Looking for Effective Strategies
for Outreach to and Having Broader Impact in
K-12 and Community College?

TOOL KIT FOR WORKING WITH K-12 and COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
(Equity and Inclusion)

Includes:

- Five Issues to consider when working with K-12 and community colleges
- Three "C's" - Where mishaps occur when working with K-12 and community college
- Providing Context: Trending issues in public education

Since the 1970s the Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) has been critical to fulfilling Berkeley's public service mission to provide educational excellence by serving as a symbol of hope for all Californians. CEP's K-12 and Community College programs deliver free academic enrichment, counseling and educational support services to over 60,000 students and their families at more than 125 schools and 68 California community colleges. In addition, the Center engages thousands of educators through professional development on educational access and equity issues. If you have any questions or comments regarding this Tool Kit, please contact CEP at 510-643-1439 or email CEP at edpartnerships@berkeley.edu.

Five Issues to Consider When Working with K-12 and Community Colleges

1. Include school site participation in grant development and writing:
(Remember: funders often look for level of school buy-in when deciding what to support)

    - Think through the purpose and goal of your work and how it fits into the mission/vision/curriculum of school/district (this is important even if you are developing new and innovative approaches)
    - What ideas might the school site or representatives have in applying your concept / idea / research to what the school is focusing on?
    - Who will be your district and local (school site) contact / coordinator?
    - Who do you need permission from at the district and site level to partner at the site – are policies already in place?
    - Research the school's demographics, data, SARC (School Accountability Report Card), Dept. of Ed school web site, school's web site, etc.
    - Make an appointment to visit the school when school is in session to feel/see the culture

2. Coordinate with UCB units (such as CEP), who maintain existing relationships with the school site(s) involved:

    - Who is already working with the school or district from UC Berkeley?
    - What relationships exist that might be leveraged?
    - Does the school already have significant Berkeley involvement? Is it feeling "over studied" or maxed out in any way?
    - What insight can be gained in discussing ideas and approaches with those already familiar with and working with the site / district?
    - What opportunities exist or are on the horizon that fit within the scope of your interest / area of research?
    - Is it possible to leverage existing projects / programs to gain greater effect for the school /research / grant?

3. The mission of the University, as regards outreach, is to primarily focus on schools with large populations of low-income, first generation to college students and families of color, that have low college-going rates and low academic profiles:

    - Speak to units that work with local schools / districts (such as CEP) to determine which districts serve students facing barriers to higher education
    - Which districts already have a targeted, intentional UC Berkeley program or outreach presence?

- If considering working with a specific district or school, does the district/school match the profile of the school and/or student body you specify in your grant? (e.g., low-income, Latino)
- How might the focus of the research or initiative address the challenges of the targeted population?

4. Consider developing a longer-term partnership with the school, not an "event", think of being part of a larger effort and how meaningful the work is long-term:

- School sites / districts are looking for partners that have similar or overlapping goals and interests and not necessarily to be used as a "guinea pig" without context.
- What might the grant or research bring to the site or district that aligns with their existing broader goals / strategies?
- How can results be measured and shared in a format and context that furthers the assessment and mission of the school site or district?
- If successful, a long-term partnership beyond the grant is possible and sustainable.

5. Be thoughtful about translating your content for educators, parents and students (e.g., cultural competence, age, experience, appropriateness):

- Is your content accessible to the various constituencies you are working with? How do you know it is?
- Do your grant (greater impact) partners or research subjects have a thorough understanding of what you are doing and buy-in to the idea and intended results?
- If you are working with groups or sub-groups that are not immediately familiar to you or similar culturally, with whom do you work to ensure that your work is culturally sensitive, aware and perceived in a positive manner?
- What needs to change in the delivery of content so that it is not such a struggle or "hard sell" to the communities you are working with?

Three "C's" - Where Mishaps Occur When Working with K-12 and Community College

1. Communication

- Discuss up front what enough "lead time" is for a school to be prepared. There's an awful lot going on at schools – did they get the notification/time for planning agreed to?
- Lack of follow-up: For example, the project promises a yearly statistical recap and report to all participants and the governing body – but the school hasn't seen it in four years.
- What other UCB programs/research is already on-going at the site? We are all perceived by the broader community as representing the "same" thing… what one

UCB representative says must be known by all of them at the site… don't frustrate existing positive relationships!

- Students are not guinea pigs for research! It is bad practice to assume that one can walk in and distribute a survey or conduct research without proper authorization AND participant release documentation AND written approval of the school site / district. Remember that the University has Human Subjects regulations and procedures when doing research. In addition, you should clarify with the school/district how data will be reported in terms of whether the school will be identified, or if a "proxy" will be used (e.g., urban school in mid-size city with predominantly an African American population).

2. Culture

- Have and demonstrate appreciation for the complexity of schools and their primary mission and the constraints they work under – schedule/ meetings/deadlines etc.
- Respect teachers, curriculum, school culture, students – one might not understand them but they must be treated respectfully.
- Be open to feedback – we have as much to learn about schools, their work and students as they might from us.
- Knowledge of district policies regarding research and evaluation at school sites – don't find out that your work is inadmissible or has been inappropriately obtained because you skipped the process.
- Research should be a two way street—the research should relate to interests/needs of the school community and its mission, and through the research you should be giving back to the school a deeper understanding of their strengths and challenges which enhances the school's teaching and learning environment for students, teachers, parents, etc.

3. Curriculum

- Guard against lack of alignment with curriculum – if connections are not clear to the people at the site or district, they are not clear enough. Aligning with curriculum has become essential for teacher involvement given all the new mandates and requirements.
- Avoid one-off "pet projects"/not what is being taught – with the constraints applied to school site / district settings, the work we do needs to align with existing priorities or it is likely a distraction, and, perhaps, not a welcome one.
- Be aware of the curriculum so that you can shape your project to support it – if it is completely unrelated, you are taking valuable time that does not exist.
- Carefully review your pedagogy with site personnel and experts in the field (such as CEP) to ensure that your lessons are appropriate. If a project team member delivers a lecture to a socioeconomically, culturally, ethnically and experientially diverse student body… how successful will it be? Is the person delivering the lesson "in tune" with the cultural variables that exist in the classroom(s) they are in? If you or they immediately answer, "Yes", ask how you have verified this.

- Be prepared for students with an extremely wide variety of skills and abilities. If one spends an hour delivering a lesson that is only appropriate for 15% of a class, it is not considered a success.
- If you are taking a critical perspective, it is important that you are well aware of the present educational plan and that your work be contextually based and presented as a "value-add" for the school/district, i.e. what benefit will they derive by participating.

Providing Context: Trending Issues in Public Education

The question of how to ensure that K-12 and Community Colleges have a culture of high expectations and student success is at the center of numerous policy initiatives in CA.

The following is a summary of major reform policy initiatives that are intended to create a useful frame for understanding some current issues in education. This frame can be helpful for considering issues for research and/or evaluation, as well as for thinking about possible areas of study to pursue with educators and educational institutions. In addition, regardless of specific project priorities, scholars interested in working with K-12 schools and community colleges can benefit greatly from understanding this background information – both because the issues involved significantly impact the daily work of teachers and schools, and because many of the trends listed here intersect with the types of equity-centered concerns frequently addressed by Berkeley projects.

Alternative Instructional Strategies

How should we integrate alternate instructional strategies (primarily on-line instruction/courses) into the educational program at the K-12 and post-secondary level? How could these strategies level the playing field for underprepared students? More and more K-12 and higher education institutions are turning to computer mediated instruction and the use of technology to individualize learning and transform classrooms. Strategies include blended learning (integrating both classroom and computer mediated instruction), flipped instruction (student watches video instruction at home, and then comes to school where they work on applying the knowledge), as well as regular on-line classes, video instruction (e.g., Kahn Academy) and the like. Much discussion on these strategies centers on providing less expensive educational models at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

CA Accountability System Significantly Changed

California's chief measure of a high school's performance, from a nearly exclusive reliance on state test scores, is being broadened to better gauge student accomplishment and preparation for college and the world of work. Starting in 2016, no more than 60% of the Academic Performance Index (API) will be determined by test scores. Metrics such as: graduation and drop-out rates, "a-g" completion, graduating high school without need for remediation in English or Math in college, completion of an Academy program (integration of academics and career curriculum), passing rates on AP exams, etc. will make up the other 40%. What metrics will be used will be determined by the CA State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (See also Local Control Funding Formula)

Career Technical Education

What is the role of Career Technical Education, Career Academies and career pathways from high school to community college? How do we prepare students for both college AND career? This is a significant issue as recent research indicates that students who participate in career-related programs in high school have more success in and after high school related to jobs and post-secondary education. Linked learning is a model of working with students from Middle School to High School to post-secondary education (two and four year programs) and ensuring closer alignment of curriculum, real world experiences and instruction.

Charter Schools

The expansion of Charter schools in CA is a major policy issue. Studies differ regarding their performance and impact on other regular public schools. This is a particularly important area for research from UC Berkeley, as the university founded CAL Prep, a charter school with its partner Aspire Public Schools in 2005. CAL Prep focuses on increasing access and success in higher education for low-income and first generation students. It has had three graduating classes, with all students enrolling in college…there are presently 9 CAL Prep students at UCB.

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core Curriculum is a new set of comprehensive standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics to prepare K-12 students for college and career. The CCSS emphasizes critical thinking, inquiry-and project-based instructional strategies and is focused on skills and knowledge that prepare students for both college and career. The Common Core is being implemented in 45 states including CA by 2014, with new assessments administered in 2015. This is viewed as a “game changer” in public education—most states having the same high standards with the approach to instruction left to states and districts and assessments increasingly computer-based.

Community College Student Success Initiative

There are 2.6 million students in the California Community Colleges and it is a primary gateway to a better life for those students and their families. Yet, only about half of degree-seeking students achieve their educational goal—for Latinos and African-Americans the rate is even lower. Understanding that significant changes are needed to improve completion rates, narrow the achievement gap and keep pace with an economy demanding more college educated workers, the CA Community Colleges Board of Governors established a Student Success Task Force who developed a Student Success Initiative (SSI) that identifies core priorities—basic math and English instruction, transfer preparation, career technical training and degree attainment. The SSI includes numerous policy changes such as: requiring students to participate in a diagnostic assessment, attend an orientation and develop an educational plan; prioritize student enrollment for returning and first-time students who have completed the diagnostic, orientation and developed an educational plan; improve basic skills education by developing new and innovative approaches to instruction and providing quality professional development for teaching basic skills, etc.

Local Control Funding Formula

The Local Control Funding Formula recently signed into law in CA will result in additional resources to districts and schools with large numbers of students who are low-income and/or English Language Learners. This concept of providing funding based on student need (weighted student formula) is one of the strategies being promulgated to achieve equity among students. The Local Control Funding Formula legislation includes a requirement for a robust accountability plan that requires data from districts in state priority areas such as: student achievement; student engagement; school climate, parental involvement, course access, and implementation of Common Core State Standards. How this accountability system and the changes in the API (see CA Accountability System Significantly Changes) will be aligned is yet to be determined.

"Rating" Teacher Education Programs

Over the past year there has been a movement to "rate" teacher education programs based on criteria ranging from course content to the quality of student teaching experiences (e.g., National Council for Teacher Quality [NCTQ]); and recently the City of New York published its own system for evaluating Teacher Education Programs in New York. This is very controversial, particularly in regard to appropriate indicators and methodology, and how consumers should use this data. Few schools in CA received a good grade in the NCTQ.

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

Addressing the challenge of recruiting and retaining those underrepresented in the STEM field in undergraduate (both community college and four year institutions) and graduate education, as well as in teaching and other related professions, is a major policy issue. There is a longstanding trend that women, African American, Latino and Native American students are underrepresented in STEM fields at both the K-12 and university levels. Efforts are being made to address this challenge in community colleges, four-year undergraduate programs and graduate education, as well as in teaching and other related professions. This includes various strategies and programs that are being funded at Berkeley to focus on this issue.

Teacher Evaluation

The question of how teachers should be evaluated, receive tenure and raises has become a major national conversation. Hot button issues include what metrics and tools should be used, and specifically the role of test score data in evaluating teacher performance. Various formulas have been constructed by scholars (e.g., Valued Added) and there is much controversy regarding their use.

Waiver of the Requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Legislation

The Federal Department of Education granted a consortium of districts under the auspices of California Office for Reform in Education (CORE) a one-year renewable waiver from the current student achievement accountability measures under NCLB and has also begun to allow greater flexibility in the use of categorical funds. The districts include: Clovis, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Sanger and Santa Ana. The consortium is also required to develop an alternative accountability system.