

Hispanic Community College Students and the Transfer Game: Strikes, Misses,
and Grand Slam Experiences
By Linda Serra Hagedorn and Jaime Lester

The purpose of this study was to assess the amount of Hispanic students able to transfer to a four year university based on the IGETC California transfer readiness curriculum. The article uses a metaphor of baseball to describe the transfer rate of Latino students. The Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students Project (TRUCCS) was used to determine the progress of Hispanic students towards the goal of transfer and whether certain variables such as native language, age, and gender had an affect on transfer rate.

The author first describes a need to make changes at the elementary and secondary school levels. In the Los Angeles Unified School district, Hispanics have a low academic performance index score and a low high school completion rate at 57%.

According to the California Postsecondary Education Commission, 30 out of every 100 Latinos who graduate high school will go to a community college and only 3 of these 30 will transfer to a four year university. Transfer rates are difficult to measure because it is not easy to decide on one definition. One way to measure transfer rates may be by measuring transfer readiness, defined as the amount of prerequisite courses taken and passed in order to transfer (based on IGETC).

Transcripts from TRUCCS were analyzed to count out the number of courses taken that would lead to a successful transfer. The analysis only consisted of the first 6 semesters of each transcript's data. 70% of Hispanic students passed at least one of the requirements for IGETC. One sixth of students completed two of the five sections required for transfer by IGETC. Only 8% were transfer ready based on IGETC. There did not seem to be a significant difference in gender, age, or native language in transfer rates. With regards to math and English remedial classes, it seems that only a small percentage is able to "climb" to the advanced transfer level courses.

The author suggests that more work needs to be done at the elementary and secondary school level by having stricter requirements for credentialing to ensure the quality of teachers in the state. At the community college level, the author recommends an increase in counselors. Some of the students who were spoken to had never heard of IGETC. Counselors are needed to monitor student progress. Also tutoring and other programs are needed in order to help those in remedial courses to advance to higher level courses that will allow them to transfer. The author strongly suggests that community colleges supervise their students to make sure that no group is underrepresented in transfers or graduation.

Citation:

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Summary by Caitlin Tiffany