

## Chapter 1



### Who are the Students with Basic Skills Needs?

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# Chapter 1



## Who are the Students with Basic Skills Needs?

If we asked you to define the basic skills student in California, what would you say? Stop for a moment and imagine a typical developmental level student, perhaps one with whom you've worked or taught. What does he or she look like? What are his or her academic needs? Use the chart below to complete your portrait.

### Student Portrait

Place a check in all the boxes that apply to your image of a typical basic skills student in California.



- New student; recently graduated high school seniors
- Adult student from the workforce
- Immigrant student
- First generation college student
- Particular cultural or ethnic group
- Student with learning disabilities
- Student scoring at a basic skills level on placement tests
- Student who uniformly require help in all basic skills areas
- Remedial student from the CSU and UCs
- Student who may require discrete or focused help in a single area (ESL, reading, writing, mathematics, study skills) while having adequate collegiate or advanced skills on another area
- All of the above

Now, picture the moment this student stepped on to your campus. What dreams have impelled him or her to come? What courage might it take to face the bewildering maze of registration and assessment procedures for the very first time?

Take the image one step further. Imagine the moment this student hears that he or she has assessed into basic skills.

Now, their college education has taken a turn. As you probably know from direct experience, assessing into basic skills may be confusing or carry a stigma for many students. Certainly, their dreams may require adjustment because now they cannot take the college classes they'd intended to register for because they do not fulfill the pre-requisites. They may require many



more classes, a longer period of time to complete their degree and more tuition fees than they had originally planned. For adult learners, this may mean that they cannot advance in employment as soon as they had hoped. Some immigrants, regardless of their skills, capabilities or educational preparation in their home country, may not be able to succeed at work or school here because their pronunciation is not clear or their writing needs focused attention.



But what will acquiring these basic skills mean? Flash forward many semesters and imagine the student you first pictured at graduation. Perhaps he or she has hugged you after receiving a certificate or diploma or written you a little note to let you know about successes that occurred after leaving your college. Though the rigor of our work sometimes makes us forget, we all know students who are proof positive that mastering basic skills unlocks the door to all higher education, creating a ladder toward jobs that will sustain life above the poverty line. Perhaps you are one of those stories yourself, which is why you are so committed to working with this population. You know that acquiring basic skills provides entry or promotion in occupations that will also provide financial security. On a larger scale, these skills also create an educated citizenry, so crucial in our bewildering and fast-changing world. Finally, mastering basic skills have also been shown to create a pathway to success for the children of these students. No wonder the Board of Governors recently commented,

“More than any other postsecondary segment in California, the community colleges exemplify the spirit of the California Education Code Section 66201 which affords each able Californian an unparalleled educational opportunity:

*It is the intent of the Legislature that each resident of California who has the capacity to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to enroll in an institution of higher education. Once enrolled, each individual should have the opportunity to continue as long and as far as his or her capacity and motivation, as indicated by academic performance and commitment to educational advancement, will lead him or her to meet academic standards and institutional requirements.’*

To this end, it is imperative that the community colleges continue to move forward with efforts underway to make improvements in ESL and basic skills. The MIS data reveal that for the 2006-07 academic year, close to 70% of the students enrolled in credit and noncredit ESL and basic skills courses were Hispanic/Latina/o, Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islander and African-American. Leading basic skills and ESL students to succeed in college is critical to the achievement of educational equity and to the state’s long-term social and economic health.”<sup>1</sup>

If you forget occasionally that what you are doing is important work, this is a reminder. The student you pictured at the opening of this chapter is depending on you and your college to make a life of meaning and security. The building that we create to house his or her academic



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<sup>1</sup> *Report on the System’s Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills.* Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008 pp. 32 -33

dreams will impact not only the individual student, his or her children but also you and me, our community, our state and even our nation.

In order to plan that structure or shore up the one we have already built, we need to closely examine who the students with basic skills needs are across the entire state. We must get a firmer handle on how well we're doing addressing their needs.

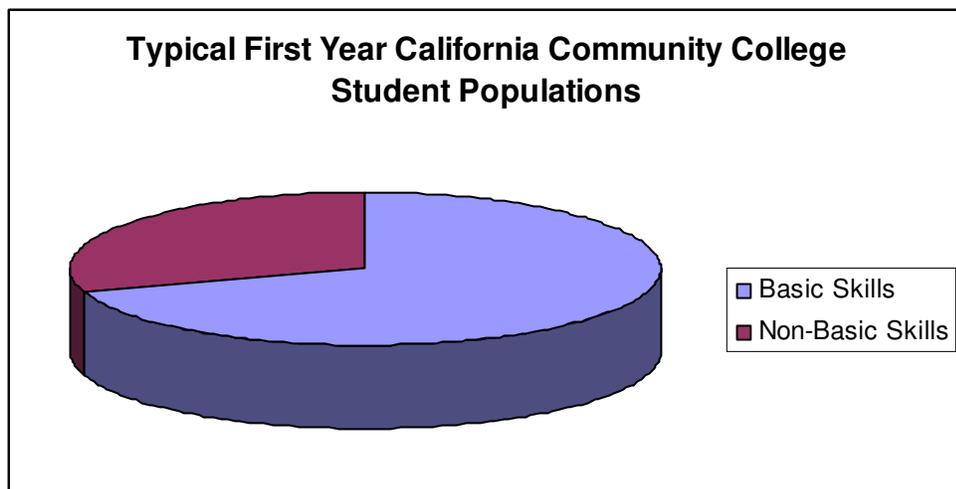


We're now going to throw a bunch of numbers at you. If you begin to feel bewildered, your head swimming as you try to make sense of these figures, go back to picturing students with basic skills needs you actually know. Remember their stories, their challenges and triumphs. See their individual faces. Let's take a look at who we are all working so hard to serve.

## Demographics

One of the first things we know about students with basic skills needs is that there are no standard descriptors. According to the data we have, the correct answer to the quiz at the beginning of this chapter would be to check every box in quiz or  All of the above. Even this does not capture the diversity among our students with basic skills needs! The students enrolling in the basic skills courses are predominantly Hispanic/Latina/o, Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islander and African-American. Consideration of basic skills students' needs and success is an essential component of providing equity for all Californians.

The unduplicated headcount for California Community Colleges 2006-2007 academic year was 2,621,445 students. We are the largest higher education system in the world! Like colleges all across the country, the California Community Colleges assess 70% to 85% students into a pre-collegiate level in one or more of the basic skills areas.



Remember, we are defining basic skills as “those foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language, as well as learning skills and study skills, which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*, The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, July 2007 (second edition) p.4.

Loosely translated, this could mean, that unless those basic skills needs are completely addressed in the first year, approximately 1.82 to 2.08 million students in the California Community College System may be basic skills. Is it possible that in any class on campus, during daily interactions in counseling, at any given moment in the library or bookstore, that you are interacting with students that have basic skills needs? Yes! The overwhelming percentage of students requiring training in one or more basic skills dictates that 70-80% of every function on a college campus involves a basic skills student. And yet in the academic year 2006-2007, only 719,482 students (27.44%) were enrolled in at least one credit or noncredit basic skills and/or ESL course; 326,478 enrolled in credit courses and 393,004 enrolled in noncredit course.<sup>3</sup>

Where were the rest of those students with basic skills needs? They were attending non-basic skills courses!

### **How diverse are students with basic skills needs?**

The chart on the following page provides data about the students enrolled in credit and non-credit basic skills courses. These data tells us that registering for classes are not equally represented by ethnicity and do not always approximate the total percentage represented in the system.

- Compared to the 7.49% African-American students system-wide, 11.24% are enrolled in credit basic skills and far fewer in non-credit basic skills.
- Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islanders enroll in basic skills classes at a higher rate than their percentage in the general population, and they tend to enroll in the non-credit basic skills courses at a slightly higher percentage than in credit basic skills.
- Hispanic/Latina/o students enroll in both credit and noncredit basic skills at much higher rates than the system-wide percentages.
- Whites enroll at much lower rates in basic skills classes whether credit or noncredit.

Significantly, the percentage of students enrolled in non-credit seems to be an essential starting point for Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic/Latina/o students with basic skills needs. Adequately supporting, funding and assessing this noncredit coursework is an important legislated responsibility in providing opportunity for all individuals to higher education (Education Code Section 66201).

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<sup>3</sup> Information from the *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008

**Table 1**  
**California Community College Academic Year 2006-2007**  
**Headcount of Students System-wide as Compared to**  
**Students Enrolled in Credit and Non-credit by Ethnicity**

ETHNICITY	% OF TOTAL HEADCOUNT (Total Unduplicated headcount)	% OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT in <b>Credit Basic Skills &amp; ESL</b> (total headcount)	% OF ENROLLMENT in <b>Non-credit Basic Skills &amp; ESL</b> (total headcount)
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	7.49% (196,449)	11.24% (36,688)	6.23% (24,470)
ASIAN/FILIPINO / PAC ISLANDER	16.40% (429, 897)	17.00% (55,529)	19.39% (76,208)
HISPANIC/LATINA/O	28.79% (754,708)	41.40% (135,156)	43.72% (171,821)
NATIVE AMERICAN	0.86% (22,433)	0.92% (2,987)	0.54% (2,115)
OTHER, NON-WHITE	1.98% (51,999)	1.99% (6,485)	1.89% (7,420)
WHITE	35.40% (928,056)	22.57% (73,702)	18.69% (73,459)
UNKNOWN	9.08% (237,903)	4.88% (15,931)	9.54% (37,511)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(2,621,445)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(326,478)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(393,004)</b>

Source: modified from the *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008 found on pages 5-7.

### What about gender?

The overall percentage of female students (54.8%) is greater than male students in our system as a whole. This same pattern in Credit and Noncredit classes exists with just a slightly higher percentage of females (57.33). See the chart in Appendix I that displays system-wide data. Students with basic skills needs are not typified by sex.

## **How many are citizens?**

The *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills (2008)* provides information about the citizenry of the students in Basic Skills. Approximately 55.3% are citizens, 17.89% are non-citizens, 12.34% are other, and 14.47% are of unknown citizenry. Appendix I shows detail about the number and percentage of citizen and non-citizen students enrolled in basic skills and ESL credit and noncredit courses. It is important to note that the over-representation of Hispanic/Latina/o students and of non-U.S. citizens in basic skills can be attributed to the inclusion of ESL courses in the definition of "basic skills." Students with basic skills needs cannot be typified by citizenry.

## **How about age?**

Finally, in terms of age, basic skills student represent the spectrum, with about one quarter in the recently graduated high school age group and another large group represented by all those over 26 years of age. Overall, students 21 and younger represent 44.49% of the students with basic skills needs, while 26 years of age and over are 40.57% of the students with basic skills needs. Appendix I indicates detail on specific age groups. Students with basic skills needs cannot be typified by age.

## **So, how well are we doing in addressing the needs of these diverse Students with basic skills needs?**

One way to determine how well our present strategies are working is to look at the success rate of students enrolled in basic skills and ESL. basic skills student success data over the last six years have not changed significantly. The table below provides success rates reported by the California Community College System Office for all ESL, English, Mathematics, and all courses coded as basic skills over the last six years. By success, we mean receiving a C or better or a pass in a course.

**The success rate fluctuates slightly, but overall the classes show a success rate averaging around 61.34% in the combined basic skills area.**

In 2006-07, the highest success rate was in the area of ESL, slightly over seventy percent (70.6%). And, though the changes are small, the total success rate has gone down overall. Half a percentage point represents a large number of students. Appendix II contains a summary of success in all basic skills, non-basic skills and pre-collegiate courses by disciplines. However, the following table provides the trends in success for the last six years in basic skills courses. Table 2 below summarizes the success rates over the last five years in the Basic skills areas.

**Table 2**  
**California Community Colleges Academic Year 2001-02 to 2006-07**  
**Student Success Rates in Basic Skills and ESL**

Academic Year	ESL Success Rate	English Success Rate	Math Success Rate	Total Basic Skills Success Rate
01-02	68.7%	59.5%	53.7%	61.2%
02-03	69.8%	60.7%	56.2%	62.7%
03-04	69.8%	60.5%	55.1%	62.2%
04-05	69.7%	59.4%	53.7%	61.3%
05-06	69.9%	58.8%	52.5%	60.6%
06-07	70.6%	59.3%	52.2%	60.5%

Source: *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008. p. 35

Let's look at that number again. Only an average of 61.34 % of students with basic skills needs receive a C or better in a course. Is that a success? There is great debate on the issue. What do you think? Record your thoughts in the box below:

What if you discovered that when you looked at these success rates certain groups of students were failing at higher rates? Data for populations suggest that we need to alter our strategies to help some students in different ways. These data do not suggest that we “lower the standards so more can succeed.” However, we know that different learning styles test differently. To help our students succeed, to improve the health in California's economy, we must look at these success rates and adapt different teaching methods.

**Successful Completion Rates**

Another way to look at success is to determine how many students who started in Basic Skills in a specified year (called a cohort) successfully completed specific outcomes years later. If we define those outcomes as completion of a degree, a certificate or transferring we get a picture of their success over

time. Let's look at students who were enrolled in basic skills classes in 2001-2002 and track their successful outcomes for five years.

Table 3 shows these cumulative outcomes by ethnicity. It is evident that ethnic groups achieve these outcomes at different rates. For example, 43.1% of Filipino students who originally began in basic skills eventually earned a degree, certificate or transferred, while only 20.17% of Latina/os did. Truly examining these differences can help us to meet the differing needs of our diverse students.

And it's imperative that we do so. Satisfaction with the successful outcomes of some students, without looking at those who are not succeeding, has the potential to disenfranchise populations that require different types of support and opportunities. Our legislated mandate and the best practices required in accreditation all speak to meeting the needs of all our diverse populations while maintaining high standards.

**Table 3**  
**Student Progress to AA/AS Degree, Vocational Education Certificate, or**  
**Transfer to A Four-Year College or University,**  
**Fiscal Year 2001-02 to Fiscal Year 2006-07**

Ethnicity	Enrolled in Basic Skills	% of total originally enrolled in Basic Skills	% of total originally enrolled in Basic Skills in 2001-2002 that earned an AA/AS by 2006-2007	% of total originally enrolled in Basic Skills in 2001-2002 that earned a vocational certificate by 2006-2007	% of total originally enrolled in Basic Skills in 2001-2002 that transfer to a four year college by 2006-2007	% of total originally enrolled achieving any of these outcome
	2001-02					
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	60,673	7.75%	12.90%	3.56%	13.37%	29.82%
ASIAN	114,296	14.61%	13.68%	3.64%	20.10%	36.27%
FILIPINO	21,698	2.77%	18.30%	4.88%	4.02%	43.12%
HISPANIC	311,148	39.76%	9.26%	2.40%	24.59%	20.17%
NATIVE AMERICAN	6,010	0.77%	13.89%	3.68%	0.71%	30.28%
OTHER, NON-WHITE	14,158	1.81%	14.37%	2.97%	2.68%	37.72%
PACIFIC ISLANDER	4,255	0.54%	14.52%	3.20%	0.75%	36.59%
WHITE	194,440	24.85%	16.25%	3.72%	34.40%	39.03%
UNKNOWN	55,847	7.14%	7.94%	1.69%	5.23%	19.73%
	782,525		12.24%	3.04%	5.23%	29.04%

All of the students were enrolled in at least one basic skills course in 01-02. The transfer students earned at least 12.00 transferable units at a community college.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Original data source: *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008.

Appendix II shows a detailed list of success for course completion by discipline (TOP code) for students assessed with basic skills needs compared to non-basic skills students. This table has a lot of variability; one biology course may have a prerequisite of college level reading while another may not, ultimately affecting the outcome. As we stated in the beginning of this chapter, most of our classes, regardless of discipline probably contain a number of students with basic skills needs trying to be successful in college-level courses without all the necessary skills.

What do you think about these different rates? Are there things we can do to support the students' success in completing these benchmarks? Of course, we all know that there are complex factors that contribute to a student's success, many outside of school and far beyond our control, but each of these attainments relates directly to the future earning power of these students and the health of California. Take a moment to write down your ideas in the box below. Picture the students that you know.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their ideas and thoughts on the topic discussed in the text above.

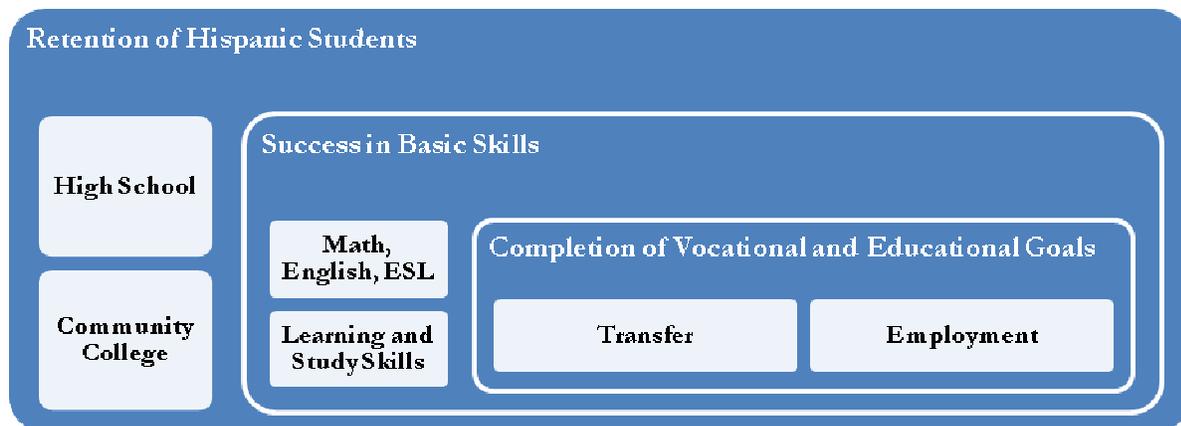
## Why MUST we improve these numbers?

One factor that may influence our success rates has to do with the dynamic effect of demographic and population changes. In California, the largest growing population of students with basic skills needs are Latina/os, in both community colleges and K-12. If we follow this population of students from high school through college we find some shocking and very important statistics to consider if we are going to improve student success and our California economic health. In a publication by the Hispanic Dropout Project (1998) we begin to discover the magnitude of this problem.

Nearly one in five of our nation's Hispanics, between the ages of 16-24 who ever enrolled in a United States school left school without either a high school diploma or an alternative certificate such as a GED, according to the most recently available data from the United States Census Bureau. If we consider all of our nation's Hispanics, including immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools, the Hispanic dropout rate reaches a staggering 30%. While accounting for just 56% of all U.S. immigrants, Hispanics account for nearly 90% of all immigrant dropouts.

While the dropout rate for other school-aged populations has declined, more or less steadily, over the last 25 years, the overall Hispanic dropout rate started higher and has remained between 30 and 35 percent during the same time period. As a result, today's dropout rate for Hispanics is 2.5 times the rates for blacks and 3.5 times the rate for white non-Hispanics.<sup>5</sup>

First our strategies must focus on retaining Hispanic students. Even after variables such as economic status, social backgrounds, immigration status and language proficiency are controlled or equalized, the studies show that Hispanic students are more likely to drop out of education. This lack of education condemns Hispanics and their families to a lifetime of poverty and effectively prevents them from participation in our democracy. Data from the United States Census Bureau and research from the Hispanic Dropout Project make it clear that without adequate education, "the country's soon-to-be largest minority group will be underprepared for employment, for making personal choices, and for engagement in civic life as is required for this democracy to grow and adapt as the founders intended it to."<sup>6</sup>



Secondly, our strategies must focus on helping these students to succeed in acquiring the basic skills necessary for high education. These responsibilities will fall heavily upon the California Community

<sup>5</sup> Secada, W.G., et al. *No More Excuses: The Final Report of the Hispanic Dropout Project*. February 1998. Retrieved at [http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/ccvi/pub/manuscript/Secada-No\\_More\\_Excuses.pdf](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/ccvi/pub/manuscript/Secada-No_More_Excuses.pdf) p. 5

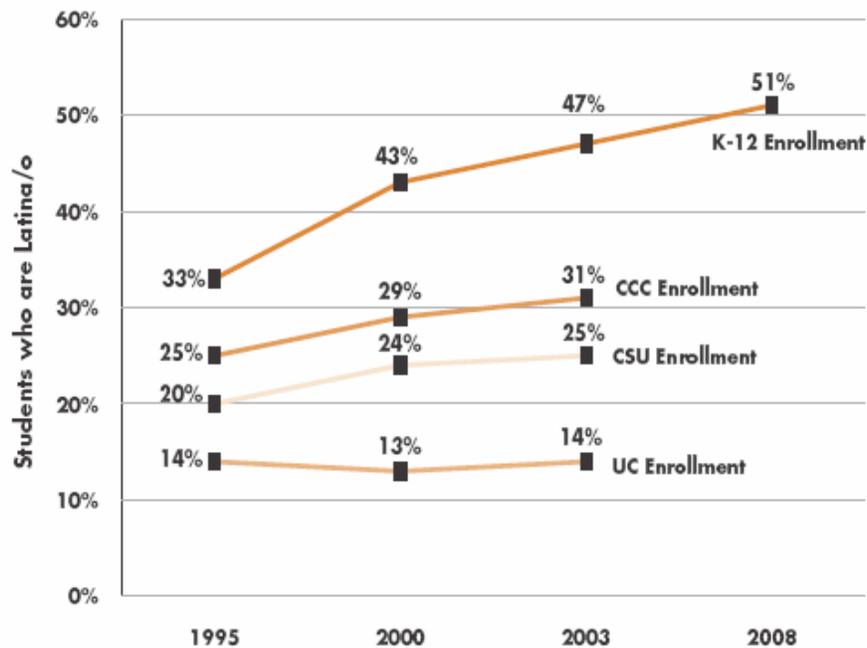
<sup>6</sup> Ibid p. 7  
Chapter 1

Colleges and particularly in the non-credit and basic skills courses. Lastly, we must create pathways to help students navigate the system, identifying educational goals, acquiring the necessary skills and completing courses of study, whether it is a GED, Career Technical certificate or degree, or transfer to four year schools.

Yet another vital factor is the data about those students that are retained. The following information and graphs visualize the reality of the student success. As you examine this information, continue to ask yourself if these data are acceptable and what the continued trend will produce in our society.

### Latina/o Students' Share of California Enrollments

Figure 1. Percentage of Latina/o Students in Public K-12 Schools and Postsecondary Institutions in California



Source: Standardized data from California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office 2007 (CCC Enrollment); California Department of Finance 2000 (K-12 Enrollment); and California Postsecondary Education Commission 2007 (CSU and UC Enrollment).

Note: K-12 projection data for 2003 and 2008 are from California Department of Finance 2000.

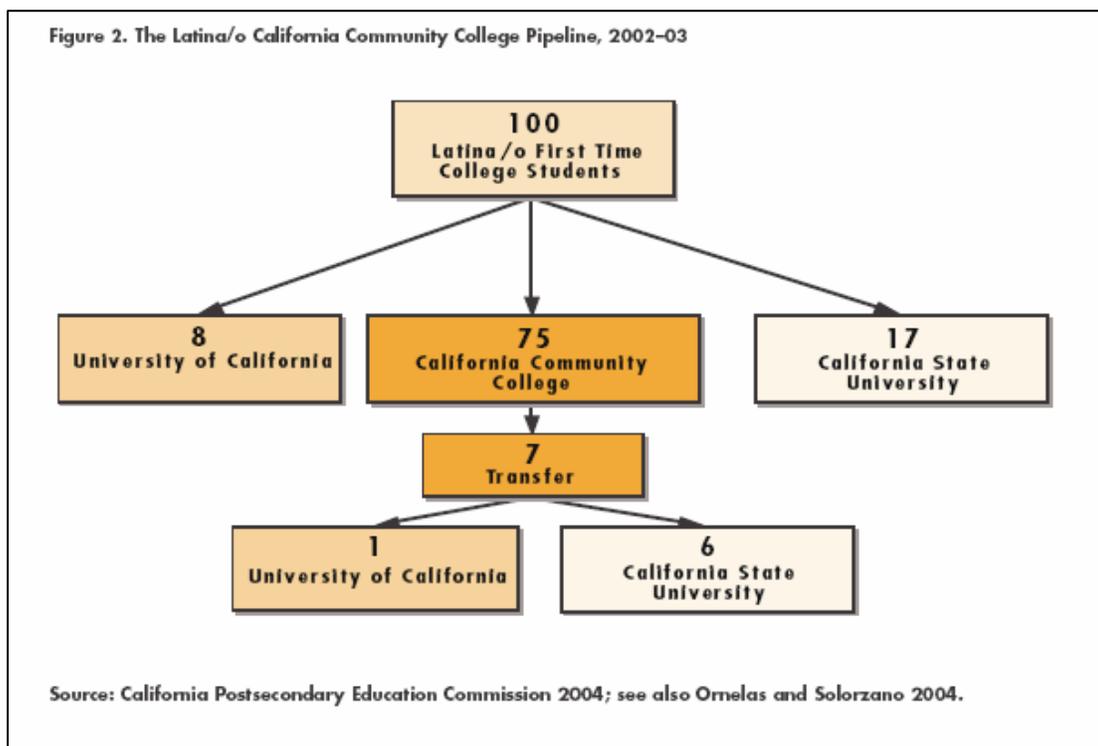
From Martha A. Rivas, Jeanette Pérez, Crystal R. Alvarez, and Daniel G. Solorzano, *An Examination of Latina/o Transfer Students in California's Postsecondary Institutions*, CSRC Latina/o Policy and Issues Brief No. 16 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2007). Reproduced with permission.

If we examine the success of Latina/o students, we see an interesting impact on community college student demographics. In their study of the importance of the transfer process for Latina/o community college students, Martha A. Rivas, Jeanette Pérez, Crystal R. Alvarez, and Daniel G.

Solorzano report that 75% of college-going Latina/o students will go to a community college (see figure 2).<sup>7</sup>

But here is the shocking news “Of the 75 at community colleges, only about 7 on average will transfer — 6 to Cal State campuses and 1 to a University of California campus.”<sup>8</sup>

In Table 3 we learned that Hispanic students represent the largest number of basic skills student (39.76%), yet they have lowest success rate (20.17%) If we simply continue to do what we have always done, our success rates will decline. We must address our lack of success! And we must address it at it applies to our fastest growing population of students in order to ensure a healthy California.



From Martha A. Rivas, Jeanette Pérez, Crystal R. Alvarez, and Daniel G. Solorzano, *An Examination of Latina/o Transfer Students in California’s Postsecondary Institutions*, CSRC Latina/o Policy and Issues Brief No. 16 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2007). Reproduced with permission.

A community college professor remarked, “As a Hispanic female, I’m very aware of where my classmates are. I was the only female who finished college out of my small graduating class. When I look at the statistics, I see that Latina/os work the most and get paid the least. At the very bottom are females. These things get to me. In the decade since the U.S. Secretary of Education declared an emergency in Latina/o education, there hasn’t been any improvement.”

<sup>7</sup> See Martha A. Rivas, Jeanette Pérez, Crystal R. Alvarez, and Daniel G. Solorzano, *An Examination of Latina/o Transfer Students in California’s Postsecondary Institutions*, CSRC Latina/o Policy and Issues Brief No. 16 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> *California’s Transfer Mismatch* June 8, 2007 *Inside Higher Ed* retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/06/08/Latina/o>

The Board of Governors of the California Community College System agrees that improvement is needed. After looking at these success rates, they have concluded that, “While many colleges offer quality programs in ESL and basic skills, there is a need to enhance these programs in order to increase student success in the ESL and basic skills courses, which do serve as the pathway to program and degree completion, transfer, and entrance in the workforce for a large number of entering students...A number of strategies might be considered as colleges take steps to improve ESL and basic skills.”<sup>9</sup>

It is important to visualize what these numbers really mean. Look in the Appendix III of this chapter for a simple interactive visualization of these numbers.

### **What happens if we don't meet these needs?**

Before we go on to Chapter 2: An Overview, which asks you to look at the statistics and equity plans for your individual college and the later chapters which detail effective strategies for working with students with basic skills needs, let's take a moment to imagine what California might look like if we don't meet the needs of these students.

“In the early part of the twentieth century, education focused on the acquisition of literacy skills: simple reading, writing, and calculating. It was not the general rule for educational systems to train people to think and read critically, to express themselves clearly and persuasively, to solve complex problems in science and mathematics. Now, at the end of the century, these aspects of high literacy are required of almost everyone in order to successfully negotiate the complexities of contemporary life. The skill demands for work have increased dramatically, as has the need for organizations and workers to change in response to competitive workplace pressures. Thoughtful participation in the democratic process has also become increasingly complicated as the locus of attention has shifted from local to national and global concerns.” p.4<sup>10</sup>

Students requiring attention to these basic skills now represent the majority of the students that we see at our colleges. As you know, in our state, funding for non-credit and basic skills courses has always been significantly lower than for credit courses. Some citizens and legislators believe that providing funding for community college students who are under-prepared for college is like paying twice, the perception being “that the state may be paying again for what it has already paid for in high school” (Lazarick) (qtd. *The State of Basic Skills Instruction in California Community Colleges* ASCCC April 2000).<sup>11</sup>

This concern about paying twice for these students falls far short of reality. Without the education California's economic health will decline, and we will see a widening gap and classification among our citizens. According to *America's Perfect Storm* (2007), we have three major storm fronts washing over California and the nation:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008

<sup>10</sup> *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. (1999). John D. Bransford...[et al.], editors; Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning and Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Washington, D.C. National Research Council. Available at <http://www.nap.edu/html/howpeople1/>

<sup>11</sup> *The State of Basic Skills Instruction in California Community Colleges*. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges April 2000 retrievable at <http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Ppr.asp>

<sup>12</sup> Kirsch, I, Braun, H. & Yamamoto, K. (2007) *America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future*. Educational Testing Service (ETS): Princeton, New Jersey available at [ets.org/stormreport](http://ets.org/stormreport) (p13)

1. A burgeoning population that does not have basic skills in literacy and mathematics.
2. An economy that increasingly favors employment of workers with high technical skills.
3. A tsunami-sized demographic shift with the highest immigration rates in the last 100 years.

These factors are supported by data that show that a growing proportion of our population have low literacy skills. In fact, *America's Perfect Storm* (2007) provides data that establish that “half of America’s population lack literacy skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>13</sup> California needs more skilled workers to remain global economic leaders. Statistics show that the once competitive global economy of California is falling behind competitors. The authors of *America's Perfect Storm* conclude that this is magnified by the large demographic shifts in ethnic populations, the low and inadequate literacy and numeracy skills of many American youth and a declining rate of young people earning degrees. The younger working Californians are less educated than the older working Californians. This trend is significantly reversed in other states and countries. According to *It Can Happen: Unleashing the Potential of California's Community Colleges to Help Students Succeed and California Thrive* (2008), in order to have a competitive California economy we need to produce 50% more graduates. In other words for every 2 students that graduate or earn a degree or certificate, we need to have 3 instead or for every 100 graduates just to keep up, we need 150.<sup>14</sup>

California Community Colleges have an incredible potential to reverse this decline in California. The community colleges educate the vast majority of post-secondary Latino/a students, the fastest growing population in California. We educate the majority of nurses, fireman and policeman in California. And we have the only system that actively targets retraining of adults. What we need to do better is address the lack of basic skills in order to make that wide open door a door to the future instead of a door to failure.

We know what do to help these students succeed, but we often fail to do what is necessary. Two programs in California Community Colleges have shown evidence of enormous success in helping students identified as “at risk” by various criteria. These programs are EOPS programs (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) and DSPS (State-wide Disabled Students Programs & Services). The essential ingredients that facilitate success of EOPS and DSPS students can and should be modeled for more students, particularly Students with basic skills needs, if we are truly looking for student success. However, these successful programs each benefit only a very small number of our students (only 3-4% of the total CCC students are served by each program) as shown in Appendix IV. Because of these programs and the research cited in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*,<sup>15</sup> we know the best practices to create an organizational and administrative focus on meeting basic needs. They are:

- Effective programs
- Adequate staff development
- Innovative instructional practices.

Is your head spinning from all these statistics and the prognosis of doom and gloom? We are in a dire situation, there’s no doubt. But the Basic Skills Initiative provides us with a wonderful opportunity to

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid (p14)

<sup>14</sup> Shulock, Moore, Offenstien, & Kirilin. *It Can Happen: Unleashing the Potential of California's Community Colleges to Help Students Succeed and California Thrive* (February 2008), CSUS

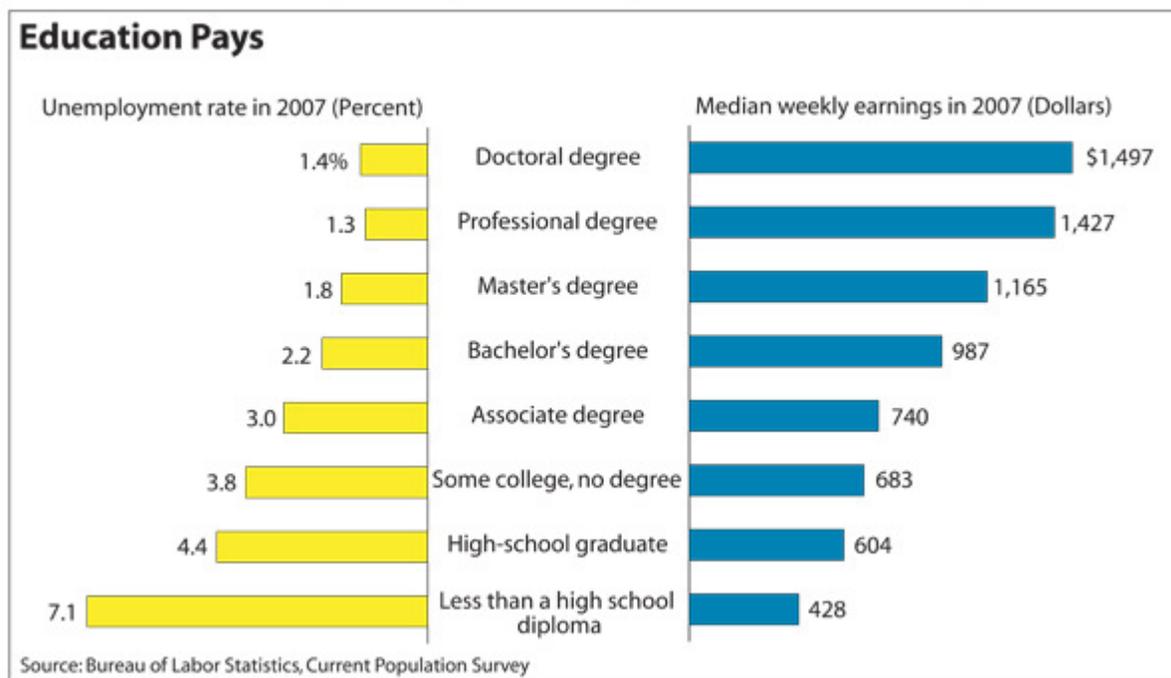
<sup>15</sup> *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*, The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, July 2007 (second edition)

begin to turn all of this around. And it can be used to show the legislators and citizens who don't want to fund basic skills that they are mistaken.

Let's go back to the student you pictured at the beginning of this chapter. Picture him once again at graduation, receiving a degree. See her working in the field of her choice, earning a good living.

What does succeeding at college mean? The California Dropout Research Project published in August of 2007 reported that California sustains \$6.4 billion in total economic losses from each cohort of 120,000 20-year-olds who do not complete high school. An "average" high school graduate earns \$290,000 more over a lifetime than does a high school dropout, and pays \$100,000 more in federal, state, and local taxes. The project also found that high school graduation reduces crime: by 20% for murder, rape, and other violent crimes; by 12 for drug-related offenses, and by 11% for property crime. A high school graduate compared to a dropout is 68% less likely to be on any welfare program.<sup>16</sup> These latest statistics in the graph below show how education is a strong predictor of both unemployment and weekly earnings nationwide.

**“Education pays in higher earnings and lower unemployment rates.**



[Chart data—TXT found at <http://www.bls.gov/emp/edupay.txt> Note: Data are 2007 annual averages for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. BLS has some data on the [employment status](#) of the civilian non institutional population 25 years and over by educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic origin online. The Bureau of the Census also has some data on the [educational attainment](#) online.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Belfield, C. and Levin, H. (2007) *The Return on Investment for Improving California's High School Graduation Rate*. University of California Santa Barbara. *California Dropout Research Project*. (2007). Retrieved at [http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs\\_reports.htm](http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs_reports.htm)

<sup>17</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. *Education Pays*. (2007) retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab7.htm>

For specific wage information for California and our students please look at the data in Appendix V. These data from the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC report) show that attending community college and earning a degree or certificate has helped students increase their earnings, approximating the California median income. We make a huge difference for many Californians and their families, serving those that would otherwise be marginalized. The California Community Colleges offer an open door to citizens and an opportunity to invest in the economic and social health of California, like no other system of education. And now the challenge is that we have large percentages of students with basic skills need which must be met before they can succeed. By using this handbook, you can do something **right now** to improve student's chances for success. We have provided it so you can invest time and resources in exploring the effective practices it contains.

Once you've chosen a few effective practices to explore, we encourage you to develop a means to assess them or use some of the assessment examples where they are included. This important step provides the data to validate the efficacy of basic skills instruction. It's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work constructing a better building that can house our students' academic dreams.



**Appendix for Chapter 1**  
**Who are Students with Basic Skills Needs?**



**Appendix 1:** Demographic Information about Students with basic skills needs

**Appendix 2:** State-wide Student Success in Basic Skills and Non-Basic Skills Courses

**Appendix 3:** The Stand Up Exercise – Visualizing our Student Success

**Appendix 4:** Students in DSPS and EOPS

**Appendix 5:** Statewide Wage Data from the ARCC (Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges)

**Appendix 6:** Resources for Chapter 1

## Appendix 1

### Demographic Information about Students with basic skills needs

#### A. Gender

**California Community Colleges Academic Year 2006-07  
Comparing All Courses with Credit and Noncredit Basic Skills/ESL Enrollment by Gender**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>STATE-WIDE UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT</b>	<b>% OF ENROLLMENT STATE-WIDE ALL COURSES</b>	<b>BASIC SKILLS &amp;ESL ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>% OF ENROLLMENT IN BASIC SKILLS ESL</b>
FEMALE	1,440,925	54.8%	412,487	57.33%
MALE	1,159,913	44.1%	296,468	41.21%
UNKNOWN	30,059	1.1%	10,527	1.46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,630,897</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>719,482</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008 combined with data from the Data Mart retrieved March 1 and found at

[http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/studdemo\\_annual\\_college\\_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=1000](http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/studdemo_annual_college_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=1000)

#### B. Citizenry

**California Community Colleges Academic Year 2006-07  
Enrollment in Credit and Noncredit Basic Skills and ESL by Citizenship**

<b>STATUS</b>	<b>CREDIT</b>	<b>% OF ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>NONCREDIT</b>	<b>% OF ENROLLMENT</b>
U.S. CITIZENS	246,595	75.53%	217,339	55.30%
NON-U.S. CITIZENS	65,095	19.94%	70,291	17.89%
OTHER	11,336	3.47%	48,478	12.34%
UNKNOWN	3,452	1.06%	56,896	14.47%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326,478</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>393,004</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008. p. 7

#### C. Age

**California Community Colleges Academic Year 2006-07  
Credit and Noncredit Basic Skills/ESL Enrollment by Age**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>BS-ESL ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>% OF ENROLLMENT</b>
< 18	46,310	6.44%
18-19	175,118	24.34%
20-21	98,630	13.71%
22-23	60,807	8.45%
24-25	45,119	6.27%
OVER 26	291,908	40.57%
UNKNOWN	1,590	0.22%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>719,482</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: *Report on the System's Current Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Skills*. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division of the System Office, January 2008. p. 8

## Appendix 2

### State-wide Student Success in Basic Skills and Non-Basic Skills Courses

The following data table is from the California Community College Chancellor's Office

<http://www.cccco.edu/SystemOffice/Divisions/TechResearchInfo/MIS/DataMartandReports/tabid/282/Default.aspx>

This table reports the student success of all discipline courses by basic skills versus non-basic skills courses by TOP code allowing a comparison of success between basic skills and non-basic skills

<b>State-wide Success Rate Spring 2007 All Disciplines</b>				
<b>Note: The State-wide figures represent 112 reported out of total of 117 reporting entities state-wide</b>				
<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Basic Skills Status</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Succeeded</b>	<b>Success</b>
		<b>Enrollments</b>		<b>Rate (%)</b>
Agriculture and Natural Resources (01)	Non-Basic-skills	26,514	20,649	77.88%
Architecture and Related Technologies (02)	Non-Basic-skills	8,159	5,908	72.41%
Biological Sciences (04)	Basic Skills	364	317	87.09%
Biological Sciences (04)	Non-Basic-skills	127,661	83,659	65.53
Business and Management (05)	Basic Skills	1,510	579	38.34%
Business and Management (05)	Non-Basic-skills	232,185	149,364	64.33%
Commercial Services (30)	Non-Basic-skills	14,145	11,289	79.81%
Commercial Services (30)	Basic Skills	1	0	0
Education (08)	Basic Skills	1620	971	59.94%
Education (08)	Non-Basic-skills	325,413	238,497	73.29%
Engineering and Industrial Technologies (09)	Basic Skills	165	85	51.52%
Engineering and Industrial Technologies (09)	Non-Basic-skills	135,738	107,238	79.00%
Environmental Sciences and Technologies (03)	Non-Basic-skills	5,888	4,324	73.44%
Family and Consumer Sciences (13)	Basic Skills	52	32	61.54%
Family and Consumer Sciences (13)	Non-Basic-skills	152,710	108,737	71.20%
Fine and Applied Arts (10)	Basic Skills	232	114	49.14%
Fine and Applied Arts (10)	Non-Basic-skills	311,417	219,782	70.57%
Foreign Language (11)	Basic Skills	242	9	45.00%
Foreign Language (11)	Non-Basic-skills	97,539	65,324	66.97%
Health (12)	Basic Skills	633	473	74.72%

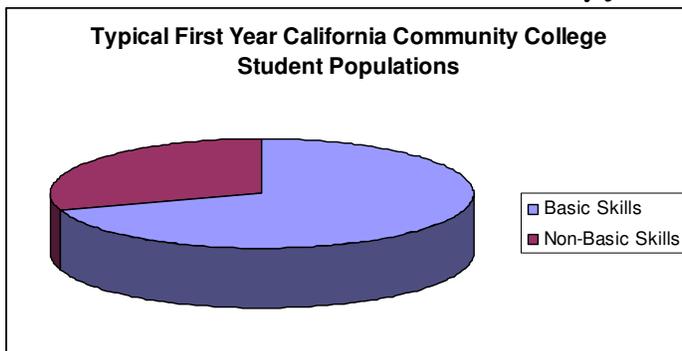
State-wide Success Rate Spring 2007 All Disciplines				
Note: The State-wide figures represent 112 reported out of total of 117 reporting entities state-wide				
Program Type	Basic Skills Status	Total	Succeeded	Success
		Enrollments		Rate (%)
Health (12)	Non-Basic-skills	117,841	97,885	83.07%
Humanities (Letters) (15)	Basic Skills	35,878	19,833	55.28%
Humanities (Letters) (15)	Non-Basic-skills	417,808	272,946	65.33
Information Technology (07)	Basic Skills	159	115	72.33%
Information Technology (07)	Non-Basic-skills	94,116	58,355	62.00%
Interdisciplinary Studies (49)	Basic Skills	167,346	97,386	58.19%
Interdisciplinary Studies (49)	Non-Basic-skills	129,738	87,586	67.51%
Law (14)	Non-Basic-skills	10,358	7,492	72.33%
Library Science (16)	Basic Skills	21	18	85.71%
Library Science (16)	Non-Basic-skills	6,087	3,854	63.32%
Mathematics (17)	Basic Skills	37,166	17,690	47.60%
Mathematics (17)	Non-Basic-skills	264,573	140,180	52.98%
Media and Communications (06)	Non-Basic-skills	54,404	37,852	69.58%
Military Studies (18)	Non-Basic-skills	116	67	57.76%
Physical Sciences (19)	Basic Skills	47	27	57.45%
Physical Sciences (19)	Non-Basic-skills	134,047	89,865	67.04%
Psychology (20)	Basic Skills	8	8	100.00%
Psychology (20)	Non-Basic-skills	136,278	86,197	63.25%
Public and Protective Services (21)	Basic Skills	785	777	98.98%
Public and Protective Services (21)	Non-Basic-skills	196,771	159,115	80.86%
Social Sciences (22)	Basic Skills	14	6	42.86
Social Sciences (22)	Non-Basic-skills	437,291	274,886	62.86
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>3,691,448</b>	<b>2,469,622</b>	<b>66.9</b>
Total non-Basic Skills		3,436,797	2,331,051	67.83%
Total Basic Skills		246,243	138,440	56.22%

Representing the latest state-wide data for duplicated head count retrieved March 1 2008.

## Appendix 3

### The Stand Up Exercise – Visualizing our Student Success

By Joan Cordova



**How many basic skills students are there?  
The stand up exercise using information  
from the Basic Skills Handbook  
Page 3 -8**

15% or fewer students are WITHOUT Basic Skills needs.

Step 1

To get an image of how few of the CCC students are NOT basic skills – 15% (*approximately one row if you had 100 people, 85 left standing*)

Step 2

Everybody stands representing the entire CCC student body 2.6 million students.

85% have basic skills needs. Leave 85 % standing, first row sits. These are the students with basic skills needs. Is there any moment on campus, any class, any interaction in the cafeteria/bookstore/library where a basic skills student is not involved present?

Step 3

What happens to these basic skills students as they go through the system?

Students with basic skills needs are standing, non-basic skills students sit down. (*Of 100 people this would be 80-85 left standing*)

Step 4

Who will succeed in the basic skills courses they take?

Of the basic skills students have 40% - 50% sit – these students will not pass the basic skills courses they sign in to (*of the 80-85 left standing 32-40 sit leaving 35 to 51 standing*)(**page 7 handbook**)

**\*\*\*ALSO note - that there are 2.6 million CCC students. If there are 100 people in the room - each person that sits down represents 26,000 students that do not make it.**

Step 5

Of the students that succeed in a basic skills class, how many will go on to the next level?

Of those that passed a basic skills course have 50% sit down – these are the only ones that will be successful in the next level class – we call this progression or basic skills improvement. Of those that improve or progress we have these final outcomes. (*of the 48-50 standing have 50% sit down leaving only 24-25 standing*)

Step 6

**How many of our CCC basic skills students will complete our CCC mission? (page 8 handbook)** (At this point only about 20% of the original room are standing) The good news. EACH of the standing individuals also represented 26,000 students. Is this enough?

12% All but one row sits. These standing individuals complete an AA/AS. This is one of our success rates. This is the report the public and the legislature gets on our success at accomplishing our mission As reported to the public and the legislature in the ARCC data.

5% Half of the remaining one row sits. These standing individuals transfer. This is one of our success rates. As reported to the public and the legislature in the ARCC data.

3% Half of the remaining group sits. These standing individuals complete a certificate. This is one of our success rates. As reported to the public and the legislature in the ARCC data.

## Appendix 4 Students in DSPS and EOPS

### EOPS - Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

The last table represents the students identified and served by the EOPS, a very successful program for a group of highly defined students at risk but represents only 3.8% of the students in the 2007-2008 academic year.

<b>State-wide Extended Opportunity Programs and Services(EOPS) For 2006-2007</b>	
<b>EOPS Status</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
EOPS and CARE participant	9,593
EOPS participant	92,675
Not an EOPS participant	2,528,629
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,630,897</b>

[http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/Programs\\_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=500](http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/Programs_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=500)

### DSPS - State-wide Disabled Students Programs & Services

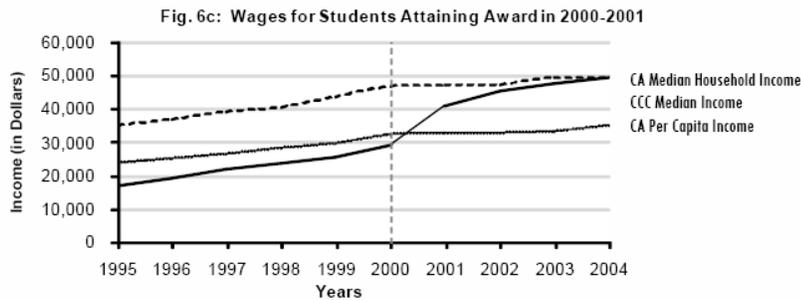
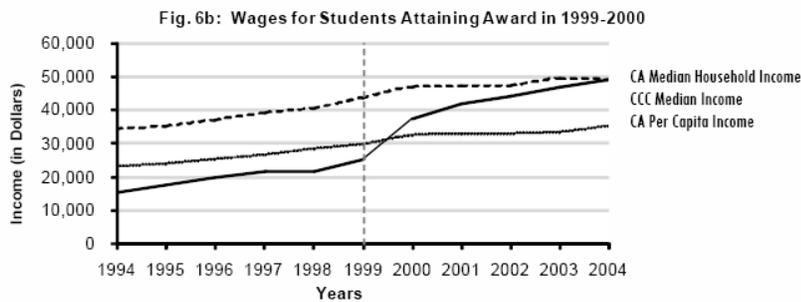
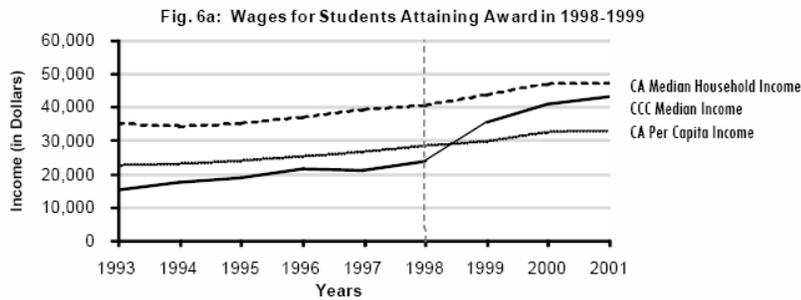
These data represent the students in the system for the Academic Year 2007-2007 that were identified and served by DSPS. Notice that 3.37% of the overall students are served by the DSPS

<b>State-wide Disabled Students Programs &amp; Services(DSPS) For 2006-2007</b>	
<b>Primary Disability</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
Acquired Brain Injury	4,414
Developmentally Delayed Learner	8,887
Hearing Impaired	3,501
Learning Disabled	21,071
Mobility Impaired	12,306
Not Disabled	2,542,252
Other Disability	23,521
Psychological Disability	11,982
Speech/Language Impaired	542
Visually Impaired	2,421
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,630,897</b>

[http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/Programs\\_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=500](http://misweb.cccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/Programs_rpt.cfm?RequestTimeout=500)

# Appendix 5 – Accountability Report for California Community Colleges ARCC 2008 Report: Systemwide Indicators

## Student Progress and Achievement: Vocational / Occupational / Workforce Development



### Results:

Figures 6a, 6b, and 6c represent income trends for students attaining a degree or certificate in (a) 1998-1999, (b) 1999-2000, and (c) 2000-2001. The dashed vertical line in each figure signifies the award year for each cohort. The trend lines for CCC Median Income in Figure 6 (solid line) suggest that students receiving awards from community college programs generally experience wage gains in the years following vocational award attainment for which wage data are available. We include trend lines for California Median Household Income (dashed line) and California Per Capita Income (dotted line) to provide additional perspective.

While there are several important caveats to the CCC Median Income trends shown in these figures, the lines indicate a noticeable “jump” in median income that occurs following receipt of an award. This jump takes place for all three wage cohorts (1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001). The wage trends continue at that higher level across the years for which we have post-award wage data.

For Methodology and Data Source, see Appendix B. Note that data for these figures have not changed from the 2007 ARCC report. Updated wage data were not yet available from California’s Employment Development Department for the 2008 ARCC report.



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Page 19

State of California 18

<sup>18</sup> Focus on Results: Accountability Reporting for California Community Colleges. March, 2008) California Community Colleges State Chancellor’s Office Sacramento, California. Retrieved from [http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/ARCC/arcc\\_2008\\_final.pdf](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/ARCC/arcc_2008_final.pdf)

## Appendix 5 – Resources for Chapter 1

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