Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness

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Dissertation Defense
Graduate School of Education
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Thank you!

- Committee Members
  - Dr. Tom Chenoweth, PhD
  - Dr. Samuel Henry, EdD
  - Dr. Pauline Jivanjee, PhD
  - Dr. Amy Petti, EdD
My Journey

- 17 Years as an educational leader
- 10 years as a teacher
- 7 years as an administrator
- 3 states (OR, AZ, MT)
- 6 years in traditional public schools
- 11 years in public charter schools
- Currently principal of Clackamas Middle College

...I am College...
Overview of Presentation

- Problem and Educational Significance
- Solution
  - *Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness*
- Research Methodology
  - Data collection
  - Data analysis
- Issues and Challenges
- Results and Findings
- Future Research and Recommendations for Leadership
Many students graduating from high school aren’t ready for postsecondary options
The importance of a postsecondary education

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate in 2013 (%)</th>
<th>Median Weekly Earnings in 2013 ($)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1,623</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1,714</td>
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<td>Master's degree</td>
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<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>777</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>727</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All workers: 6.1%  All workers: $827

Many students graduating from high school aren’t ready for postsecondary options.

- First year of college is the most important in regard to degree completion
  - 25 percent of these students drop out their freshman year
  
  Carey, 2004

- Problems of remediation
  - Some two-year colleges see 80% of their students taking remedial classes
  
  Conley, 2010

  - Nationally, only 17% of students who must take remedial reading receive a bachelor’s degree or higher
  
  Conley, 2010
Educational Significance

**Financial and economic implications**

- The next decade will bring an economy where more than 60% of jobs will require a college degree.

- In Oregon only about a third of students will enter college the fall after graduating, and only about 10% will earn a degree within 4 years.  
  Carnevale, N. Smith, & Strohl, 2010

- 40% of students enrolled into postsecondary institutions will take at least one remedial course costing $1 billion or more per year.
  Conley, 2010
“The Holy Grail of College Readiness”

An integrated system that provides postsecondary readiness standards to students in an appropriate way so that they have a sense of how well they are being prepared, and are actually preparing themselves for college.

Conley, 2007
Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness

- Workshop

- Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook
  - A comprehensive approach to postsecondary readiness
  - Centers on a “Postsecondary Readiness Framework” to address the problem:
    - Many students graduating from high school aren’t ready for postsecondary options

- Small scale tested and field tested
Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness

Introduction

- Seven Sections
  - The Problem-Supported by Research and Data
  - Structural Elements
  - Academic Elements
  - Social Elements
  - Application of Postsecondary Readiness
  - Postsecondary Readiness Resources
Research Methodology

Purpose of the study

- To create a tool for educational leaders to help prepare students for postsecondary options

Problem-based learning (PBL) research design that uses the research and development (R&D) methodology
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

- A research approach that begins with a problem which requires a critical synthesis of knowledge, applying this knowledge, developing problem-solving skills, implementing solutions, facilitating collaboration, and developing self-directed learning skills.

- The PBL process aligns critical synthesis, systematic inquiry, and application of domain-relevant knowledge.

(Bridges & Hallinger, 1995)
Research and Development Methodology (R&D)

Purpose of R&D

- To generate original contributions to knowledge, improve educational practice, and contribute new knowledge through research while raising new theoretical and empirical questions

(Borg & Gall, 1989)
Research and Development Cycle

1. Research and information collecting
2. Planning objectives, learning activities, and small scale testing
3. Develop preliminary form of the product
4. Preliminary field testing
5. Main product revision
6. Main field testing
7. Operational product revision
8. Operational field testing
9. Final product revision
10. Dissemination and implementation
Research Questions

Primary research questions

- How can educational leaders prepare high school students for postsecondary success?

- Does *Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness* build the capacity and confidence of participants to successfully facilitate student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education?
Guiding Questions

- In what ways is the guidebook useful in helping educational leaders prepare students for postsecondary success?

- What improvements and changes to the workshop/guidebook are needed to help educational leaders?

- What is the perceived impression of the guidebook’s usability, applicability, and accessibility?

- In what ways is the workshop useful in helping educational leaders navigate through the guidebook?
Data Collection Procedures

- Qualitative Approach
  - Qualitative data
    - Interviews
      - Workshop
      - Guidebook’s functionality (usability, applicability, accessibility)
      - Relevance and usefulness of the guidebook
    - Observations
      - How groups/individuals work with the guidebook
  - Surveys with open-ended comments
    - Workshop
    - Postsecondary readiness knowledge
    - Guidebook’s functionality
Data Analysis

- Triangulation through different forms of data
  - Knowledge of postsecondary readiness (pre/post)
  - Workshop (interviews, observations, surveys)
  - Guidebook’s functionality (interviews, observations, surveys)
- Guidebook’s relevance and content
Data Analysis-Coding

- Inductive coding
  - Clear, descriptive words to characterize segments of data (comprehensive-including all aspects)
- Facesheet coding
  - Demographics (role of educator i.e. 6th grade teacher)
- Enumeration
  - Frequency (systematic -46)
- Hierarchical categorization
  - Typology (cognitive- problem formulation, research, interpretation, communication, precision and accuracy)
Step 1 - Research and information collecting (2012-2013 school year)

- Review of Literature (Chapter Two) on preparing students for college and careers
  - Methods, best practices, and programs aimed at building students’ skills to smooth the transition from high school to postsecondary options
  - Common themes came up that helped me create a framework that would provide a comprehensive approach to postsecondary readiness
  - This “postsecondary readiness framework” gave me insight and ideas about creating a tool to help school leaders prepare students for postsecondary success
  - Created an initial template to small scale test
Step 2 - Planning, objectives, learning activities, and small scale testing (2012-2013 school year)

- Formation of a design team
  - Does the proposed product meet an important educational need?
  - Is the educational environment sufficiently advanced that there is a reasonable probability that a successful product can be created?
  - Are personnel available who have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to build this product?
  - Can the product be developed within a reasonable period of time?

- Participation in the NCSD District Achievement Compact Committee

- Trained through Education Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC)
Step 2 - Planning, objectives, learning activities, and small scale testing (continued)

- Small scale test of a comprehensive approach to postsecondary readiness (initial template)
  - Visitations of schools from around the nation who had programs aimed at preparing students for college and careers
    - Three schools outside of San Jose (one elementary, one middle and one early college high school)
    - Three schools around San Antonio (one charter high school, one early college high school, one traditional comprehensive high school)
Step 3- Develop preliminary form of the product (Summer 2013)

- Feedback from step 2 with design team
  - Workshop
  - Introduction
  - Section on the problem
  - Refine sections from the Postsecondary Readiness Framework
  - Resources

- Postsecondary Readiness Framework + Small Scale Testing = Preliminary form of the postsecondary readiness guidebook
Components of the Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook

- **Design Question (The Problem)**

  **Design Question 1**

  *How is your school preparing all students for postsecondary success?*

- **Target 1**

  The Problem: *Many Students Graduating from High School Aren’t Ready for a Postsecondary Education!*
Step 4- *Preliminary field testing (September-October 2013)*

- Achieve Higher through College Network (pseudonym)
  - Five educational leaders
    - Educational policy advisor
    - Two program directors
    - Two teachers
- Preliminary Field Tested (interviews, surveys)
  - Workshop
    - Content, design, facilitation, results, delivery
  - Guidebook
    - Postsecondary readiness knowledge
    - Content
Findings from Preliminary Field Test

- "The workshop could be longer to help take us through each section of the guidebook."
  - Linda

- "Excellent approach to prepare educational leaders."
  - Sam

- "Wow, I feel this guidebook gives direction with how to proceed."

- "I would add a section for reflections and planning."
  - Erin

- "There needs to be an assessment of the guidebook’s usability."
  - Linda
Step 5- Main product revision (November-January 2013-2014)

- Feedback from step 4 with design team
  - Improvements on the workshop
  - Implementation of activities
  - Recommendations
  - Reflections on current practice
  - Design questions and targets
  - Action plan template
  - Survey of guidebook’s usability, applicability, accessibility

- Main product revised for main field test
Components of the Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook

- **Activity Circles (Academic Elements)**

  **Activity Circle**
  
  *How do teachers at your school identify what they teach in their content area? Is this process consistent across all content areas?*

  **Activity Circle**
  
  *Describe some authentic assessments being used in your school? What are the components of these assessments? To what extent are they preparing students for postsecondary success?*
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Components of the Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook

- **Recommendations (Structural Elements)**

  This target addresses the following best practices for Design Question 2:

  - Create a mission/vision statement along with school goals for your school based on collective shared values and beliefs of all staff members. These statements should include a systematic approach to prepare students for postsecondary success.
Step 5 - *Main product revision* (November-January 2013-2014)

- Feedback from step 4 with design team
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Components of the Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook

- Reflecting on Current Practices and Beliefs (Structural Elements)

Before examining this target, take some time to look at your current beliefs and practices by answering the following questions:

1. Explain how the mission, vision and goals of the school were created? To what extent are these related to postsecondary preparedness?

2. How well do you know the organizational structure of your school/district? Describe it to the best of your current knowledge.
Step 5 - Main product revision (November-January 2013-2014)

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- **Design Question (The Problem)**

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- **Target 1**

  **The Problem:** *Many Students Graduating from High School Aren’t Ready for a Postsecondary Education!*
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  - Action plan template
  - Survey of guidebook’s usability, applicability, accessibility

- Main product revised for main field test
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List quick wins</th>
<th>List a few moderately difficult undertakings</th>
<th>List one or two major tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Leadership Specific Strategies/Actions</td>
<td>Personalization Specific Strategies/Actions</td>
<td>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specific Strategies/Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actions to develop the requisite knowledge for success</td>
<td>Actions to practice the requisite skills for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership team/ Steering committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty colleagues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community leaders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong> (list them)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 5- Main product revision (November-January 2013-2014)

- Feedback from step 4 with design team
  - Improvements on the workshop
  - Implementation of activities
  - Recommendations
  - Reflections on current practice
  - Design questions and targets
  - Action plan template
  - Survey of guidebook’s usability, applicability, accessibility

- Main product revised for main field test
Step-6- *Main field testing*

*The challenges of securing a site*

- Initial interest in my study
  - Gatekeeper (Special Education Coordinator and Vice Principal)

  “A gatekeeper is an individual who has inside status with a group and serves as the initial contact for the researcher and leads the researcher to other participants.”

  (Creswell, 2007)

- Letter of introduction and description of the study
- Integrate study into accreditation plans
- Final approval one month prior to field test
Step-6- Main field testing (February 2014)

➢ Oasis Academy PCS (pseudonym)

- Pre-Kindergarten-12 public conversion charter school
- The mission is to prepare self-directed, self-aware, college-ready learners who will embrace the challenges of obstacles, experience the pride of perseverance and accomplishments, and demonstrate the strength of family and community
- 78.7% of students live in economic hardship
- 14.1% of students are homeless
- 35.7% proficient in reading
- 23.2% proficient in math
Oasis Academy

PCS

- Twenty-six educational leaders
- Four teams of educational leaders
  - Administrative, secondary, sixth, fifth

- February 3-7, 2014
- One week of field testing (interviews, surveys)
  - Workshop sessions
    - Content, design, facilitation, results, delivery
  - Guidebook
    - Postsecondary readiness knowledge
    - Usability, applicability, accessibility
    - Content
Planned Agenda

- Prior to visit
  - Teams were sent Section 1 - The Problem and pre-assessment of knowledge
- Monday
  - The Problem
- Tuesday
  - Structural Elements
- Wednesday
  - Academic Elements
- Thursday
  - Social Elements
- Friday
  - Application of concepts and resources/action planning
Issues and Challenges

- Instability of leadership
  - Chaotic culture
  - Buy-in

- Contract issues
  - Limited availability

- Transformation model
  - Consultants
Revised Agenda

- **Monday**
  - Admin Team (The Problem)

- **Tuesday**
  - Secondary Team (The Problem)

- **Wednesday**
  - Admin Team (Structural Elements)
  - Secondary Team (Academic Elements)
  - Sixth Grade Team (The Problem)
Revised Agenda

Thursday
- Admin Team (Application)
- Secondary Team (Application)
- Sixth Grade Team (Social Elements)

Friday
- Admin Team (Resources)
- Secondary Team (Resources)
- Sixth Grade Team (Resources)
- Fifth Grade Team (The Problem)
Results

Demographic data
- 26 participants
  - 13 male
  - 13 female
  - 13 Caucasian
  - 7 Pacific Islander
  - 2 Latino/Hispanic
  - 2 African American
  - 1 Asian
  - 1 Multicultural

Teams
- 3-Admin. team
- 11-Secondary team
- 5-Sixth grade team
- 7-Fifth grade team

Interview participants
- 2-Administrative team
- 2-Secondary team
- 2-Elementary team
Workshop Results

- Most valuable aspect
  - Organized, systematic approach

“The workshop really got me thinking.”  -Kathy (sec. team)

“Provides common language and approach to education.”  -James (sec. team)

“The comprehensive approach can bring all levels together.”  -Paula (6th grade team)
Workshop Results

- Least valuable aspect
- Length and time of year

“Could use this with the whole staff.”

“Needs to be for the whole staff in a retreat.”

“Would have loved to have this as a PD opportunity for the whole staff together.”
Usability and accessibility results were favorable

“It gives our sixth grade team an opportunity to prepare students for the secondary level.” - Pete (admin. team)

“I like the vertical alignment with secondary programs.” - Colleen (6th grade team)

“I loved the comprehensive approach and that all levels are working toward the same goal.” - Sarah (secondary team)
Guidebook
Functionality Results

- Usability (audience)
  - Community members and parents?

- Applicability (time and motivation of educator)

  “I don’t want another ‘thing’ added to my teaching load.”

  - Eric (5th grade team)
Guidebook Results (Knowledge)

- Pre and post-assessments
- Implementation dip
- Greatest perceived growth of knowledge

A dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and understanding

*(Fullan, 2001)*

- *I know how to implement a comprehensive approach to postsecondary readiness at my school.*
  - 6% to 100% from pre to post
- *I am aware of resources to help improve our process of postsecondary preparedness.*
  - 35% to 100% from pre to post
“Our approach needs to become systematic.”
- Clark (secondary team)

“We haven’t looked at our mission statement in four years.”
- Eric (5th grade team)

“We should survey parents on our transitions from one level to the next.”
- Leslie (secondary team)

“This guidebook and workshop gave me direction and an awareness of how to approach this.”
- John (admin. team)
Interviews on the workshop and guidebook - Formative

- "I think the action plan needs to be teased out a bit, but if we get leadership to buy into this, I believe the action plan can walk us through our issues.” - John (admin. team)

- "Your recommendations need to be a bigger part of your workshop and guidebook.” - James (secondary team)

- "This guidebook can help unite our advisory program from one level to another.” - Paula (6th grade team)

- "I don’t know how this applies to 5th grade.” - Eric (5th grade team)
Step 7 - Operational product revision
(February-April 2014)

- Feedback from step 6
  - Improvements to the workshop
    - Timing
  - Professional development
    - Audience
    - Connect users
    - Timeline
    - School improvement (workload)
  - Improvements to the guidebook
    - Continuum for identification and development
    - Checklist of essential components
    - Addition of educational leader comments
    - Refinement of components
Findings

(PBL) Problem:
- Many students graduating from high school aren’t ready for postsecondary options

Research Questions:
- *How can educational leaders prepare high school students for postsecondary success?*
  - By using the guidebook: *Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness*
- *Does the Postsecondary Readiness Guidebook build the capacity and confidence of participants to successfully facilitate student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education?*
  - Yes, if implemented in proper conditions with requirements
Future Research and Recommendations for Leadership

- Operational product revised for operational field test
  - Further development under proper conditions
    - Integrated into professional development prior to the start of a school year
    - Integrated into the School Improvement Plan
  - Full-day training (8 hours)
  - All levels represented
  - Preparation sessions prior to workshop

- Steps 8-10 for further research
  - Operational field testing (July 2014)
  - Final product revision (August 2014)
  - Dissemination and implementation (September 2014)