

Student Support (Re)defined: From Research to Action on Your Campus

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theRPgroup

Agenda

- What is Student Support (Re)defined?
- What have we found so far?
- What does all this mean?
- How can you use this research?
- What is the action guide?

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn about six factors that support students' success
- Use this research to identify how it can further advance their students' success
- Gain familiarity with an action guide designed to help colleges explore ways to strengthen student support
- Envision how you can use the guide on your campus

Reflection

1. Thinking back, what would you say was most important to your success as a college student?
2. What do you think is most important to community college students' success today?

OVERVIEW OF STUDY PURPOSE, DESIGN &
METHODOLOGY

What is Student Support (Re)defined?

General research question

In an environment of extreme scarcity, which student support activities can be delivered inside and outside of the classroom to improve success for all students, paying special attention to African-American and Latino learners?

Research design and methodology

- Student Perspectives Methodology
 - Literature review
 - Student telephone survey (current students, leavers, completers)
 - Focus groups (current students)

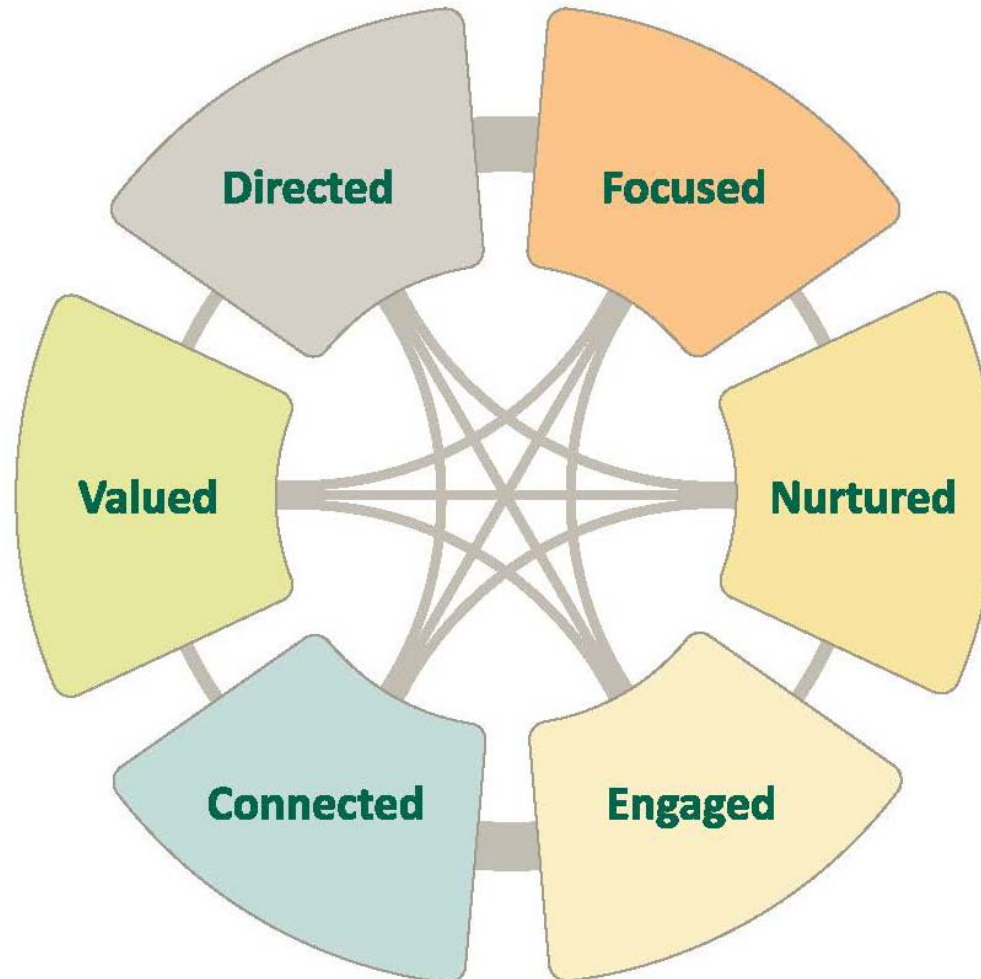
Participating colleges



Study participants

- Survey: 785 students (12 CCCs)
 - 36% current students, 32% completers, 32% leavers
 - 30% first generation
 - 32% white, 31% Latino, 25% African American, 12% other
- Focus groups: 102 students (4 CCCs)

Six success factors



SUMMARY OF STUDENT PERSPECTIVES RESEARCH

What have we found so far?

Directed: Student Voices

I came here for liberal arts and then I got offered to take several human resources and business classes. I was doing well in these classes and just going along and the professor asked me, “What are you here for? What are you doing?” I said, “Just having fun and stuff.” He said, “You really need to focus on something.” So it was the instructor that helped me choose a direction.

Focused: Student Voices

On my college website, they have a “degree works” system where I can go and check all the classes I’ve taken. And I keep looking at it when I’m a little down. I think, “Oh, I’m almost there.” So, it’s kind of a big motivator. I see my grades and what I’ve accomplished and it lifts my spirits.

Nurtured: Student Voices

The first day I came to campus to register, I was lost and didn't know where to go. I unintentionally ended up in DSPS office and there's a lady that sits in front. . . . She was very helpful to me. She actually told me exactly what I have to do. . . . She even sat down with me on the computer to help me finish my registration. And she has been very helpful since then. I really feel that . . . when somebody cares about you, it makes you more responsible. Because she's been taking care of me, I think that I have to do my best. Whenever she talks about me she says, "This is the student that I helped and he's so successful."

Engaged: Student Voices

For me [engagement] happens in the classroom, outside of the classroom and in activities. . . . For me it's important to do all three. That's just the type of learner I am because I'm not just here to . . . be in the classroom and engage in the classroom and then leave and not engage. I have to because otherwise I'll forget what I just learned or it's a waste of time for me to be here.

Connected: Student Voices

I think . . . making the student feel more connected, it sort of lies a bit within the professors as well. Because there's been some classes where the professor has one or two tests a semester and doesn't lecture and it's all based on the book. And you don't feel very connected to that class. Whereas you can have a professor that fully engages you in lectures. There's classwork spread throughout the whole semester and you can see he really cares. You're more motivated to go to that class to be at the school.

Valued: Student Voices

I worked in a particular field so I bring my professional experience to the classroom and I feel that's valued. I've been told I bring an enormous professional background, specifically in debates and in answering questions about my professional experience and organization I'm able to make arguments about why you don't do certain things So, yeah, in that sense, I feel very valued.

Small Group Discussion

For any of these six factors, discuss one thing you could start doing tomorrow in your interactions with students:

Directed	Engaged
Focused	Connected
Nurtured	Valued

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

What does all this mean?

Key Themes

1. Colleges need to foster students' motivation.
2. Colleges must teach students how to succeed in the postsecondary environment.
3. Colleges need to structure support to ensure all "six success factors" are addressed.
4. Colleges need to provide comprehensive support to historically underserved students to prevent the equity gap from growing.
5. Everyone has a role to play in supporting student achievement, but faculty must take the lead.

UTILIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

How can you use this research?

10 Ways Faculty Can Help

1. Ask students about their educational and career goals (*directed*)
2. Integrate career and educational goal exploration into course assignments (*directed, focused, engaged*)

10 Ways Faculty Can Help

3. Provide regular and meaningful feedback to students about their performance and progress (*focused, engaged*)
4. Regularly ask students if they understand the course material and direct them to available assistance when needed (*nurtured, engaged*)

10 Ways Faculty Can Help

5. Learn your students' names and ask them how they are doing (*nurtured, connected*)
6. Create opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience in your course throughout the term (*engaged, valued*)

10 Ways Faculty Can Help

7. Show students that you are proud to work at your institution and that they should be proud to be enrolled at your community college (*connected*)
8. Provide opportunities for and encourage students to connect with and support each other (*connected, nurtured, engaged*)

10 Ways Faculty Can Help

9. Incorporate opportunities for students to share their personal and family history and culture in class assignments (*valued, engaged*)
10. Connect or provide students with opportunities to help their peers (*valued, engaged*)

STUDENT SUPPORT (RE)DEFINED IN ACTION

What is the Student Support (Re)defined Action Guide?

What is the purpose of the Action Guide?

- Assist an existing change initiative or facilitate a new effort to improve student success and support
- Provide a process, tools and resources focused on exploring our research and planning for action
- Help colleges strengthen success through support that is integrated inside and outside the classroom

Who can use the Action Guide?

Teams of practitioners...

- Interested in strengthening student success through improved support
- Involved in other success initiatives on campus
- Who can link the process to institutional planning and/or resource allocation
- Connected to students at different points along the educational pathways through your college

How do you use the Action Guide?

Reinforcing an existing effort...

- Select activities and resources that inform and advance your institutional planning process or student success initiative

Starting from scratch...

- Take a more holistic approach, utilizing the process and activities from start to finish

What does the Action Guide include?



Phase 1: Preparation

- Form a core group of leaders who will guide this inquiry process
- Collectively familiarize yourselves with the Student Support (Re)defined research
- Identify additional team members

Phase 2: Engagement

- Coalesce your team
- Establish a common definition for student support
- Select success factors and explore them in your own college's context

Phase 2: Engagement

Success Factor Discussion Guides

- Offer questions designed to facilitate discussion on:
 - How the findings related to the factor fit within your local context
 - How current college practices help support students in areas related to the factor
 - Possible responses to students' suggestions related to the factor
 - Ideas for change related to the factor

Phase 3: Action

- Decide what change to pursue
- Plan for action
- Reflect on your process

Additional Resources in the Action Guide

Optional activities:

- Icebreaker for first meeting
- Defining student support
- Relating own work to success factors
- Selecting success factor to explore

Appendices:

- Sample invitation for participation
- Opportunity matrix
- Action plan template

Action on your campus

What is one step you can take to begin using this guide on your own campus?

- Current initiatives at your college that could benefit from using this resource
- Others on your campus with whom you could share this guide

RP's Next Steps

- Sharing these findings among a variety of constituent groups
- Disseminating the action guide
- Reconnecting with colleges that participated in the study and convenings to see how they are using the findings
- Identifying practices that can be sustained and scaled at the individual, program/department and institutional levels

Q & A



For more information on Student Support (Re)defined

<http://www.rpggroup.org/projects/student-support>

Dr. Darla Cooper, Project Director
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Thank you!



What is Student Support (Re)defined?

Student Support (Re)defined aims to understand how community colleges can feasibly deliver support both inside and outside the classroom to improve success for *all* students.

What are the six factors for success?

Through a review of leading studies on effective support practices and interviews with both practitioners and researchers, the RP Group identified “six success factors” that contribute to students’ success. These factors subsequently drove our inquiry into what *students* find critical to their achievement. We list them below in the order of importance according to students participating in our study.

DIRECTED: Students have a goal and know how to achieve it

FOCUSED: Students stay on track—keeping their eyes on the prize

NURTURED: Students feel somebody wants and helps them to succeed

ENGAGED: Students actively participate in class and extracurricular activities

CONNECTED: Students feel like they are part of the college community

VALUED: Students’ skills, talents, abilities and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated

For a full report of student perspectives on these six success factors, please visit: www.rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/StudentPerspectivesResearchReportJan2013.pdf

What have we discovered?

In phone surveys and focus groups, the RP Group asked nearly **900 students from 13 California community colleges** what supports their educational success, paying special attention to the factors African Americans and Latinos cite as important to their achievement.

Five distinct themes emerged:

1. Colleges need to foster students’ motivation.

While this research recognizes students as key agents in their own educational success, it also highlights that even those who arrive to college motivated need their drive continuously stoked and augmented.

Findings suggest that undecided and first-generation students in particular may need additional support to find, hone and maintain their motivation.

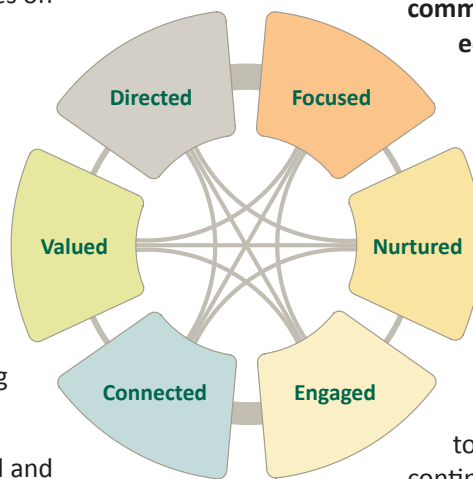
2. Colleges must teach students how to succeed in the postsecondary environment.

These findings also imply that colleges must show students how to translate their motivation into success. Students need assistance building the specific skills and knowledge necessary to navigate and thrive in their community college, particularly those who are new to higher education or who arrive without a particular goal in mind.

3. Colleges need to structure support to ensure all six success factors are addressed.

Participants (a) confirmed the six success factors were important to their progress and achievement and (b) indicated that the factors interact with each other in various ways. Students noted how

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I feel that whenever someone wants me to succeed and is supportive of me, then I am motivated to work harder and be successful. The motivation they provide for me is vital to me pushing myself and being focused, engaged and directed towards success.

— Focus Group Participant

A teacher's engaging when they're not just writing on a board or showing you a PowerPoint, but really talking to the class, when they make the eye contact and ask questions. Don't just give us the answer. Talk to the class. Engage people. Make them answer questions. Pick on somebody a little bit. Make a joke here and there. And, connect us to outside resources and extra tutoring.

— Focus Group Participant

experiencing one factor often led to realizing another, or how two factors were inextricably linked to one another. Since students do not experience these factors in isolation, colleges need to consider ways to help students attain multiple factors at once.

4. Colleges need to provide comprehensive support to historically underserved students to prevent the equity gap from growing.

Comprehensive support is more likely to address the multiple needs—academic, financial, social and personal—identified by African-American, Latino and first-generation participants in this study. These students were more likely to cite a lack of academic support, the absence of someone at the college who cared about their success and insufficient financial assistance as reasons not to continue their education. Colleges must find a way to provide comprehensive support to these student groups—at scale. If they do not, the equity gap will likely grow.

5. Everyone has a role to play in supporting student achievement, but faculty must take the lead.

Participants noted how everyone on a campus can affect their achievement. Their responses underscored the importance of colleges promoting a culture where all individuals across the institution understand their role in advancing students' success, no matter their position at the college. Yet, students most commonly recognized instructional faculty as having the greatest potential impact on their educational journeys and suggested multiple ways teachers can support their progress both inside and outside class.

For a detailed discussion of these themes, please visit: www.rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/StudentPerspectivesResearchBriefJan2013.pdf

What will Student Support (Re)defined do next?

A key goal of Student Support (Re)defined is engaging practitioners with the study's findings and providing structures for exploring and acting on these results. Activities include:

COLLEGE CONVENINGS: In spring 2013, we convened the 12 colleges that participated in the student phone survey to help practitioner leaders examine study findings, explore how their college presently approaches student support and identify ideas for related institutional change. We will continue connecting with these colleges in the coming year to determine how they are using the research.

PRESENTATIONS: We are also continuously sharing findings through multiple venues throughout the state, from individual college meetings to association conferences and system-level discussions. In 2012-2013, the RP Group conducted 22 presentations reaching hundreds of faculty, support professionals, administrators and policy makers.

RESOURCES: We are currently developing an action guide to assist colleges in (a) using study findings to reflect on their own student support policies and practices, (b) considering how to address changes mandated through the Student Success Act and (c) developing campus plans for strengthening support. In 2013-14, we will also profile a series of colleges and practitioners that have pursued change initiatives to improve student support.

For more information . . .

Find more information and all project resources at: www.rpgroup.org/projects/student-support or contact Dr. Darla Cooper, Director of Research and Evaluation, dcooper@rpgroup.org.

Student Support (Re)defined

Equitable
Integrated
Cost Effective

10 Ways Faculty Can Support Students' Success:

Helping Students Achieve the “Six Success Factors”

Six Success Factors Defined

Through a review of leading studies on effective support practices and interviews with both practitioners and researchers, the RP Group identified “six success factors” that contribute to students’ achievement. We list them below in order of importance according to the students participating in the Student Support (Re)defined study.

DIRECTED: Students have a goal and know how to achieve it

FOCUSED: Students stay on track—keeping their eyes on the prize

NURTURED: Students feel somebody wants and helps them to succeed

ENGAGED: Students actively participate in class and extracurricular activities

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VALUED: Students’ skills, talents, abilities and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated

What can faculty do to help students experience the “six success factors”—focused, directed, nurtured, engaged, connected and valued—during their community college enrollment? (See sidebar, Six Success Factors Defined) Find below 10 suggestions the RP Group gleaned from nearly 900 California community college learners participating in our Student Support (Re)defined study.

1 Ask students about their educational and career goals (directed)

By asking students why they are in college and what their major is, you let them know you expect them to have a reason for enrolling in postsecondary education.

2 Integrate career and educational goal exploration into course assignments (directed, focused, engaged)

Students indicated that their teachers could play a unique role in helping them explore careers given the professional experience and content-specific expertise many instructors bring to their courses. Rooting this exploration in the classroom can help students draw connections between their educational and career goals and coursework, and in turn, find greater relevance in course content.

3 Provide regular and meaningful feedback to students about their performance and progress (focused, engaged)

Students want to know where they stand in their individual classes and whether they are on the right track in meeting their goals. This type of feedback can foster motivation as well as allow students to “course correct” by connecting with additional resources if needed to improve their performance.

We would work with each other so we would get to know other people in our class, and then we'd get to work on the same problems together. That would make us more engaged and we can learn from each other [as well as] the professor.

— Focus Group Participant

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4 Regularly ask students if they understand the course material and direct them to available assistance when needed (nurtured, engaged)

Students want faculty to care if they are learning. While it is not possible to provide private instruction to every student in need, help by identifying and referring struggling students to campus resources like tutoring centers for assistance.

5 Learn your students' names and ask them how they are doing (nurtured, connected)

Knowing every student's name can be a challenge, especially in large classes, yet there are techniques such as name tags or plates that can prove useful. Recognizing someone by name is a small gesture that can go a long way in making a student feel like an important and valuable participant in your course. For students who approach you, learn their name, ask them how they are doing, and wait for the answer.

6 Create opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience in your course throughout the term (engaged, valued)

Students said that being asked for their feedback in both formal and informal ways made them want to engage more in their classes because they felt like their input and experience mattered. In addition, being asked for their opinion helped students feel they had something worth offering that could help improve the course, which made them feel valued.

7 Show students that you are proud to work at your institution and that they should be proud to be enrolled at your community college (connected)

Some students don't see their community college as a place of pride. When asked why, participants referenced an absence of strong organizational identity among faculty and staff at their institutions. Other students indicated that there was no value in establishing ties with what they perceived to be "just a two-year

I like having conversations with my teachers. . . . [I'd like] if I'm having a hard day or something where I could open up [to] them and share my feelings . . . and it not just be about, "Oh sorry, I didn't complete the homework." . . . That's definitely something I think is very beneficial to have, [to] talk with them and know that they genuinely care about you.

— Focus Group Participant

college," reporting plans to make these connections upon transferring to a university. Illustrating with students your own sense of connection to your institution and sharing why you choose to work in a community college environment can invoke a greater sense of place and pride in students.

8 Provide opportunities for and encourage students to connect with and support each other (connected, nurtured, engaged)

Students are a critical and often untapped resource of support for one another. Help students connect with each other by creating study groups, assigning project work, instituting a buddy system and facilitating peer mentoring opportunities.

9 Incorporate opportunities for students to share their personal and family history and culture in class assignments (valued, engaged)

Many students in the study, especially African-American, Latino and first-generation participants, indicated that they appreciated being provided with opportunities to share their backgrounds and experiences in ways that showed their perspectives and contributions were valued.

10 Connect or provide students with opportunities to help their peers (valued, engaged)

Students felt most valued when they were helping other students. Create opportunities inside the classroom through group and other assignments where students assist each other. Guide students in identifying opportunities outside the classroom where they can volunteer or work in the local community or on campus.

For more information . . .

Find more information and all project resources at: www.rpgroup.org/projects/student-support or contact Dr. Darla Cooper, Director of Research and Evaluation, dcooper@rpgroup.org.