

Cal-PASS

Transitions

Success at Every Level

From the Executive Director: Dickens Was Right!

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” This quote from Dickens’ classic “A Tale of Two Cities” seems to aptly reflect Cal-PASS’ current situation given the state’s financial crisis. Cal-PASS staff members have been working to ensure that the funding stream will continue so that Cal-PASS can continue its mission.

For example PLCs working on the ACCESS initiative, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Haas Jr. Foundation (San Francisco), and, recently, the Girard Foundation (San Diego), had a productive Summer Convening in Ontario and did the initial work in aligning curricula and developing a series of sample assignments. That

work will be expanded by the 26 ACCESS councils in the coming year. (See “ACCESS Gains Momentum” on page 3.)

The new Standardized Metrics for Analysis, Reporting, and Tracking (SMART) Tool, using Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) cube technology and developed with support from the Hewlett and Irvine Foundations, has been released to community colleges. This fall, cubes should be ready to beta test for both K–12 and universities. The cubes make program review processes much smoother because data are now interactive and in real time, making information immediately available in a user-friendly format. Custom cubes for a number of programs have been created as well and will be available to the field shortly. Watch for an announcement on our Web site about trainings.

The Stuart Foundation has been working with Cal-PASS to link the Child Welfare Services database with the Cal-PASS database to better understand educational outcomes for foster youth. This groundbreaking effort is setting California at the forefront of efforts to ensure that this often neglected population is afforded equal educational opportunities and to improve educational policies and programs to support their educational success.

In other developments, a contract with

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ECAP: Evaluating Success

Five years ago, through discussions with intersegmental colleagues, the Cal-PASS San Diego East County English Professional Learning Council (PLC) members realized that high school students were not mastering the common requirements of reading, analyzing and synthesizing expository (i.e., nonfiction) texts to be used for discussion and writing. Although these skills are common requirements for students in high schools and post-secondary institutions, high school students are unprepared for this critical aspect of postsecondary work.

To address this, the Cal-PASS English Curriculum Alignment Project (ECAP) was initiated. A team of 13 teachers from the West Hills High School’s English Department and San Diego State University’s Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies designed assignment types around the common requirements, and the West Hills High School English faculty developed new curriculum to merge expository text with existing literary focused curriculum.

The Cal-PASS ECAP team has developed nonfiction assignment sequences for 9th through 12th grades. The curriculum emphasizes the following requirements: (a) critical reading of expository texts; (b) understanding and articulation of rhetorical

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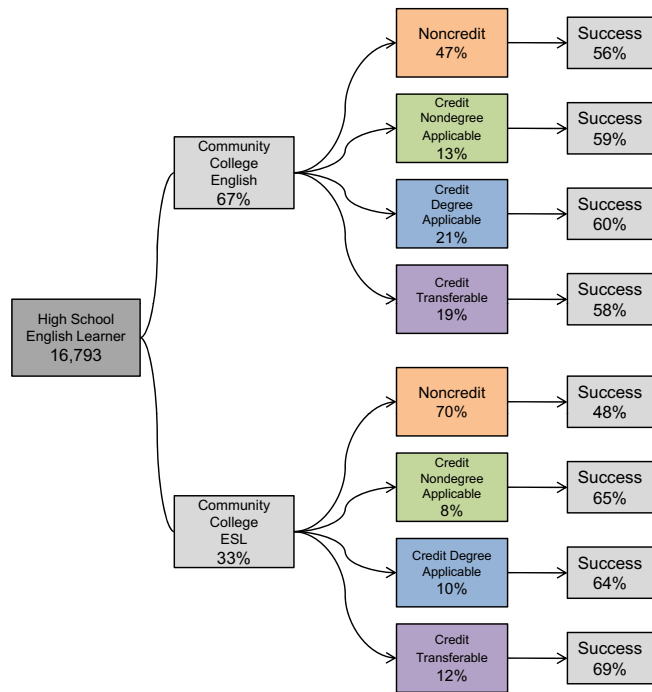
Spotlight on Data:

EL Students' English Pathways

There are many pathways between high school and college, especially for students who are learning English as a second language. When English learner (EL) or English as a second language (ESL) students enroll at a college, they work with counselors and faculty to determine if they should continue taking English courses designed for ESL students or if they should take English courses for native English speakers. Within each pathway there are several levels of courses for students to select from.

The figure below shows the pathways taken by a group of 16,793 students who were identified as EL students in high school and subsequently enrolled in an English class at a community college. High school EL status was determined by outcomes from the Comprehensive English Learner Diagnostic Test (CELDT) and by high school course-taking patterns. Only those students who attended schools in the Cal-PASS data-sharing system were included. Students were not included if the time between high school and community college enrollments was outside the timeframe of the database.

The figure shows that about two thirds of high school EL students attempted courses for native English speakers. Students attempting community college ESL courses were much more likely to attempt noncredit courses than those attempting community college



EL Students' High School to Community College English Course Pathways

English courses. In general, success rates (earning a grade of C or better) were higher for students attempting credit courses (rather than noncredit courses), but the reasons for these differences are unknown. An important consideration is that some students are seeking to transfer to a four year college while others are intent upon quickly building English skills for job advancement. Also consider that community colleges vary in

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the Employment Development Department (EDD) has been signed and Cal-PASS staff is hopeful that EDD data will soon be linked to Cal-PASS data so that the relationship between preparation for work and outcomes may be examined.

Cal-PASS also is working in partnership with the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, to identify successful practices in dual enrollment initiatives for populations underrepresented in California's colleges. Funded by the U. S. Department of Education and the Irvine Foundation, Cal-PASS will provide member institutions participating in the project with systematic, Web-based access to their data in support of program evaluation and improvement efforts.

The partnerships Cal-PASS has formed with these foundations and others obviously represent the best of times. There are, however, some difficult financial issues at hand. At the time of publication, Cal-PASS is facing a 20 percent cut in state funding. As always, staff members are looking at ways to become more efficient so that Cal-PASS can continue to improve student transition and success.

Data submission woes?

Help is available!

help@calpass.org

ACCESS Gains Momentum

Fifty-three high school, community college, and university faculty from Cal-PASS Professional Learning Councils (PLCs) attended a three-day convening in late June to share curricula materials and discuss course alignment across segments. These faculty members represented 26 PLCs that are working on the Aligning Curricula and Career Education for Student Success (ACCESS) initiative. The ACCESS initiative is made possible by the generosity of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Haas Jr. Foundation, and most recently, the Girard Foundation.

Efforts on the ACCESS Initiative began last spring when faculty gathered curricula materials for the ACCESS courses of interest and started or continued discussions of curriculum alignment for sequential courses in their PLC meetings. The 2009 Summer Convening was an opportunity to bring faculty together from around the state to discuss curriculum and curriculum alignment across regions and across segments. The outcomes of the 2009 Summer Convening included:

- creating first drafts of entrance and exit competencies for math, English, and ESL courses from 11th grade through transfer-level coursework in post-secondary education
- developing first drafts of model assessment items for each exit competency listed above
- reviewing and discussing how courses are aligned (or misaligned) from one course to the next (within and across educational segments)

In addition to creating these tangible products, the Summer Convening was also an opportunity for faculty to network with colleagues who teach the same coursework in other educational institutions.

In the coming academic year, faculty will build on these outcomes by collaborating with regional colleagues at PLC meetings and online with more than 300 statewide ACCESS PLC participants. ACCESS PLCs will further refine entrance and exit competencies, develop model assessment items for each exit competency, and integrate Career/Technical Education assessment examples into the curricula. The ultimate outcomes of this pilot project will be curricula maps from 11th grade through transfer-level coursework at the community colleges and curricula guides that include statewide aligned exit and entrance competencies (and model assessment examples) that can be utilized by faculty as resources to inform their teaching practice.

The ACCESS initiative will result in a methodology and product that clearly and effectively communicates what students are expected to know when they complete one course in order to be successful in the next sequential course. This work is good for students, faculty, individual educational institutions, and the California educational system. For more information about ACCESS, contact Dr. Eden Dahlstrom, Access Project Director, at edahlstrom@calpass.org or (530) 204-7129.

Cal-PASS and CALPADS: *A Partnership*

A commonly asked question is “What is the difference between Cal-PASS and CALPADS?” Although the names may sound similar and the two systems are complementary, they are quite different.

CALPADS is the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System created and administered by the California Department of Education (CDE). It was designed to meet federal reporting requirements and to establish a K–12 statewide student system. Several years in the making, CALPADS is scheduled to go live this August. Cal-PASS and CALPADS staff have been working cooperatively over the last several years to ensure that the two systems can work together to accomplish the goals of each. This collaboration will benefit many, but none so much as the K–12 staff responsible for data submissions. Since Cal-PASS data are a subset of what is collected via CALPADS, Cal-PASS will begin getting the K–12 data directly from CALPADS with the 2009–10 academic year, easing the burden on the K–12 district data staff. The

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Spotlight, *cont.*

their offerings. Some have robust non-credit programs designed to lead to credit courses. Others have more modest non-credit offerings aligned toward lifelong learning and building basic job skills. Understanding student progression in relation to their goals and the opportunities offered by institutions can help educators promote the pathways most likely to lead to success.



Cal-PASS and CALPADS, *cont.*

benefits for this are many: K–12 staff won't have to submit data to both places; there will be better data quality in Cal-PASS as other uses of the data through CALPADS will ensure more attention to data quality; and Cal-PASS will be able to focus less on the mechanics of data submission and more on the intersegmental use of the data, its primary mission.

The CDE and Cal-PASS are currently working out the process for transferring the data and are collaboratively writing policy on the release of data from CALPADS to Cal-PASS to meet the security and privacy requirements of both partners as well as the districts. The Standardized Testing and Recording (STAR) and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) data currently being collected by Cal-PASS will not be a part of the CALPADS data transfer because not all of the testing variables used by Cal-PASS are part of CALPADS. Those collections will continue to be created via the Cal-PASS software that extracts data from the original test result files. This annual submission requires minimal staff time and assistance is available from the Cal-PASS helpdesk staff. For questions on CALPADS and Cal-PASS, contact help@calpass.org

ECAP: Evaluating Success, *cont.*

analysis of argument and text structures; (c) comprehension of the purpose/context of text; and (d) use of these skills in the research process.

Four years into the project, West Hills' teachers were surveyed about their Cal-PASS ECAP experiences. Seven out of 10 responding faculty reported increased use of expository text in their teaching because of their involvement in ECAP. Almost two thirds believed they were addressing more standards using expository text than before their involvement in the project. Eighty-eight percent reported that additional expository text lessons have better prepared their students for college than traditional high school curricula.

Students also are reporting success when they enter postsecondary institutions:

"Thank you so much for teaching us how to analyze and chunk nonfiction pieces. Our first essay is based on two articles and we were assigned to 'mark them up'....If it wasn't for your class I would be completely lost....My instructor talked about using ethos, logos, and pathos in our papers and I was one of the few who knew what they were. I can't thank you enough for integrating these important college concepts into your class!"

"So I get to my Rhetorical Writing Class [at the university] and what is the very first assignment? Hmmm... a précis! And everyone else in the class had NO clue what the heck that was except me!"

Cal-PASS is continuing to evaluate this work and assess student performance and outcomes. Based on preliminary evidence of success in the pilot high school, the project was expanded to include three high schools in the 2008–09 academic year with two more to be added in 2009–10. Additionally, a local community college has agreed to waive the English placement examination for students from West Hills and place students from this district into transfer-level English courses as their initial English placement.

For more information about ECAP, please contact Dr. Shelly Valdez, Director for Regional Collaboration, at svaldez@calpass.org.



A Partnership of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
and the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

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**Cal-PASS will begin
collecting data for the
2008–2009 academic
year in August.
Details available at
www.calpass.org**