

Asset-Based Writing Center/Community-Building

Asset-Based Community Development practices (ABCD), articulated in *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann from the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) at Northwestern University in 1993, are based on the premise that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing (but often unrecognized) assets and thereby respond to and create local economic opportunity. ABCD draws attention to social assets: the gifts and talents of individuals, and the social relationships that fuel local associations and informal networks. Methods of implementing ABCD include:

- Collecting stories about community successes and identifying the capacities of communities that contributed to success.
- Organizing a core group to carry the process forward
- Mapping completely the capacities and assets of individuals, associations, and local institutions
- Building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem-solving within the community.
- Mobilizing the community's assets fully for economic development and information sharing purposes
- Convening as broadly representative group as possible for the purposes of building a community vision and plan
- Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset-based, locally defined development (See resource below*)

Application to Writing Centers/Community Partnerships

While the ABCD process was articulated for large-scale community development initiatives, the methods can apply to writing centers attempting to develop partnerships both inside and outside their home institutions.

- Collect stories about writing center, departmental, partners, individuals, institutional successes and identify capacities that contributed to success.
- Organizing a core group of people inside and outside the institution
- Mapping the capacities and assets of stakeholders
- Build relationships inside and outside the institution
- Focus on successes to leverage further assets and resources.

*Mathie, Alison and Gord Cunningham. "From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy For Community-Driven Development" Occasional Paper., January 2002. The Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University www.stfx.ca/institutes/coady/text/about_publications_occasional_citizens.html, October 11, 2008

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Collecting Stories and Determining Assets

Tell one story of success you have had in your writing center. In doing so, determine the individuals, groups, assets and capacities that underlie that success. Consider the resources that are identified in that success.

Success

Who was involved?

For each person/group/institution involved in success, what are their capacities and assets?

(ie. Time, Skill(s), Relationships, Networks, Power, Knowledge, Infrastructure, Credibility, Access, etc.)

Person(s)	Capacities/Assets

Resources Identified that Can Contribute to Partnership-Building