



Consolidated Annual Program Evaluation Report

THECB Funded Programs
Fiscal Year 2012

January 2013

Planning and Accountability



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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Mission of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions, and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, and thereby provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

Philosophy of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will promote access to quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access is unacceptable. The Board will be open, ethical, responsive, and committed to public service. The Board will approach its work with a sense of purpose and responsibility to the people of Texas and is committed to the best use of public monies. The Coordinating Board will engage in actions that add value to Texas and to higher education. The agency will avoid efforts that do not add value or that are duplicated by other entities.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Foreword

This is the fifth edition of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) *Consolidated Annual Program Evaluation Report*. This report presents information on THECB funded programs. It is produced on an annual basis, enabling policy makers and higher education leaders to make more informed judgments about the relative costs and benefits of specially funded higher education programs.

The printed version of the report provides an overview and summary of lessons learned in three areas: increasing student participation and success, informing teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards, and promoting a college-going culture. Its online companion enables anyone who is interested in knowing more about a particular program or specific projects to obtain individual evaluation reports at the click of a button. The online reports are now available on the THECB's website (www.thecb.state.tx.us) or by going directly to www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/ape

It is our goal to provide you with the best information possible. To that end, we invite your comments. You can send us your comments via the online site or by e-mailing Robin.Zuniga@thecb.state.tx.us.

Table of Contents

Foreword	ii
Executive Summary	iv
Recommendations	vi
Introduction	1
Encourage Student Participation and Success in Higher Education.....	2
Bridge Programs.....	2
College Student Success Programs.....	6
Developmental Education	9
Adult Basic Education.....	12
Program Highlights	14
Recommendations	14
Inform Teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards.....	15
Teacher Preparation	15
Teacher Services and Resources	15
Program Highlights	19
Recommendations	19
Promote a College-Going Culture.....	20
Advise Texas.....	20
Adult Degree Completion	20
Program Highlights	24
Recommendations	24
Appendix A – Status of THECB Programs Operating in Fiscal Year 2012.....	25

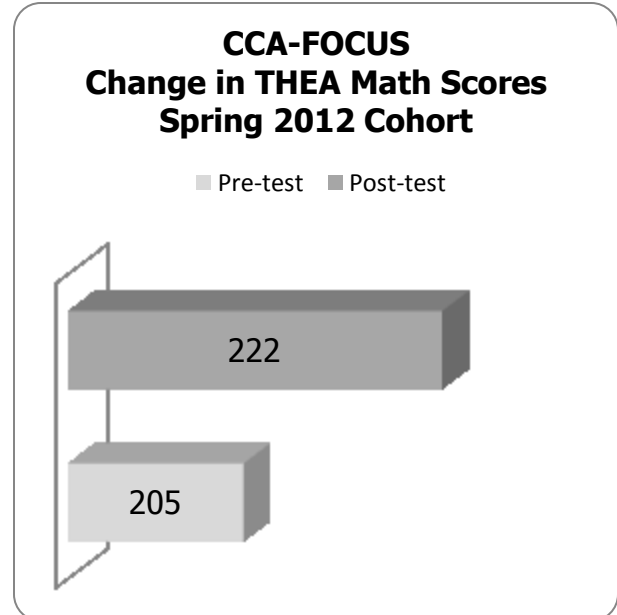
Executive Summary

This report summarizes evaluation-related findings for Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) programs for Fiscal Year 2012. Included are programs which provide funds to postsecondary institutions and other organizations in three areas supporting the THECB's *Accelerated Plan for Closing the Gaps by 2015*: increasing student participation and success, informing teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), and promoting a college-going culture. For the 2012-2013 biennium, \$21,690,275 from state appropriations was allocated to all THECB programs. An additional \$16,959,509 in state funds, some of which is carried over from earlier biennia, and \$48,366,528 from the federal government and private foundations allocated over the life of these projects were used to support these efforts for a total of \$87,016,312.

Research into the effectiveness of THECB programs yields lessons for future work. The following are key findings from selected program evaluations.

Complete College America - Focus on Conceptual Understanding and Success (CCA-FOCUS). This mathematics pilot has been implemented at seven Texas community colleges. Early results indicate that the program was able in a *single semester* to reduce students' mathematics anxiety, significantly improve their Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) scores, and most importantly, successfully move them from developmental education through College Algebra.

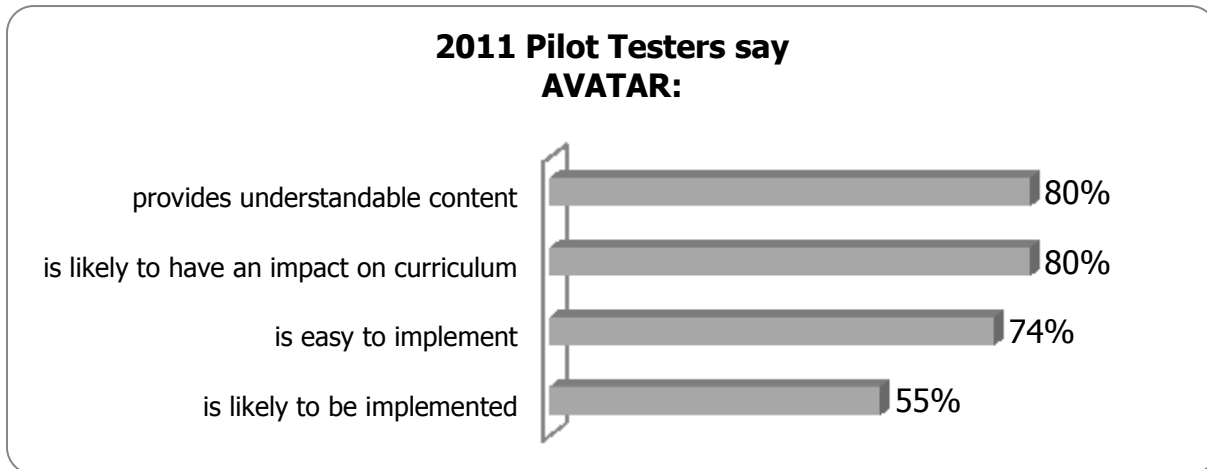
Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) for Higher Education. In fall 2011, 11 institutions began implementing the AVID program to increase the learning, persistence, completion, and overall success of college students at risk of dropping out, withdrawing, or failing.



Preliminary data suggest that:

- Participants in the AVID for Higher Education program had significantly higher GPAs on average than a comparison group.
- AVID had a small, positive impact on one-semester persistence.
- Students in the AVID program accumulated credit at a slower rate than non-AVID students. It is not clear why this is the case or what its impact might be for students. AVID students may be taking more non-credit bearing developmental courses than non-AVID students or perhaps AVID students are advised to take fewer courses and focus on earning higher grades. More study of this phenomenon is advised.

Vertical Alignment Training (VAT). The purpose of the VAT program is to engage regional P-12 school systems in vertical curriculum alignment. In 2011, a grant was awarded to the University of North Texas to design the Academic Vertical Alignment Training and Renewal (AVATAR) system.



The evaluation of AVATAR in 2011-2012 focused on examining the quality and utility of modules designed to provide participants information on forming and maintaining vertical alignment processes. A group of pilot testers was asked about the quality and usability of the modules. They were very confident that the intended audience will understand the content of the modules and felt that the vertical alignment process as presented can be easily implemented. However, they were less confident that these vertical alignment processes will actually be implemented in their regions.

The AVATAR training will be launched statewide in 2012-2013.

Adult Degree Completion. This program targets adults over the age of 25 who left college without a degree after earning 60 or more credits. The Grad TX website informs students about their options for returning to school. In spring 2012, Adult Degree Completion program participants from eight partner programs were surveyed about the factors that made it possible for them to return to college. In order of frequency they said:

- Availability of online courses (80 percent).
- Flexible scheduling (55 percent).
- Increased ability to pay for school (52 percent).
- Increased support or encouragement from friends and family (47 percent).

In addition to the programs highlighted above, the *Consolidated Annual Program Evaluation Report* addresses the following: the Developmental Education Demonstration Project, Summer Bridge programs, Comprehensive Student Success Program, Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students, Adult Basic Education - Innovation Grant programs, Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration programs, Faculty Professional Development Modules, and Advise Texas.

Recommendations

Encourage Student Participation and Persistence in Higher Education

Challenge other Texas higher education institutions to adopt promising institutional reforms piloted at the *Developmental Education Demonstration Project* sites. Recruit more institutions for the *CCA-FOCUS* Mathematics program, and continue to study its implementation. Collaborate with other higher education organizations, such as the Texas Association of Community Colleges, to identify and disseminate information to institutions about the options available for improving developmental education.

Continue to track participants in the *Summer Bridge* and *Intensive Program for Adult Education Students* programs to measure the long-term impacts of these programs on student persistence and success. Disseminate information about best practices such as involving faculty and student services staff in planning and providing innovative curriculum.

Continue to research best practices used in the *AVID Higher Education and Comprehensive Student Success Programs* to support at-risk college students and increase their persistence and success. Collaborate with participating institutions to interpret and use evaluation results to implement improved practices. Best practices include requiring supplemental instruction and tutoring, providing pedagogical training for tutors, and supporting intensive advising/early alert systems. Disseminate results.

Identify the institutional, academic, and state policy barriers to college and technical education for the *Adult Basic Education - Innovation Grant* program population and make recommendations for overcoming these barriers.

Inform Teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards

Improve the usefulness of the *Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration* program assessment tools by making the educational theory behind them more explicit and identifying and highlighting research-based practices for preparing teachers to teach at a level that ensures college readiness.

Investigate new ways to market the *Faculty Professional Development Modules* to novice teachers and find ways to improve the value of the online teaching and reading comprehension modules to teachers.

Enhance the modules developed for the *Vertical Alignment Training/AVATAR* program by further developing the implementation sections of the training modules and devoting considerable attention to gaining buy-in and administrative support from secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators.

Promote a College-Going Culture

Disseminate the top recommendations from the *Adult Degree Completion* program participants to institutions including: 1) increase the amount of financial aid available and make it easier to obtain, including providing scholarships to part-time students; 2) eliminate campus fees for online-only students; and 3) offer a greater number of online course offerings.

Introduction

This report summarizes findings from evaluations in three areas that support the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB's) *Accelerated Plan for Closing the Gaps by 2015*: increasing student participation and success, informing teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards, and promoting a college-going culture.

Since 2007, the THECB has operated a number of pilot programs intended to encourage student participation and success in higher education. Results of these pilots at select institutions have provided information that will be helpful to other institutions seeking to design similar programs. This report begins with a review of long-term results from three summer bridge programs followed by preliminary results from two new college student success programs, two programs focused on improving developmental education, and two programs serving students in adult basic education.

The report then addresses programs that focus on helping teacher educators and P-12 teachers integrate the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) into their teaching practices. Included are findings from a program that seeks to help teacher preparation programs incorporate the CCRS into their curriculum, as well as two ongoing efforts providing professional development opportunities to secondary and postsecondary instructors.

Finally, the THECB has been engaged in outreach to communities and P-12 students for more than a decade. The THECB's *Accelerated Plan for Closing the Gaps by 2015* promotes the value of preparing students in the P-12 pipeline to be college and career ready and also emphasizes the importance of successful completion of a college credential. This report reviews two federal College Access Challenge Grant programs: one that trains college-readiness advisors to work in Texas' secondary schools and one that targets adults who have earned 60 or more college credits but who are no longer in college and have not yet completed a degree.

Program evaluation provides information about the outcomes of programs and offers ongoing support and information for program improvement. During fiscal year 2012, the THECB used evaluation data to identify effective practices and inform the higher education community about these practices. For example, the Complete College America – Fundamentals of Conceptual Understanding and Success (CCA-FOCUS) program, which began as a developmental education summer bridge program in 2008, is now being implemented across the state.

The programs discussed in this report represent only a sample of programs implemented by the agency to reach its goals. The programs selected for summary were chosen because they provide important information about the effectiveness of strategies employed by the THECB over the past five years. A full list of active programs for fiscal year 2012 is included in Appendix A, and detailed reports for these programs are available on the THECB website at www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/ape.

Encourage Student Participation and Success in Higher Education

Since the THECB first developed *Closing the Gaps* in Texas higher education, it has focused considerable effort on finding best practices for helping P-12 students prepare for college-level work and helping underprepared students be successful once they are enrolled in college. Four different types of programs have been funded at Texas institutions over the past five years: Bridge, College Student Success, Developmental Education, and Adult Basic Education programs.

Bridge Programs

Bridge programs are designed to introduce students to higher education by providing short-term programs on college campuses, generally over the summer months. The majority of bridge programs across the country focus on students interested in specific careers or specific colleges. In contrast, the majority of the programs operated by the THECB have taken this established model and applied it to populations at risk of not attending or of dropping out of college.

The first THECB supported summer bridge programs were implemented in FY 2008. From the summer of 2008 through the summer of 2011, 97 bridge programs were funded. Combined they served more than 5,500 students. These programs served four different populations: rising 11th and 12th graders, recent high school graduates, academically struggling college students, and adult basic education students. The long-term outcomes for three of these programs are discussed below. The fourth program, Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students, is discussed in conjunction with the THECB's Adult Basic Education initiatives.

In FY 2011, two of the bridge programs, considered to be exemplary, received an additional two years of funding: the High School Summer Bridge program at The University of Texas at El Paso, and the Developmental Education Summer Bridge program at Texas A&M International University.

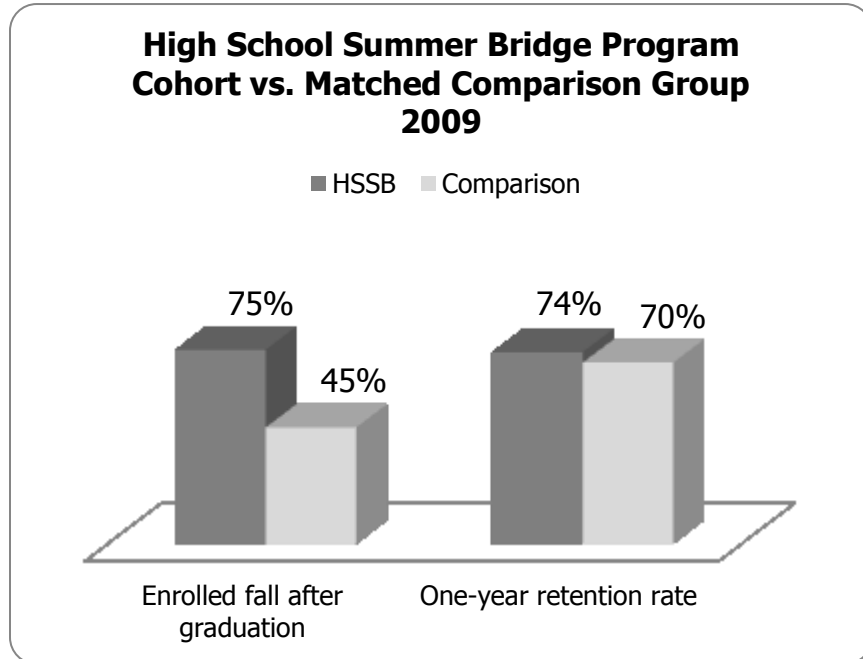
High School Summer Bridge

The University of Texas at El Paso (UT-El Paso) was funded from September 1, 2011, through August 31, 2013, to operate and study their existing High School Summer Bridge (HSSB) program. Over the past five years, UT-El Paso has hosted one of the state's most successful High School Summer Bridge (HSSB) programs. Test scores on the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) for students in the 2011 HSSB cohort significantly increased with mathematics scores increasing by an average of 14 points and reading scores improving an average of 13 points from the beginning to the end of the program. Information on best practices gleaned from this program will be available in fall 2013.

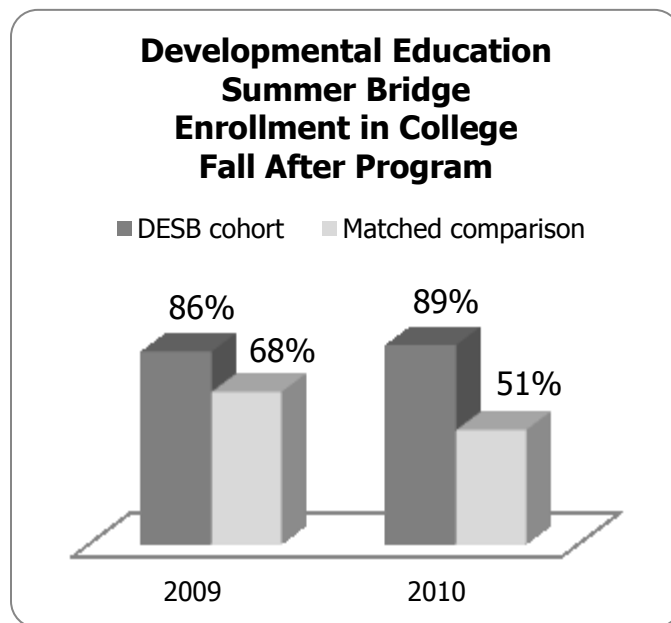
Meanwhile, the THECB continues to track students who participated in each of the 14 funded HSSB programs between 2009 and 2011. This year data were available to follow both the rising 11th and 12th graders who participated in the five 2009 HSSB programs into college.

As illustrated below, the 85 rising 11th and 12th graders participating in 2009 were much more likely to enroll in college immediately following high school than a similar group of students that

did not participate in the HSSB program. The 62 rising 12th graders in the 2009 cohort who enrolled in college in fall 2009 were also much more likely than a similar group of students who did not participate in the HSSB program to persist in college from one year to the next.



Developmental Education Summer Bridge



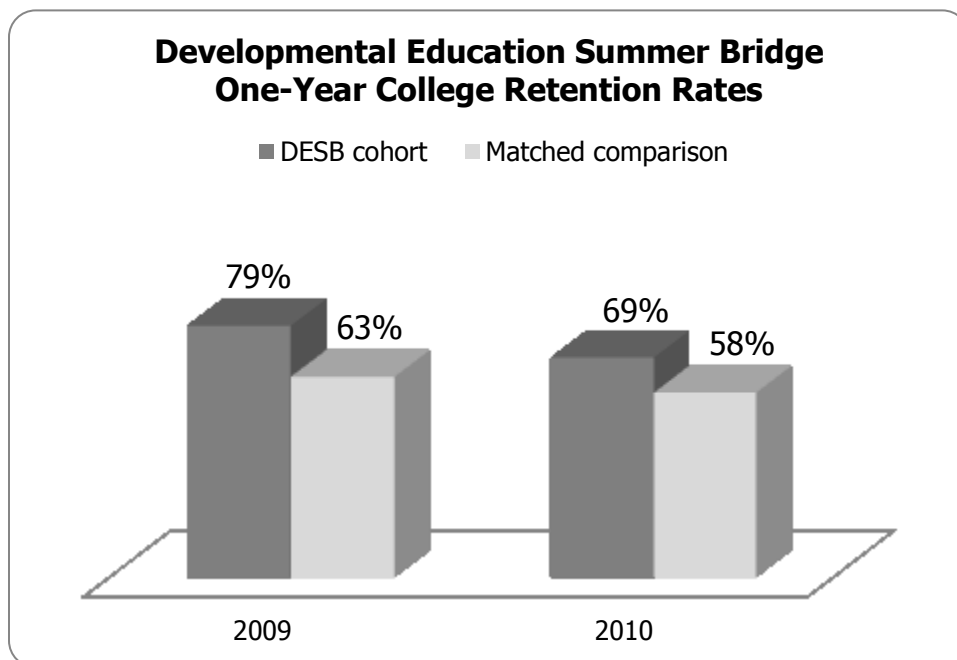
Texas A&M International University (TAM-International) was funded from September 1, 2011, through August 31, 2013, to operate and study its existing Developmental Education Bridge (DESB) program. TAM-International had one of the most successful developmental education summer bridge programs funded over the past five years. This program focused exclusively on mathematics remediation. The 84 students in the summer 2011 cohort significantly increased their scores on the THEA mathematics test an average of 29 points from the beginning to the end of the program. Information on best practices gleaned from this program will be available in 2013.

Meanwhile, the THECB continues to track students who participated in each of the 13 funded DESB programs between 2009 and 2011. This year data were available to follow participants in the five 2009 and four 2010 DESB summer cohorts into college. Those data revealed that:

- Participants in the DESB programs enrolled in college within one year of high school graduation at a higher rate than a matched comparison group. Eighty-six percent of the 2009 and 89 percent of the 2010 DESB cohorts had enrolled in college the fall after high school graduation, compared with 68 percent of a 2009 matched comparison group and 51 percent of a 2010 matched comparison group.
- The students participating in the DESB moved more quickly through developmental education than a matched comparison group.

2010 Developmental Education Summer Bridge Participants			
Completed college-level course fall after DESB program:		Percent	
		Bridge Participants (n=161)	Comparison Group (n=161)
Mathematics		88	78
Reading		85	68
Writing		81	68

- As illustrated below, both DESB cohorts (2009 and 2010) had a higher one-year college persistence rate than a matched comparison group.



- Two years from initial college enrollment, the difference in college persistence rates between the two groups weakened somewhat, with a 47 percent two-year college persistence rate for the 2009 summer cohort, compared to 42 percent for a matched comparison group.

Intensive Summer Programs

The Intensive Summer Program (ISP) served more than 1,330 at-risk new and continuing college students in 30 programs on six college campuses between 2008 and 2011. No ISP was funded beyond summer 2011. However, THECB has continued to track these students' college careers.

- Of the 130 students enrolled in the 2010 ISP 79 percent were enrolled in college in fall 2010 after completing the program, compared to 59 percent from a matched comparison group.
- The one-year college persistence rate for the 103 students in the ISP who enrolled in college was 71 percent compared to 44 percent of the 77 students from the matched comparison group.
- After participating in the ISP, students were better prepared to successfully complete college-level courses. Prior to their participation, 72 percent of the students in the 2010 ISP cohort had completed one or more college-level courses in mathematics, reading, and/or writing. Participants in the 2010 ISP cohort who had not already completed a college-level course in one or more core subjects were more likely than a matched comparison group to complete their first college course in mathematics, reading, and/or writing the fall after program completion.

2010 Intensive Summer Program Participants			
Who had not completed a college level course prior to the program			
Completed college-level course fall after ISP program:	Number of ISP students in each group*	Percent	
		Bridge Participants	Comparison Group
Mathematics	37	57%	22%
Reading	50	36%	11%
Writing	45	44%	19%

*An individual student may be counted in more than one group.

College Student Success Programs

Two College Student Success programs, both funded under the federal College Access Challenge Grant, were launched in 2011: the Comprehensive Student Success Program (CSSP) and the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) for Higher Education program. The goal of these programs is to strengthen academic advising and support, thereby reducing undergraduate course dropout and failure rates.

Comprehensive Student Success Program

In 2011, five Texas public colleges were funded under the Comprehensive Student Success Program (CSSP). Participating higher education institutions were required to identify courses with high dropout and failure rates. Each institution was then required to implement intensive advising, supplemental instruction or tutoring, and other initiatives designed to reduce the dropout and failure rates in these courses. Similar courses with students not receiving these interventions were identified for comparison purposes. Outcomes data for the first year are currently being collected. Analysis of the results of these first year outcomes will be available in January 2013.

Comprehensive Student Success Program (CSSP) 2011-2012 Target Courses			
Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code	Credit-Bearing Courses by Subject:	Number of:	
		Course sections	Students served
27.01	Math/College Algebra	20	648
23.13	English/Composition	25	635
54.01	History/U.S. History	24	868
26.01/40.05	Life Sciences/Biology/Chemistry	8	234
45.01/24.01	Social Sciences/Humanities	8	247
TOTAL		85	2,632

The evaluation team conducted site visits at each of the five institutions in fall 2011 and spring 2012. Information for the four sites remaining in the program in spring 2012 is reported. Preliminary observations on program implementation at the sites include:

- *Intrusive Advising/Early Alert Systems* – Students in target courses received more frequent opportunities to meet with an academic advisor/faculty member; these meetings were proactive, initiated by the advisor or faculty member, rather than by the student. In addition, early alert systems that allowed faculty to easily alert an academic advisor when a student is falling behind or failing a class was another popular intervention.
- *Supplemental Instruction/Tutoring* – All programs provided more academic support to students in the CSSP intervention courses than in traditional courses. Some institutions required students to complete a specific number of hours of tutoring. At one institution the emphasis was placed on providing supplemental instruction (or peer-assisted group study with trained leaders) in all CSSP classes.

- *Learning and Study Strategies Skills Integration* – All of the CSSP sites were required to pre- and post-test the CSSP cohorts and non-CSSP comparison cohorts on the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). In addition, several of the sites were using the data from the LASSI to better integrate the teaching of learning and study strategies into the CSSP courses.
- *Faculty Professional Development* – Faculty assigned to teach the CSSP courses were given professional development in how to integrate learning and study strategies into the course instruction. Instructors were also given training on how to advise students and use the early alert systems. At least one institution had gathered faculty into learning teams by subject area. These teams meet regularly to discuss the impact of the CSSP courses.

Advancement via Individual Determination for Higher Education

The Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program started in secondary schools in the 1980s. In spring 2010, THECB entered into an agreement with the AVID Center to develop a similar program for higher education. In fall 2011, 11 institutions of higher education began implementing a model for increasing the learning, persistence, completion, and overall success of college students.

The institutions agreed to:

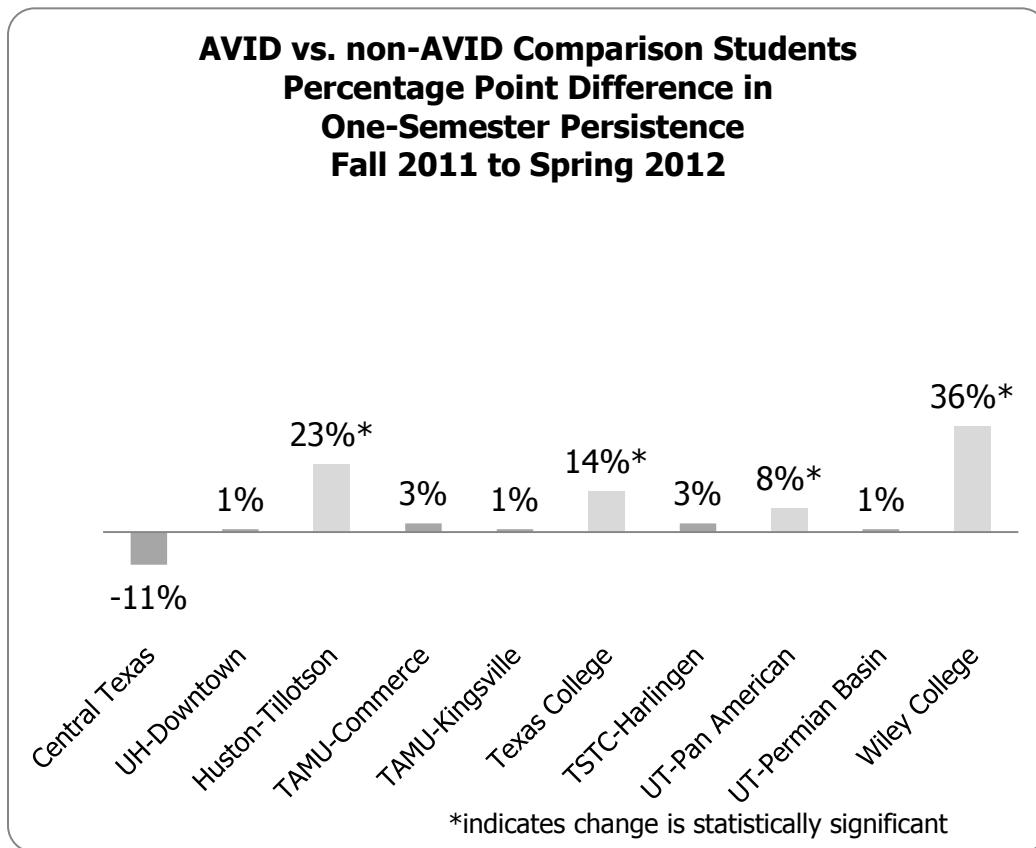
- Identify an AVID cohort of students.
- Provide intensive advising, tutoring, and learning experiences to the AVID cohort with AVID trained faculty.
- Offer a first-year seminar taught by faculty with AVID training to the AVID cohort of students.
- Designate an AVID Center on campus to provide academic and social integration outside the classroom and a place for students to receive tutoring and for study groups to meet.
- Form learning communities for the AVID cohorts that include linked courses, freshman interest groups, thematic integration of courses, and similar strategies.

The evaluation focused on both the extent to which higher education institutions were able to implement these strategies and the student outcomes resulting from the use of these strategies. Implementation issues were identified through site visits at each of the participating institutions. Improvement in student learning skills and motivation was measured by pre- and post-testing on the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and by higher college persistence, course completion, and passing rates for members of the AVID cohort versus similar students who were not in the AVID cohort.

Preliminary analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data after the first year of program implementation suggests that overall:

- AVID students, at the seven institutions where student grade-point average (GPA) data were available (private institutions do not report GPA data to THECB), had higher GPAs on average than a non-AVID comparison group, and this difference was statistically significant.

- AVID had a small, positive impact on the one-semester persistence rate from fall 2011 to spring 2012, and this difference was statistically significant at four institutions.
- Credit accumulation was slower for AVID than for non-AVID students for the seven institutions where these data were available (private institutions do not report credit accumulation data to THECB). It is not clear why this was the case or what its impact might be for students. Lower accumulation of credits by AVID students may mean that: 1) AVID students are taking more non-credit developmental education courses than the non-AVID comparison group, or 2) AVID students perhaps are advised to take lower course loads and focus on performance rather than credit accumulation.



The site visits and surveys of faculty provided several interesting insights into the implementation of the AVID program. For example:

- Institutions are finding it difficult to develop student learning communities due to both technical (registration barriers) and logistical (students have varying instructional needs) issues.
- The level of faculty buy-in varied across programs, most typically described as "moderate" or "mixed." Faculty support for AVID strategies was greatest at institutions where faculty were persuaded that the AVID training wasn't just one more "teaching fad" and where use of AVID strategies was incorporated into faculty performance assessments.

- Tutors were more likely than faculty to say they had benefitted from the AVID professional development.
- All institutions had facilities that served the function of the AVID Center, but for many of them, branding it the "AVID Center" was neither feasible nor desirable.

Developmental Education

Improving developmental education at the state's colleges and universities is a priority. In fall 2010, more than 54 percent of students entering Texas public community colleges and 14 percent entering public universities for the first time had to take at least one developmental education course. Moreover, placing into at least one developmental education course reduces a student's chances of graduating. Of students who entered a Texas public community college in fall 2006 and were required to take at least one developmental education course, only 32 percent completed an associate's degree or certificate within three years. Of students entering a Texas public university in fall 2004 who had to take at least one developmental education course, only 12 percent completed a bachelor's degree within six years ([THECB Developmental Education Accountability Measures](#)). THECB has started several initiatives to address these problems. In 2009, THECB entered into a partnership with the Texas Community College Education Initiative. Under this partnership, funding was obtained from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation to form the Developmental Education Initiative (DEI). The purpose of the DEI is to bring increased focus, ambition, and intensity to the state's efforts to improve developmental education.

In accordance with the DEI goals and the state's legislative agenda, THECB began investing state and private funds in the redesign of developmental education. Two of the principal efforts undertaken by THECB in this area are the Developmental Education Demonstration Project and the Complete College America – Fundamentals of Conceptual Understanding and Success programs.

Developmental Education Demonstration Project

In summer 2010, five community colleges and four universities received funding to undertake institutional redesigns of their developmental education programs. The goal of the Developmental Education Demonstration Project (DEDP) was to promote systemic reform of developmental education programs for underprepared students by making significant structural and curricular changes in developmental education programs. Special emphases were placed on restructuring developmental mathematics and writing and on developing targeted advising for developmental education students.

For this phase of the program, the evaluation identified the types of changes that were adopted by the grantees and came to some preliminary conclusions about the grantees' ability to reach the overall program goals. The reform strategies these institutions implemented fell under six general areas: forming effective community partnerships, developing advisors/counselors dedicated to developmental education, providing professional development for instructors, implementing student academic support programs, redesigning curriculum, and adopting new instructional strategies.

The grant enabled participating universities and community colleges to:

- Strengthen old community partnerships and form new ones.
- Hire and train academic advisors dedicated to students in developmental education.
- Purchase and implement early academic warning systems and train instructional and advising staff to use them.
- Provide additional professional development services to help instructional staff implement innovative, research-based instructional strategies.
- Offer skill-building courses and workshops to developmental education students.
- Operate summer bridge programs to help prepare students for college.
- Redesign core curriculum in mathematics, reading, and writing to include accelerated developmental education options including: co-requisite, self-paced, blended, and block-scheduled courses.

Participating institutions were given considerable latitude in the changes they chose to implement. This lack of consistency made it difficult to collect quantitative measures of success. The evaluation did conclude that, at two community colleges, overall passing rates in developmental courses and passing rates for students from traditionally underserved ethnic/racial populations increased after implementation of the DEDP reforms. Passing rates at the other three community colleges were unchanged. Likewise, withdrawal rates for developmental education students varied considerably across sites and years.

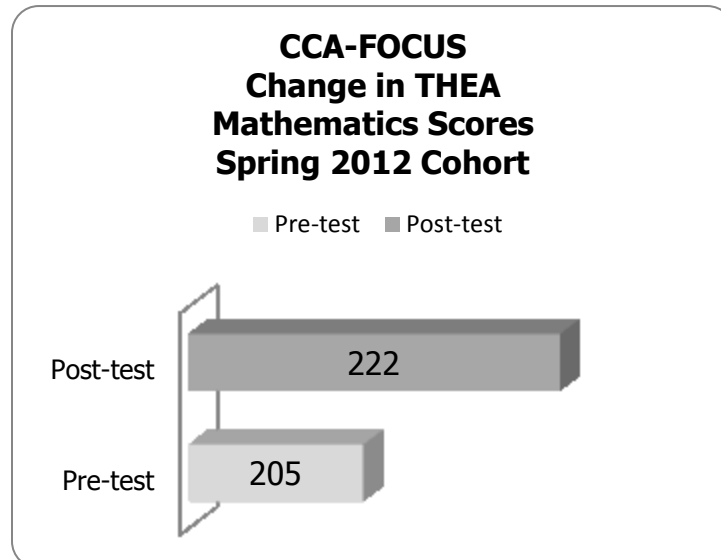
The next phase of the institutional reform of developmental education begins in FY 2013. Ten awards will be given to medium and small community colleges to implement best practices in five areas: restructuring assessment and placement, transforming academic and career advising and counseling services, reducing time-to-degree and accelerating success, increasing preparedness of developmental educators, and deploying transformative technology.

Complete College America – Fundamentals for Conceptual Understanding and Success

In 2011, THECB received a one-million dollar grant from Complete College America and the Gates Foundation. This grant supports implementation of a promising program in developmental mathematics education. The Complete College America - Fundamentals for Conceptual Understanding and Success (CCA-FOCUS) program, is being introduced in seven community colleges across the state. The FOCUS model is a co-requisite developmental mathematics program developed at the Texas State University Center for Mathematics Readiness. It was initially funded under the THECB Developmental Education Summer Bridge program in 2008. Evaluation of the program indicated it was successful at accelerating students' progress through developmental education and the first credit-bearing course. Students enroll immediately in College Algebra, while simultaneously receiving just-in-time remediation in the fundamentals of mathematics.

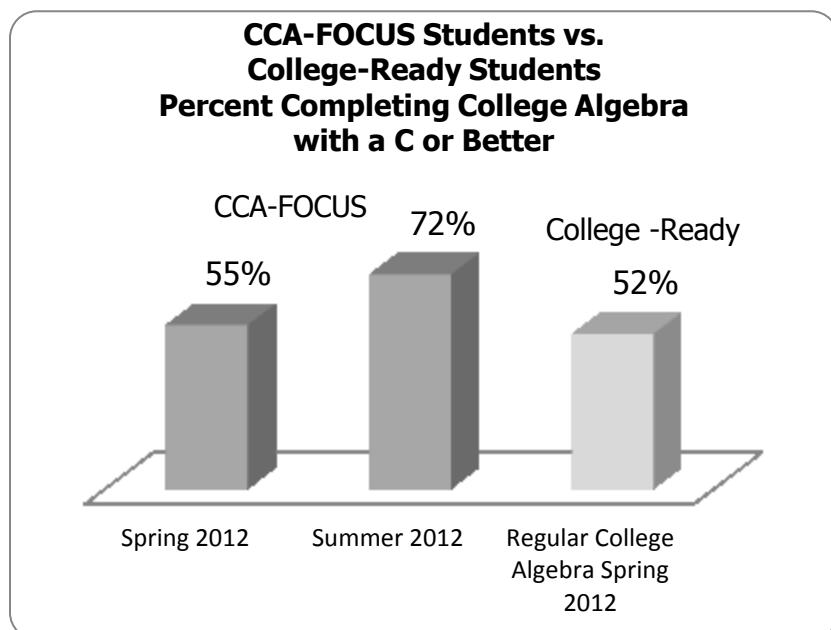
In fall 2011, faculty from seven Texas community colleges were trained to implement the FOCUS co-requisite program at their institutions. Implementation began at these sites in spring 2012 and will continue through spring 2013. The evaluation has examined four areas: students'

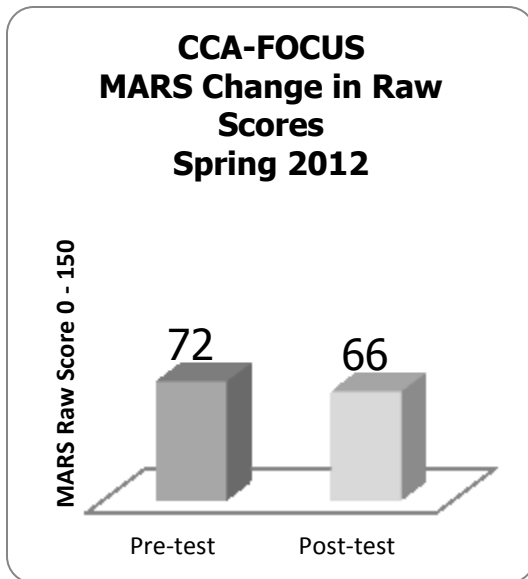
mathematics anxiety, learning and study skills, improvement on the mathematics portion of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), and successful completion of College Algebra. Early indications are that the program is successful. Significant improvements observed included reduced levels of mathematics anxiety and increased levels of college readiness in mathematics.



The average mathematics THEA score for FOCUS students increased an average of 17 points, which is statistically significant. Since the THEA tests more than Algebra knowledge and skills, the evaluators also examined specific areas of the test related directly to Developmental Education and Algebra (Fundamental Mathematics, Algebra and Problem Solving) and found that students in the FOCUS cohort significantly increased their scores in these areas.

All of the students in the spring 2012 cohort had to test into developmental mathematics to be admitted to the program. Yet, at the end of the program in spring 2012, 55 percent had successfully completed College Algebra with a grade of C or higher. Preliminary data for summer 2012 was even better, with 72 percent completing College Algebra with a C or higher. This compares to a completion rate of only 52 percent for a group of college-ready students in a regular College Algebra course.





The Mathematics Anxiety Rating Scale (MARS) was used to measure student's math anxiety. The higher a student's score on the MARS, the higher the student's anxiety. At the beginning of the spring 2012 program, students were found to be relatively anxious about mathematics with an average raw score on the MARS of 72. At the end of the program, their mathematics anxiety was reduced, as evidenced by an average score of 66.

Preliminary data for the CCA-FOCUS program is promising. A final report on this program will be available in fall 2013.

Adult Basic Education

Another population receiving a lot of attention is Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. ABE students are individuals who are returning to school to complete their General Equivalency Diploma (GED). In 2010, the Texas Workforce Investment Council estimated that more than 3.8 million Texans 16 years of age or older were eligible for ABE services. Two current THECB programs targeted at this population: Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students (IP-AES), a college bridge program for adults who recently completed a GED and the Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants (ABE-IG) an integrated GED/workforce certificate program. These two programs are discussed in detail below.

Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students

The Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students (IP-AES) began in 2009. IP-AES provides a bridge for students who have recently completed a GED and need to improve their basic skills before entering college. Unlike the summer bridge programs, IP-AES institutions hold four- to six-week bridge programs for multiple student cohorts throughout the year. More than 1,778 students at 12 institutions have been served by the IP-AES program since 2009.

Students in the IP-AES program are pre- and post-tested on the THEA and the LASSI. Overall, students in 2011-2012 increased an average of 15.2 points on the THEA mathematics test, 4.5 points on the THEA reading test, and 8.4 points on the THEA writing test.

Moreover, for 2011-2012, statistically significant increases were found between the pre- and post-assessments on all ten LASSI subscales indicating IP-AES students improved their skills in these areas.

The IP-AES program will continue through August 31, 2013. A final report on the program will be available in October 2013.

Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants

The Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants (ABE-IG) provide a pathway to the simultaneous completion of a GED and a workforce certificate (postsecondary or board sponsored) leading directly to a skilled job. This program began at eight institutions in fall 2010 and in an additional six in fall 2011. More than 2,187 students have been served through August 31, 2012, in more than 60 certificate programs ranging from Certified Nursing Assistant to Welding and Construction Trades. As of August 1, 2012, 984 participating ABE-IG students had earned a postsecondary or board sponsored workforce certificate, including some students who earned multiple certificates. These programs are funded through August 31, 2013.

Site visits in fall 2011 and spring 2012 revealed some barriers to the success of these programs:

- Not all of the ABE-IG sites had existing relationships with ABE providers prior to the program. Forming strong partnerships with the federally recognized ABE provider, area businesses, and area workforce councils is important to program success.
- Many community colleges have not had previous opportunities to serve ABE students. At many of the institutions a change in culture was needed to fully integrate ABE students into the life of the institution. In some cases, institutional systems (e.g., registration and enrollment management) were not equipped to enroll students who did not already have a GED. In the past, these students may not have been assigned student identification cards or otherwise been embraced. Further, some institutions misunderstood that students did not have to meet the college readiness standards on the Texas Success Initiative exam to enroll in certain postsecondary certificate programs.

An evaluation report will be available in late 2013.

Encourage Student Participation and Success in Higher Education

Program Highlights

The Summer Bridge programs were funded from 2008 until 2011. Participants in Summer Bridge programs were more likely to enroll in college the fall after high school graduation, complete their first college-level courses, and persist into a second year than similar students who did not participate.

The CSSP and AVID Higher Education programs target college students at-risk of dropping-out or failing core academic courses. Early results from the AVID program suggest participants have higher GPAs after participating in the program and have a higher one-semester persistence rate than a comparison group.

Early results indicate participants in the CCA-FOCUS program completed developmental education and College Algebra in a single semester at a higher rate than non-developmental education students enrolled in a regular College Algebra course.

More than 2,187 students have been served by the Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants as of August 1, 2012. Of these, 984 ABE-IG students have already earned a postsecondary or board sponsored workforce certificate.

Recommendations

Challenge other Texas higher education institutions to adopt promising institutional reforms piloted at the Developmental Education Demonstration Project (DEDP) sites. Recruit more institutions for the CCA-FOCUS Mathematics program, and continue to study its implementation. Collaborate with other higher education organizations, such as the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC), to identify and disseminate information to institutions about the options available for improving developmental education.

Continue to track participants in the Summer Bridge and Intensive Programs for Adult Education Students programs to measure the long-term impacts of these programs on student persistence and success. Disseminate information about best practices such as involving faculty and student services staff in planning and providing innovative curriculum.

Continue to research best practices used in the AVID Higher Education and Comprehensive Student Success Programs (CSSP) to support at-risk college students and increase their persistence and success. Collaborate with participating institutions to interpret and use evaluation results to implement improved practices. Best practices include requiring supplemental instruction and tutoring, providing pedagogical training for tutors, and supporting intensive advising/early alert systems. Disseminate results.

Identify the institutional, academic, and state policy barriers to college and technical education for the Adult Basic Education - Innovation Grant program population and make recommendations for overcoming these barriers.

Inform Teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards

One of the most direct ways in which colleges and universities impact P-12 education is through the training of prospective teachers. THECB's involvement in teacher training has primarily been focused on helping teacher educators and P-12 teachers incorporate the College and Career Readiness Standards into their teaching practice. This section focuses on one of those initiatives: the Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration program. In addition, it addresses THECB supported programs that provide direct professional development services and resources to P-12 educators. Lessons learned from two of these programs, the Faculty Professional Development Modules and the Vertical Alignment Training programs, are highlighted.

Teacher Preparation

The Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration program was established to research best practices in preparing P-12 teachers to incorporate the College and Career Readiness Standards into their teaching. Grants were given to two universities, Texas A&M University (TAMU) and Stephen F. Austin University (SFA). TAMU and SFA were directed to research best practices and develop faculty development and self-assessment tools for use by teacher education programs as they incorporate the CCRS into their curriculum. In spring 2012 both institutions submitted draft self-assessment tools.

Expert reviewers in teacher education and college-readiness were contracted to review the tools and provide feedback on their content and usability. The reviewers found different strengths and weaknesses with each set of tools, and had a few overall observations about their value. They noted that the tools can be strengthened by:

- Including references to national and Texas policies and standards to make them applicable to a wider audience of teacher educators both inside and outside Texas.
- Discussing the theoretical underpinnings of this work by clearly articulating how the literatures on how people learn and on school change are reflected in the program assessment and professional development tools.
- Focusing more on how teacher education programs can teach for college-readiness by providing a deeper, research-based understanding of best practices for teacher preparation.

A final report on this program will be available in mid-2013.

Teacher Services and Resources

Two state-funded THECB programs that focus on professional development of P-12 and postsecondary faculty are highlighted in this report: Faculty Professional Development Modules and Vertical Alignment Training.

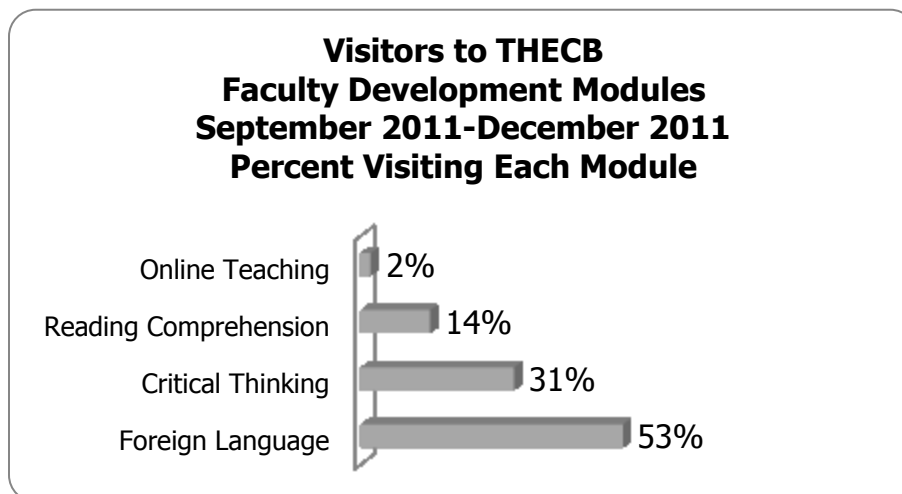
Faculty Professional Development Modules

Faculty Professional Development Modules provide faculty with professional development opportunities that are accessible through online delivery. In 2011, four modules were completed and disseminated by THECB: critical thinking, foreign language, reading comprehension, and

online undergraduate teaching. In addition, four new modules began development in 2011-2012 in the areas of writing across the curriculum, best practices in undergraduate teaching, understanding data, and using and analyzing data.

Analysis of website statistics for the four active modules revealed that for those visiting the site:

- Postsecondary faculty had a median of 10.2 years of teaching experience while P-12 teachers had 5.2 years.
- The two most popular modules were Foreign Language (53 percent) and Critical Thinking (31 percent).
- One-hundred percent of the visitors were instructors. The majority were affiliated with a two-year public institution (53 percent), followed by those affiliated with a four-year public institution (25 percent), and a P-12 public school district (12 percent).



A survey of the developers of the new faculty modules was conducted to better understand the development process and the resources needed for this type of project. The results indicated that:

- Design teams that were required to submit a detailed plan to THECB prior to implementation had more structure, clarity, and better project plans than those who were not required to do so.
- Staffing and administration was the biggest cost item for these projects.
- The challenges faced by the design teams included coordination and management of diverse teams (content and technical staff), moving from planning to implementation, staff turnover, and stakeholder involvement.

The evaluators suggested that THECB:

- Investigate better ways to market the existing modules to novice teachers.
- Determine why two of the existing modules (online teaching and reading comprehension) are being accessed less frequently than the other modules.

- Require developers to submit a detailed proposal and development plan for new modules, regardless of how funding is structured.
- Develop a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to foreshadow challenges and document solutions for module design teams.

Vertical Alignment Training

The purpose of the Vertical Alignment Training (VAT) program is to engage regional school systems in vertical curriculum alignment. In 2011, a grant was awarded to the University of North Texas to design the Academic Vertical Alignment Training and Renewal (AVATAR) system. The goal is to encourage regional school systems to create sustainable networks among higher education institutions, secondary schools, and regional education organizations such as the Regional Education Service Centers and P-16 Councils. Of the 20 P-12 educational service center regions in Texas, 14 are participating in AVATAR. The overall goals of the program are to:

- Expand awareness of vertical alignment initiatives.
- Identify and implement strategies to close content and curriculum gaps between secondary and postsecondary schools.
- Help educators understand state standards and assessments.
- Disseminate knowledge about policies and procedures related to curriculum design and delivery.
- Identify and assess local progress toward closing the student achievement gap.
- Disseminate findings from the vertical alignment networks to all stakeholders.

The evaluation of the AVATAR program in 2011-2012 focused on examining the quality and usability of the AVATAR training modules developed as part of the AVATAR system. A group of pilot testers was asked to review the modules. Of those:

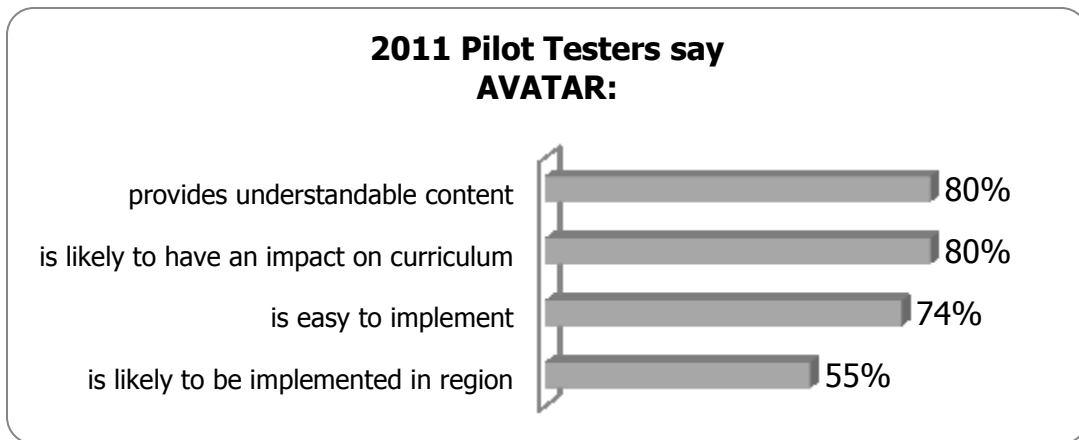
- Eighty percent said the modules were of high quality.
- A majority said each module was very or completely useful. The three modules receiving the lowest ratings focused on how to implement the vertical alignment process: Action Plans, PowerPoint, and Research; Reflection and Action Plans; and Project Introduction and Partners' Roles and Responsibilities.
- Close to 80 percent said they were very confident that the intended audience will understand the content of the modules.
- Seventy-four percent thought that the vertical alignment process presented can be easily implemented.
- Nearly 80 percent thought the AVATAR training can have a strong to very strong impact on curriculum alignment efforts. However, 45 percent were pessimistic that these vertical alignment processes will actually be implemented in their regions.

When asked what additional resources are needed to implement a vertical alignment process, they cited the need for both postsecondary and P-12 administrator support and instructor buy-in.

The evaluators recommended that:

- Modules focusing on the roles and responsibilities of participants in the vertical alignment process and the actual steps for implementing a vertical alignment process should be further developed.
- Considerable attention must be spent on gaining buy-in and administrative support from postsecondary and secondary instructors and administrators for the program to be successful as it moves forward.

The AVATAR training will be launched statewide during the 2012-2013 academic year. A final evaluation report will be available in late 2013.



Inform Teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards

Program Highlights

THECB has supported a number of programs over the past five years that focus on informing teacher educators, postsecondary faculty, and P-12 teachers about the College and Career Readiness Standards.

The Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration program was established to research best practices in preparing P-12 teachers to incorporate the Career and College Readiness Standards into their teaching. Expert reviewers in teacher education and college-readiness were contracted to review the tools and provide feedback on their content and usability. The reviewers concluded that these tools will be useful to both a Texas and national audience.

Faculty Professional Development Modules were developed in four areas: critical thinking, foreign language, reading comprehension, and online undergraduate education. Two of these four active modules (foreign language and critical thinking) have received more than three-quarters of the visits to the modules. The instructors visiting the site were generally experienced teachers, with eight or more years of teaching experience, and were most likely to be affiliated with two-year institutions.

The Academic Vertical Alignment Training and Renewal (AVATAR) system has been developed to further the goals of the Vertical Alignment Training program. Preliminary evaluation results indicate the AVATAR materials are of high quality, useful, and understandable to the intended audience. Final results of the evaluation will be available in late 2013 after the full launch of the system in 2012-2013.

Recommendations

Improve the usefulness of the Teacher Preparation Education Demonstration program assessment tools by making the educational theory behind them more explicit and identifying and highlighting research-based practices for preparing teachers to teach at a level that ensures college readiness.

Investigate new ways to market the Faculty Professional Development Modules to novice teachers and find ways to improve the value of the online teaching and reading comprehension modules to teachers.

Enhance the modules developed for the Vertical Alignment Training/AVATAR program by further developing the implementation sections of the training modules and devoting considerable attention to gaining buy-in and administrative support from secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators.

Promote a College-Going Culture

One of the strategies for accelerating progress in achieving the goals for *Closing the Gaps by 2015* is to promote a college-going culture through publicity campaigns and related efforts. The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) is a federal program that, since 2009, has been a primary funding source for THECB efforts to inform the public about the value of a college education and providing help for applying for college and financial aid. In fiscal year 2012 the CACG programs focused on three areas: promoting a college-going culture in P-12 schools, increasing community awareness of the value of a college education, encouraging adult students to complete their degrees, and supporting interventions to improve the persistence and success of at-risk college students.

The two CACG programs focusing on at-risk college students, CSSP and AVID, are discussed in earlier in this report (see page 6). This section of the report includes information on two additional programs within CACG: Advise Texas and the Adult Degree Completion programs.

Advise Texas

In 2011-2012, the Advise Texas program supported the training and placement of college-readiness advisors, one per high school, at 120 high schools with a combined enrollment of more than 50,400 seniors. A preliminary evaluation report reveals that schools served by the program are, on average, seeing increases in college applications and FAFSA completion rates.

- Prior to program implementation in 2010-2011, 59.5 percent of seniors in participating high schools completed the Texas uniform college application; this increased to 65.7 percent in 2011-2012, the first year the program was in place. To put this in context, the overall state application rate for high school seniors in 2011-2012 was only 57.2 percent.
- Submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) also increased overall in participating schools. In 2010-2011, 49.5 percent of seniors submitted FAFSAs compared with 52.1 percent at participating schools in 2011-2012.

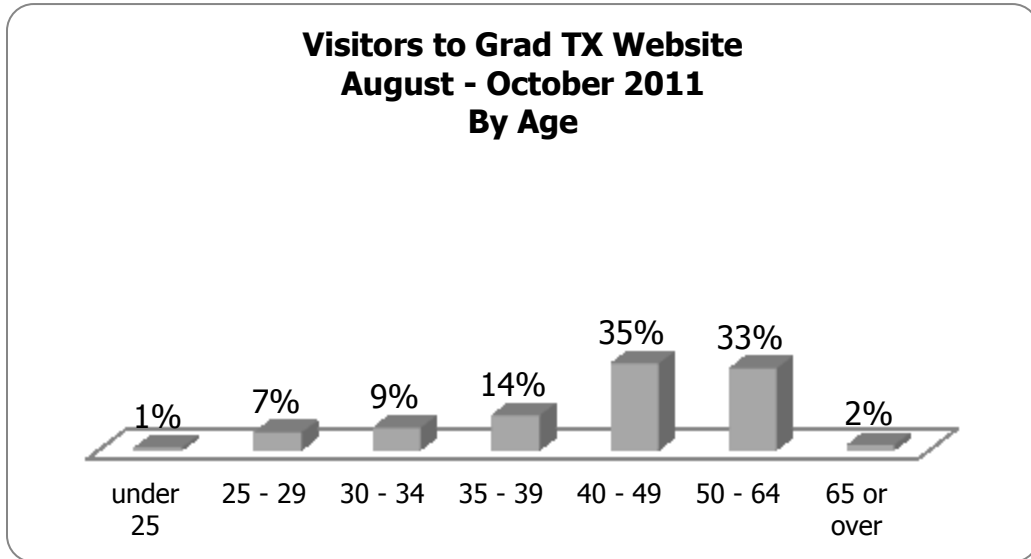
Advise Texas is evaluated as part of a national effort. A report will be available in early 2013.

Adult Degree Completion

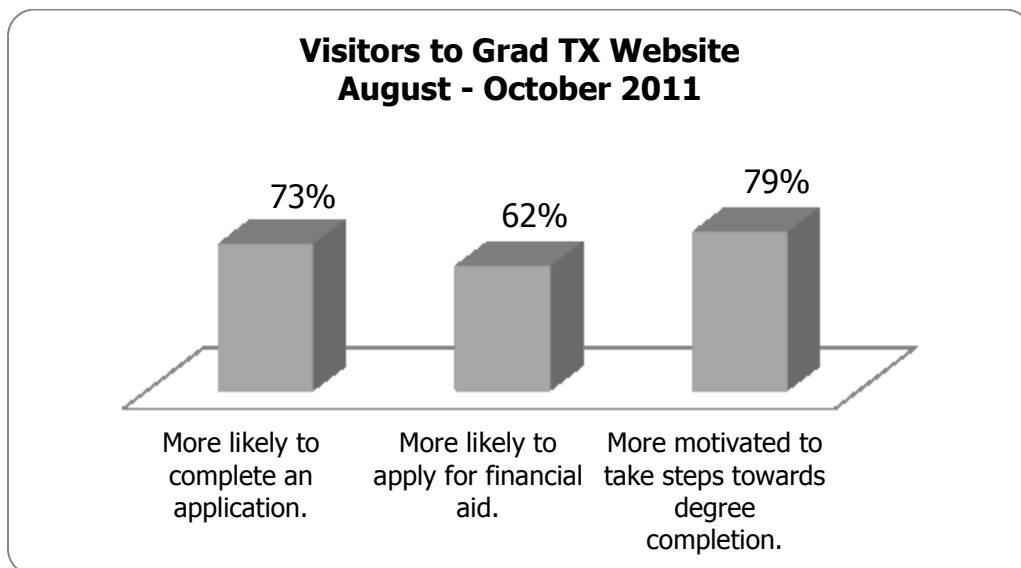
The Adult Degree Completion program targets adults over the age of 25 who left college without a degree after earning 60 or more course credits. The main focus of the program is to inform these former students through the Grad TX website about their options for returning to college. Eight public institutions of higher education, which offer programs targeted at adults who may wish to complete a bachelor's degree, are featured on the website. In fiscal year 2013, additional degree programs will be added.

The goal of the evaluation has been two-fold: a) to gain a better understanding of the demographic and academic characteristics of these students and the barriers they may face in completing a degree and b) to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current outreach effort.

During the first three months of its operation (August – October 2011), the Grad TX website attracted close to 10,500 unique visitors. A survey of visitors to the Grad TX website revealed that more than half of those responding were female (54 percent) and 70 percent or more were 40 years of age or older.



The majority of site visitors identified themselves as white, non-Hispanic (50 percent), followed by 26 percent Hispanic, and 13 percent black, non-Hispanic. Thirty-three percent reported that they were from a military family and forty-three percent reported family income below \$50,000 per year.



The majority of respondents (73 percent) said that as a result of visiting the Grad TX website they are more likely to complete an application to return to college. Over one-half (62 percent) indicated they are more likely to apply for financial aid, and more than three-fourths (79 percent) said that visiting the website increased their motivation to take steps toward degree completion.

In spring 2012, returning adult students were surveyed at each of the eight institutions with degree programs featured on the website. Students' reasons for stopping out of college the first time were diverse. Among the most common reasons were financial challenges, scheduling difficulties, and starting a family or getting married. However, none of these reasons was selected by more than one-half of the students that responded. There was much greater agreement regarding students' reasons for returning to school. Almost 80 percent indicated they wanted to complete what they had started and two-thirds reported that they wanted to become better educated. They also indicated that availability of online courses was a major driver in their ability to return to school.

Returning students who responded to the survey chose among eight factors that influenced their decision to go back to school including:

- The availability of online courses (80 percent).
- Flexible scheduling (55 percent) and increased ability to pay for college (52 percent).
- Increased support or encouragement from friends and family (47 percent).
- Availability of a fast/accelerated program (26 percent).
- Decrease in their responsibilities for others (25 percent).
- Support from a current employer (24 percent).

Finally, a usability study of the Grad TX website was conducted in fall 2012. While the study revealed a number of technical and formatting changes that needed to be made on the site, it also noted many positive features:

- The home page quickly conveys that the program is geared toward adults who have completed college credits and are considering returning to complete a bachelor's degree.
- Users are attracted to the Grad TX program. Ninety percent of users wanted to keep their online account active. All users indicated they would return to the site again and will recommend it to friends and family.
- Users generally complemented the site's clean design and lack of cluttered content.
- Users found the financial aid information helpful. They liked that it was aggregated in one place and provided links to many additional sources of information.
- The lists of courses needed for different degrees were informative and had an encouraging and motivating impact on users.

Adults who have returned to college to complete their degrees recommended that institutions can help them by:

- Reducing financial barriers including:
 - Making more financial aid available and making it easier to obtain.
 - Giving scholarships to part-time students.
 - Eliminating campus fees for online-only students.
- Offering a greater number of online courses .
- Improving advising and academic counseling and/or communication including:
 - Helping more with class scheduling.
 - Answering student questions thoroughly and promptly.
 - Providing more training to advisors.
 - Offering more help with job placement.
- Offering more classes and areas of study targeted at adults returning to college (not specifically online).
- Accepting or awarding college credits for military courses, professional development credits, and life and work experiences.
- Offering more evening, weekend, and summer classes.

Promote a College-Going Culture

Program Highlights

The Advise Texas program supports the training and placement of college-readiness advisors at 120 high schools serving more than 50,400 seniors. A preliminary evaluation report reveals that high schools served by the program are seeing increases in seniors' college applications and FASFA completion rates.

The Adult Degree Completion program targets adult students over the age of 25 who left college without a degree after earning 60 or more credits. During the first three months of its operation, the Grad TX website attracted close to 10,500 unique visitors. A survey of visitors to the Grad TX website revealed that more than one-half were female (54 percent) and 70 percent or more were 40 years of age or older. Most indicated they were likely to complete an application to resume their studies.

Recommendations

Disseminate the top recommendations from the Adult Degree Completion program participants to institutions including: 1) increase the amount of financial aid available and make it easier to obtain, including providing scholarships to part-time students; 2) eliminate campus fees for online-only students; and 3) offer a greater number of online course offerings.

Appendix A – Status of THECB Programs Operating in Fiscal Year 2012

Status of THECB Programs Operating in Fiscal Year 2012					
Program¹	Total Funding²	Participants³	Source of Funds	Program Ending⁴	
				Month End	Year End
Strategy A - Participation, Success, Excellence and Research					
Bridge and Intensive Programs					
Developmental Education Summer Bridge	\$341,672	400	State	August	2013
High School Summer Bridge	\$213,128	400	State	August	2013
College and Career Readiness Initiatives Faculty Collaboratives	\$6,220,000*	Statewide	State	August	2013
College Readiness Assignments: Development, Refinement, and Alignment	\$996,625	2,000	State	August	2013
Intensive Program for Adult Education Students	\$1,137,500	491	State	August	2013
Complete College America - FOCUS	\$1,000,000	860	External	February	2013
Strategy D - Health Programs					
Hospital Based Nursing Education Partnerships	\$4,750,000*	370	State	December	2012
Emergency and Trauma Care Education Partnership Program: Graduate Nursing Education	\$1,889,213	NR	State	August	2013

Status of THECB Programs Operating in Fiscal Year 2012 (continued)					
Program¹	Total Funding²	Participants³	Source of Funds	Program Ending⁴	
				Month End	Year End
Strategy E - Quality/Participation					
Adult Basic Education-Innovation Grants	\$2,970,000	2,187	State	August	2014
Developmental Education Demonstration Projects					
Community Colleges	\$7,750,000	Site Specific	State	August	2012
Universities	\$1,600,000	Site Specific	State	August	2012
Educator Preparation Demonstration Program	\$1,649,000*	Statewide	State	August	2014
Faculty Professional Development Modules for Online Learning	\$602,224	Statewide	State	April	2013
Learning Objects Repository (Phase II)	\$450,000*	Statewide	State	August	2013
Math, Science, Technology Teacher Preparation Academies	\$3,421,000*	1,090	State	August	2013
Texas Pathways	\$469,509*	Site Specific	State and External	August	2013
Vertical Alignment Training	\$400,000	2,477	State	August	2013
Strategy F - Federal Grant Programs					
College Access Challenge Grant (CACG)					
Comprehensive Student Success Program	\$2,592,246	9,250	Federal	August	2013
Marketing Campaign -- Generation Texas (Gen TX)	\$8,500,000	Statewide	Federal	August	2013
Adult Degree Completion (Grad TX)	\$1,062,500	Statewide	Federal	August	2015
Workstudy Mentorship Program	\$5,025,137	790	Federal	August	2012

Status of THECB Programs Operating in Fiscal Year 2012 (continued)					
Program ¹	Total Funding ²	Participants ³	Source of Funds	Program Ending ⁴	
				Month End	Year End
Strategy F – Federal Grant Programs (continued)					
Advise Texas	\$5,373,000	120**	Federal and Match	August	2012
AVID Higher Education Project	\$2,136,000	4,108	Federal	August	2013
Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Grant	\$1,187,029	Statewide	Federal	June	2014
Teacher Quality Grants	\$22,490,616	1,014	Federal	April	2013
Strategy G - Tobacco Fund					
Nursing Innovation Program					
Best Practices	\$558,050	556	State	August	2012
Breaking the Bottleneck in Clinical Instruction	\$724,140	925	State	August	2012
Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program	\$1,507,723	5,096	State	May	2012
GRAND TOTAL Funding²	\$87,016,312				

Data reported in this table are updated as of October 26, 2012.

¹Programs are organized by Legislative Appropriations funding strategy.

²Total amount of money allocated from all sources for either the current FY2012-2013 biennium (for state funding) or the entire grant period (for federal or other external grant funding). The “*” denotes funds allocated either in the prior FY2010-2011 biennium or across multiple biennia.

³Participants may be students, teachers, or advisors/other support staff served or supported by the program. “Statewide” indicates that this program is intended to have a statewide impact, while “site specific” indicates a broad impact on a specific site. Detailed explanations about the types of participants served are included in the individual program reports available on the THECB website: <http://theccb.state.tx.us/apps/ape>.

**Indicates number of Advisors supported.

⁴Program ending date based on total funding reported.

