Increasing College Access, Student Success, and Career Prospects Through Community College Bridge Programs

Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative Meeting of Community College Partners

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Certificates Count . . .

- “High-quality certificates offer substantial labor market returns”

- “Consistent and unambiguous evidence of positive, strong labor market returns to certificates of at least one year”

- “Some evidence to suggest that certificate completers can earn more than associate completers”

- “Evidence is less certain about earning gains from certificates of less than one year” (varies by industry)

Completion Matters . . .

“Those who started but failed to complete a credential had negligible earnings returns to the few credits they accumulated.”

“A year of coursework to realize a labor market return, and even then returns lag for those who walk away with no credential.”

Connect the dots—and the missions

• Middle-skill jobs, which require > HS degree but < 4 yr degree, make up largest segment of jobs in CA, and will for years to come.

• CA faces critical shortages in crucial industries, particularly in middle-skill jobs

• 3/4s of those who will be in the labor force in 2020 are already past the reach of K12

• One year plus a certificate was the “tipping point” in WA

• CC voc. certif. or degree = 100% wage increase 3 yrs out (ARCCCC report)
New approaches to basic skills especially needed because . . .

• Assessment as sole measure of “college ready” flawed
  — Overreliance on single cut score keeps out of college courses students who could succeed (especially those who score near cut score). Poor predictive power of current assessments.
  — Ignores other important predictors of whether students can succeed such as motivation and perseverance.

• Current sequences of adult basic education and developmental education take so long that few students complete, especially those referred to multiple levels.

• “Exponential attrition.” Important to look at how many students move through entire educational pathway over time, not just pass rates within single course or single year.

L. Collins; J. Strawn (2011). Certificates Count: Addressing Student Completion in CTE. CCCAOE Spring Conference. Pre-session. (CLP and CLASP)
Math In-Order Course Completion and Enrollment

- Sample: 2001-2005 cohorts, tracked for three years

- Enrolled 12%
  - Passed 17%
    - Enrolled 22%
      - Passed 29%
        - Enrolled 29%
          - Passed 40%
            - Enrolled 79%
              - Referred to Level 3+ 96,653
                - Not enrolled 21%
              - Not enrolled 15%
                - Not completed 11%  
            - Not enrolled 7%
              - Not completed 5%  
          - Not enrolled 5%
            - Not completed 2%  
        - Not enrolled 5%
          - Not completed 11%  
      - Not enrolled 7%
        - Not completed 5%  
    - Not enrolled 17%
      - Not completed 10%
Community College Research Center
research on completion of Dev. Ed. sequences

**Reading In-Order Course Completion and Enrollment**

- **Sample:** 2001-2005 cohorts, tracked for three years

**Diagram Flow**:
- **Total:** 25%
  - **Not completed 4%**
    - **Not completed 3%**
      - **Not enrolled 6%**
        - **Not enrolled 10%**
          - **Not enrolled 12%**
    - **Not enrolled 7%**
      - **Not completed 5%**
        - **Enrolled 36%**
          - **Passed 45%**
            - **Enrolled 39%**
              - **Passed 29%**
                - **Enrolled 3%**
                  - **TOTAL: 25%**

- **3+ levels below**
  - **Not enrolled 30%**
    - **Referred to Level 3+**
      - **15,255**

- **2 levels below**
  - **Enrolled 48%**
    - **Passed 58%**
      - **Enrolled 45%**
        - **Passed 39%**
          - **Enrolled 29%**
            - **Enrolled 25%**
              - **TOTAL: 25%**

- **1 level below**
  - **Enrolled 5%**
    - **Passed 4%**
      - **Enrolled 3%**
        - **Enrolled 2%**
          - **TOTAL: 25%**
What are Career Pathways?

- Carefully crafted programs linking education and support strategies to enable students, often while working, to advance over time to successively higher levels of education & employment in a given industry or occupational sector
- Each step is designed to prepare students to progress to the next level of education and career
- Span the entire range from entry level, intensive “bridge” programs for underprepared students and extending through postsecondary certificates & degrees
- Certificates are “stackable” & “nested” into degree/transfer requirements
- Focus on careers in demand, with family-sustaining wages and ongoing advancement opportunities
Core components of Career Pathways

- **Strategic partnerships** of employers, education and training providers, CBOs, etc. in key industries and occupational groups.

- **Multiple ways to enter and exit** postsecondary pathways, with marketable credentials at each step. (e.g. high school, one-stops, basic skills, colleges)

- **Active participation by employers** to address regional workforce needs: in curriculum and pathway development, work site training, workbased learning/internships, and/or financial support for worker learning

- **Innovations in program content and delivery** (e.g. new technical certificates and diplomas, contextualized basic skills, flexible class schedules, combinations of online and face-to-face instruction).

- **Support services**, such as career and academic coaching, financial aid, etc. provided by a range of partners, including community groups

L. Collins; J. Strawn (2011). *Certificates Count: Addressing Student Completion in CTE.*
CCCAOE Spring Conference. Pre-session. (CLP and CLASP)
Career Pathway Bridges

- Career pathway bridge models typically cover “soft skills,” pre-college academic and English language skills, and occupational skills, with student supports.

- Bridges contextualize basic skills and English language content to the knowledge and skills needed in a specific occupation or groups of occupations.

- Bridges usually involve modified or new curricula; ideally articulated to the next level in the pathway.
  - Some bridges use co-instruction; some involve dual or concurrent enrollment in adult ed., dev. ed., CTE;
  - Most use cohorts.

- Partners in bridge programs are employers, unions, workforce bds., CBOs, comm./tech. colleges, foundations. Can’t do bridges well without partnerships.

J. Strawn (2011). Excerpted from Oregon Pathways Alliance presentation. CLASP
Boiling it Down: Essential Bridge Program Elements

• Cohort-based learning communities

• Integrated basic/academic skills and career technical education: contextualized and accelerated approaches

• Clearly defined career pathways with attention to transitions
  — options for both continuing education and employment
  — strong connections with employers
  — “stackable” certificates

• Support services
  — embedded in the learning community
  — leverage external supports/benefits to support post-secondary attainment

• Address needs and barriers for targeted students
Pathways and bridges growing

• At least 7 states have career pathway efforts aimed at adults.
  – AR, KY, IL, MA, OH, OR, VA, WA, WI
  – Under Perkins every state must have pathways for high school students.
• Half a dozen states have career pathway bridge initiatives
  – IL, IN, MN, OH, OR, WA, WI
  – New Gates Foundation ABE to Credentials grants may expand that number.
  – Some states have focused state adult ed plans/RFP’s on this. (IL, IN).
• Many states have region-focused, sector initiatives (e.g. PA, MI, WI); some linked to career pathways and bridges.
• Career pathways and bridges now a theme in federal policy.
  (E.g. Recovery Act, OVAE integrated programs)
• Hundreds of local, career-focused bridge programs, according to 2010 Workforce Strategy Center bridge survey. However, little uniformity.

J. Strawn (2011). Excerpted from Oregon Pathways Alliance presentation, CLASP
I-BEST: Using state data to communicate why innovation is worth investment

• May 2009 independent study of I-BEST compared participants to similar group of students.
  – 55% of I-BEST students earned an occupational certificate as compared to only 15% of the matched group.
  – More than three-fourths of I-BEST students (78%) persisted into a second year of postsecondary education vs. 61% of other group.

• Preliminary state quarterly emp/earnings for 08-09:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tipping Point</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>$4,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term training</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>$3,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE only</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$2,810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J. Strawn (2011). Excerpted from Oregon Pathways Alliance presentation. CLASP
California context

- Student Success Task Force looking at acceleration, CTL, metrics for completion
- Basic Skills Initiative/3CSN focusing on completion
  - Co-hosts regional events focus with CLP on Acceleration and CTL
- CCLC’s Vision 2020 call to:
  - Develop enhanced Basic Skills funding model that includes clear and expedited pathways for students tied to defined benchmarks or “momentum points” leading up to and including completion.
  - Develop alternatives to traditional curriculum sequences using linked or contextualized curriculum across curricular areas.
- Relationship between Adult Ed/CCCs receiving new scrutiny
  - Little Hoover Commission hearing June 2011
  - CA Adult Education Strategic Plan focuses on transition of adult learners to college and career
  - AB1315 (Furutani): regional pilots linking CCC/Adult Ed
CCC: Career Advancement Academies

- Establish pipelines to college and high wage careers for underemployed, underprepared young adults (18 –30 years old)

- Bridge programs connected to career pathways in key sectors

- Utilize range of approaches, but have common key elements:
  - Contextualized Teaching and Learning as core strategy
  - Cohort based learning communities combine basic skills and CTE
  - Integrated student services
  - External partnerships (business, labor, WIBS, CBOs, adult ed/ROCPs)
  - Attention to transition strategies

- Demonstration projects:
  - Phase 1: 29 colleges in 3 regions (East Bay, Central Valley, LA)
  - $15 million investment over 3 years; > 6,500 students to date
  - Phase 2: expanding to 4 regions
  - Public/Private Partnership between CCC system and philanthropy
  - CLP: TA/support; Public/Private Ventures: evaluation

- **90% retention; 74% course success**

BRIDGES TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

- Advanced Professional Degrees
- Baccalaureate Degrees
- Associate Degrees
  - Associate in Arts
  - Associate in Science
  - Associate in Applied Science
- Technical Certificates
  - Career & Technical Education (college credit)

INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

- Managers & Technical Professionals
- Skilled Technician
- Entry-Level Technician
- Entry-Level Skilled Job
- Semi-Skilled Job
- Unskilled Job

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- Strong Connection to Jobs
- Learning While Working

RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & PLACEMENT

BRIDGE PROGRAM
- Contextualized Instruction
- Career Development
- Transition Services
  - Adult Education (GED, ESL, ABE)
  - Developmental Education,
    Workforce Agency or Community Organization
Stackable Certificate and Degree Programs

- Liberal Arts Courses Required to Satisfy AA/AS Degree Requirements or for Transfer to 4-Year University

- Focuses on Advanced Technical Skills, Management/Professional Skills
- Includes Competencies to Pursue Multiple Career Pathways

- Focuses on Occupation-Specific Technical Skills and Competencies
  - Focuses on Industry-Wide Skills and Competencies
  - Typically Includes Applied Mathematics/Algebra
Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Many people learn better and faster, and retain information longer, when they are taught concepts in context.

- Makes it relevant
- Engages and motivates hard-to-reach students
- Increases learner confidence & enthusiasm
- Enhances interest in long-term goals & education

Center for Student Success, Research & Planning Group.  
*Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in CA Community Colleges*, p. 58.
Contextualized Learning

Students in contextual math compared to standard math courses:

• 327% more likely to pass contextual course

• 387% more likely to pass degree applicable coursework in the same semester

• 400% as likely to pass transfer-level course in the same semester

Contextualized Learning

Students in contextual math compared to standard math courses:

- 167% more likely to pass degree applicable coursework in the subsequent semester
- These effects are more pronounced for Black and Hispanic students.

Bridges to college & careers

• At minimum basic skills bridges should create shorter, more relevant paths to credentials that matter
• Local flexibility on bridge approaches is critical, as are some parameters based on best available research
• At their best, basic skills bridges can be transformational for students and institutions:
  – Change students’ perceptions of their own possibilities and abilities
  – Change faculty and staff perceptions of basic skills students, of each other, and of their roles (ABE, CTE, dev. ed., academic, student services, financial aid, etc.)
  – Build relationships (among students, between students and staff/faculty, and among staff/faculty from different parts of college)
  – Build new curricular and pedagogical approaches, program design and offerings tailored to student needs and focused on accelerating student progress along pathways and completion of credentials

J. Strawn (2011). Excerpted from Oregon Pathways Alliance presentation. CLASP
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