

ALT-C 2005

Carol Twigg is President and CEO of the National Center for Academic Transformation, in Saratoga Springs, New York (<http://www.thencat.org/index.html>). These are Carol's answers to questions put to her after her keynote speech on 7/9/2005 to the 2005 ALT Conference.

This document, and Carol's presentation, its abstract, and her biography can be accessed from: <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/keynotes.html#carol>. In case of difficulty, email alt@brookes.ac.uk.

1) Has there been any resistance from tutors who see reduction in staffing as a threat to their jobs?

Not from any of those actually involved in the redesigns since they, in essence, control their destinies--i.e., they plan the redesign and what will happen to those faculty who are no longer required to teach the introductory course. No permanent staff member has lost his or her job; some adjunct faculty or TAs have not been re-hired.

2) Have you done anything similar with K12 schools?

No - we get lots of interest in this idea, but I like to say that changing higher education seems to be an ambitious enough goal, much less taking on K12. These techniques would certainly work at the secondary school level, and we would be happy to partner with organizations in K12 to implement redesigns.

3) Of the five models, do they have a bias in use in different disciplines?

Not necessarily - if the model is applied thoughtfully. What I mean by this is, for example, the emporium model seems to be the most effective in math. Using a supplemental model in math would not be appropriate IF one did not change what is going on during class meetings. But IF one makes significant changes in what is going on in class and supplemented with online software interaction, that model would work fine.

4) Considering the cost of each redesign(\$200,000) is this a realistic model for change for institutions with such funding?

No it's not - that's why our subsequent programs do not offer this level of funding. See <http://www.thencat.org/R2R.htm> - the Roadmap to Redesign program where we are giving NO grants and http://www.thencat.org/system_solutions.htm - UH and OLN programs where they are giving grants of about \$35,000. \$200,000 is not needed - we gave that amount as an incentive to get institutions to try something that no one had even done - much of the funding went into meeting our stringent reporting and assessment requirements.

5) Over a period of how many years have the savings been measured?

The savings we describe are for one year of operating costs. We do not include other kinds of cost savings such as those accrued from increased space capacity and from greater retention. One could reasonably amortize the savings over the life of the course. Doing so would increase the savings by a factor of five, for example, if the course remained substantially the same for five years.

6) Are the improved learning outcomes you describe maintained over time or is novelty a factor in the changes found?

In general, the learning outcomes appear to be sustained and, in many instances, increased over time. For example, here is data from the U of Alabama tracked over subsequent terms:

Success rates prior to redesign:

Fall 1998	47.1%	Spring 1999	44.2%
Fall 1999	40.6%	Spring 2000	53.5%

Success rates after redesign:

Fall 2000	50.2%	Spring 2001	35.8%
Fall 2001	60.5%	Spring 2002	49.8%
Fall 2002	63.0%	Spring 2003	41.8%
Fall 2003	78.9%	Spring 2004	55.4%
Fall 2004	76.2%		