- Parents: volunteering/teaching, too!

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**We needed to think critically about training.**

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**We did not need to change EVERYTHING.**

We KEPT: number of students, types of transportation, materials budget, timing of the day for partners, and many other things
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“We are destined to change the world. We will dream fearlessly.”

WORK TIME!
STEP 2 Dream Fearlessly:
Set an ambitious goal.
- What needs to change about what is HAPPENING Day to Day to better meet your why?
- Put all your ideas on the table, no matter how big or small

STEP 3 Discover your best self:
- Think about what is reasonable to change
- What does your timeline need to be?
- Do you have the right people in place for this?
Approval is still important

- Who needs to approve these changes?
- What deliverables do they need?
How we got approval:

We submitted a proposal to our leadership team (to take to our board) that included:

- Timing for the afternoon
- Staffing shifts
- Programming Shifts
- $$$
STEP 5
SHARE YOUR BRILLIANCE
IMPLEMENT CHANGES

DO IT!
Tweaks, shifts, reflections

- Now, at the end of the year, we’re thinking a lot more about this and things look very different than at the beginning of the year.
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FINAL TAKEAWAYS

In 1 - 2 sentences, what are you planning to take back to your Program?