Title

California Community College's ESL Enrollment and Student Success

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9fd55354

Author

Malas, Emily

Publication Date

2024-07-01

Data Availability

The data associated with this publication are available upon request.

California Community College's ESL Enrollment and Student Success

Emily Malas · University of California, Santa Barbara

Between 2014 and 2021, the California Community College system hasn't had more than 25% of English Learners move up one or more skill levels in a given school year. Additionally, enrollment rates have decreased. After COVID-19 impacted millions of students, non-traditional learners, and faculty, the California Community College system must prioritize the enrollment and retention of all students, including English Learners, to ensure their success and educational equity amidst a time of immense racial and economic disparities. I aim to understand in this work how online content, which rose exponentially during the pandemic, can impact English Learners. Broadly, does publicly available content on English as a Second Language (ESL) and student support impact English Learners (ELs) enrollment and skill gain in Community Colleges? Specifically, does publicly available information on ESL programs, counseling and support services, and ESL coursework impact ELs enrollment and skill gain in select California Community Colleges (CCCs) in the 2018-2019 school year compared to the 2020-2021 school year?

To answer this question, I used the Wayback Machine to analyze selected CCCs websites as they were in roughly summer (June-August) 2018 and summer 2020 to determine the sufficiency of each college's inline content on ESL and support services between periods. These were then scored against a rubric on thoroughness and accessibility. This score was compared to ELs net enrollment and skill gain changes. This method was used to understand the relationship between the content posted and its ultimate success in drawing in students and successfully supporting them through progressing in the program.

Context

English as a Second Language (ESL) functions to aid underdeveloped and underprepared students to get into entry-level college English. It is part of a broader effort to eliminate achievement gaps through targetted resources, individuality for specific campus populations, and more recently, tracking and publicizing data to see the effectiveness of programs.[1] ESL is typically a program consisting of sequences where students are placed below transfer-level English (TLE) and then progress through each consecutive class until reaching TLE. Sequence lengths and the number of classes needed before TLE vary from campus to campus within the CCC system but usually range from three to five pre-TLE courses. Increasingly, ESL programs at CCCs have begun integrating optional language support classes, functioning like a lab, that are worth fewer units and run concurrently with program-specific courses. These sequences and support curriculum are intended to have students at college-level English proficiency within three years.

Sequences are either credit or non-credit programs. Credit is taken for units and based on instructional hours at low to no cost. The non-credit pathway is free and has low to no textbook costs. Many ESL programs in the CCC system provide free online instructional resources through their websites for equitable access to educational materials. Students who complete credit ESL programs obtain credit towards their respective degree and non-credit ESL programs reward a certificate upon completion. In addition to educational resources, most campuses provide counseling services to support students' academic, emotional, and financial concerns.

---

[1] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "Basic Skills and English as a Second Language." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/What-we-do/Basic-Skills-and-English-as-a-Second-Language.

The California K-12 system is a feeder to CCCs, which has an immense ELs population. In Fall 2022, over 19% of California public school students are considered ELs, over 39% speak another language than English in their home, and 89% of ELs speak Spanish.[2] The CCC system follows a similar trend with at least 25% of CCC students being ELs (international students, young adults from high school ESL programs or those never properly classified as ELs, adult/non-traditional students) and immigrants.[3] The CCCs each vary in population demographics but statewide in 2021-2022, ELs were over 50% Hispanic, 17% Asian, 16% White, and less than 5% Black/African American.[4] The diverse student population requires a variety of techniques and methods for ESL approaches in the CCC system, which was heightened by AB 705.

Assembly Bill 705 was signed in October 2017 and implemented in colleges in Fall 2021 for ESL programs in CCCs due to COVID-19 delays. The bill intended to increase access to TLE and math while also making a key distinction between remedial education and ESL. It was centered around equity, as students of color were primarily disadvantaged by difficult and inconsistent measures taken for placement into both remedial education and ESL. It aimed to increase financial equity, diversity and success, and overall social equity. This meant colleges must maximize resources such as high school transcripts or self-guided placement to ensure students would be placed accurately into pre-transfer level courses. The goal was for students to complete ESL sequences within three years of beginning pre-transfer level coursework to get to

---

[2] California Department of Education. "English Learner Facts." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/cefelfacts.asp.

[3] EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-705#:~:text=While%20students%20can%20elect%20to,or%20without%20additional%20corequisite%20support.

[4] Cal-PASS Plus. "Student Success Metrics." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx.

TLE.[5] Prior to AB 705, 100% of colleges were using standardized tests for ELs placement into ESL programs, which disadvantaged students with inaccurate results and sequence placement, and only 12% considered high school records. After AB 705, every college is mandated to use records available to inform placement into ESL sequences or other Chancellor's Office approved methods such as guided or self-placement.[6]

The reformed system was guided by the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) throughout the pandemic for ESL sequences. They recommended: integrating skills into credit ESL courses that would feed into TLE (rather than developmental English), placing students in ESL pathways with the highest probability of reaching and succeeding in TLE, providing faculty with professional development opportunities, to teach ESL courses to teach TLE to students with an ESL background, and more.[7] AB 705 and the CCCCO guidelines have supported the development and implementation of numerous ESL program reforms and provided a unified and detailed base for ESL across the vast CCC system. This new system has attempted to create a more equitable program for the disadvantaged EL population. Simultaneously, it inspired a wave of data collection on and attention to the ESL population, which was previously coupled with remedial and adult education, in an attempt to spotlight the immense effort, change, and the intended success of the refined system post-pandemic in 2021.

---

[5] EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-7
.
[6] Public Policy Institute of California. "English as a Second Language at California's Community Colleges." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://www.ppic.org/publication/english-as-a-second-language-at-californias-community-colleges/.
[7] EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-7
05#:~:text=While%20students%20can%20elect%20to,or%20without%20additional%20corequisite%20sup
port.

Significance

The California Community College system has been on a pathway towards equity since 2017 under Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley with his Vision for Success Goals, which then aligned with the 2021 Governor's Roadmap Goals, and finally under Chancellor Sonya Christian evolved to Vision 2030.[8] It is a movement towards three main goals: success, support, and access. Vision 2030 aims to provide equitable futures for historically disadvantaged populations including veterans, low-income individuals, K-12 dual-enrollment students, foster youth, and students who are justice-involved or justice-impacted. It is tailored around providing support and inclusive experiences for all students, including ELs.[9] This call to equity ensures that by 2025, California will meet the 3.7 million more associate and bachelor's degrees needed to remain a competitive economy.[10] With over 2 million students among 116 colleges, thousands of underserved ELs are critical in guaranteeing both Vision 2030 equity success and preparing a large enough workforce for California. Removing barriers and setting students up for success when entering their academic careers, through AB 705 and the CCCCO, the CCC system will lead the national stage in just and fruitful education for such a large demographic.

Literature Review

Studies have shown that the longer the ESL sequence, the harder it is for EL to complete their program. Although AB 705 tried to mitigate the impacts of long sequences, it has not been entirely successful. For ELs from high school, they can be placed into either an English pathway

[8] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "Vision for Success: Strengthening the California Community Colleges to Meet California's Needs." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030.

[9] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "New Pathways to Reach Future Learners." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030/new-pathways-to-reach-future-learners.

[10] Duffy, Ryan D., Michael F. Steger, Patrick L. Douglass, and Lindsay Autin. "The Search for Purpose: An International Interest." *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 17, no. 4 (December 2018): ar65. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cbe2.1237.

or an ESL pathway. For credit-seeking ELs from high school, almost 15% were placed into the ESL pathways and only 24% of those students completed transfer-level English (TLE) compared to 42% of students who completed TLE that were enrolled into an English pathway.[11] In a study conducted using data from 1999 to 2012 on ELs, only 8% of students placed six levels behind TLE successfully completed TLE, 12% for five levels behind, 23% for four levels behind, 36% for three levels behind, 56% for two levels behind, and finally 68% for one level behind.[12] Extremely low rates for students placed further back in ESL sequences show the need for shorter programs with integrated material to maximize students' completion in their respective sequences. It was even found that of students enrolled in remedial coursework, like ESL sequencing, only 60% of students enroll in the course referred, of which only 50% complete their program.[13]

It is clear that among all populations in higher education, the longer the sequence, the worse student outcomes are. Consistent collection of data has emerged over the last ten years in the CCC system and there have been few in-depth analyses of this data since it began. This work intends to unpack the various CCC metrics on ELs enrollment and skill gain in comparison to sequence length and characteristics to see if the current method in select CCC aids or hinders their EL populations. If colleges maximized the resources available through AB 705 and the CCCCO guidelines for implementation, ESL content should increase data between 2018 and

---

[11] RP Group**.** "Maximizing English Language Learners' Completion." September 2020. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/MultipleMeasures/AB705_Workshops/Maximizing-English-Language-Learners-Completion_September2020.pdf.

[12] Bahr, Peter Riley. "The Labor Market Return in Earnings to Community College Credits and Credentials in California." *Community College Review* 47, no. 1 (2019): 31-50. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0091552119867467.

[13] Radunzel, Justine, Julie Noble, and Sue Sawyer**.** "Predicting Long-Term College Success through Degree Completion Using ACT Composite Score, ACT Benchmarks, and High School Grade Point Average." *Educational Assessment* 14, no. 3-4 (2009): 178-194. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272775709001071?casa_token=IAeJ6HuGm6wAAAAA:IBeOztI1dYG0hNnrdAeJR9Tgpv9yVPcpjs4Ii7JtMFOqU5wFw66E3qQgncHvzO3zuzj2_xmd0g.

2020 as colleges had support and time for ESL content creation and disbursement. Applying this research to the CCC system, there can be further analysis of the effectiveness of sequencing to highlight the direction colleges should move during the evaluation and refinement of their ESL programs.

Support services are also critical to seeing the success of ELs who come from a variety of backgrounds. Counseling in particular is a vessel to support academic and personal development, which was found in a study conducted by Benjamin Castleman and Joshua Goodman. Their results showed that access to support like extensive college counseling increased the likelihood that students would enroll in colleges as well as increased persistence of students of low-income or first-generation students.[14] A study by the Nevada State College Library compared library usage against student outcomes using ANOVA and found that students who used these resources had a higher semester GPA than their peers. The study's chi-squared test indicated a significant proportional difference in one-term retention rates between students who used library resources and those who did not.[15] These results suggest that support services are critical to the enrollment and retention of students. After COVID-19 and an increasingly digital academic space, using websites to share and raise students is essential. My work helps to highlight whether the proper and effective usage of online content can increase enrollment and retention, like what has been proven independent of online resources. Understanding and utilizing digital content can help students make informed decisions, have better outcomes, and alleviate economic disparities by making these websites free and accessible.

---

[14] Avery, Christopher. "Intensive College Counseling and the Enrollment and Persistence of Low-Income Students." *Education Finance and Policy* 13, no. 1 (2018): 19-41. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article/13/1/19/10284/Intensive-College-Counseling-and-the-Enrollment.

[15] Castleman, Benjamin L., and Lindsay C. Page. "Summer Nudging: Can Personalized Text Messages and Peer Mentor Outreach Increase College Going among Low-Income High School Graduates?" *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* 11, no. 1 (2018): 1-26. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/682829.

During COVID-19, ELs, who are largely low-income and students of color, found themselves unequally impacted by the transition to online and virtual learning. Whereas in 2018 students had the choice for online and flexible learning in the CCC system, 2020 mandated it. This new modality for ELs through digital platforms and online applications with changes to content management has called on colleges to prioritize funding allocation and continuous monitoring of learning design for ESL.[16] With the prolonged closure of schools, the less likely students see themselves as learners which makes it difficult to get students back into educational spaces. This coupled with a host of psychological impacts on learners' happiness, anxiety and stress, and health can all impact students' enrollment and retention, especially ELs who were deeply financially and educationally disadvantaged.[17] The abrupt shift to fully remote learning did not ensure sustainability and required digital literacy, internet connection, devices for learning, etc. that many ELs struggled with.[18] That means college websites, the main vessel of information for students during COVID-19, needed to be simple, accessible, and thorough to support ESL students. With the Google browser translation tool students are able to access college websites in their native language however these translations tend to be formal, inconsistent, and outright incorrect in languages that require special characters. Without proper translations by the colleges themselves, many students will be unable to find or process critical enrollment, financial, and support information even if colleges have produced substantial material. This work intends to analyze if the CCC system during COVID-19 created more

[16] Habibur Rahman, M. T., and Mustafa Kamal. "The Impact of COVID-19 on English Language Teaching and Learning Process: A Review." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11, no. 2 (2021): 82-92. https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/9741/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-english-language-teaching-and-learning-process-a-review.pdf.

[17] Jha, Ranjana Kumari. 2020. "Socio-Economic and Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on English Learners". *Journal of NELTA Gandaki* 3 (1-2):82-92. https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v3i1-2.33147.

[18] Bal, Emine, and Başak Çağlayan. "Challenges and Opportunities for Teachers in Blended Learning During the Pandemic: A Case Study." *Journal of Education and Research* 28, no. 1 (2021): 15-27. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1677427.

content that was accessible and available within five or fewer clicks from the homepage to ensure ELs weren't burdened by the increase of information tucked into all corners of the college's websites.

Theory

Conceptually, I hypothesize that the greater the amount of publicly available information on ESL programs and support services, the higher the number of ELs students enrolling and moving one or more skill levels in ESL programs will be. I hypothesize that the higher the select California Community College website's score on a rubric based on available content within four categories (ESL program overview, counseling and support services, and ESL coursework), there will be increased enrollment and skill gain by ELs the following year. I hypothesize the 2020-2021 school year will have higher enrollment and skill gain improvements than 2018-2019 because of the increased time for AB 705's implementation and curation of content for students. With greater access to material about ESL programs, including information about the sequence model and enrollment dates, students will be better prepared and capable of enrolling, leading to higher enrollment. Smooth and easy access to college services and support resources for personal, academic, and ESL-specific support will allow students to perform at a higher level, increasing their course and sequence progression once enrolled. Since AB 705 was passed in 2017, there is cause to believe that although officially implemented in 2021, the 2020-2021 school year will have more available content online leading to higher enrollment rates and skill gains among ESL students.

Research Design

When designing my research, I centered the work around selected colleges' websites and the content publicly available on them. Each website was evaluated according to a forty-five-question rubric (see Appendix A) that scored the overall detail from each college. The rubric consisted of a variety of questions centered around sequencing, support services, ESL program overview, and coursework to understand the depth of information available the summer before the beginning of the Fall semester of each school year in twenty colleges in five microregions.

This data was placed against the dependent variables: net enrollment and skill gain changes between the 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 school years and 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 school years. The data used to measure these variables came from the CCC Student Success Metrics website which has collected and aggregated into a variety of groups, including ESL /Adult Education. To find net enrollment, I took the total ESL population and divided it by the total number of students in that microregion in the selected year to find the ESL population percentage. I did this again for the following year, subtracted the two values, and got the net change. This was done for each time period. Skill gain was defined as students who moved one skill level in a given academic year and was measured by taking the percentages from Student Success Metrics for the two school years each time period and subtracting them from each other to get net changes. These two dependent variables will assess if colleges are successfully getting students into their ESL programs and providing adequate support for progression through the sequence.
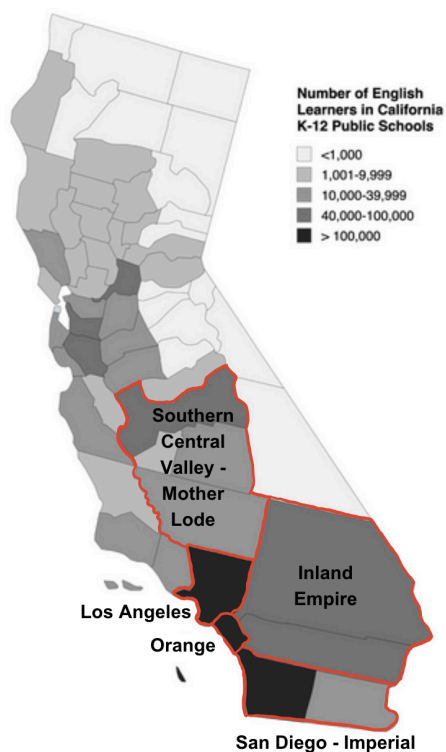
Figure 1. Map of Microregions against K-12 ELs. Data source: PPIC and Student Success Metrics

The data collected for this work was broken down into two time periods for comparison across the five microregions in California with the highest concentration of ELs in K-12 education. Almost 10% of California high school students participate in dual enrollment [19] and of the 63% of California high school students who enroll in college immediately after high school, almost 60% enroll in 2-year CCC programs.[20] Using data from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), I gathered the regions with the highest number of K-12 students classified as ELs[21] and compared it to the microregions available on CCC Student Success Metrics to get data that was large enough to mitigate the effect of data suppression due to FERPA. I came up with

[19] CC Daily. "Deep Dive into California's Dual Enrollment Data." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.ccdaily.com/2024/02/deep-dive-into-californias-dual-enrollment-data/#:~:text=About%2010%25%20of%20all%20ninth,and%2015.8%25%20rate%20among%20seniors.

[20] EdPolicy CA. "Statewide National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Report." Pages 6-7. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/Statewide%20NSC%20Report%20Final%20Online.pdf.

[21] Public Policy Institute of California. "California's English Learner Students." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-english-learner-students/.

Southern Central Valley-Mother Lode, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego-Imperial (See Figure 1) which make up 62 out of 116 colleges. Within the five microregions, I randomly selected four community colleges (n = 20 schools) to analyze their website content against the overall metrics for enrollment and skill gains for the region between the two time periods, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 school years and 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 school years.

These two time periods were selected to show the impact after AB 705. I attempted to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 within my periods selected by using percentages to analyze the net change between school years rather than raw student enrollment numbers to account for the 272,269 students' overall enrollment drop between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Accounting for the enrollment drop allows the work to focus on the impact of the college's websites without disadvantaging the work in 2020. Globally students and colleges alike adapted to the pandemic which meant many Americans, especially nontraditional and adult learners, leaned towards workforce demands rather than calls to higher education. I used a variety of statistics posted on the CCC Student Success Metrics to pull work to get data that accurately describes the enrollment increase and skill gains that are proportionate to the overall CCC system population between the two time periods.

Because of the diversity of California and the CCC system, I analyzed website data concerning the dominant races/ethnicities in the microregions observed. In my rubric, I accounted for the English and the two highest races/ethnicities' prominent languages, based on the United Language Group's publication of the most common languages spoken by each demographic. The intention behind accounting for the accessibility of these languages was to make sure that each region was focusing its work around their student populations to ensure the

colleges were making useful and intentional decisions when publicizing content for CCC ELs. Metrics on demographics in each microregion were also pulled from the Student Success Metrics, and data was collected to understand the change in demographics between the periods to understand if the websites were adequately aiding the intended audience.

Research Methods

To understand the data collected I graphed net enrollment and skill gain changes for each microregion in each period on separate graphs. This showed which microregions had the highest positive changes and which had the lowest. I ranked net enrollment from highest to lowest then skill gain from highest to lowest in the 2018-2019 school years and 2020-2021 school years. This data was then placed against the overall average of website scores from each microregion in 2018 and 2020. The percentage of questions that answered "Yes" were given one point while questions that answered "No" received no points. My questions were broken up into four categories: ESL program overview (15 questions), counseling services (14 questions), support services (8 questions), and ESL coursework (8 questions). Colleges received a score that correlated to their "Excellent," "Good," or "Poor" rating.[22] Once each school in a microregion had their total score (in the form of a percentage) they were averaged by their region and ranked from the highest scoring region to the lowest. With microregion ranked based on net enrollment and skill gain as well as rubric score for each period, I was able to use Spearman's Rho to see if there was a correlation between my variables: rubric score to enrollment and rubric score to skill gain.

---

[22] For *ESL Program Overview* an "Excellent" was a score of 12 or above, "Good" was between 8-11, and "Poor" was anything under 7.
For *Counseling Services* an "Excellent" was a score of 9 or above, "Good" was between 6-8, and "Poor" was anything under 5.
For *Support Services* and *ESL Coursework* an "Excellent" was a score of 6 or above, "Good" was between 4-5, and "Poor" was anything under 4.

Results

When doing my content analysis, I found that in 2018 the Irvine Valley and Santa Monica Colleges both scored the highest at 78%. Clovis College scored the lowest with 22%. The median score was 47% which San Bernardino Valley College, San Diego Mesa College, and Cuyamaca College all scored. Orange received the highest overall scores during this period, followed by Los Angeles, San Diego - Imperial, Inland Empire, and Southern Central Valley - Mother Lode. See Figure 2 for 2018 scoring results.

I found that in 2020, Irvine Valley College scored the highest at 80% while Clovis College scored the lowest at 24%. The median of the data set was a score of 60% that Los Angeles Southwest College, Reedly College, and San Diego Miramar all received. Orange received the highest overall scores in 2020, followed by Los Angeles, San Diego - Imperial, Inland Empire, and Southern Central Valley - Mother Lode. See Figure 3 for 2020 scoring results.

2020 had about a 10% increase in the average content scores (56%) across all microregions compared to the 2018 overall average (48%). Between both periods and across all microregions, colleges scored the best in the support services category. 14 out of 20 schools received an "Excellent" in this category at least once over the two time periods, with 13 of those schools receiving that grade in 2020. Only 5 of the 20 colleges received an "Excellent" on the ESL program overview category, of which four received this score in 2020. Schools that scored higher on ESL program overview also tended to score the highest on ESL coursework. Overall for the counseling category, schools scored in the higher end of "Good" and some "Excellent," with only three colleges scoring in the "Poor" category of which all scored this in 2018. (See Appendix B).
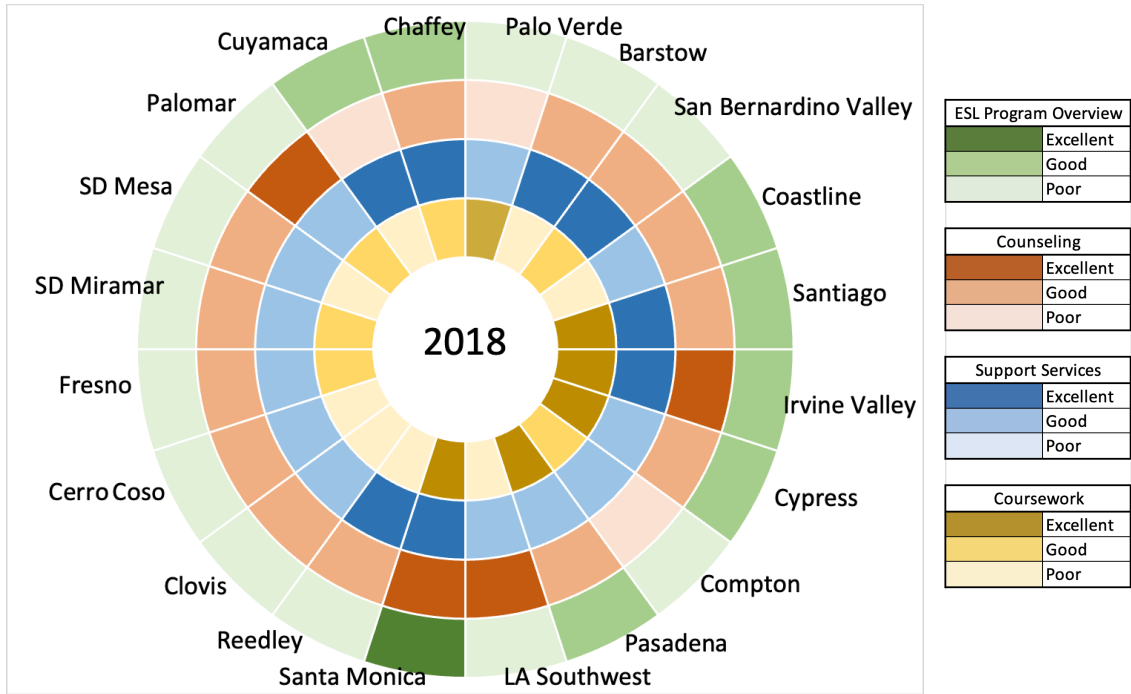
Figure 2. 2018 Content Analysis Results. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics
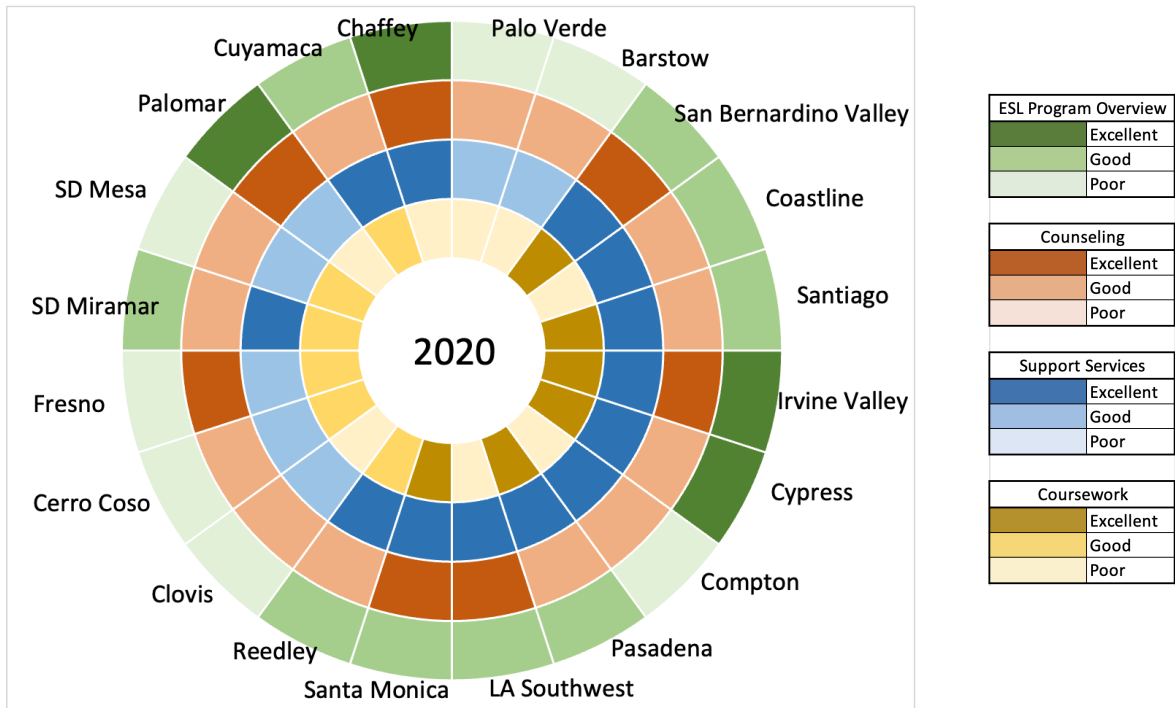

Figure 3. 2020 Content Analysis Results. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics

The results from net enrollment change between the 2018 and 2019 school years showed decreases in all microregions but Orange which increased by 0.61%. Los Angeles had the largest percentage decrease in ESL student enrollment across all microregions at -2.94%. The net enrollment change between the 2020 and 2021 school years all showed increases in ESL populations with San Diego - Imperial increasing the most at 2.13%. Southern Central Valley - Mother Lode had the lowest with an increase of only 0.25%. See Figure 4.
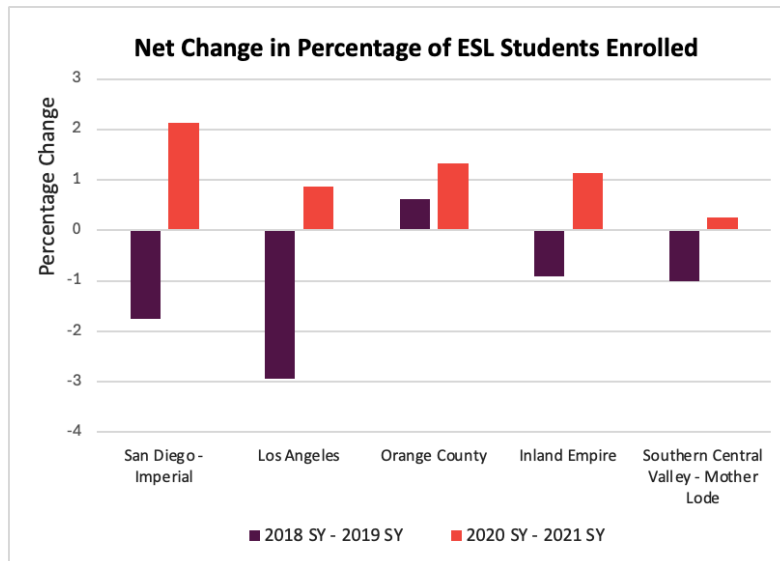

Figure 4. Net Change in ESL Enrollment. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics

The results from net skill gain change between the 2018 and 2019 school years showed a decrease in all microregions except for San Diego - Imperial which had an increase of 3%. Orange had the largest drop of -5% in skill gain. The skill gain change between the 2020 and 2021 school years showed mixed results with there being a net increase in Orange and Southern Central Valley - mother lode, a change of 0% in Los Angeles, and a decrease in San Diego - Imperial and Inland Empire. Although Inland Empire had a decrease in both time periods, they had a skill decrease of 1% in the 2020-2021 period versus a 3% decrease in the 2018-2019

period. The Southern Central Valley - Mother Lode increased by 2% and Orange increased by only 1%. See Figure 5 for net skill gain data.
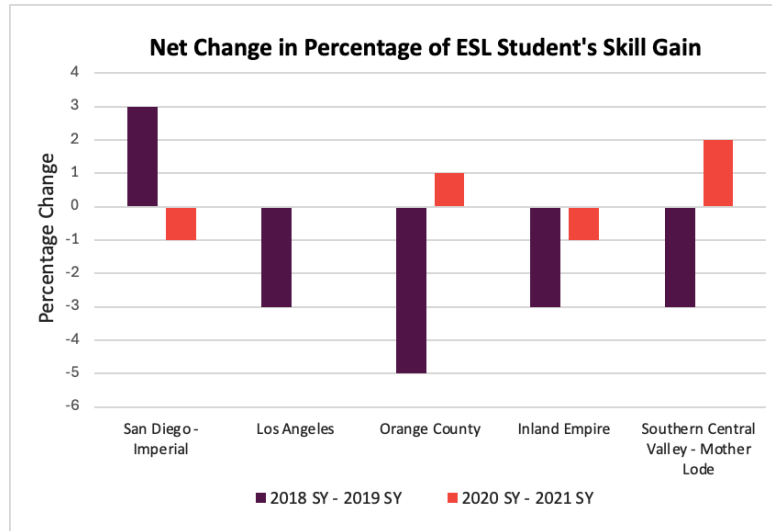

Figure 5. Net Change in ESL Student's Skill Gain. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics.

After running Spearman's Rho correlation between my variables, I found no overall correlation between content and skill gain or enrollment. The correlations found were:

- Between the 2018 rubric score and the 2018-2019 school years net enrollment change: no correlation (0.1). See Figure 6 for the correlation graph.

- Between the 2018 rubric score and the 2018-2019 school years net skill gain change: moderate negative correlation (-0.65). See Figure 7 for the correlation graph.

- Between the 2020 rubric score and the 2020-2021 school years net enrollment change: strong positive correlation (0.875). See Figure 8 for the correlation graph.

- Between the 2020 rubric score and the 2020-2021 school years net skill gain change: no correlation (-0.075). See Figure 9 for the correlation graph.
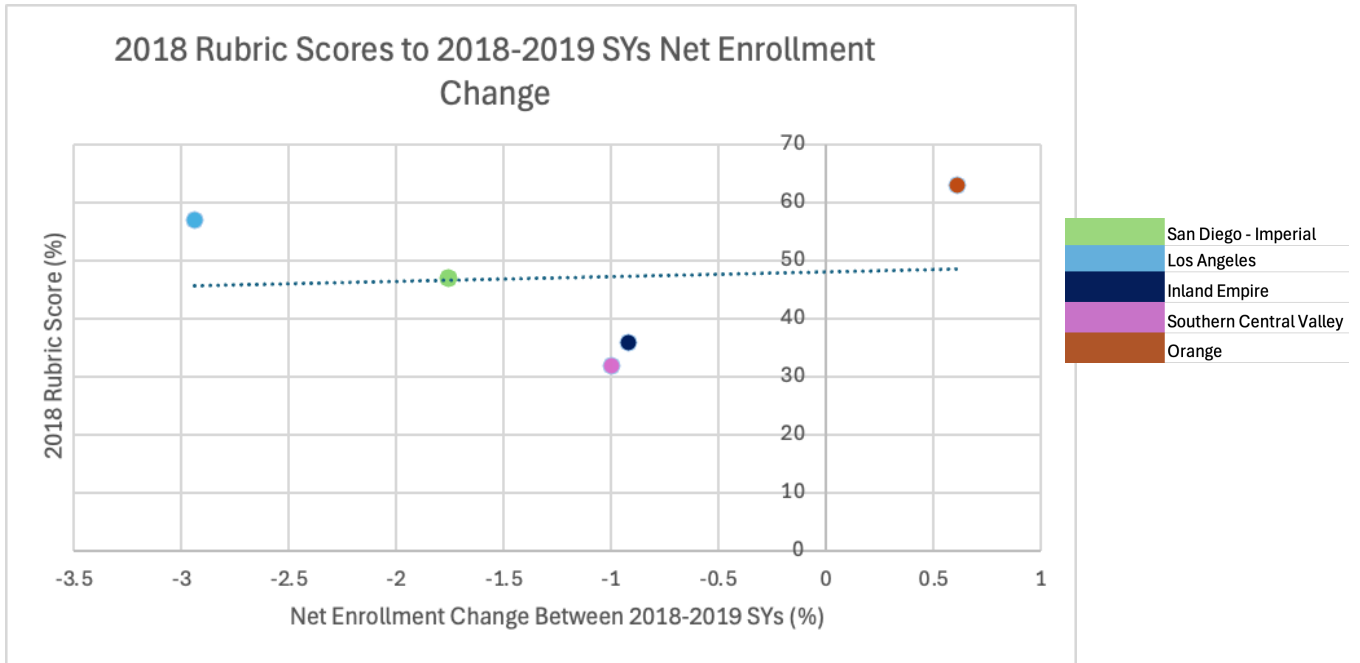
Figure 6. 2018 Rubric Score to Net Enrollment Change in 2018-2019. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics

and The WayBack Machine.

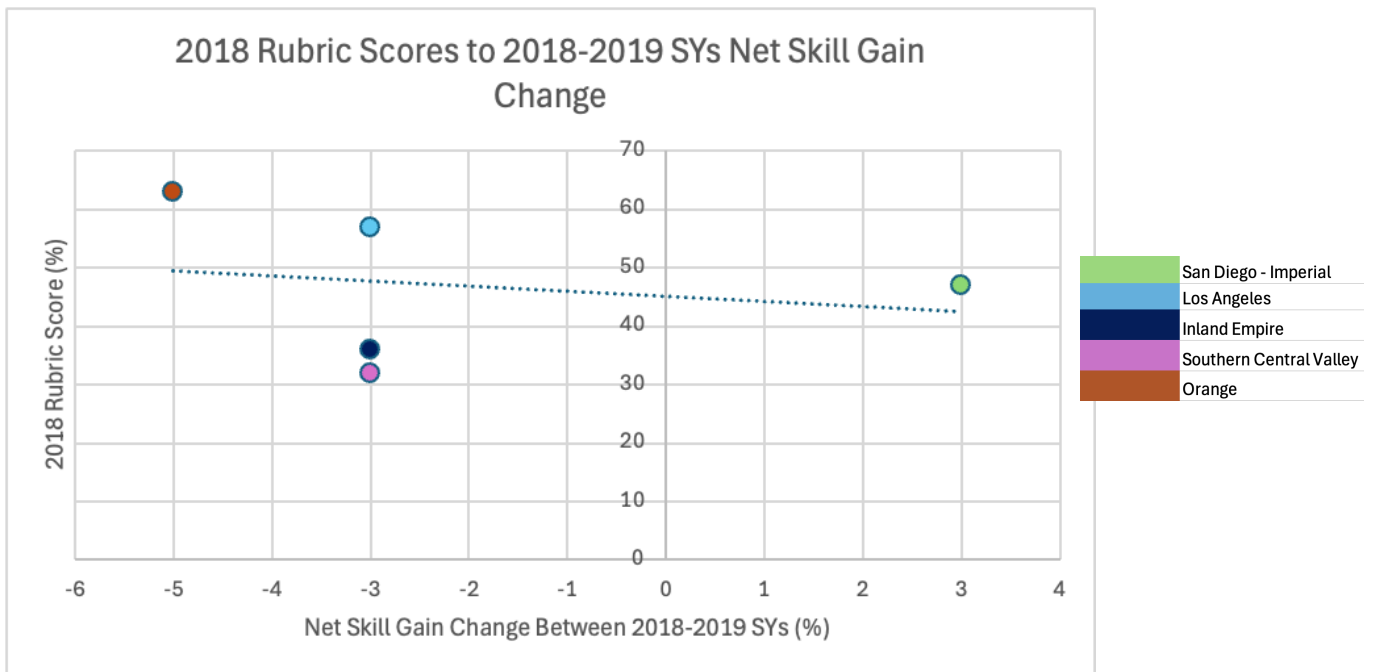Figure 7. 2018 Rubric Score to Net Enrollment Change in 2018-2019. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics
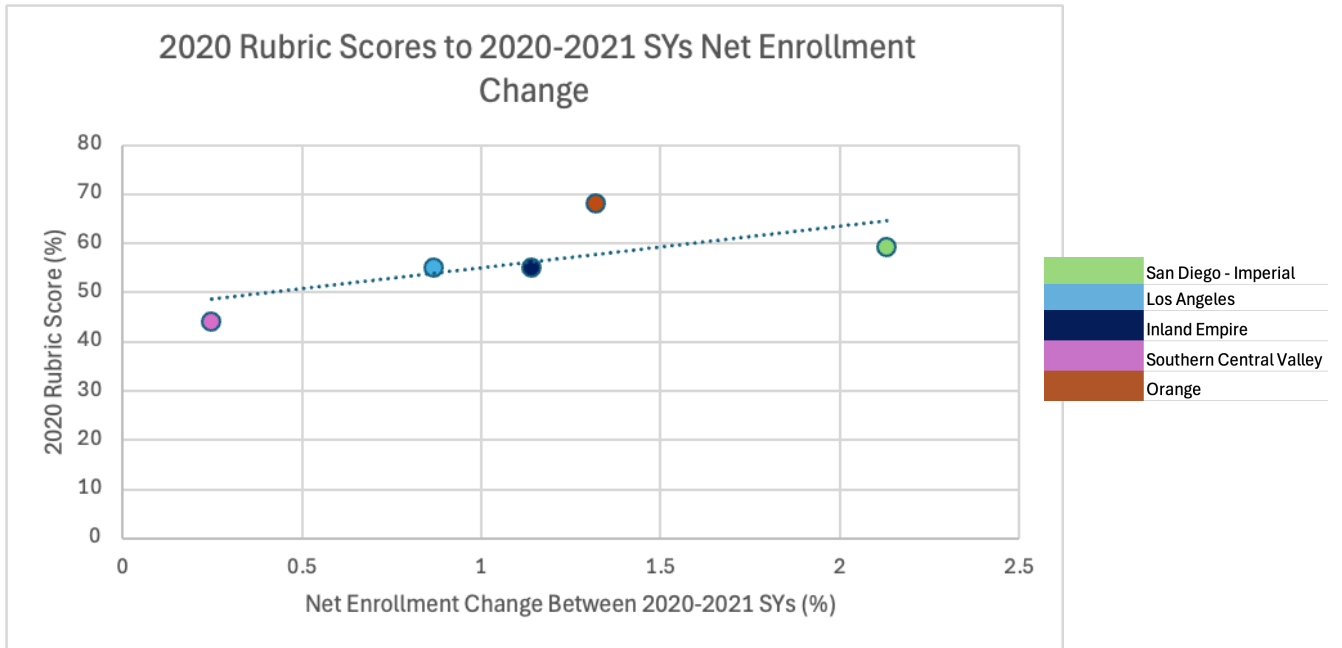
and The WayBack Machine.

Figure 8. 2020 Rubric Score to Net Enrollment Change in 2020-2021. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics and The WayBack Machine.
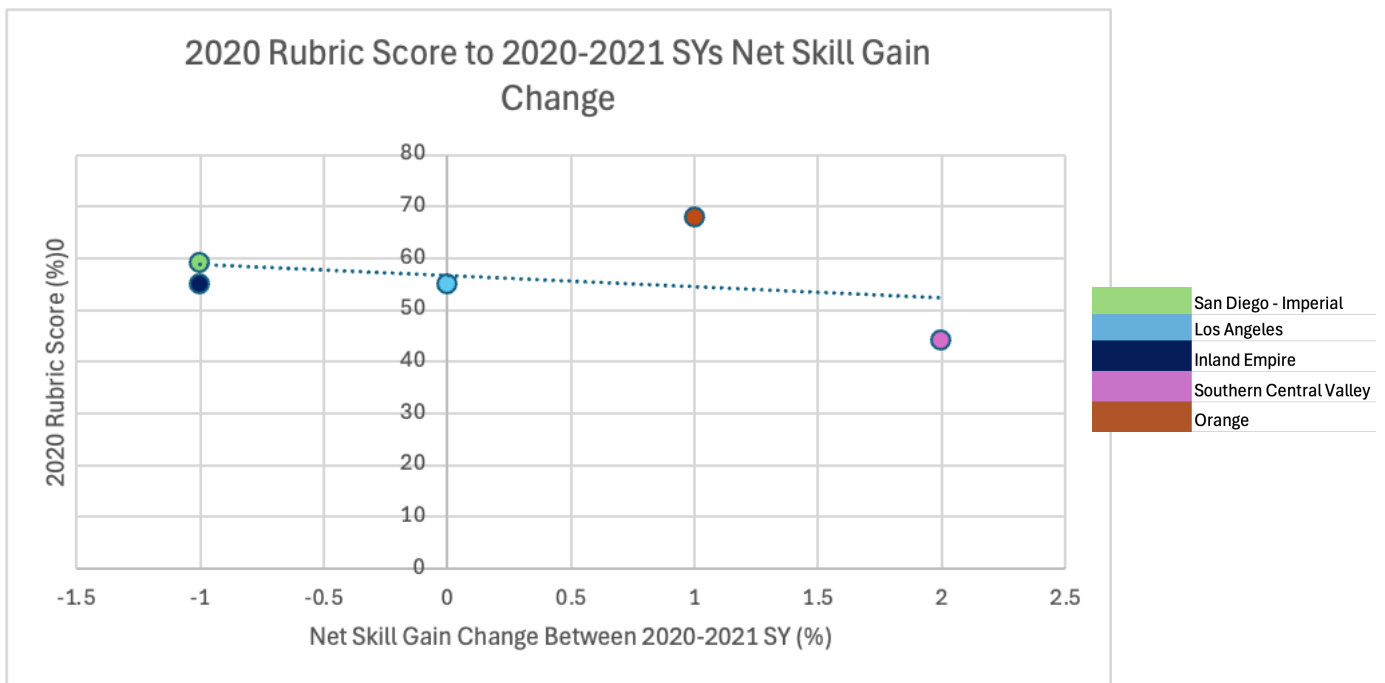

Figure 9. 2020 Rubric Score to Net Enrollment Change in 2020-2021. Data Source: CCC Student Success Metrics and The WayBack Machine.

Research Implications

The results from my research concluded that there was not a consistent or strong correlation between either net skill gain or enrollment changes to the overall amount of ESL content available. However, there was more content available on ESL programs and support services in 2020 compared to 2018. The lack of correlation between the two dependent variables and the overall amount of content available could be attributed to the lack of knowledge ELs have navigating online content, especially in English. With ELs already having limited proficiency and digital content becoming the dominant form of communication and resource distribution, they may need help finding the necessary pages or contacts for enrollment or success. Information on ESL programs was buried in some websites which could be inaccessible for students looking to enroll with very little English understanding. Having to click through Academic pages and Departments to try and find "English As a Second Language" can end up discouraging or confusing. Just because more content was produced in 2020 does not mean that the information became more accessible and easy to digest. With the lack of graphics or in-page translations into other languages, many students may leave the website more confused than helped which can make enrollment harder and overall retention difficult. When students cannot find the information for tutoring services or counseling in their native language, there become extreme boundaries to ELs success.

Additionally, there could be increases in enrollment and not a correlation with content in 2020 due to the pandemic and recession which drew more students into higher education, specifically CCCs due to their financial burden. During the period of high unemployment during the 2008 financial crisis, community colleges in America saw almost a 7% increase in

enrollment.[23] With ELs being a particularly vulnerable population, many could have enrolled in classes due to their low cost and financial possibilities. With the pandemic exacerbating pre-existing equity and income inequalities, many students and adults of color turned to the CCC system to increase their economic security but the system has failed them. The CCC system has spent over $40 million in marketing since 2021 but getting students to the website is only the first part.[24] There must be functionality and accessibility for all students, including ELs who are meant to be a priority under Vision 2030.

Overall, the California Community College needs to allocate more resources to website design and ease to make the content compatible with the varying degrees of English proficiency its students hold. By allocating money and time to redeveloping interfaces and incorporating more translations in multiple languages, students will be able to better access the content that has already been distributed throughout the college's websites.

Research Limitations

During the initial stages of my research, I ran into many data suppression issues due to FERPA and protecting CCC students' privacy. Because of this, I had to broaden my research design and look at regional data rather than seeing the impact of specific colleges' content versus their individual ESL enrollment and skill gain which would give a more direct view on the correlation between the variables. I also only surveyed 4 schools in each microregion when the research could benefit from each school from each microregion analyzed to see if there are any outliers or additional trends in the data that are unavailable due to the smaller sample size. Additionally, this research did not control for or analyze the economic status of the colleges,

[23] EAB**.** "Understand Higher Education Enrollments During Economic Recessions." Accessed August 14, 2024. https://eab.com/resources/infographic/understand-higher-education-enrollments-economic-recessions/.

[24] https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/covid-19-and-educational-equity-crisis

microregions, or ELs enrolled. Understanding the financial status and amount of money allocated to each college could affect the resource allocation to website design and content, impacting the overall accessibility to ELs. Including these control variables can help present solutions to the low enrollment and skill gain changes that occurred by presenting means to allocate more money to schools with low performance, if a correlation was found between lower-income areas, low EL enrollment and skill gain, and low website content available.

Once more information is available on the CCC Student Success Metrics, this study should be expanded to help guide further policy and resource development for the CCC system and campuses with low-performing ELs. However, this data won't be available for almost five years and may continue to face data suppression due to low enrollment numbers and FERPA protections for student identities. Expanding on the rubric to encompass more functions of the website, like translation tools, or using ELs to test and score websites based on a rubric could help digest the correlation between the variables. Overall moving forward with this project on a larger, more substantial scale, could prove beneficial to understanding the EL population better as well as overall the CCC students' needs when it comes to online content and its accessibility.

Conclusion

The California Community College system has a long way to go on its roadmap to equity under Vision 2030. With the lack of correlation found between online content and enrollment or skill gain for English Learners, CCCs must become innovative in their content delivery and accessibility. AB 705 was a stepping stone to reducing ELs educational barriers, but in an increasingly digital age with more non-traditional students entering higher education, technological learning and functionality must be prioritized. Although this study lacked size, it

showed the beginning of new research to understand what methods and tools ELs need in the face of economic instability and drastic educational shifts. Using this model, colleges can perform their evaluations to see if they are providing critical information in a manner that those with low English proficiency can reach. The CCC runs on the idea of education for all yet hinders ELs enrollment with inadequate resources and buried information. The system desires student outcomes but there is an inconsistent number of ELs moving through their sequence model. These students cannot wait for another bill to force colleges to act but require long-term solutions as soon as possible. Just because they speak another language does not mean ESL students shouldn't be able to obtain a degree, or certificate, or access higher education as a whole.

References

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "Basic Skills and English as a Second Language." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/What-we-do/Basic-Skills-and-English-as-a-Second-Language.

California Department of Education. "English Learner Facts." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/cefelfacts.asp.

EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-705#:~:text=While%20students%20can%20elect%20to,or%20without%20additional%20corequisite%20support.

Cal-PASS Plus. "Student Success Metrics." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx.

EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-705#:~:text=While%20students%20can%20elect%20to,or%20without%20additional%20corequisite%20support.

Public Policy Institute of California. "English as a Second Language at California's Community Colleges." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.ppic.org/publication/english-as-a-second-language-at-californias-community-colleges/.

EdPolicy CA. "English Learners' Pathways Through California's Community Colleges Under AB 705." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/english-learners-pathways-californias-community-colleges-under-ab-705#:~:text=While%20students%20can%20elect%20to,or%20without%20additional%20corequisite%20support.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "Vision for Success: Strengthening the California Community Colleges to Meet California's Needs." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "New Pathways to Reach Future Learners." Accessed July 30, 2024. https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030/new-pathways-to-reach-future-learners.

Duffy, Ryan D., Michael F. Steger, Patrick L. Douglass, and Lindsay Autin. "The Search for Purpose: An International Interest." *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 17, no. 4 (December

2018): ar65. Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cbe2.1237.

RP Group. "Maximizing English Language Learners' Completion." September 2020.
Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/MultipleMeasures/AB705_Workshops/
Maximizing-English-Language-Learners-Completion_September2020.pdf.

Bahr, Peter Riley. "The Labor Market Return in Earnings to Community College Credits and
Credentials in California." *Community College Review* 47, no. 1 (2019): 31-50. Accessed
July 30, 2024. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0091552119867467.

Radunzel, Justine, Julie Noble, and Sue Sawyer. "Predicting Long-Term College Success
through Degree Completion Using ACT Composite Score, ACT Benchmarks, and High
School Grade Point Average." *Educational Assessment* 14, no. 3-4 (2009): 178-194.
Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272775709001071?casa_token=IAeJ
6HuGm6wAAAAA:IBeOztI1dYG0hNnrdAeJR9Tgpv9yVPcpjs4Ii7JtMFOqU5wFw66E
3qQgncHvzO3zuzj2_xmd0g.

Avery, Christopher. "Intensive College Counseling and the Enrollment and Persistence of
Low-Income Students." *Education Finance and Policy* 13, no. 1 (2018): 19-41. Accessed
July 30, 2024.
https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article/13/1/19/10284/Intensive-College-Counseling-and-the-E
nrollment.

Castleman, Benjamin L., and Lindsay C. Page. "Summer Nudging: Can Personalized Text
Messages and Peer Mentor Outreach Increase College Going among Low-Income High
School Graduates?" *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* 11, no. 1 (2018):
1-26. Accessed July 30, 2024. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/682829.

CC Daily. "Deep Dive into California's Dual Enrollment Data." Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://www.ccdaily.com/2024/02/deep-dive-into-californias-dual-enrollment-data/#:~:tex
t=About%2010%25%20of%20all%20ninth,and%2015.8%25%20rate%20among%20seni
ors.

EdPolicy CA. "Statewide National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Report." Pages 6-7.
Accessed July 30, 2024.
https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/Statewide%20NSC%20Report%20Final%20O
nline.pdf.

Public Policy Institute of California. "California's English Learner Students." Accessed July
30, 2024. https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-english-learner-students/.

 Habibur Rahman, M. T., and Mustafa Kamal. "The Impact of COVID-19 on English
    Language Teaching and Learning Process: A Review." *International Journal of Academic
    Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11, no. 2 (2021): 82-92. Accessed August 14,
    2024.
    https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/9741/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-english-language-t
    eaching-and-learning-process-a-review.pdf.

Jha, Ranjana Kumari. 2020. "Socio-Economic and Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on
    English Learners". Journal of NELTA Gandaki 3 (1-2):82-92.
    https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v3i1-2.33147.

Bal, Emine, and Başak Çağlayan. "Challenges and Opportunities for Teachers in Blended
    Learning During the Pandemic: A Case Study." Journal of Education and Research 28,
    no. 1 (2021): 15-27. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1677427.

EAB. "Understand Higher Education Enrollments During Economic Recessions." Accessed
    August 14, 2024.
    https://eab.com/resources/infographic/understand-higher-education-enrollments-economi
    c-recessions/.

EdPolicy CA. "COVID-19 and Educational Equity: A Crisis." Accessed August 14, 2024.
    https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/covid-19-and-educational-equity-crisis.

Appendix

Appendix A- Questions Used on The Rubric For Content Analysis

ESL program	Counseling
Is there a dedicated ESL page?	Is the link to counseling on the home page?
Are there program goals stated?	Is counseling in English?
Is credit v. non-credit explained?	Is counseling in the second-most spoken language (based on population ethnicity %)
Is there a sequence infographic?	Is counseling in the third-most spoken language (based on population ethnicity %)
Is placement explained?	Is counseling available online?
Is there contact information? - Phone number and email	Are there appointments for academic advising?
Is there an ESL-specific orientation?	Are there appointments for mental/emotional support?
Are images utilized to explain the program?	Are there appointments for ESL support?
Is the website available in English?	Are appointments offered for financial aid/tuition?
Is the website available in the second-most spoken language (based on population ethnicity %)?	Is there an ESL-specific counselor?
Is the website available in the third-most spoken language (based on population ethnicity %)?	Are outcomes listed for counseling initiatives?
Can you find the ESL page within 3 clicks from the homepage?	Is there contact information for counseling? - Phone number and email
Is there a FAQ?	Is there drop-in counseling/advising?
Are placement outcomes explained?	Is counseling available Monday through Friday?
Are college registration deadlines outlined?	

Support	Coursework
Are there free English language resources?	Is the course sequencing laid out?
Does the website link to tutoring or writing center support?	Are there descriptions for all ESL classes on the website?
Is there a career options or placement assistance page?	Are courses offered online?
Are there mental health resources within 3 clicks from the homepage?	Is cost information available?
Is there an online library available?	Are deadlines for course enrollment clear?
Is there a crisis page available? - housing, financial, emotional support	Are credit and non-credit classes indicated?
Are there FASFA/DACA workshops?	Is the intended number of instructional hours indicated?
Is there a page for how to apply for FASFA/DACA?	Is ESL-specific faculty listed?

*All questions got one point if they answered "Yes" and no points if they answered "No"

Appendix B- Scores Each College Got

		ESL Program Overview		Counseling		Support		Coursework		Percentage Scored	
		2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020
Inland Empire	Chaffey	10	20	7	11	7	6	5	4	64%	73%
	Palo Verde	1	1	5	6	4	4	1	1	24%	27%
	Barstow	0	6	7	7	6	5	0	1	29%	42%
	San Bernardino Valley	2	11	7	9	8	8	4	6	47%	76%
Orange	Coastline	9	9	6	7	5	8	2	2	49%	58%
	Santiago	8	8	8	8	7	6	7	7	67%	64%
	Irvine Valley	11	12	9	9	8	8	7	7	78%	80%
	Cypress	9	12	6	7	5	6	6	7	58%	71%
Los Angeles	Compton	7	0	4	7	5	6	4	0	44%	29%
	Pasadena	8	9	6	6	4	6	7	7	56%	62%
	LA Southwest	6	8	9	9	5	7	3	3	51%	60%
	Santa Monica	12	9	9	9	8	8	6	5	78%	69%
Southern Central Valley - Mother Lode	Reedley	0	8	8	7	6	7	0	5	31%	60%
	Clovis	0	0	6	6	4	5	0	0	22%	24%
	Cerro Coso	1	3	6	6	4	5	3	4	31%	40%
	Fresno	5	5	6	10	4	5	4	4	42%	53%
San Diego - Imperial	SD Miramar	2	9	6	7	4	7	4	4	36%	60%
	SD Mesa	6	6	8	8	4	5	3	6	47%	56%
	Palomar	7	12	9	10	5	5	5	3	58%	67%
	Cuyamaca	8	9	4	7	7	8	2	5	47%	53%

Data Source: California Community College's Websites using The WayBack Machine