“Articulation in the 2013 Context: What Does It Mean and Why It Matters”

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Transfer & Articulation

- Transfer—process of moving a student’s credits across different institutions
- Articulation—institutional policies or other structures that are implemented to encourage, facilitate and monitor the student transfer process
Metaphoric Articulation

Bus

articulated joint

rear rigid section

front rigid section
Broken Articulation
Importance of High Quality Articulation Agreements

❖ Today, it is more important than ever to tackle this persistent issue and improve the transfer and articulation process. It is important because we must, as a nation, improve the efficiency of our educational process and get students through quicker and more successfully (Hezel Associates, Lumina Foundation, Western Interstate Committee for Higher Education, 2009).
Importance

❖ “President Obama has challenged the U.S. to regain international leadership in the education of our citizenry, yet we simply cannot achieve this goal, given our substantial reliance on community colleges, unless we improve transfer and articulation” (Hezel, et al.)
Importance (cont.)

- While record numbers are enrolling, however, degree completion rates have stagnated. This has serious economic and civic implications for our nation, according to the academic and popular literature alike (Hezel, et al.).
Importance (Cont.)

- “As states’ primary engine for workforce development, public higher education must develop degree pathways and infrastructures that ensure adult learners receive postsecondary education, including to the baccalaureate level” (Townsend, Bragg and Ruud 2008, p.1).

- Assuming that the baccalaureate is increasingly the “entry point to the workforce for the majority of students, …improving the effectiveness of 2/4 transfer will be the key to national progress in closing the gap among racial groups in degree attainment since more minorities enter higher education through community colleges (Wellman 2002, p. v).
Melinda Gates observed “We were once first in the world in postsecondary completion rates. We now rank tenth. That’s a danger for the nation’s economy, and it’s a tragedy for our citizens” (Jaschik, 2008).

Recently, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a new funding initiative focused specifically on increasing the college completion rates of college students, especially those of community college students.
Community College Students: Who Are They?

- 35 percent of all postsecondary students are enrolled in community colleges (NCES, 2008, p. iii).
- 17% of community college students persist and complete their bachelor’s degrees
- 45% of students who began their studies at four-year public colleges and universities persist and graduate (Community Colleges: Special Supplement to the Condition of Education 2008)
- States & higher education’s professional community are concerned with assisting college students move efficiently & seamlessly to 4-year schools to complete degrees
Community College Students: Who Are They?

- 59 percent of community college students are female; 54 percent of students in public four-year institutions are female.
- First time enrollees in community colleges are generally poorer than in public four-year institutions.
- Individuals who fall in the “lowest 24 percent of income” category constitute 44 percent of community college students as compared to 35 percent of students in four-year public institutions.
Community College Students

- Community college students more likely than their counterparts at public four-year institutions to be persons of color, part-time, and older.

- Only socioeconomic status has been found to have a slight impact on degree completion rates (Adelman, 2006, xxiii)
Community College Students

- 25 percent of beginning community college students transferred to a four-year institution (vertical transfer)
Students who transfer with A.A. degrees have lower grade point averages (3.12) than students who transfer with either A.S. or A.A.S degrees (3.18)

Students with A.A. degrees tend to graduate at a rate that is significantly higher compared to students who earned either an A.S. or an A.A.S

82 percent of students who had transferred all of their credits graduated within six years versus 42 percent those who had only some of their credits transferred (Doyle, 2006)

Of those who had only some credits transfer another 36 percent were still enrolled and 19 percent had left higher education without a degree.
Community Colleges Are Particularly Important in Difficult Economic Times

Compared to other sectors of higher education community colleges are more accessible to a wider range of learners, especially those groups generally absent, (i.e., people of color, first generation college students, and adult learners) due to:

- Geographic locations
- Open admissions policies
- Lower costs
Articulation Agreements in the Current Political & Economic Climate

- Articulation is a cost effective model for state budgets
# Savings for State & Student

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</tbody>
</table>
Savings (Cont.)

- 350 students x $10,562 = $3,696,700 (student investment)
- 2 years x $1,017,800 = $2,035,600 (state investment)
- Total savings for two years of education = $5,732,300
President’s Early Childhood Initiative

- The President is proposing a new federal-state partnership to provide all low- and moderate-income four-year old children with high-quality preschool, while also expanding these programs to reach additional children from middle class families and incentivizing full-day kindergarten policies.
President Obama Preschool Plan

Early Head Start
- Home Visiting
- Child Care

Head Start
- Home Visiting
- Child Care

Pre-K
- Home Visiting
- Child Care

Kindergarten
- Child Care

B – 2 yrs.
3 yrs.
4 yrs.
5 yrs.
Obama Plan (Cont.)

- The president proposes that all states would staff their pre-K programs have “well-trained teachers, who are paid comparably to K-12 staff”

- Politically to pay pre-K teachers on the same scale as K-12 teachers they must have comparable credentials

- Therefore, pre-K teachers be required to have a 4-year college degree and jump through the same credentialing hoops as K-12 teachers

- High quality articulation agreements become essential
Head Start as Prior Impetus

- Head Start Act requires 50% of teachers nationally have Bachelors degree by Sept. 30, 2013
- In 2011, 57% had a BA or higher
- 31% AA
- 10% CDA
- 2% No related credential or degree
- 43% still need the 4-year degree (although not mandated)
Bachelors Degrees and Program Quality

- Review of Studies Bachelors Degree Impacts (Whitebook, 2009)
  - Underscore the importance of more higher education and specialized training, and identify the role of the bachelor's degree, most often in ECE, in producing teacher behaviors consistent with high-quality programming, which in turn supports better developmental outcomes.
Analysis indicated that effects on quality outcomes from teachers with a bachelor’s degree (the treatment group) were significantly different from those teachers with less education (the comparison group). In standard deviation units, the average effect was .16 standard deviations ($p < .05$) higher for teachers with a bachelor's degree than for their non-bachelor’s degree counterparts (NIEER, 2007).
More B.S.

- Questions remaining:
  - thresholds of education and training;
  - the content, format, and quality of specialized early childhood training;
  - variations in strategies for teachers with varying characteristics and needs;
  - aspects of the adult work environment that scaffold teachers' knowledge, enabling them to engage in effective strategies with children (Whitebook, 2009).
ECE Professional Development (McMullen & Apple, 2007)

- Who makes the decisions about the professional development requirements for early childhood professionals?
- What are the underlying power dynamics, competing elements, and moral contentions inherent in the system?
- Who is affected by these decisions and how are they influenced?
- How do decisions made by those with power affect those with less capacity to influence the outcomes?
Five Constituent Groups Responsible for Decision-Making

- Bodies responsible for establishing and monitoring mandatory regulations;
- Bodies responsible for establishing and monitoring voluntary regulations that are more stringent than mandatory regulations;
- Early childhood teacher educators;
- The market; and
- Consumers of professional development.
Student Intentionality

✦ When (or how many times) do students decide on their career paths?

✦ Checkpoints along the way (Apple, 2004)
UNC Greensboro Transfer Students

- 36% of students transferring to UNCG from 2001 to 2005 from 2-year AAS programs were from diverse backgrounds
- Only 24% of the native students were from diverse backgrounds
- Over a 5-year period the average GPA for senior transfer students was 3.27 and for native students 3.35
- These data are very similar to earlier data from 1995 to 1998 indicating identical GPAs of 3.22 for transfer and native students at UNCG
UNCG (Cont.)

- Both transfer and native students had lower GPAs than did seniors
- On average, the transfer student GPA increased from 2.72 in the 1999 study to 2.98 in the 5-year period ending in 2005
- These data clearly indicate the success of community college early childhood transfer students in 4-year degree programs
The data suggests that the rigor of the coursework in the AAS programs is sufficient to ensure student success at 4-year institutions.
Best Practices (Ignash & Townsend, 2000, p. 176-179):

- Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions are equal partners in providing the first two years of baccalaureate degree programs.

- Transfer students should be treated comparably to ‘native’ students by the receiving institutions.

- Faculty from both the two-year and four-year institutions have primary responsibility for developing and maintaining statewide articulation agreements.
Best Practices (Cont.)

- Statewide articulation agreements should accommodate those students who complete a significant block of coursework (such as the general education requirements) but who transfer before completing the associate degree.

- Articulation agreements should be developed for specific program majors.

- A state’s private institutions should be included in statewide articulation agreements.

- A statewide evaluation system should monitor the progress and completion of transfer students.
Applying these criteria or principles, the authors found at that time that “only about half of agreements reflect awareness that students transfer in several directions, not just upwardly vertical,...that almost three-quarters (71 percent) of states had developed agreements for transfer of a general education core,” and that few states’ agreements included private institutions or articulation agreements for academic program majors.
What Should Be the Goal?

- The vast majority of credit hours from the AS/AAS degree transfer for **required** credits at the 4-year institution (55 credit hours)

- No more than 70 credit hours remaining at the 4-year institution
Our Properly Working Articulated Bus