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In March of 2012, WestEd submitted to the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) an evaluation of CAPP Expository Literacy Grant (ELG) outcomes in six California high schools, based on a six-year grant period (2005/06 through 2010/11). The goal of the ELG project was to reduce the number of high school graduates required to enroll in remedial, non-credit-bearing English language arts courses as entering freshmen in California State Universities and California community colleges. The ELG funding supported intensive professional development for English language arts teachers to improve curriculum and instructional practices in expository literacy instruction.

The evaluation reported findings on student outcomes, teacher practice, the role of leadership, and sustainability of ELG practices. Because of significant gaps in available student outcome data at the time the evaluation was conducted, CAPP felt that it would be useful to gather additional student achievement data that were not previously available for the purposes of this study, in order to supplement and inform the original evaluation findings.

WestEd reviewed ELG participation rates in 9th through 12th grades and identified 11th grade as the grade with the highest ELG participation rates over the six years of the grant. Student achievement data on 11th grade students in all six ELG cohort 1 schools for all six years of the grant were obtained from the California Department of Education (CDE)'s Ed-Data database. The data of most interest were the California State Test (CST) in English Language Arts (ELA) and the Early Assessment Program (EAP) English participation rates and pass rates. These data offer alternative perspectives on student achievement as well as college readiness. Data for ELG schools were compared against data for the non-ELG schools identified in the original evaluation, as well as state averages.

Why the Need for Additional Data?

The evaluation, as it was originally designed, examined student, teacher, and administrator data, including both quantitative and qualitative data. To study change in teacher practice, WestEd designed and collected qualitative data. To study student performance using quantitative measures, WestEd worked with Cal-PASS and its Standardized Metrics for Analysis, Reporting,

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1 Although the California State University system makes EAP test result data available on its website, it was preferred that one database would be used to examine CST data and EAP data for the purposes of this addendum. A previous progress memo (see “ELG Evaluation—Phase One Progress Memo: Quantitative Data Collection for Cohort 1 Schools—Memo 2 of 3,” dated September 3, 2010), specified the use of the Ed-Data database to develop school profiles, and consistency between data sources was desired.

2 On the CA STAR test, 11th grade students have the option of completing the augmented EAP test at the end of the ELA portions of the STAR test. These additional multiple-choice questions, along with a 45-minute essay, constitute the “EAP test” for the purposes of this evaluation.

3 In this document, “non-ELG schools” refers to schools that had student demographics similar to those of the ELG schools. For a more in-depth description of how these schools were identified, see the CAPP Expository Literacy Grant Evaluation—Final Report.

4 Cal-PASS is a longitudinal database housing California student achievement data and descriptive data for grades K–16. Over 6,800 elementary schools, high schools, community colleges, and universities from over 52 counties in California voluntarily participate in this partnership.
and Tracking (SMART) Tool technology, which enabled access to student performance data throughout grades 9–16. WestEd chose to work with Cal-PASS for several reasons. First, at the time of the evaluation, the Cal-PASS system was the only system in place in California that tracked student performance from the secondary level to the postsecondary level. Second, all six schools in ELG cohort 1 were part of districts that had signed memoranda of understanding to upload their data to the Cal-PASS system. Third, the Cal-PASS system has the capability to disaggregate data at the student level, a preferred method for targeting only those students who received the ELG treatment; in that way, WestEd could look specifically at ELG students and track their performance, both at the high school level and at the postsecondary level. Finally, the Cal-PASS system could be used to generate comparison schools that matched the academic, socioeconomic, and demographic profiles of the ELG schools but that did not have an ELG program. The original evaluation data set, intended to inform the evaluation’s analysis of how students attending ELG schools were faring, was incomplete. Only three of the six schools had complete data in Cal-PASS. Due to these limitations of the evaluation data set, WestEd proposed using CDE’s data set, Ed-Data, to examine the performance of the CAPP ELG cohort 1 11th grade students during the course of the grant.

As with the original evaluation, WestEd focused on 11th grade performance data, since that grade was found to be the grade level with the most relevant college-readiness measures and at which the largest number of students were exposed to the ELG during the grant period. For example, five of the six ELG cohort 1 schools had 100 percent student participation across mainstream English language arts courses for all six years of the grant.

This alternative data set from Ed-Data does not replace the Cal-PASS data set used in the original evaluation, since the student performance data from Ed-Data include those of all 11th grade students at ELG schools, whether or not students actually received ELG instruction—including students enrolled in courses, such as English language development, special education, or Advanced Placement, that did not implement the ELG practices. The Cal-PASS data set targeted only students enrolled in an 11th grade English language arts course taught by a teacher participating in the ELG evaluation.

Ultimately, it is the intention of this addendum to present the most accurate information possible, given the benefits and limitations of the longitudinal data systems currently available. WestEd hopes that the new data provided in this addendum are useful in providing another lens through which to understand the progress students of ELG teachers may have made in preparation for college readiness.

5 The Cal-PASS SMART Tool is an online tool enabling users to perform complex analyses of data from the Cal-PASS longitudinal data system.
6 The six schools that implemented the ELG between 2005/06 and 2010/11 were Calexico High School, Lower Lake High School, Mar Vista Senior High School, Ridgeview High School, San Lorenzo High School, and South High School. For more information about the participating schools, see the CAPP Expository Literacy Grant Evaluation—Final Report.
7 Cal-PASS receives its data from districts, not individual schools. Districts have signed agreements with Cal-PASS and are expected to upload their data on an annual basis. Participation in the system is voluntary.
California State Test (CST) and Early Assessment Program (EAP) Data Graphs, 2005/06–2010/11

Figure 1. Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced on the 11th Grade ELA CST, 2005/06–2010/11

Source: California Department of Education.

Figure 1 data suggest a slight upward trend in the percentage of 11th grade students identified as Proficient or Advanced on the ELA CST for all observed groups. ELG schools’ and non-ELG schools’ percentages were consistently lower than the statewide percentages for each year of the grant.
Figure 2 data suggest an overall upward trend in EAP English participation rates for all observed groups. The increased participation in the early warning assessment is an indicator of increased awareness of postsecondary education. ELG school participation rates were consistently higher than the non-ELG school and statewide rates, reaching 98 and 97 percent, respectively, for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 school years.

Source: California Department of Education
Figure 3. EAP English Pass Rate (“Ready for College”), 2005/06–2010/11

Source: California Department of Education

Figure 3 data suggest a very slight upward trend in the EAP English pass rates for all three observed groups. ELG schools’ and non-ELG schools’ rates were consistently lower than statewide rates for each year of the grant.⁸ For three of the six grant years, students at ELG schools had slightly higher EAP English pass rates than students at comparable non-ELG schools.

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⁸ In 2010/11, the state-determined EAP cut score was 151. Starting in fall 2011, the cut score was lowered to 147. This change in cut scores did not impact the ELG schools during the grant years.