



Academic Pathways to
Access and Student Success

*Report on the Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success Initiative
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Between the period of January 1 and March 31, 2006, additional work was carried out in for specific areas that advanced the Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success (APASS) project. These four areas are listed below and explained in further depth in this report:

- 1) Follow-up with the 50 states to update state profiles
- 2) Development of local program profiles via the local program online survey and state referrals
- 3) Development of the federally funded grant focusing on Adult Basic Education (ABE) and the GED as a bridge to college
- 4) Development of additional publications and presentations to disseminate information about APASS

1. Follow-up with the 50 States to Update State Profiles

The primary mechanism for organizing information for the APASS information and making it available to the public is via the website at www.apass.uiuc.edu. Since the decision was made to continue the project for the period of January 1 through March 31, 2006, the APASS staff has made three separate attempts to contact the 50 states to get agency personnel to review, revise and update information presented in the state profiles that appear on the website. To date, we have received responses from 36 states indicating their willingness to update the state profile or completing the updating process, which entails reviewing the state profile that appears on the website and offering comments to confirm or change and update information. A total of 14 states have not responded to three requests to update the state profile over the period of time between January and mid-March. We have not given up on all of these states, but are disappointed that they have not communicated with us about the APASS update process.

As a result of these contacts, state profiles of the 29 states mentioned in Table 1 have been updated and reposted on the website. As additional information is received, the state profiles are revised and posted within a few working days and sometimes within a few hours of their receipt.

One more comment is worthy of attention pertaining to this item and that has to do with a number of very positive statements that were received pursuant to the APASS website. Numerous state personnel not only provided information to update their state's profile but they commented on the utility of the website in helping them make cross-state comparisons as new policies were being considered in their states. This is, of course, a key reason for the development of the APASS website, and it has been gratifying to learn that several states have used the website to learn about policies in other states that might be transferred to support their own initiatives.

Table 1. Status of APASS State Profile Update

States completing APASS update (31 states)	States agreeing to update (6 states)	States not responding to three requests to update (13 states)
Arkansas California Connecticut Florida Georgia Hawaii Idaho Indiana Illinois Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana Maine Maryland Massachusetts Mississippi Nebraska New Hampshire New Jersey Oklahoma Oregon Rhode Island South Carolina South Dakota Tennessee Utah Vermont Virginia West Virginia Wyoming	Alabama Alaska Minnesota North Carolina Ohio Wisconsin	Arizona Colorado Delaware Michigan Missouri Montana Nevada New Mexico New York North Dakota Pennsylvania Texas Washington

2. Development of Local Program Profiles via the Local Program Online Survey and State Referrals

During the spring and summer of 2005, APASS staff developed and pilot tested a Local Program Online Survey to gather information about local programs that state and other local professionals referenced as exemplars of high quality academic pathways. The process primarily involved seeking recommendations and referrals of local programs from state agency personnel and executive administrators of relevant professional organizations (i.e., the Middle College High School Consortium, the National Association of Tech Prep Leadership). Once referrals were made, our APASS staff contacted local program administrators to ask for their participation in the online survey. Information was gathered via the online survey posted on the APASS website at <http://www.apass.uiuc.edu/survey/survey.htm> and then this information was synthesized into a brief program profile. Table 2 presents the name, type, and state of the programs included in the program profiles at the present time. Similar to state profiles, there are on-going efforts by the APASS staff to continue to grow and improve this section of the website.

Table 2. APASS Local Program Profiles

APASS - Local Program Name	Program Type	State
Academy of Finance and Law	Career Academy	NH
Academic Initiatives	Early / Middle College High School	MT
Arcadia Valley Embedded Credit	High Schools That Work (HSTW)	MO
Bristol Community College Tech Prep program	Tech Prep	MA
Career Edge academies	Career academy	IA
CEC Middle College of Denver	Early or middle college high school	CO
Christina School District AP program	Advanced Placement (AP)	DE
Collegiate High School	Early or middle college high school	KY
Dickinson State University (DSU)	Dual credit/Dual enrollment/Concurrent enrollment	ND
Discover College	Dual credit/dual enrollment/concurrent enrollment	KY
Eastern Region Partnership	Career academy	NH
Edgecombe Early College	Early / Middle College High School	NC
Future Educators Academy	Tech Prep	NH
Gaston College Tech Prep program	Tech Prep	NC
Henry Ford Community College Tech Prep Partnership	Tech Prep	MI
High School Partnership	Dual credit	IL
High Schools That Work: South Carolina	HSTW	SC
Lake Region State College	Dual Credit / Enrollment	ND
Mott Middle College	Early or middle college high school	MI
Niagara County Tech Prep consortium	Tech Prep	NY
Northern and Eastern Maine Tech Prep Consortium	Tech Prep	ME
North Country School-to-Career	School-to Work	NH
Northern State University Center for Statewide E-Learning	Distance learning/virtual school	SC
Ohio College Access Network (OCAN)	GEAR UP and community-based college access program	OH
Project Opening Doors program	Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)	CT
Seaford Advanced Placement Incentive Program	AP	DE
St. Lawrence Valley Liberty Partnerships Program	Other	NY
Student Support Services (SSS)	TRIO program	MD
Summer Success Institutes	Bridge program	TN
Thornton Township High School	High Schools That Work (HSTW)	IL
West Virginia HSTW	HSTW	WV
Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.)	TRIO program	AR

3. Development of a US Department of Education (USDE) grant focusing on Adult Basic Education (ABE) and the GED as a Bridge to College

We are delighted that our work with the APASS initiative has resulted in additional support for a new research project that is being funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). A brief summary of the project appears at the end of this report. To support the work on this project, it is noteworthy that a national advisory committee has been formed that includes several experts associated with Lumina-funded projects, including researchers and local programs associated with *Achieving the Dream*. The project will involve site visits to five ABE/GED-bridge-to-Community College programs distributed geographically across the United States. It is our intent to include programs that have a deliberate interest in involved immigrants and English Language Learning and articulate the ABE/GED experiences with community college career pathway programs that lead to family-sustaining wages.

A website is under development to report progress and results pertaining to this new project, and that site can be found later this month at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu>.

4. Development of Additional Publications and Presentations to Disseminate Information about APASS

During the period of January – March, 2006, we have been preparing a new brochure that will highlight the goals, methods, results and implications of the APASS initiative. This brochure is in final stages of preparation, and it will be ready for dissemination within the next two weeks. Once completed, we will distribute the brochure to individuals who inquire about the project but more important we will distribute the brochure at conferences and meetings where the APASS initiative and related projects are being presented.

On April 9, Eunyoung Kim and I presented a research paper at the American Educational Research Association meeting in San Francisco where we presented results of our case study work in three states, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Oregon. The title of the paper is *How Three Disparate States Seek to Connect K-12 to College to Enhance Student Access and Student Success*. A copy of the paper and PowerPoint slides that accompany the paper are posted on the APASS website. Further work will be done on this paper during the summer of 2006 to prepare it for publication in a peer-refereed journal.

In the spring issue of the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* Debra Bragg will have the lead article featuring results of the APASS project as pertaining to three academic pathway models: dual credit and dual enrollment, tech prep and related career pathways, and middle and early college high schools. The title of this journal article is *Transitions to College: Academic Pathways from High School to Community College*.

On May 16, 2006, the APASS project will be presented at the [the annual meeting of Association of Institutional Research](#) in Chicago, IL.

In addition to the presentations and publications mentioned above, the APASS website provides a section where information about the project is archived. We encourage you to go to this site to read more about the project. Thus, APASS News is at: http://www.apass.uiuc.edu/APASS/news_archive.html

For additional information about the APASS project, contact Dr. Debra Bragg, Professor and Director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL), 129 Children's Research Center, 51 Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820, 217-244-9390, www.apass.uiuc.edu.

Supporting Materials

Project Title: *Moving Beyond the GED: Low-skilled Adult Transition to Occupational Pathways at Community Colleges Leading to Family-Supporting Careers*

Funder: United States Department of Education, National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota

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Abstract

The study is intended to identify and describe innovative curricular and instructional models and practices associated with *academic pathway* programs that connect Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), GED and related adult education and literacy programs to community college occupational education and training. The intention of the research is to provide a baseline for further research on how these programs facilitate low-skilled adults' transition into postsecondary career pathway programs and family-supporting careers. The study will identify and document local models and practices with respect to goals, key components, implementation strategies, partnerships, and evidence of impact on education and employment.

The Problem and Research Questions

Gaps exist in knowledge about the development of curricular models that lead to student success as demonstrated by a range of student outcomes, particularly retention in postsecondary education and placement in related employment. Despite the growing literature on the effects of ABE and the GED, very little is known about how new curricular and instructional pathways integrate English Literacy, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and pre-college and developmental instruction with postsecondary occupational certificate and associate degree programs in community colleges. In undertaking this project, we seek to deepen understanding of an emerging trend that has the potential to create fundamental changes in the ways low-skilled adult learners engage in, enter into, and succeed in postsecondary education and employment (Liebowitz & Combes Taylor, 2004).

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What GED, ESL, or ABE, to postsecondary career pathway programs exist in the United States that display innovative policies and practices and also offer promising evidence of outcomes for low-skilled adults, particularly persistence to completion of a postsecondary credential and placement in related employment?
2. What practices and institutional strategies are associated with GED, ESL, or ABE, to postsecondary career pathway to promote low-skilled adult participation in postsecondary credential (certificate or degree) programs and placement in related employment? What are the

programmatic components and curricular elements? What processes and practices are designed to facilitate persistence and completion? What support services such as counseling, mentoring, tutoring, financial aid are tailored to low-skilled adults and contribute to promising student outcomes at the selected sites? What organizational structures within community colleges and partnerships with K-12, higher education, community and employment organizations help to sustain the programs?

3. What lessons can be learned about curricular and instructional design that may be transportable to other GED, ESL, or ABE, to post-secondary career pathway for low-skilled adults?

Methods

This 1-year study focuses on curricular and instructional models associated with ABE/GED transition programs at selected community colleges. This study will employ a research synthesis, a national advisory panel, and intensive case studies utilizing interviews with key experts and practitioners to describe ABE/GED pathways to postsecondary career pathway programs for low-skilled adults, including programs that emphasis an intensive English Language Learning (ELL) component to support the transition of immigrant students.

Research Synthesis

A research synthesis of studies and reports on ABE, ESL, GED and related adult education and literacy and postsecondary career pathway programs will be undertaken. The literature to be collected and reviewed will address basic questions about these programs, such as what career pathways students “typically” pursue with success, what measures are being used to define this success, what are the curricular and instructional practices associated with these programs, and what is the role of student support services. The literature will be collected and reviewed to address the following basic questions about these programs:

1. What are the career pathways these students “typically” pursue with success?
2. What measures are being applied to these pathway programs in terms of student outcomes associated with credentials sought/obtained, retention, completion and placement in family-supporting careers?
3. What are the extant models (e.g., typology) of integrated instructional structures and services put into place to support low-skilled adults participation in ABE/ESL/GED-career pathway programs (e.g., integrating ABE with workforce programming, integrating developmental and degree programs, integrating public and private funding, and integrating credit and non-credit)?
4. What does the curriculum entail in terms of contextual content, accelerated learning opportunities, diagnostic assessment practices, and other curriculum modifications?
5. What instructional practices (e.g., differentiated, modularized linked to stackable credentials, independent/self paced learning, computer assisted, project-based, small group/cooperative learning, accommodations and support used, etc) are associated with pathway programs? Are there examples of smaller learning communities established within CCs to support students who are participating in ABE-to-career pathway programs, particularly students who are not native speakers of English, students with disabilities or special needs?
6. What is the role of student support services in terms of assessment, career planning, advising, etc?
7. What is the role of partnerships with K-12, higher education, the community, and employers to ensure services are provided in a timely and effective manner?

National Advisory Panel

We will convene a panel of experts, including members identified by the NRCCTE and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Department of Education. The Panel will perform three functions: a) inform the literature review; b) assist in the identification of sites for case study research; c) provide on-going feedback and evaluation of study products. The use of panels of experts in lieu of traditional survey methodologies is well documented. Panels are considered a variation of the quantitative survey approach wherein the panelists become part of an ongoing process of regular consultation: members of a panel may take part in several surveys/interviews or events over the course a study year. Widely used in marketing research, recent notable examples of the use of expert panels in education include the National Reading Panel.

Case Studies

From the sites identified by the expert panel, we will identify a pool of providers that offer ABE, ELL, or GED-to-occupational program demonstrating student outcomes that show promising models, practices, and performance. Once identified, administrators from these programs will be contacted by a member of the research team to ask follow-up questions needed to ensure that the site does indeed have expected program features. A proposed list of case study sites will be provided to OVAE. Final case study site selection will be negotiated with OVAE.

Three to five case studies will then be conducted. Trained researchers from the University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, and University of Louisville will lead the case studies. Site visits will involve 20-25 stakeholder interviews, classroom observations, and reviews of relevant institutional documents and data. Following each site visit, all interviews will be analyzed for emerging patterns and themes. A cross-analysis of all case studies will be conducted to examine common and unique trends and identify useful strategies and curricular pathway models. A case study report will be produced with information about occupational pathway programs that meet the needs low-skilled adult students, including ABE and LEP students.

Potential Impact on the Field

The study capitalizes on the extensive knowledge and experience of the research team at the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at UIUC, the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) at the University of Minnesota, and builds on the extensive research base in the area of adult literacy now being undertaken by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. The case studies will contribute significantly to the knowledge of the field, as very little is known about how to improve postsecondary outcomes for low-skilled adults. This will be a groundbreaking study of what works to help adults achieve their postsecondary education goals. At community colleges across the U.S., the results of the study will help administrators and faculty to understand what students need to gain the key elements of postsecondary readiness, and they will be able to focus their efforts on interventions that have the greatest potential for improving outcomes.

Products/Publications

A *Research Synthesis* will integrate the GED and adult literacy research with literature on career pathway/GED-career pathway programs. These areas have been funded separately and have not traditionally shared funded opportunities for research. Results have been disseminated in different journals and practitioners and researchers typically attend conferences that focus either on adult literacy or occupational education. This synthesizes knowledge associated with these disparate fields.

Technical report and case study reports. A *technical report* will be prepared to summarize major findings and recommendations for future research and practice. The findings will be shared on the NCWE, NCCTE, OCCRL, APASS and other websites. In addition, project team members will engage in publishing papers and preparing presentations at various conferences and meetings to widely disseminate

the results of the project. In addition, case study findings will be disseminated to relevant postsecondary professional associations and organizations (AACC, ACE, AHED, NCWE).

Webcast. A *webcast* will be conducted in conjunction with the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education, The Ohio State University to share results of this project.