



San Bernardino Valley College Opening Day

Creating environments that
allow us to flourish
rethinking student success & equity

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Vice President, The RP Group*



Let's begin with an irony

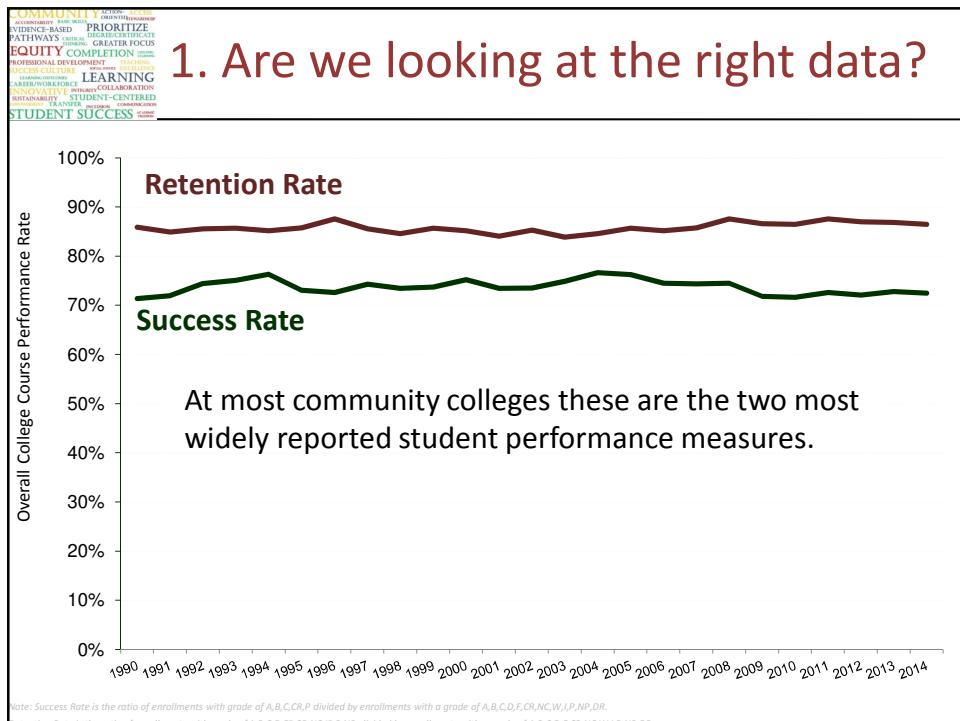
Over the last two decades data on
student performance has become
increasingly available and yet the pace of
change has remained slow.

Why?

COMMUNITY ACTION SUCCESS
 ACCOUNTABILITY AWARENESS
 EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITIZE
 PATHWAYS CRITICAL DEGREE/CERTIFICATE
 EQUITY COMPLETION JOINTNESS GREATER FOCUS
 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEACHING
 SUCCESS CULTURE EXCELLENCE
 LEARNING OUTCOMES LEARNING
 INNOVATIVE STUDENT-CENTERED COLLABORATION
 SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFER DECISION COMMUNICATION
 STUDENT SUCCESS

With all this data and evidence why are we still struggling?

1. Focusing on the wrong data
2. Using a one-size-fits-all framework
3. Too many distractions
4. We get stuck in a static world view

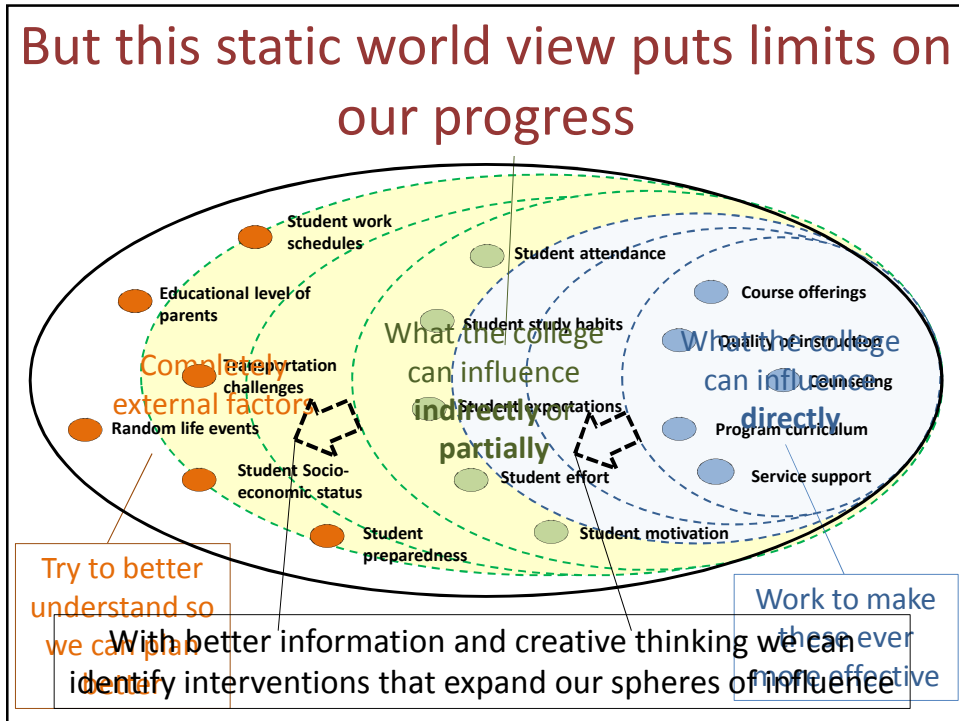


2. Not a one-size fits-all world.

A large, light gray cloud shape is centered on the page. Inside the cloud, several student categories are listed in different colors. The categories are: Unprepared students (purple), Part-time students (blue), First-time students (teal), Traditional students (red), Underserved students (yellow-green), Returning students (black), Degree-seeking students (red), Continuing students (blue), Transfer students (black), English language learners (green), Career/tech students (purple), Lifelong learners (orange), Basic skills students (orange), and Dual enrolled high school students (black).

3. Mandates and plans aplenty

A collage of various institutional plans and goals is shown. The word "Plans" is written in large, bold, black letters in the center. Surrounding it are several colored boxes containing text: College Strategic Plan (blue), Institutional Effectiveness Goals (orange), Accreditation Self Study (light green), Educational Master Plan (yellow), College BSJ Plan (brown), College Equity Plan (purple), College 3SP Plan (red), Technology Plans (blue), Professional Development Plan (light blue), and Accreditation Goals (green).



No silver bullet fixes ...

1. Are we looking at the right data?

2. Not a one-size fits-all world.

- Unprepared students
- First-time
- Underserved students
- Degree-seeking
- Transfer students
- Career
- Basic skills students

3. Mandates and plans aplenty

- College Strategic Plan
- Accreditation
- College Board
- College 3
- Professional Development

4. A static world view

...and yet, we have so many recipes for institutional success

Common Characteristics of Aspen Prize Colleges


Lumina Foundation, Achieving the Dream

1. Rewrite

Gates Completion by Design Principles


1. **Accelerate** entry into Coherent Programs of Study
2. **Customize** and **Contextualize** Instruction
3. **Integrate** Student Support with Instruction
4. Continually **Monitor** Student Progress and Proactively Provide Feedback
5. **Incentivize** Behaviors that Contribute to Completion
6. Leverage **Technology** to Improve Learning and Service Delivery

...and a flood of models and best practices to consider



What do they have in common?

*What most of these models share is an elevated appreciation of the importance of creating and maintaining **the right environment that allows the insights and passions of practitioners to flourish***



Creating the right environment

1. Take time to frame the problem
2. Check your assumptions
3. Build a good team
4. Experiment
5. Harness failures
6. Understand the culture

1. Take time to consider the problem



“If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it.”

- Albert Einstein

We need to look at the problem from different perspectives



“The world looks very different from up here”

“being able to shift your frame of reference is key in enhancing your imagination because doing so can reveal new and richer paths to the same goal.”

- Yo-Yo Ma

COMMUNITY **WISDOM**
ACCOUNTABILITY **FROM** **DEVELOPMENT**
EVIDENCE-BASED **PRIORITIZE**
PATHWAYS **LEARNING** **DIGITAL** **CERTIFICATE**
EQUITY **COMPLETION** **GRADUATION**
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT **LEARNING**
CAREER **CULTURE** **TECHNOLOGY**
CAREER **FORESIGHT** **INNOVATION**
SUSTAINABILITY **STUDENT-CENTERED**
STUDENT SUCCESS

Ask solution-oriented questions

How we frame a problem often emerges from the types of questions we ask.

What went wrong here? **Blame oriented**

vs


How might we make this work better? **Solution oriented**

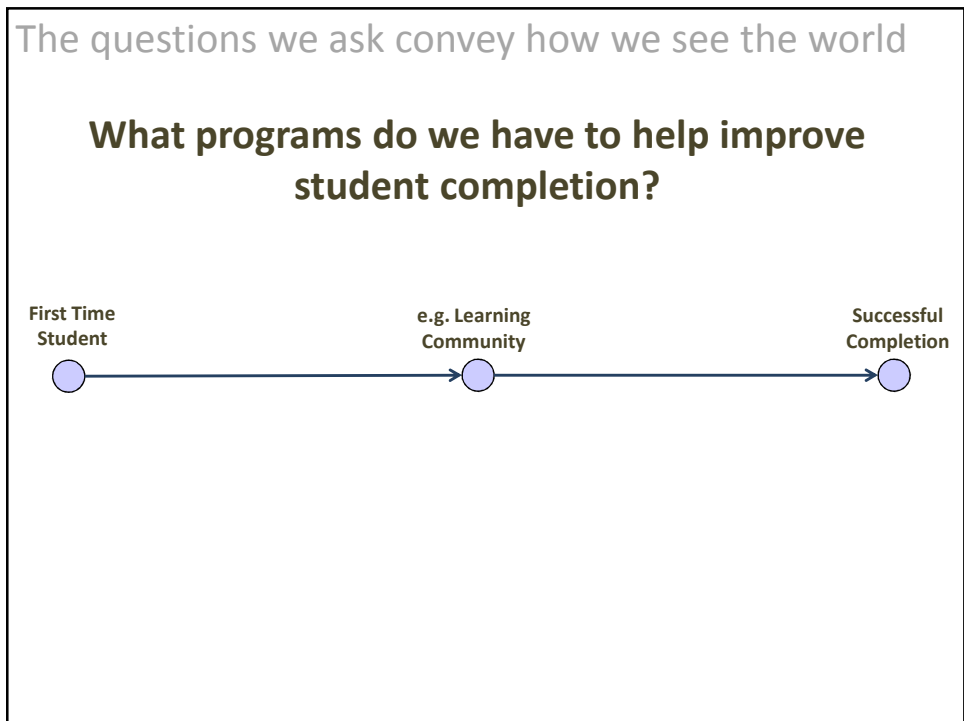
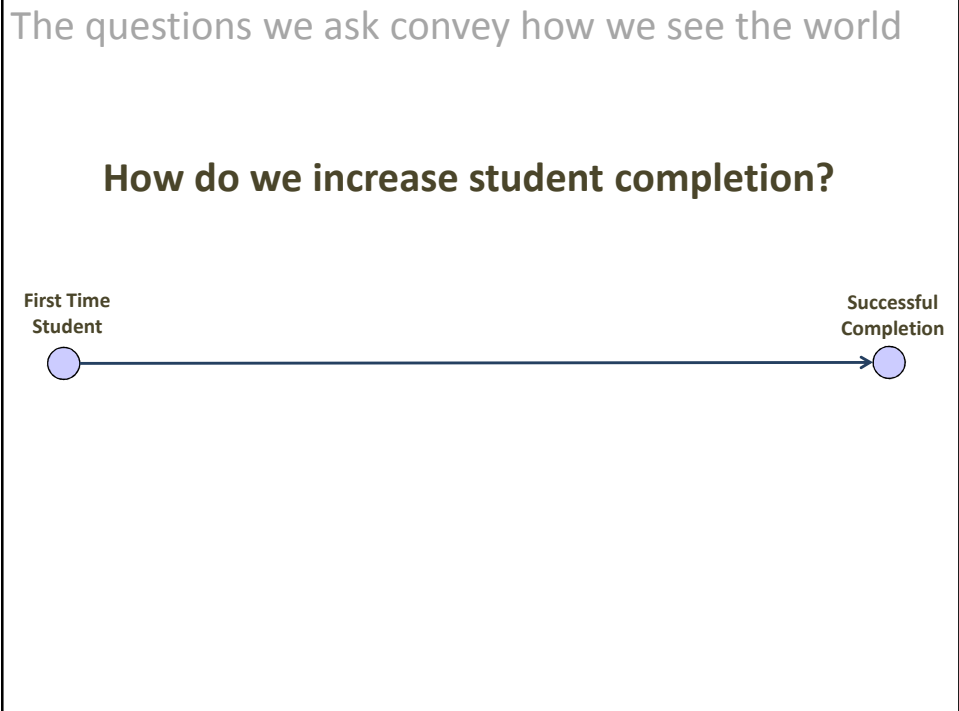
“Organizations gravitate toward the questions they ask”

- David Cooperrider
founder of *Appreciative Inquiry*

The questions we ask convey how we see the world

What is the college completion rate?





The questions we ask convey how we see the world

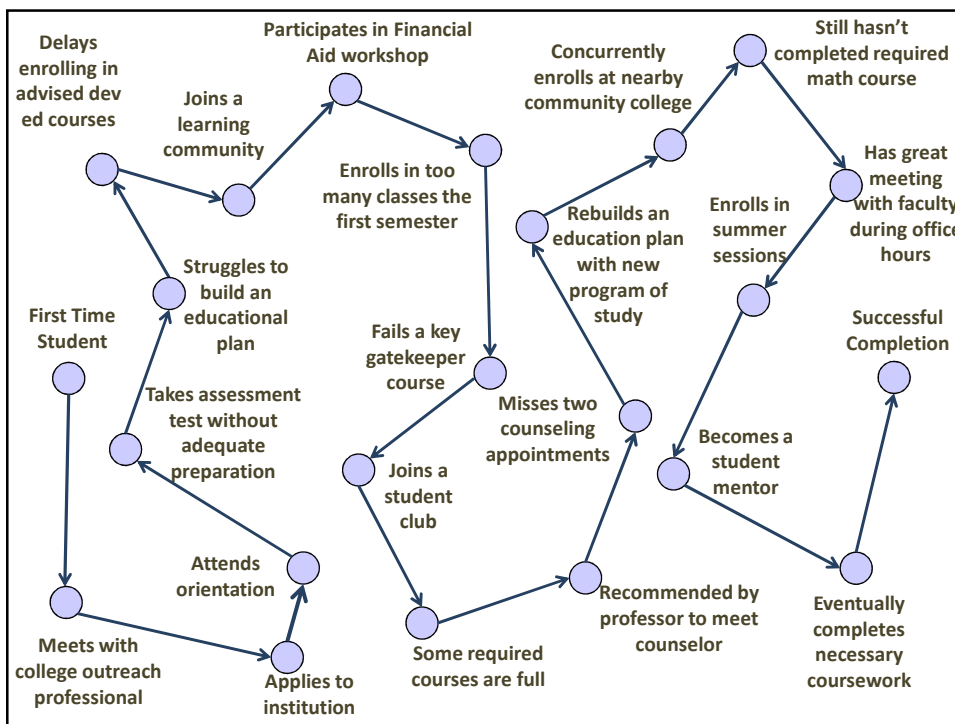
What strategies do we have to help improve student completion?

```
graph LR; A[First Time Student] --> B[An education plan]; B --> C[Learning Community]; C --> D[Early Alert Program]; D --> E[Successful Completion]
```

... a very orderly world

The questions we ask convey how we see the world

What is the student experience?



COMMUNITY ACQUISITION
 ACCOUNTABILITY TRANSITION
 EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITIZE
 PATHWAYS FOCUSING GREATER FOCUS
 EQUITY COMPLETION
 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 PROCESS CULTURE
 CAREER FORCEWORK
 INNOVATIVE LEARNING
 SUSTAINABILITY STUDENT-CENTERED
 STUDENT SUCCESS TRANSFER CONNECTIONS

2. Check your Assumptions


Good ideas often get stuck when teams hold different or competing assumptions about their environment.

Prior to the invention of the metal hull in 1787, imagine the response you'd receive to the question:

Why are ships made of wood?

COMMUNITY **ACADEMIC** **PROGRESS**
ACCOUNTABILITY **TEAM** **WILL** **ORIENTED** **TRANSFORMATION**
EVIDENCE-BASED **PRIORITIZE** **STRATEGIC**
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EQUITY **COMPLETION** **TRANSITION** **GREATER** **FOCUS**
PROFESSIONAL **DEVELOPMENT** **TEACHING**
SUCCESS **CULTURE** **LEARNING**
CAREER **WORKFORCE** **TECHNOLOGY**
INNOVATIVE **INTERDISCIPLINARY** **COLLABORATION**
SUSTAINABILITY **STUDENT-CENTERED**
TRANSFER **ACQUISITION** **CONNECTION**
STUDENT SUCCESS

Discuss your assumptions

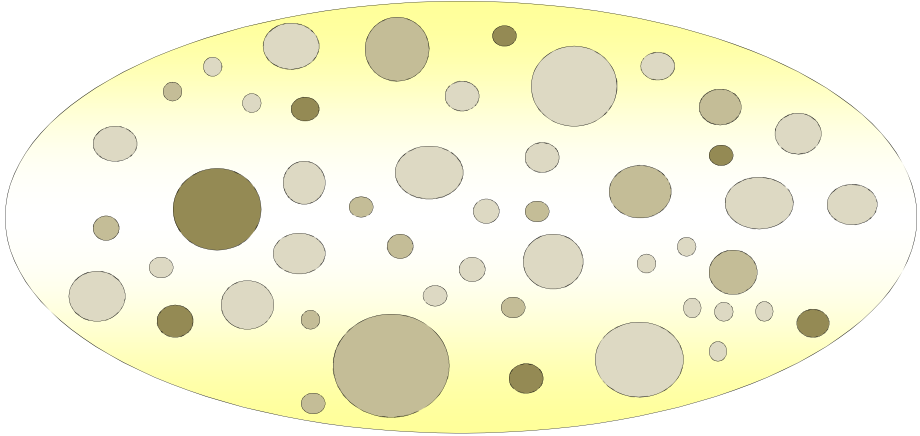


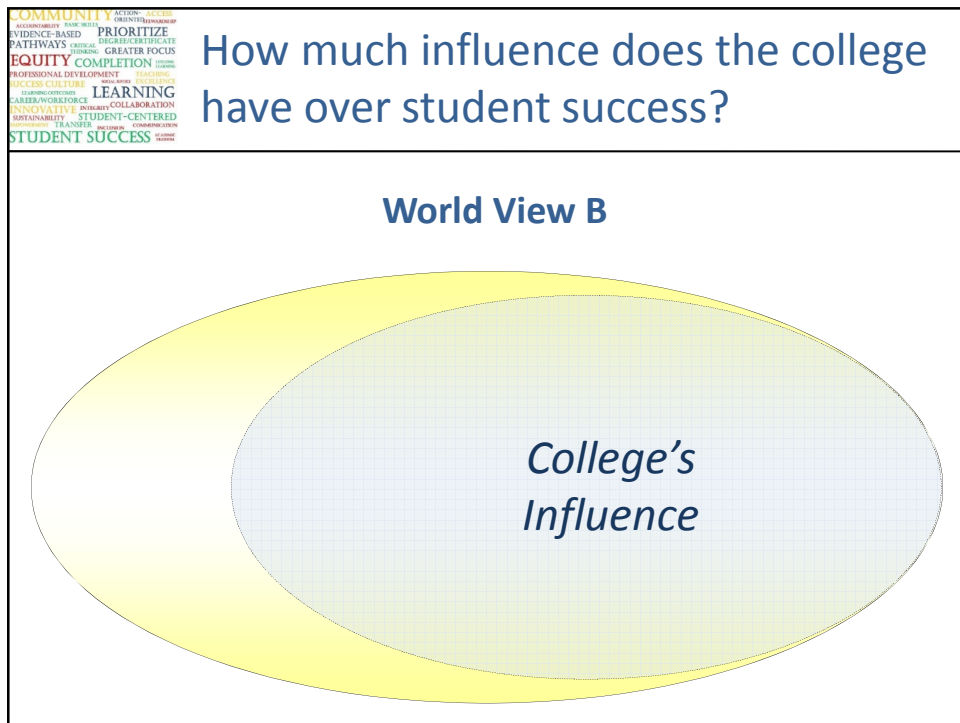
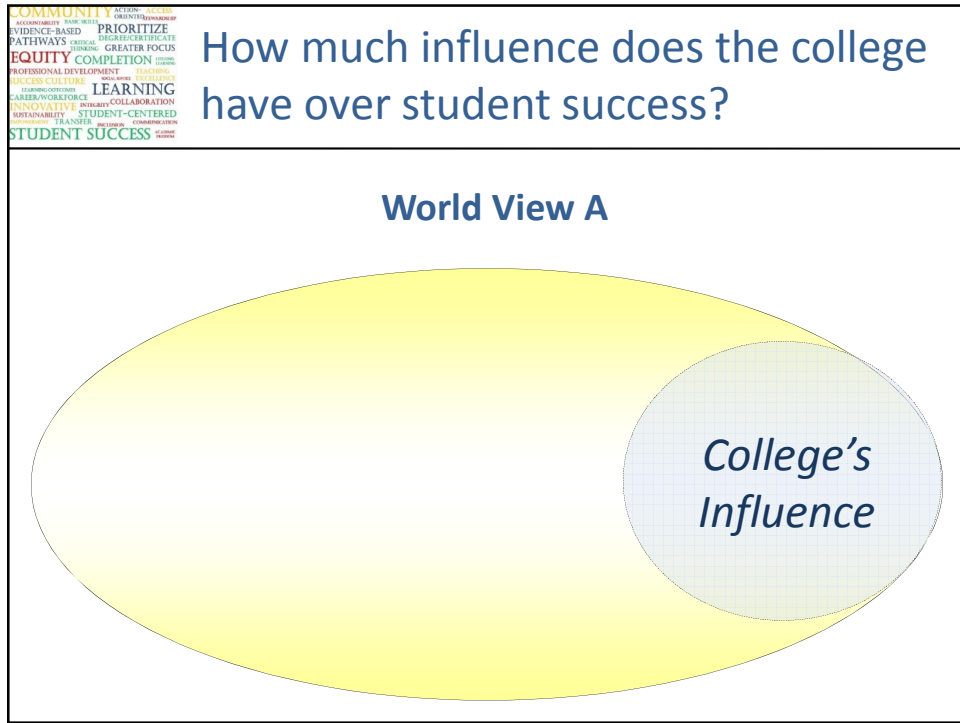
“You never really understand a person or their challenges until you consider things from their point of view.”

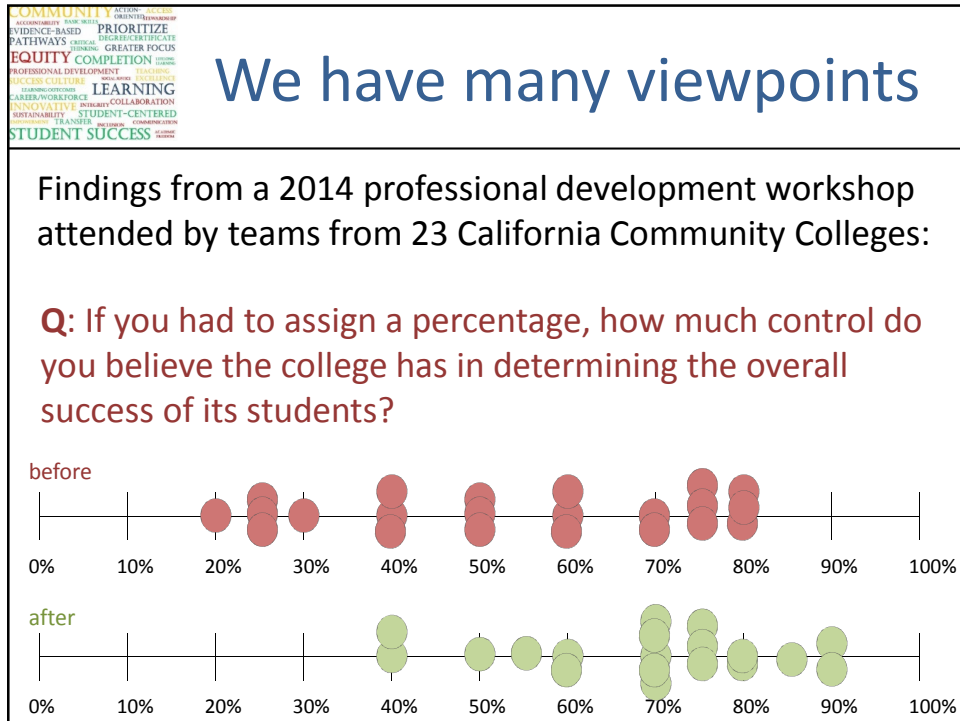
– Harper Lee
To Kill a Mockingbird

COMMUNITY **ACADEMIC** **PROGRESS**
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Consider the universe of factors that influence student success







3. Build a good team

*“Teams characterized by **high levels of diversity** are the most capable of solving complex problems like the ones we face today”*


- Claude M. Steele
Author of *Whistling Vivaldi*

“Given enough of the right eyeballs, all bugs are shallow”

- Linus Torvalds
*The Linus Law**

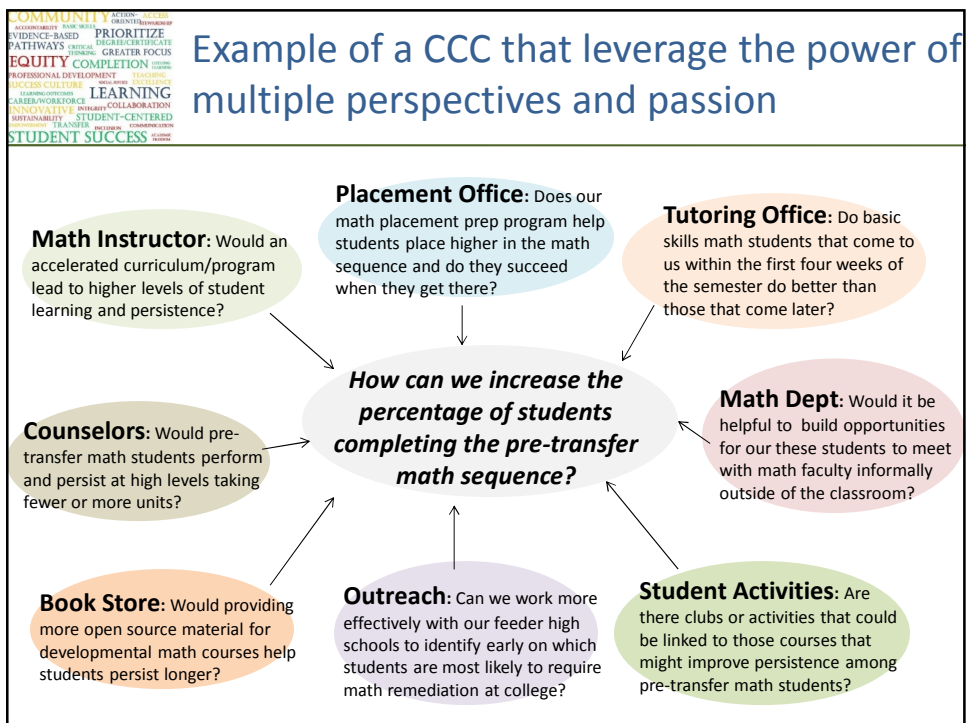
COMMUNITY ACTION ORIENTED
EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITY
PATHWAYS CRITICAL
EQUITY COMPLETION
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
ACCESS CULTURE WORKFORCE
CAREER/WORKFORCE LEARNING
INNOVATIVE INTEGRITY COLLABORATION
SUSTAINABILITY STUDENT-CENTERED
STUDENT SUCCESS TRANSFER ACCURACY COMPLETION

Find people that know and care



“...we learned early on that when faced with a really tough problem, ... not to seek out your “best people” but to find those that were closest to the problem and willing to bring the most passion to solving it”

- Sergey Brin
 Cofounder of Google



COMMUNITY ACQUISITION
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The dynamics of decision making


Decision making in complex systems *is a highly social process*, not solely an intellectual exercise.

The process is composed of many small acts, carried out by different people at different points in time.

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Teams drive change

Professional development in higher education is focusing more and more on team development and team approaches to change.



*“In tackling hard problems, success occurs when diverse teams of dedicated people bring passion to solving it and have **the courage to persist through the inevitable setbacks that will come their way**”*

- Colin Powell

COMMUNITY ACQUISITION
ACCOUNTABILITY FROM WITHIN
EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITY
PATHWAYS RIGOROUS DIGITAL CERTIFICATE
GROWING GREATER FOCUS
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4. Experiment

Asking why without taking action can yield stimulating conversation, but it is not likely to produce change

Questioning + Action = Innovation

- Action = *Philosophy*

Source: A More Beautiful Question: The Power of Inquiry to Spark Breakthrough Ideas by Warren Berger.

COMMUNITY ACQUISITION
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We learn by doing

“The gap between knowing and doing is much larger and more important than the gap between ignorance and knowing.”

“When knowledge is acquired by doing it comes with all the nuance and subtle information most critical to success.”

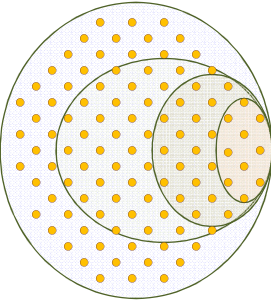
- Jeffrey Pfeffer
Stanford University
Author of *The Knowing-Doing Gap*

Balance experimentation & intuition

Consider the domain of all possible solutions to a question at hand

What to do when you reach the limits of your research and yet still face multiple choices in how to proceed ?

Trust your intuition & choose !



Through experimentation and inquiry we answer the questions that eliminate dead end solutions

5. Harness Failure

“An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a narrow field”

- Niels Bohr
Nobel Prize winning Physicist



“There is no royal flower-strewn path to success. My biggest accomplishments required that I wrestle with my failures ”

- Madam C.J. Walker
America's first female self-made millionaire

COMMUNITY **LEARNING**
RESPONSIBILITY **PROGRESS**
EVIDENCE-BASED **PRIORITIZE**
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Getting past the status quo

Many of us remained quietly, unconsciously tied to the belief or thinking that:



“It’s better to fail conventionally than succeed unconventionally”

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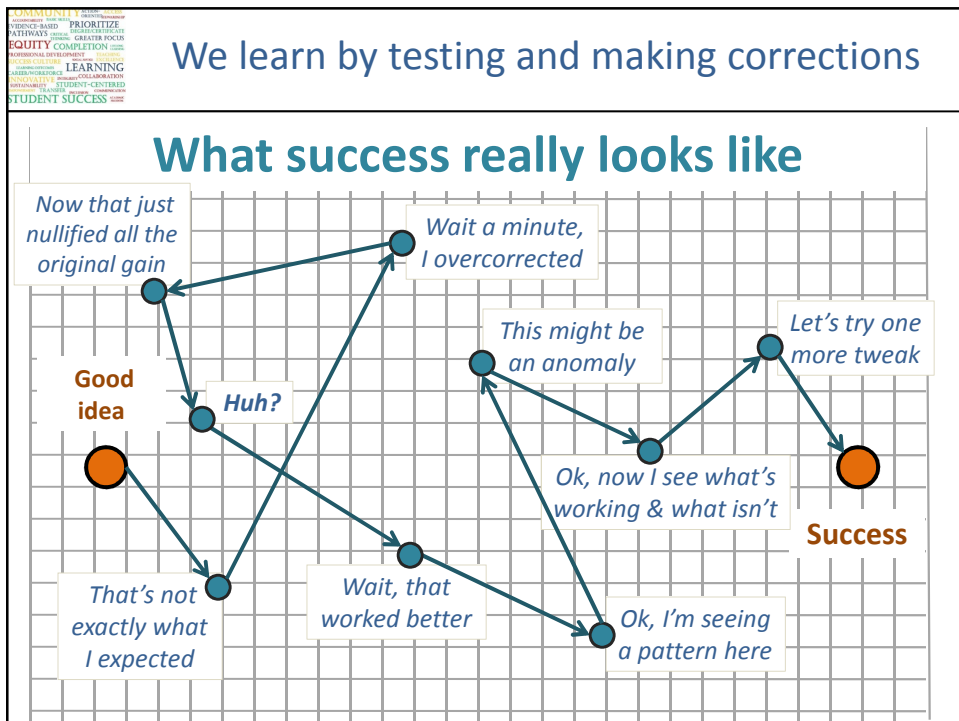
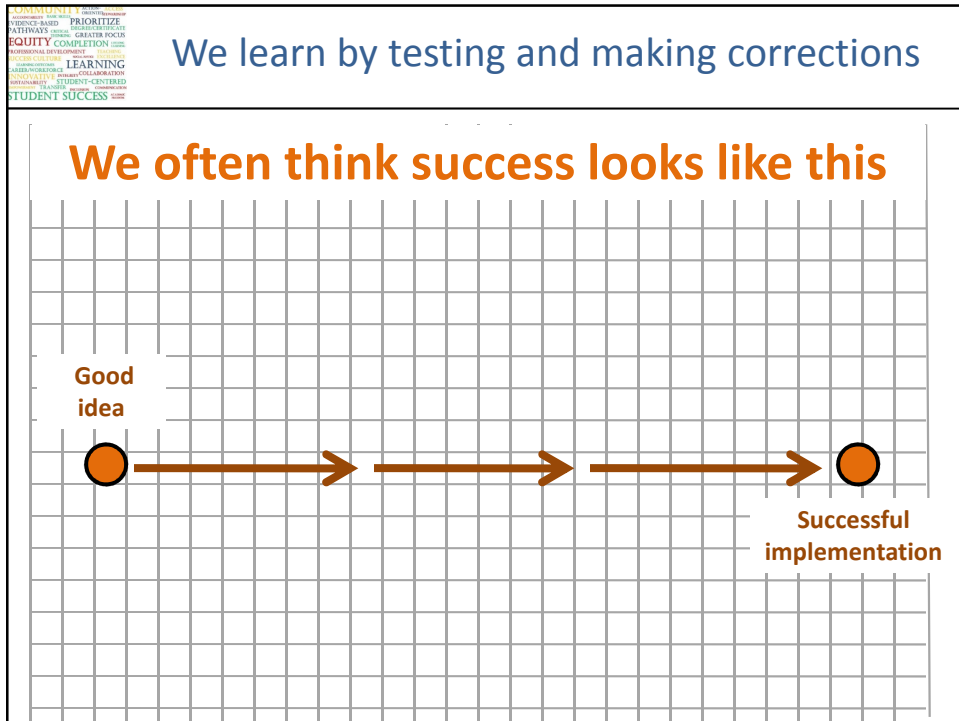
Failures can drive success

“It took approximately 160 failures and partial successes to produce the earliest version of the modern bicycle.”

-Tony Hadland & Hans-Erhard Lessing
Authors of *Bicycle Design: An Illustrated History*



The most used transportation vehicle in the world



Attitudes about failure

Findings from a national survey of faculty at 107 community colleges on academic practices

Statement	We agree that we should probably do this	We are actually doing this
We share mistakes with colleagues to help us learn	82%	3%

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress”

- Frederick Douglass

6. The role of culture

*“For the institution, **the impetus to engage in innovative behavior** does not come so much from exceptional individuals but from the **features of the local culture**”*



“... we are more than just sensitive to organizational culture, we are exquisitely sensitive to it”

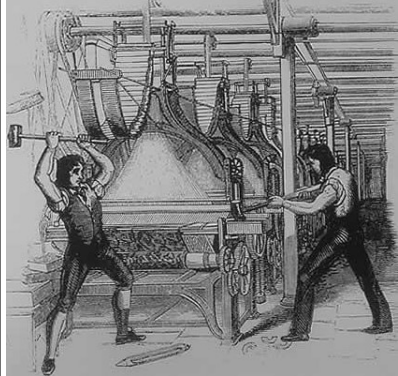
- Malcolm Gladwell
The Tipping Point

COMMUNITY ACQUISITION
 ACCOUNTABILITY FROM WITHIN
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Culture and change

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast”

- **John Kotter**
 Author of *Leading Change*



Even the greatest innovation is met with resistance by any group that feels devalued by it.

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Culture can be very local

“Around here we want to make sure our people don’t make the same mistake once.”


- President of the Saint Louis Federal Reserve

“... we undertake an on-going series of experiments, tests, hypotheses, and pivots—which means that nobody here gets it exactly right the first time or the second or even the third”

- President of the Kansas City Federal Reserve


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
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Subcultures



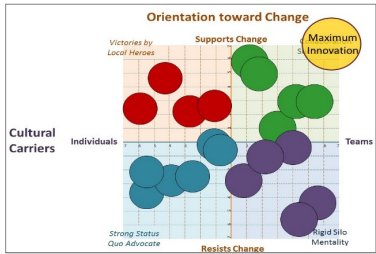
“In every enterprise there are strong and weak subcultures. In strong subcultures, most everybody knows where they want to go.

*“In weak subcultures, people just do what they’re told. They perform tasks, follow the rules and try not to color outside the lines. **There’s no mission to be passionate about.**”*



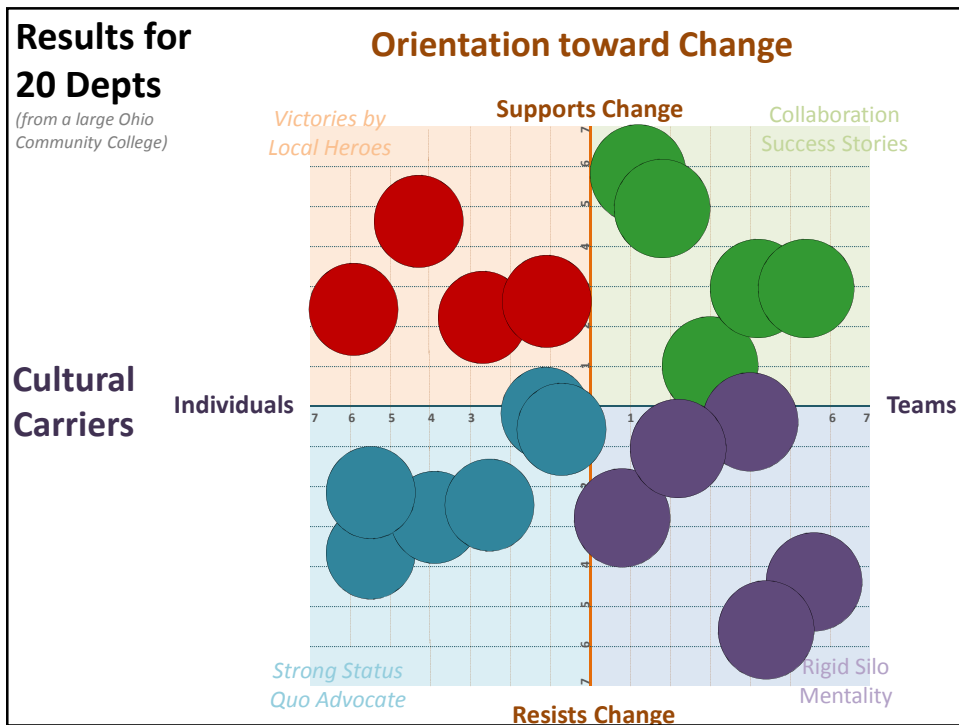
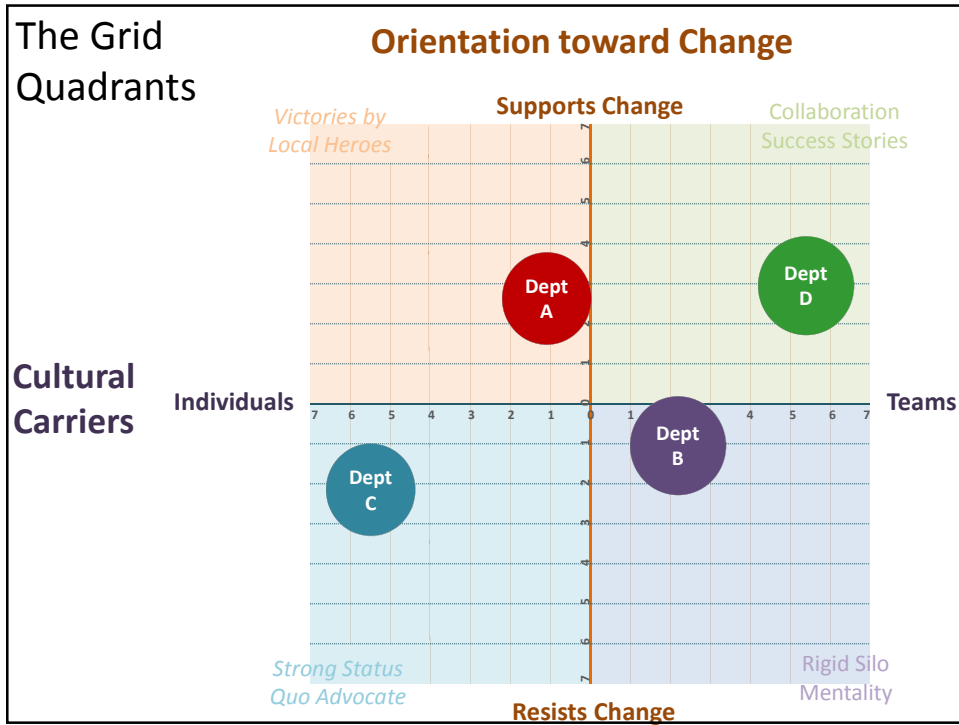
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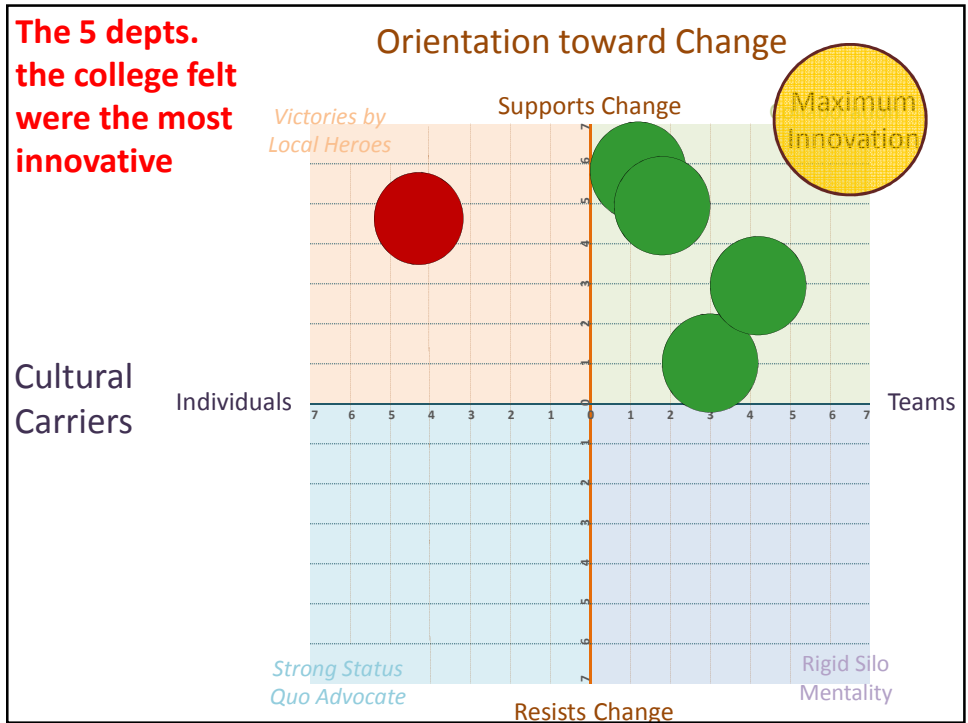
Subcultures in Community Colleges



Findings from a research study on institutional culture at an Ohio community college

- Questionnaire sent to twenty college departments
- Assessed department culture along two dimensions
- Responses for each department were scored and plotted





Evolving the culture

Research indicates that over time community college cultures tend to adapt in the direction of the outcomes that are valued by the organization.

COMMUNITY IN EQUITY
 EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITIZE
 PATHWAYS FOCUS ON GREATER FOCUS
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Let's revisit our signposts

Consider multiple frames



Call out assumptions




Experiment & explore hunches



Build a good team



Openly discuss failures




Build the culture



COMMUNITY IN EQUITY
 EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITIZE
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The catalyzing agent

TRUST



rooms without trust generate little progress and a lot of passive resistance



COMMUNITY ORIENTED
 EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITY
 PATHWAYS STRONG GREATER FOCUS
 EQUITY COMPLETION
 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING
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A framing quote ...

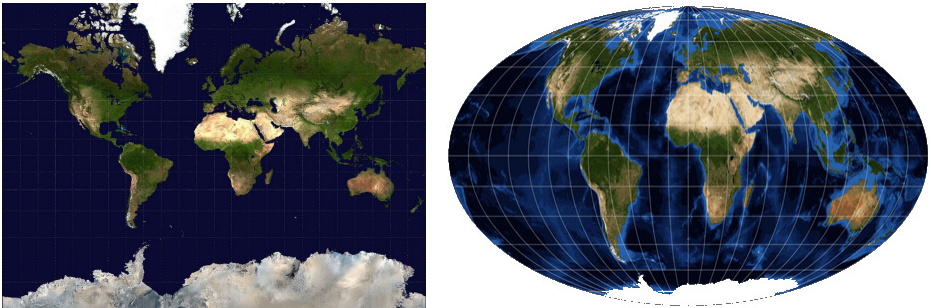
“... our slow progress stems more from weakness of purpose, confusion of vision, underuse of talent, and lack of leadership, than from conditions beyond our control”

A Nation at Risk (1983)

COMMUNITY ACTION SUCCESS
ACCOUNTABILITY SMART SKILLS
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Can we reframe?

I want to propose that we look at student success and equity in a different way ...

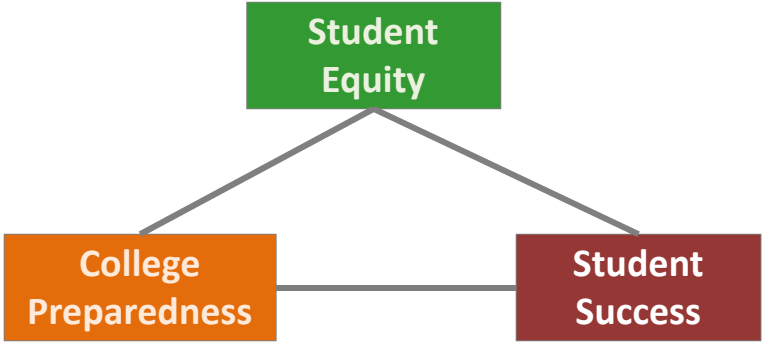


Mercator Projection Winkel Tripel Projection

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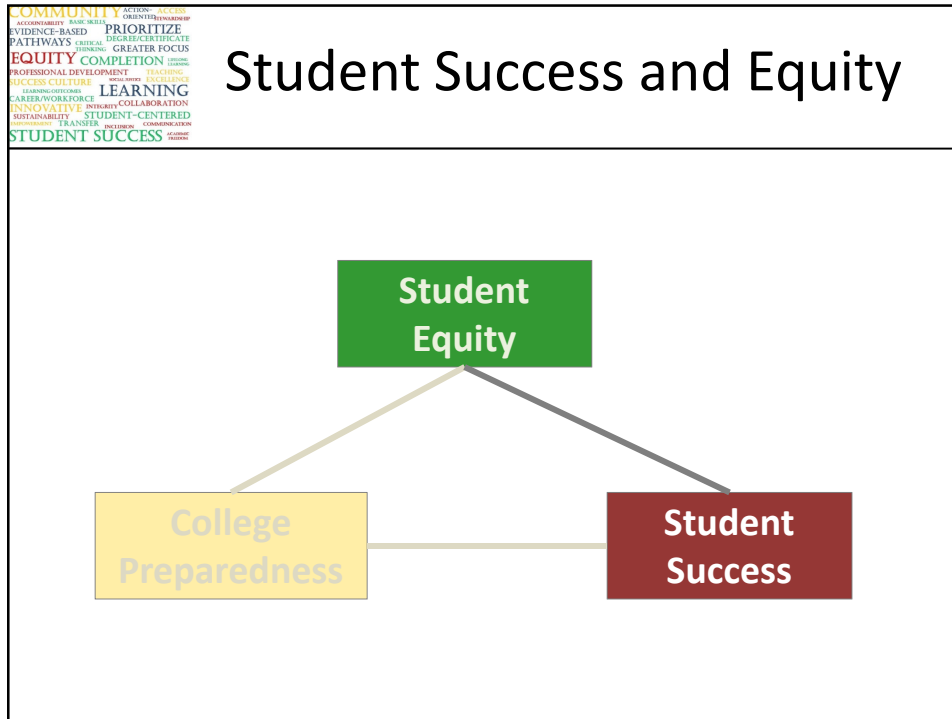
See the world differently

To a large degree, these three challenges are one in the same ...



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graph TD; A[Student Equity] --- B[College Preparedness]; A --- C[Student Success]; B --- C;
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...that is, there is an interrelationship here that we can exploit whereby we act on one and capture improvements on all three.

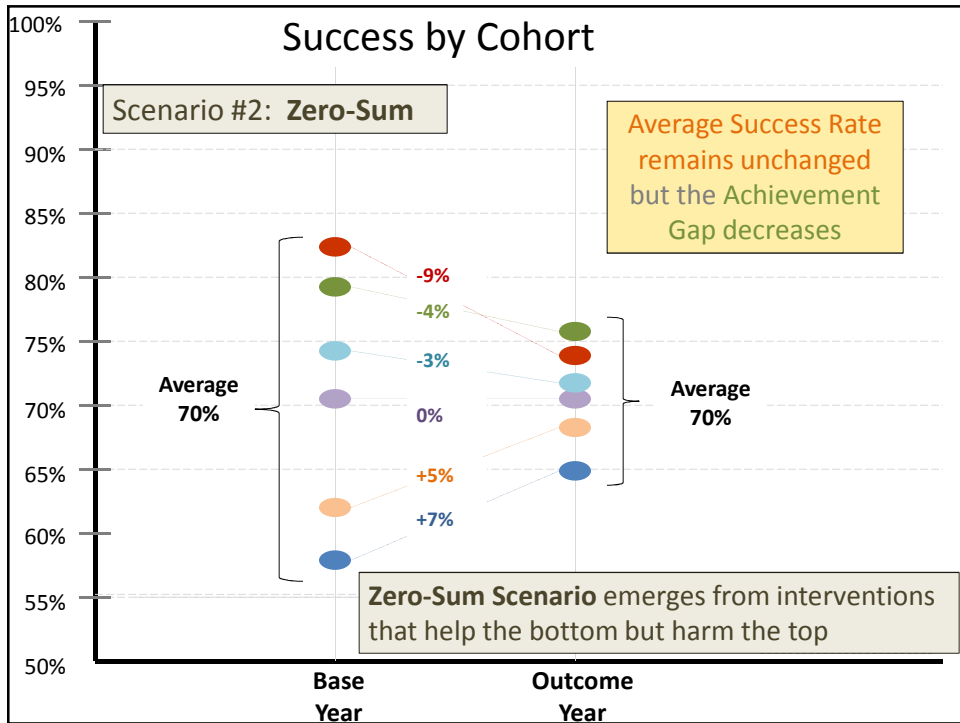
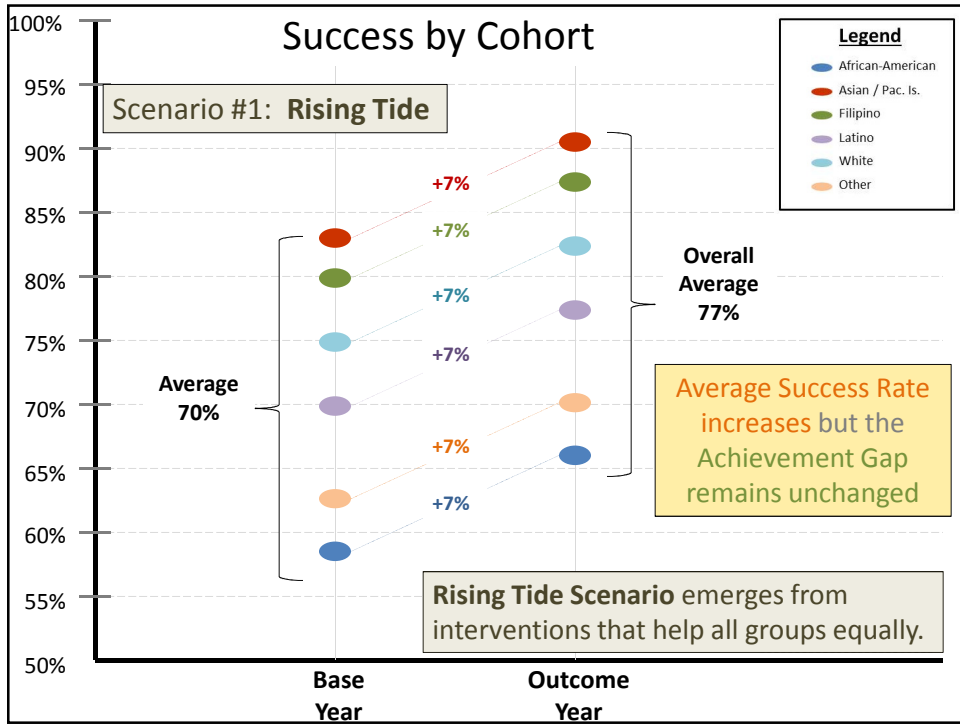


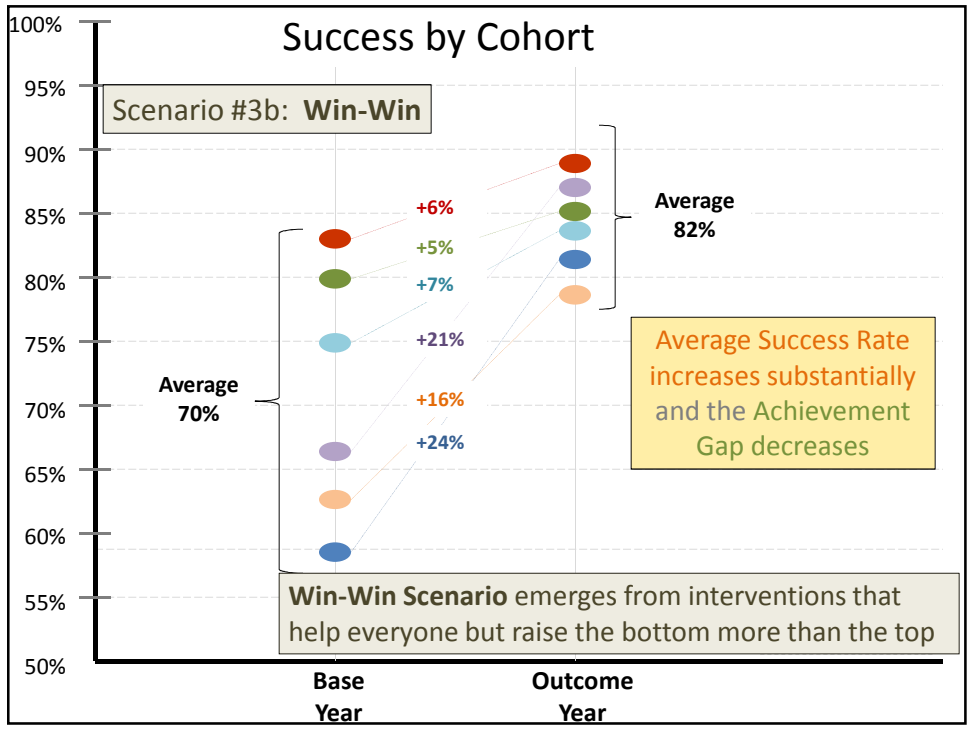
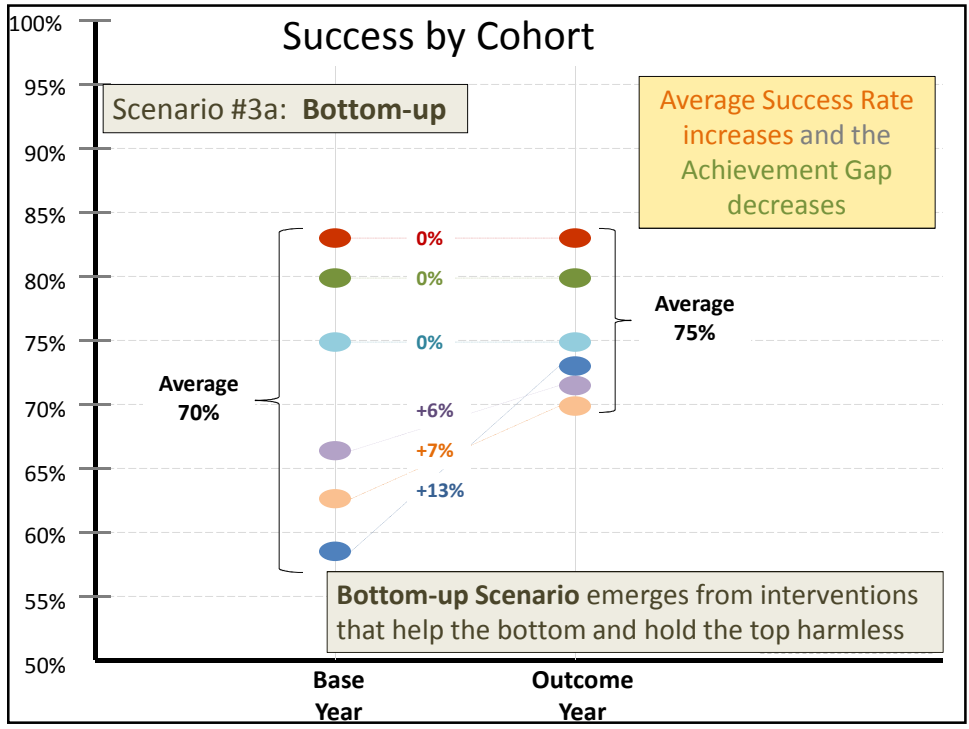
COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY SKILL-BUILDING EVIDENCE-BASED PRIORITIZE PATHWAYS DEGREE/CERTIFICATE JOURNALISM GREATER FOCUS EQUITY COMPLETION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEACHING SUCCESS CULTURE LEARNING CAREER WORKFORCE LEARNING OUTCOMES INNOVATIVE INTEGRITY COLLABORATION SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFER RESILIENCE COMMUNICATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The relationship between student equity and student success

*Most colleges have goals for raising overall student success **and** closing the achievement gap*

Let's look at the underlying assumptions required for effectiveness in both those areas...





COMMUNITY ACTION SUCCESS
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What does this tell us?

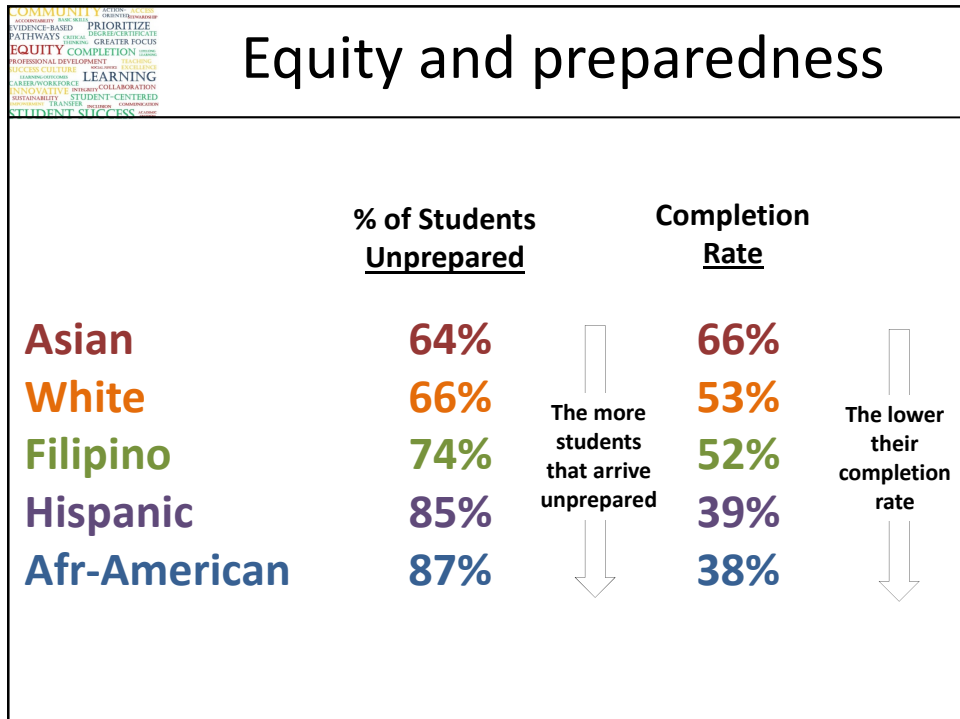
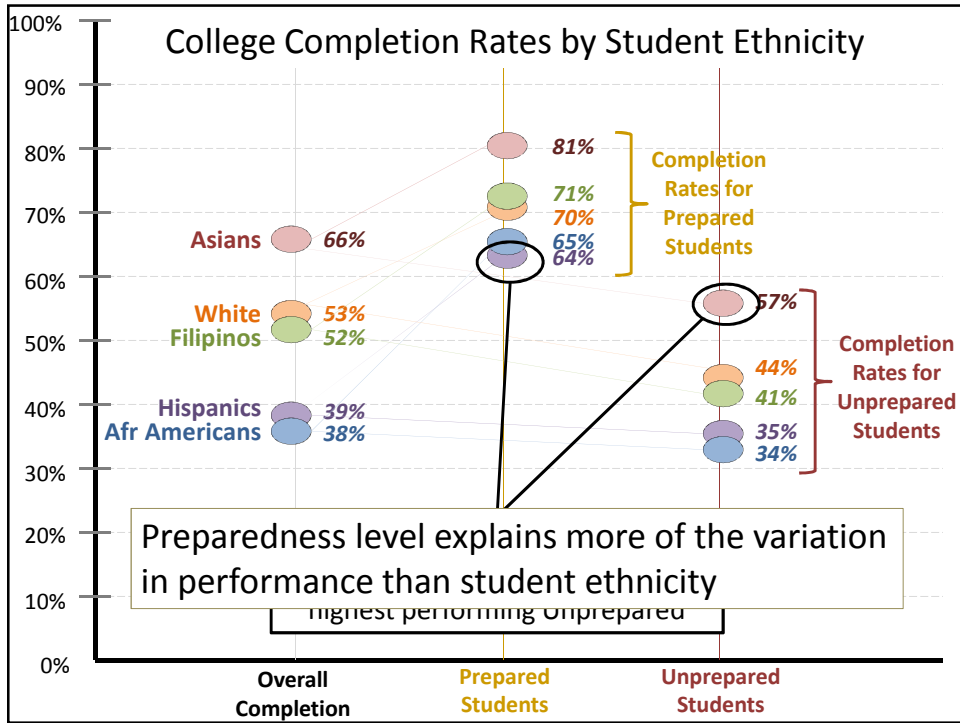
1. The Bottom-up and Win-Win scenarios **are the only strategies** that get you both higher overall success **and** close the equity gap
2. **Your college equity strategy could be your best student success strategy.**

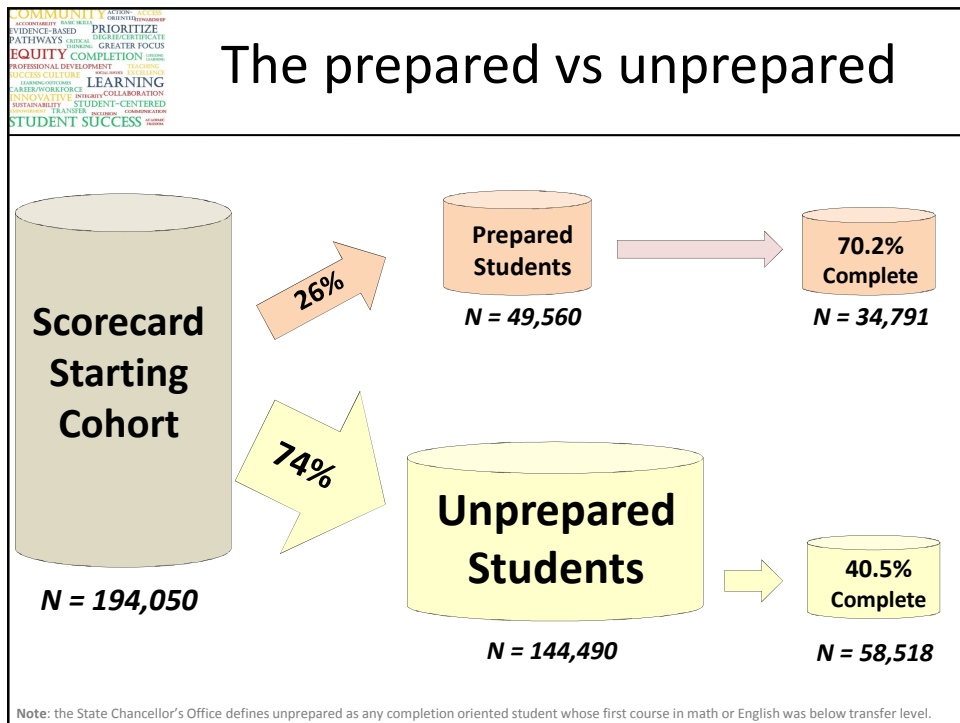
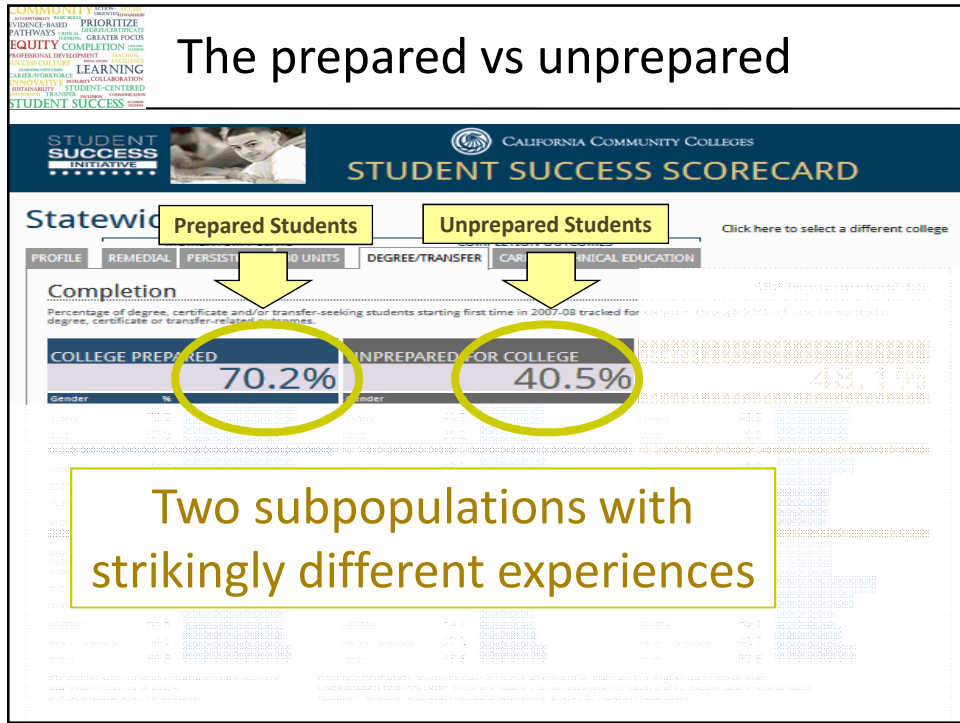
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 SUSTAINABILITY STUDENT-CENTERED
 STUDENT SUCCESS

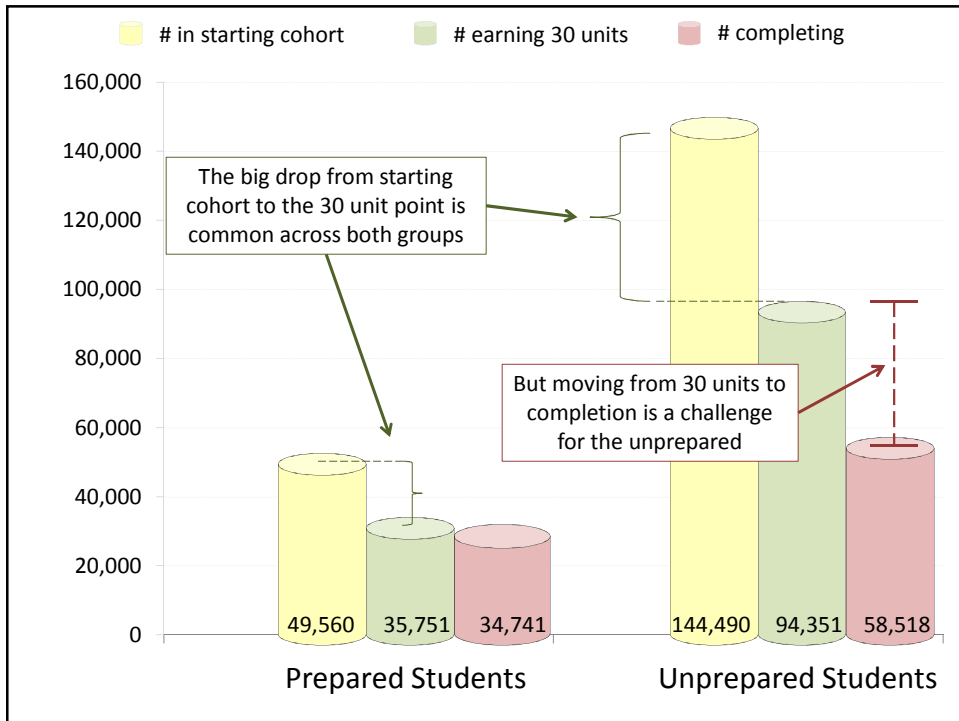
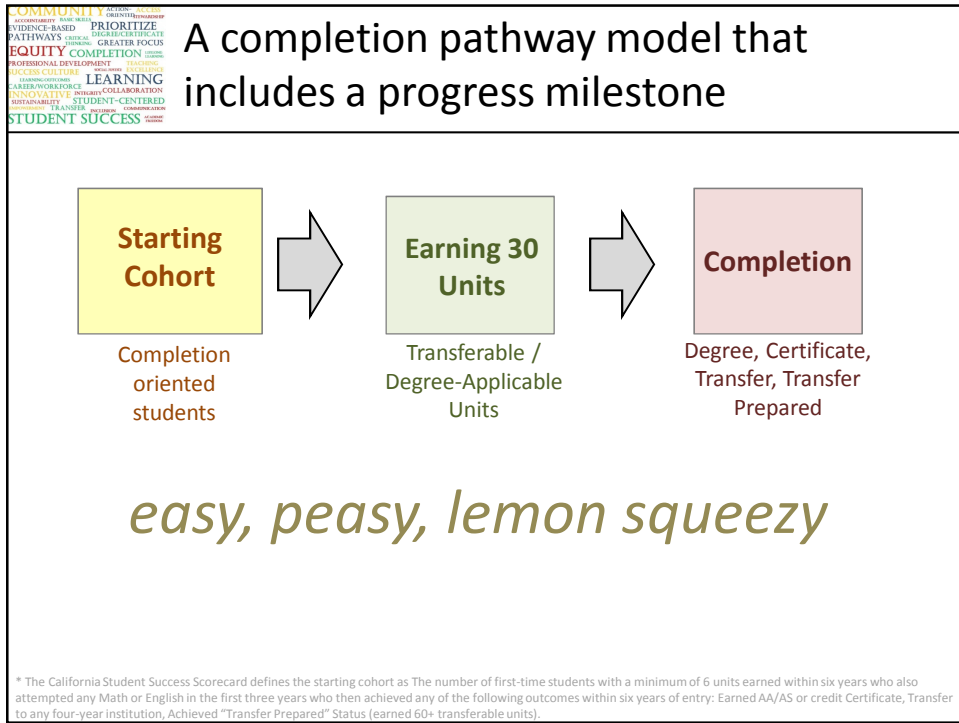
Equity and preparedness

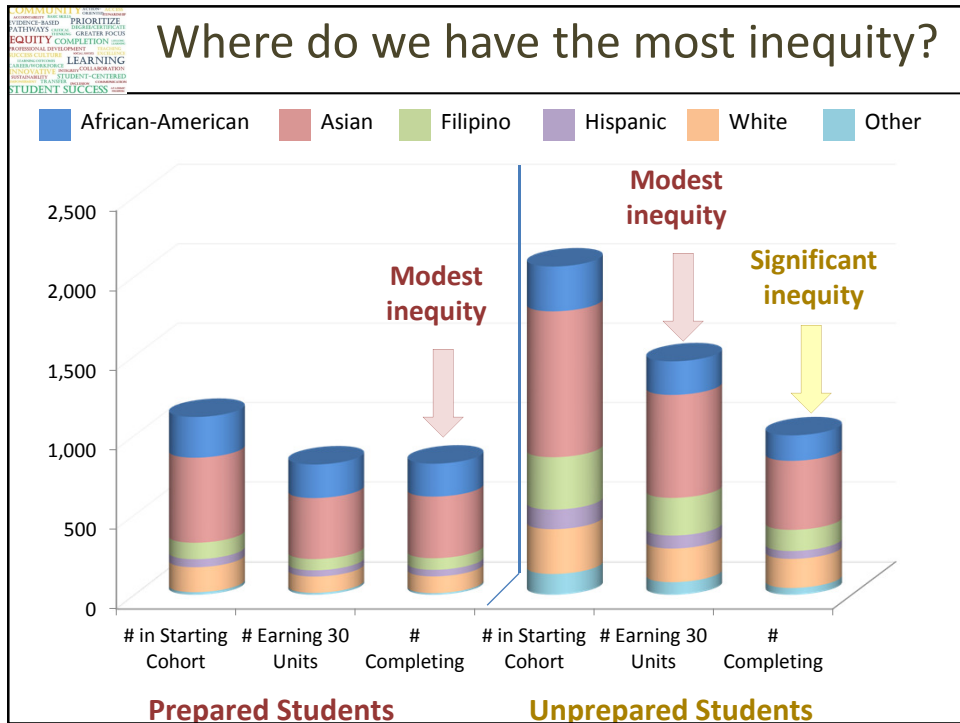
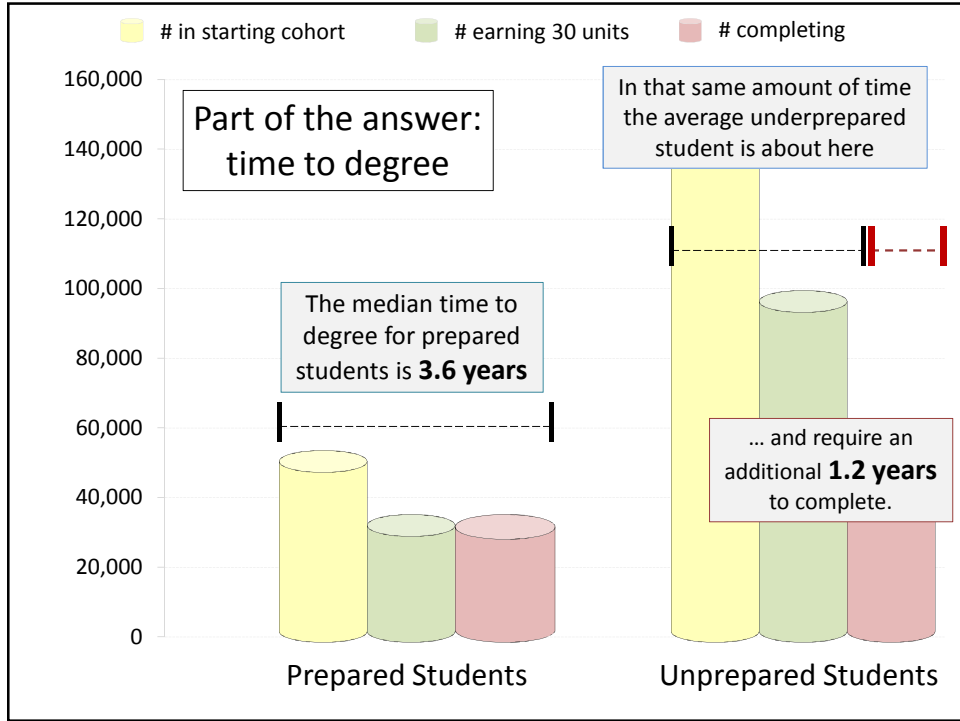
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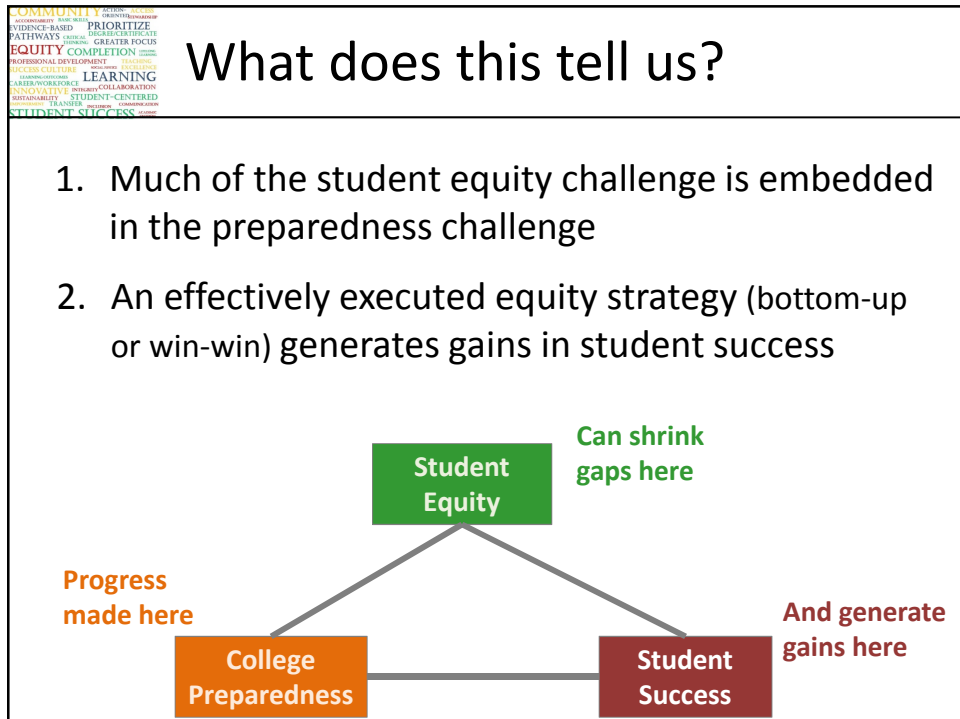
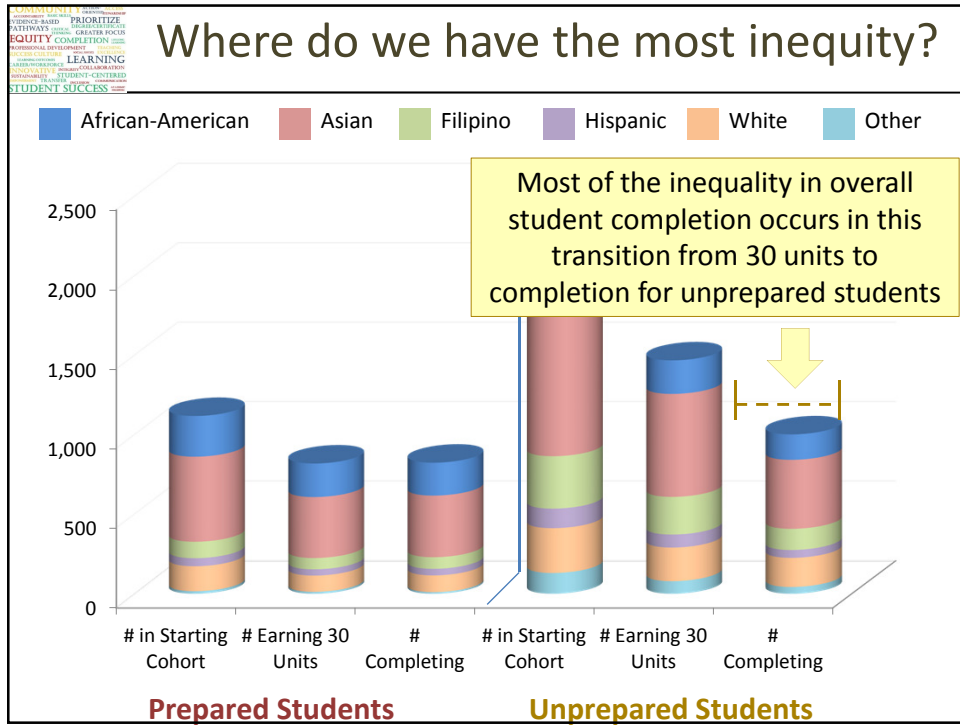
    graph TD
      SE[Student Equity] --- CP[College Preparedness]
      SE --- SS[Student Success]
      CP --- SS
    
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COMMUNITY EQUITY COMPLETION
EVIDENCE-BASED PATHWAYS PRIORITY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING
STUDENT SUCCESS

Continuing the conversation on preparedness, Equity & Success

Please join us for a deeper discussion about this approach


```
graph TD; A[College Preparedness] --- B[Student Equity]; B --- C[Student Success]; A --- C;
```

COMMUNITY EQUITY COMPLETION
EVIDENCE-BASED PATHWAYS PRIORITY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING
STUDENT SUCCESS

A parting quote

*“Our biggest take away from our work on The Aspen Prize has been that **individual community colleges will never get anywhere if they don’t rethink old problems and take bold chances**”*


What Excellent Community Colleges Do
Josh Wyner, Aspen Institute



San Bernardino Valley College Opening Day

It has been a pleasure

Gregory M Stoup
*Sr. Dean of Research & Planning, Contra Costa Community College District
Vice President, The RP Group*



Source Material

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