Promising Pathways:

Using High School Data to Spur Student Progress and Achievement

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Three goals

• Initiate reflection on student transition
• Briefly explain our research
• Introduce the implementation of the first cohort of the Long Beach City College Promise Pathways in F2012

• And....
Transition to College: Assessment and Placement

- CCCs are open enrollment institutions
  - Requires method for assessing and planning for the educational needs of incoming students.

- Most rely largely, if not entirely, on standardized assessment
  - Ease of administration
  - Transparency of administration
  - Impartiality of administration
  - Pre-approval
Consequences for student transition

- Majority of students placed into basic skills
- Placement into basic skills is significant barrier to completion
- Colleges’ first interaction with most students is to tell them they’re not ready for college
- Suggests to (and convinces) many that students are not ready for college and are likely to fail – including students themselves
- Substantial systemic changes:
  - More, longer, slower remediation sequences
  - Reduction of access, especially at bottom of sequences
Conventional Wisdom
Explaining Assessment Results

• It is a problem with today’s students
  – Students are simply, vastly unprepared for college
  – Kids these days ....

• It is a problem with public education
  – Public education is failing to prepare high school students
  – Teachers these days...
What If the Conventional Wisdom is Wrong?

- Flynn Effect – substantial and long-term sustained increase in IQ
- Proportion of 18-24 year olds with HS degree: ~90%, all-time high
- National Assessment of Educational Progress: Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American and White students at highest points in history in nearly every age category
- Growing body of research that questions effectiveness of assessment that relies on standardized tests
  - Surprisingly little relation to college course outcomes. (e.g., Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Edgescombe, 2011; Scott-Clayton, 2012; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012; Xu, forthcoming)
  - NAGB, 2012: Highly variable cutscores across institutions, with 2-year colleges often using HIGHER cutscores than 4-year

- What if the problem is not with our students, but with how we have assessed our students’ capabilities?
- Alternatively, what if one of the biggest barriers to students transitions to college is one that we have created?
We sought local answers to three questions:

• What predicts how students assess and place into developmental courses?

• What predicts how students perform in those courses?

• How well are placement and performance aligned?
Our Research

• Five longitudinal cohorts tracking more than 7,000 high school graduates who attended LBCC directly after high school built with help of Cal-PASS

• Examined utility of wide range of high school achievement data, most notably 11th grade California Standards Test (CST) scores and high school grades for predicting:
  ▪ How students are assessed and placed into the levels of our developmental skills sequences
  ▪ How students perform in those classes
Alignment in English

Predicting Placement

- CST ELA (z): 1.34
- Eng Grade (12): 0.0
- GPA (other): 0.30

Predicting Performance

- CST ELA (z): 0.17
- Eng Grade (12): 0.37
- GPA (other): 0.88

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001
x = p < 1 x 10^-10
Alignment in Math

Predicting Placement

Predicting Performance

* p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001  x = p < 1 x 10^{-10}
The Key Takeaways

- Standardized tests best predict standardized tests
- Classroom performance best predicts classroom performance
- More information tells you more about a student than less information
- Significant opportunity exists to improve placement
Reimagining the Transition to College: Fall 2012 Promise Pathways

• Predictive placement model in English & Math using multi-method, evidence-based assessment
  – *English*: A or B in 12th Grade English (as proxy)
  – *Math*: Predicted rate of success using all meaningful variables >= average success rate in course

• Prescriptive, full-time course load via pre-populated first-semester success plan
  – Emphasis on early completion of foundational skills (English, Reading, Math)

• Required group Counseling workshop
• Student success course
• Additional Experimental pilots
  – Contextualized Reading
  – Embedded academic achievement coaches
  – Automating math prerequisites
Alternative placement: Transfer-level Placement Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 First time students</th>
<th>2011 LBUSD</th>
<th>Promise Pathways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Level English</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Level Math</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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</table>
Prescriptive Full-time Course Load: Full-time status

Transfer Level English

- 2011 First time students
- 2011 LBUSD
- Promise Pathways

- 84% for Promise Pathways
- 50% for 2011 LBUSD
- 36% for 2011 First time students
Success rates in transfer-level courses

Fall 2012

Transfer Level English:
- Non-Pathways: 64%
- Promise Pathways: 62%

Transfer Level Math:
- Non-Pathways: 55%
- Promise Pathways: 51%

Neither of these differences approach significance, $p > .30$
First-term early educational milestone achievement

- Attempted Transfer Math: 5.2% (LBUSD '11), 2.8% (Promise Pathways)
- Successfully Completed Transfer Math: 8.2% (LBUSD '11), 5.5% (Promise Pathways)
- Attempted Transfer English: 52.9% (LBUSD '11), 3.8% (Promise Pathways)
- Successfully Completed Transfer English: 32.8% (LBUSD '11), 37.1% (Promise Pathways)
- Behavioral Intent to Complete: 62.9% (Promise Pathways)
How can it change students time to college-level work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Avg semesters to Engl 1*</th>
<th>Total semesters advanced</th>
<th>Semesters saved by alternative assessment</th>
<th>Total saved by alternative assessment</th>
<th>Semesters advanced by prescriptive placement</th>
<th>Total semesters by prescriptive placement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Level</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>264.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>264.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 level below</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>982.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>793.8</td>
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<td>199</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>&gt; 6.5</td>
<td>1293.5</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>696.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>486</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2540.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>786</td>
<td></td>
<td>1754.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

=5.2 per student
=1.6 per student
=3.6 per student
What LBCC Gained through a prescriptive, evidence based approach to the transition to college

- Provided students earlier but appropriate access to transfer-level courses
- Increased dramatically the number of students attaining early educational outcomes while decreasing time to do so
- Opened new avenues of discussion about research and instructional pedagogy and kick-started opportunities for experimentation and innovation
- Strongly challenged conventional wisdom about students’ readiness for college
- Provided concrete steps that any college could take to dramatically improve all of our students’ futures
Can it be done?

• Can your college do this research?

• Can this model apply at your college too?

• Can your college afford to implement something like this?

• Can you get in touch with us?
  – General questions
    • Mark Taylor, Director of College Advancement and Economic Development, mwtaylor@lbcc.edu or (562) 938-4206
  – Research questions
    • John Hetts, jhetts@lbcc.edu or (562) 938-4052