College and Career Readiness: Setting up First-Year Student Success

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

center of EXCELLENCE
College and Career Readiness
at Francis Marion University

The P-20 experiences of South Carolina students.

The Data Audit: College and Career Readiness in SC

What is going on at the state level that is impacting college and career readiness?

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

In the United States, 63% of the occupations projected to grow fastest by 2020 will require some form of postsecondary education for entry-level work (Lockard & Wolf, 2012).

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

In SC 79% of jobs require some type of postsecondary education or training, yet only 35% of the adults in this state have an associate's degree or higher (Achieve, 2012).

Indicators of CCR in SC

- SAT
- ACT
- ACT WorkKeys
- National Assessment of Educational Progress
- South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program
- College enrollment and completion rates
- Dual enrollment credits
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

- In 2010, 21% of high school graduates were not prepared for any subject area in college

- Among students with substantial core courses, only 75% were college ready

- A minority of SC students met benchmarks in critical content areas on standardized tests (SAT, ACT, ACT WorkKeys)
  - Math: 31-45%
  - English: 30-61%

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

- 40.3% of SC graduates ages 18-24 enrolled in college
  - US national average: 42.7%

- 36.8% of SC working age population had obtained associate's degree or higher
  - US national average: 40.0%
  - Varies widely by county:
    - Marlboro County (rural, low SES): 13.7%
    - Charleston County (urban, higher SES): 49.5%

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

- In the 2009-10 school year, South Carolina public high school graduation rates were below 70 %
  - US national average: 78.2%
  - Only five other places scored as low: Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi, and the District of Columbia (NCES).

SC Policy Response to Challenges with CCR

- SC Course Alignment Project
  - Effort to align coursework between high school and postsecondary education

- College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements
  - Statewide agreed upon minimum set of high school courses needed to be completed for admission into public colleges and universities

- Education and Economic Development Act (2005)
  - Individual Graduation Plans

SC Policy Response to Challenges with CCR

- Statewide college and career standards for math and English language arts
  - Implemented for 2015-2016 school year
- SC 2020 Vision
  - Increase high school on-time graduation rates from 77.5% in 2013 to 88.3% in 2020
  - 85% of all high school graduates will be performing at a level consistent with college and career readiness standards

The Latest: SC Policy Response to Challenges with CCR

- New state assessments
  - (ACT & WorkKeys)

- New teacher evaluation program

- Profile of the SC Graduate

- Dual enrollment courses

- Creation of Center of Excellence

SC Policy Response to Challenges with CCR

- 2014: SC Commission on Higher Education awards grant to establish Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness at Francis Marion University

- Research Sub-contract awarded to National Resource Center at University of South Carolina
  - Phase 1: Audit of CCR Information
    - Policies, programs, and indicators
  - Phase 2: Survey of College and Career Readiness Programs in SC
    - Middle, High, and Postsecondary

What is the Center of Excellence?

Supported by a grant from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education under the auspices of the EIA Teacher Education Centers of Excellence Grant Program.

PROFILE OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE

WORLD CLASS KNOWLEDGE

Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD CLASS SKILLS

Creativity and innovation

Critical thinking and problem solving

Collaboration and teamwork

Communication, information, media and technology

Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Integrity

Self-direction

Global Perspective

Perseverance

Work Ethic

Interpersonal Skills

transforms©
tomorrow won't wait for our students

AN INITIATIVE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON COMPETITIVENESS

Goals of the Center

- To serve as a statewide resource for P-20 initiatives

- To develop and implement best practices for promoting college and career readiness

- To provide opportunities for South Carolina teachers and students to learn more about

  - Cognitive strategies
  - Content knowledge
  - Learning skills and techniques
  - Transition knowledge and skills

center of
EXCELLENCE
College and Career Readiness
at Francis Marion University

Meeting These Goals

- Defining "college readiness"

- Facilitating Professional Development with K-12 teachers

- Investigating local readiness cultures with CampusReady Surveys

- Holding "Readiness Course" for local K-12 teachers

- Meeting students in the middle
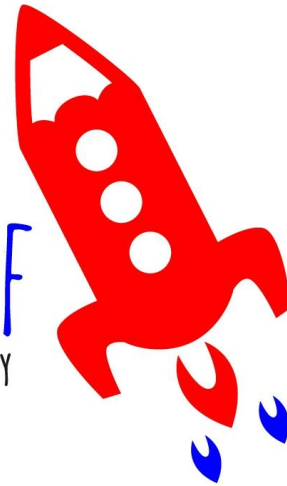
Defining College and Career Readiness

- Models
  - Four Keys (Conley)
  - Chicago Consortium on School Research (Nagaoka, Farrington)
  - National Research Council (Pellegrino & Heritage)
  - Hewlett Foundation Deeper Learning
- All emphasize that readiness is more than just reading and math scores
- All incorporate "success skills" that go beyond content knowledge
  - Academic mindset
  - Persistence
  - Goal orientation

Defining CCR in SC

- 33 states (and DC) have adopted statewide definitions of CCR
- SC among 18 states listed that had not yet adopted a statewide definition of CCR (Education Commission of the States, 2014)

Defining CCR in SC

- Profile of South Carolina Graduate
  - Developed by SC Council on Competitiveness Transform SC initiative
  - CCR in three areas
    - Knowledge in content areas
    - Workforce readiness skills
    - Personal characteristics
  - Adopted by several key state stakeholders
  - Was definition of CCR used by SC Dept. of Ed. for new readiness standards

Efforts Aimed at Supporting CCR in SC

- Examples of Statewide Programs
  - **SC CAN GO**: Marketing campaign promoting college-going culture among students and families
  - **Personal Pathways to Success**: Students, parents, and counselors mapped out educational and career aspirations
  - **Know2 Program**: State, community, and individual level partnership-based program to develop growth mindset
  - **readySC**: Program that partners business and industry in the state with educational institutions to deliver on the skills and training matching the needs of the business
  - **GEAR UP:** Federal grant program offered at low SES SC middle and high schools aimed at providing early college awareness of higher education opportunities
  - **Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness**

Skills Businesses Desire

- Survey of skills employers in SC want from graduates
  - Division of Economic Development & Workforce Competitiveness of SC Technical College System
- Qualitative analysis of responses yielded 4 main areas of competencies desired from graduates:
  - Cognitive skills (problem solving, reasoning)
  - Non-cognitive skills (drive, resilience)
  - Professional intelligence skills (engaging in work, attendance, professional behavior)
  - Technical skills (trade-specific, awareness of regulations)

Survey of CCR Programs in South Carolina

- Attempt to understand the diversity of programs in institutions of education supporting CCR efforts in the state
  - Levels: middle, high, postsecondary
  - Sector: public & private
  - Objectives
  - Programs
    - Types
    - Age
    - Reach
  - Programs by grade level

Survey of CCR Programs in South Carolina

- Survey conducted at the middle and high school level (Grades 6-12)
- 632 public and private schools in population
  - 117 respondents (18.5%) at time of analysis
  - Respondents representative of schools in population by sector (public vs. private) and grade levels

Objectives of CCR Programs

Ten most frequently named objectives

Objective	Freq.	%
Providing career exploration	37	33.3
Developing college-level academic behaviors	35	31.5
Developing critical-thinking skills	35	31.5
Developing workforce-readiness skills	31	27.9
Improving graduation rates	27	24.3
Connecting students to community resources for college and career readiness	26	23.4
Developing communication skills	26	23.4
Providing college-choice information	21	18.9
Providing support for the college application process	18	16.2
Providing college admissions test preparation (e.g., ACT, SAT)	16	14.4

Objectives of CCR Programs

Public

- Providing career exploration (35.0%)
- Developing workforce-readiness skills (31.0%)
- Developing critical-thinking skills (29.0%)
- Improving graduation rates (27.0%)
- Developing college-level academic behaviors (25.0%)

Private

- Developing college-level academic behaviors (58.8%)
- Providing support for the college application process (58.8%)
- Providing college-choice information (52.9%)
- Developing critical-thinking skills (35.3%)
- Providing college admissions test preparation (29.4%)
- Providing college enrollment information (29.4%)

Types of CCR Programs

Specific CCR Program	Freq.	%
Visits to colleges and/or universities	80	72.1
Career fairs	78	70.3
Visits from college representatives (e.g., admissions counselors, academic advisors, student recruiters)	77	69.4
Job shadowing programs	76	68.5
Visits from business or industry representatives	75	67.6
Career exploration resources	72	64.9
Partnership with business or industry	70	63.6
Partnership with college or university	69	62.7
College fairs	62	55.9
SAT or ACT test preparation classes (provided by school or district staff)	62	55.9

Types of CCR Programs

Specific CCR Program	Freq.	%
Visits to colleges and/or universities	80	72.1
Career fairs	78	70.3
Visits from college representatives (e.g., admissions counselors, academic advisors, student recruiters)	77	69.4
Job shadowing programs	76	68.5
Visits from business or industry representatives	75	67.6
Career exploration resources	72	64.9
Partnership with business or industry	70	63.6
Partnership with college or university	69	62.7
College fairs	62	55.9
SAT or ACT test preparation classes (provided by school or district staff)	62	55.9

Types of CCR Programs

Public

- Career fairs (79.8%)
- Visits from business or industry representatives (78.0%)
- Job shadowing programs (73.4%)
- Career exploration resources (71.6%)
- Visits to colleges and/or universities (69.7%)

Private

- Assistance applying for scholarships (100%)
- Visits from college reps (e.g. counselors, advisors, recruiters) (94.1%)
- Visits to colleges and/or universities (82.4%)
- Assistance filling out the Common Application (82.4%)
- SAT/ACT test prep classes (led by school/district staff) (76.5%)
- College application assistance, literature (76.5%)
- College application assistance, workshops for students (76.5%)

Conclusions

- Objectives of the state (Profile of the South Carolina Graduate) are fairly well aligned with objectives of middle and high schools responding to the survey
- Was this as a result of institutions following the state's lead, a demonstration of coordination between the state educational leadership and the districts and schools, or is this serendipity?
  - Worthy of more investigation
  - Beneficial to understanding how state-level policy decisions influence practice

Conclusions

- Measures are only showing how well SC is preparing students to get them to and into the door of postsecondary institutions (colleges or workplaces).
- Additionally, measures are global indicators, and tell us nothing about which kinds of programs or interventions are having the highest impact or for whom.
  - No systematic tracking of student participation in programs and outcomes outlined by Profile of a CCR Graduate

Conclusions

- Generally, middle and high schools are offering a mix between college and career readiness programs
- Objectives are aligned with types of programs that are being offered

- However, public institutions are more career-readiness focused while private institutions are college-readiness focused

Conclusions

- Challenges faced by those tasked with implementation of CCR efforts at the school level can only be further complicated by numerous interested parties, multiplicity of programs, and frequently shifting policies
  - Requires professional development
  - Collaborative space to build on success and create efficiencies
  - Coordination of leadership
  - Clearinghouse of "best practices"
    - Roles of Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness

Directions for Future Research

- Identify promising practices in SC
  - Phase III of current project
- Case studies of development of CCR programs at schools
- Comparative study of SC and other schools in region
- Connect student participation in CCR activities to outcomes
  - Test scores
  - Graduation rates
  - First-year retention rates

Policy and Practice Implications

- Development of definition(s) of College and Career Readiness

- Rethinking/revising course requirements

- Re-envisioning the senior year
  - Dual Credit
  - Remediation
  - Capstone Portfolios

CCR and FYE

- How can understanding the approaches to CCR inform a successful FYE?

- Four Keys to Readiness:
  - Key Cognitive Strategies
  - Key Content Knowledge
  - Key Learning Skills & Techniques
  - Key Transition Knowledge & Skills

Questions?

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A Study of the State of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

- *Note.* A substantial proportion of this presentation is based on National Resource Center Working Paper No. 2 authored by Stefania Petcu, Sara J. Frakes, Dory E. Hoffman, and Dallin George Young.