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Do you have your own evidence-based "research in action" story idea on Guided Pathways, AB 705, Simplified Metrics, the new Funding Formula, or other initiative to help improve student outcomes and success?

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New PPIC Report Provides Early Window into AB 705 Reforms and How Corequisite Models Can Help “Maximize” Completion of Transfer-Level English and Math

Katie Hern, Executive Director, California Acceleration Project

The research highlighted below is supported and funded by the California Acceleration Project.

A new Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) study, “Remedial Education Reforms at California’s Community Colleges Early Evidence on Placement and Curricular Reforms,” features powerful completion gains at colleges that have begun allowing most students to bypass remedial courses and enroll directly in transfer-level English and math. The report is especially timely as California Community Colleges plan for how they will comply with AB 705, especially its requirement to “maximize” student completion of transfer-level courses within one year.
The report focused on a set of early implementers of placement reform and corequisite remediation in 2016-2017. The PPIC researchers found that as substantially more students entered transfer-level courses at these colleges, course success rates remained relatively stable, and throughput — the share of students completing a transfer-level course — increased across all demographic groups. Further, while equity gaps remained, outcomes for low-income, Latinx, and African-American students improved substantially, with students at these colleges completing transfer-level math at rates two to three times higher than the statewide average.

“By looking at early implementers of these reforms, this study is the first to provide a comprehensive examination of multiple measures placement and co-requisite remediation in California community colleges,” write authors Olga Rodriguez, Marisol Cuellar Mejia, and Hans Johnson. “As all colleges move toward compliance with AB 705, this study sheds light on what colleges can expect to see in terms of both student outcomes and implementation challenges.”

The research provides data about the accelerated developmental courses that the California Acceleration Project helped colleges develop (e.g., pre-statistics and accelerated English courses that provide a one-year pathway through the transfer level). While these accelerated models may have higher completion rates than traditional remediation, the study found that students are still less likely to complete transfer-level English and math through accelerated developmental courses than if they enroll directly in a transfer-level course with corequisite support.

At the nine colleges offering corequisite models in English, 78% of students completed college composition within a year, a rate 30 to 40 percentage points higher than students taking an accelerated developmental course. At the two colleges offering statistics with corequisite support, 70% of students completed transfer-level math in a year, a rate two to three times higher than the rate among students who began in a pre-statistics course. (See graphs below.)

**One-Year Student Completion of Transfer-Level English (Traditional, One-Semester Acceleration, Co-Requsite Models)**

![Graph showing student completion rates](image-url)
One-Year Student Completion of Transfer-Level Math (Traditional, Pre-Statistics, Co-Requisite Models)

AB 705 Recommendations for Moving Forward

The report cites the following recommendations for moving forward under AB 705:

- Colleges should start taking steps now toward AB 705 compliance
- Institutional variation should not compromise students’ likelihood of success
- Basic skills funding should better align with the expectations that this legislation puts forth
- Effective professional development is necessary to ensure success
- Narrowing equity gaps should be a key component of planning for AB 705 compliance
- More research is needed to monitor short- and long-term student success
- California community colleges and their university counterparts need to plan for increases in the number of transfer-ready students

You can find the percentage of students that begin in transfer-level courses on your campus, your college’s one-year completion rates, and other local data in the PPIC report’s Technical Appendix.

For more information about throughput, remedial reforms, or this commentary, contact Katie Hern.

New Vision Resource Center Module Supports Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design

Kelley Karandjeff, Senior Consultant Researcher, The RP Group

Is your college moving forward with Guided Pathways planning, yet lacking student feedback on what supports and impedes academic and career journey?
Or, are you missing student input on a new strategy your college is designing to strengthen outcomes? Perhaps you are struggling to get fundamental investment in the need for transformational reform on your campus, despite data that show student opportunity gaps?

Check out Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways — a new online learning module from the Chancellor’s Office found in the Vision Resource Center. This tool offers tips and ideas for establishing a systematic, iterative practice of listening to students.

Students have vital perspectives that can spur motivation among different campus stakeholders for Guided Pathways transformation and help shape college redesign. Systematically listening to students and involving them in decision-making allows colleges to:

- Examine our approaches and understand our processes and systems through the student lens
- Create a full data “story”— enhancing institutional data with ground-level student insights
- Foster an urgency for institutional transformation
- Motivate different college stakeholders to get involved in Guided Pathways development
- Strengthen student outcomes (the deeper the engagement, the bigger the impact)

This online learning module provides support for moving past the “one and done” approach to gathering student input, including steps for collecting student voices in an ongoing way, college examples, and links to resources for conducting different methods (e.g., focus groups, surveys, interviews, classroom activities, town halls).

Colleges have already started to apply this tool in a variety of ways. For instance, in the spring of 2018, Southwestern College used the Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways guide to both advocate for the value of student input and start connecting with students in a more structured, systematic way. The college’s Guided Pathways steering committee aimed to generate broader campus understanding of obstacles and opportunities the Guided Pathways approach could address.

Marie Vicario, Acting Special Assistant to the President, conducted a study using the guide, by setting up student focus groups and surveys reaching 97 students at the college’s main campus and three centers. The pilot study zeroed in on students’ experiences with registration and educational planning, and asked students about completing awards within two years. According to Vicario, “The [tool] was a great resource for our initial planning effort. I was able to design a study that would give us an initial snapshot of what students need and really want from the college with respect to program mapping, award completion, and registration challenges. I would advise all Guided Pathways stakeholders to use this [tool] as their starting point as it has great information, and is easy to follow.”

College Guided Pathways design teams are also using the tool to gather student perspectives aimed at making the case for Guided Pathways with different campus constituents; involve students in meta-major development and program mapping; and secure input from specific student groups on the unique supports they need at different junctures in their community college experience.

To access this online learning module, log on to the Vision Resource Center and click on “Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways” at the bottom right of
To share your own experience with collecting student voices planning, consider sharing it in the Vision Resource Center by clicking on “Connect,” selecting “CCC Guided Pathways” community, and creating a new discussion post associated with the “Collecting Student Voice Guide” topic area.

For technical assistance related to accessing and using the Vision Resource Center, contact visionsupport@ccctechconnect.org.

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**Colleges Apply Through the Gate Transfer Study Methodology for their Guided Pathways and Equity Planning**

*Alyssa Nguyen, Director of Research and Evaluation, The RP Group*

Seeking to better understand your college’s transfer students as part of your Guided Pathways planning? Aiming to identify areas for the immediate improvement of equitable transfer outcomes? Considering how to practically help students more efficiently transition to university, in line with the system’s Vision for Success goals? The RP Group’s *Through the Gate Transfer Study methodology offers California Community Colleges (CCC) a concrete tool to support this inquiry and design.*

This study seeks to identify strategies for increasing transfer among individuals who have completed all or most of their transfer requirements, but who do not make it “through the gate” to university. During Phase I (2016-2018), the RP Group looked at who is transferring, who is not, and for what reasons — determining that over a recent five-year period, nearly 300,000 CCC students across the state were stuck near or at the transfer gate.

Now, campuses are using the Phase I methodology to improve their own local understanding of and support to these high-leverage students.

For example, Chaffey College recently applied the methodology as part of its Guided Pathway inquiry process and equity planning, identifying students who were (1) near the gate (those who earned ≥60 transferable units with a 2.0 GPA, but were missing transferable English and/or math), and (2) at the gate (those who earned ≥60 transferable units, a 2.0 GPA, and completed transferable English and math or those who achieved an AD-T).

Jim Fillpot, Chaffey’s Dean of Institutional Research, Policy, and Grants, shares it was “eye-opening” to discover the percentage of students who had earned an AD-T but had not transferred (over 15%) and to concretely quantify the number of students – over 1,500 – who had made significant progress toward a transfer goal.

From there, the college, in partnership with the RP Group, engaged a limited cohort of students who were near and at the gate in focus groups to better understand the institutional and external barriers they were encountering along their transfer path. Additionally, the college took a cue from the study, disaggregating data by student characteristic to further understand the transfer experience of specific populations.

Fillpot notes this research has launched new thinking about how to better reach Chaffey students who are near or at the gate. Faculty are now requesting data...
specific to their educational programs to (a) obtain a clearer understanding of some of the unique programmatic challenges that students face; and (b) directly communicate with students who are transfer eligible or are on the cusp of transferring.

The college is also exploring supplying the transfer center with more information so it can reach out to students directly and provide targeted support. Findings are also being actively included in committee conversations, including informing the college’s student equity plan and supporting Guided Pathways design work. The college plans to replicate the methodology annually.

Other colleges have also been using the findings to inform local redesign efforts. For example, Napa Valley College utilized the methodology to better understand their transfer population and plan targeted interventions — quantifying where their students fall on the transfer continuum (transfer explorers; momentum students; and students near, at, and through the transfer gate). Bakersfield College hung transfer continuum posters and presented the research during convenings with faculty, as part of its efforts to make the case for Guided Pathways.

What’s Next?
The RP Group is now undertaking Phase II (2018-2019), seeking to better understand why students who are so close to transferring do not make the transition to a university. This stage of the research will focus on gathering information and perspectives directly from students who are near or at the transfer gate.

Through student surveys and interviews, the RP Group will explore how different factors impact students’ decision-making along their transfer journey, and at what points certain factors impede or facilitate their transfer process. Colleges can expect a full report of the Phase II findings in fall 2019.

If you are interested in learning more about Chaffey’s experience, please contact: Jim Fillpot, Director of Institutional Research, Policy, and Grants, Chaffey College.

If you have your own example of using Through the Gate methodology, we encourage you to reach out to Alyssa Nguyen, Director of Research and Evaluation, The RP Group.

Other Resources
- Phase I quick facts, and research brief
- Phase I methodology found in Appendix D of the technical report
- The project website

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