



ACT HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK A Collaboration

Alliance College-Ready Public Schools Implement Career & College Clubs Curriculum, Informed by ACT Holistic Framework

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WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Alliance's goal is to have 75% or more of its alumni graduate from a 4-year college. Currently, although Alliance has a 95% high school graduation and college acceptance rate, it expects only 29% of its class of 2017 alumni will persist to complete a 4-year college degree.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

To meet its goal, Alliance is implementing the CCC curriculum in select schools as a means to provide systematic, research-based education for their scholars around the college-going process.

WHAT'S THE BENEFIT?

The CCC curriculum has student-led activities on academic preparation, college and career knowledge, leadership development, social and emotional skills, and professional etiquette. After one semester of CCC, teachers reported improved student leadership and conduct in the classroom.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a US Department of Education grant program designed to increase college readiness and success for low-income students from 7th grade through the first year of college. The Alliance GEAR UP program currently serves a cohort of 1,000 9th-grade students and families at seven Alliance schools. Eva Luc, GEAR UP Director at Alliance College-Ready Public Schools in Los Angeles, CA, recently participated in a webinar¹ co-hosted by ACT and the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)² discussing the initial success of using the Career & College Clubs³ (CCC) curriculum in some of her schools. In the webinar, Luc described how CCC aligns with Alliance's goal of having 75% or more of its alumni graduate from a four-year college. After one semester of CCC curriculum implementation, teachers and scholars have reported many benefits, such as improved student leadership and conduct in the classroom.

The CCC curriculum was recently expanded, adding additional grade levels, and aligned to the ACT[®] Holistic Framework^{™,4} a comprehensive, research-based framework that focuses on the broad range of knowledge and skills that individuals need to be successful in education and work contexts and which covers much more than the core academic subjects (e.g., math and English). In particular, the CCC curriculum has student-led activities on academic preparation, college and career knowledge, leadership development, social and emotional skills, and professional etiquette.

These skills have been associated with successful outcomes in college and work,⁵ such as higher GPA, higher persistence and graduation rates, and better work performance and job satisfaction. The CCC curriculum was designed to aid students in grades 7 through 12 to become better prepared for life after high school. A previous version of the CCC curriculum, focused solely on the middle grades, was reviewed by ACT and found to increase the odds of postsecondary enrollment by 85%.⁶

Alliance College-Ready Public Schools is one of the most successful charter public school networks in California, educating 13,000 students in 25 middle and high schools.

¹ The webinar, Evening the Odds for College-Bound Students: Applying a Holistic Approach to Career and College Readiness Curricula, can be viewed at <https://pages2.act.org/nccep-post-webinar.html>.

² NCCEP designed and published the CCC curriculum, using the ACT Holistic Framework to inform its research foundation and content.

³ For more information on Career & College Clubs, go to: <https://www.edpartnerships.org/ccc>.

⁴ To view the ACT Holistic Framework, access recorded webinars, and read issue briefs and research reports, go to: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/college-and-career-readiness/holistic-framework.html>.

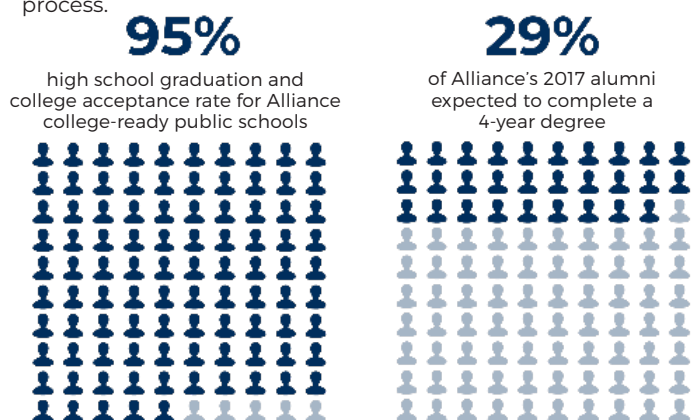
⁵ For more details on key predictors of education and workplace success, see *Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*.

⁶ <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/WP-2015-06.pdf>

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Alliance primarily works with underserved communities, as 98% of their population is African American or Latino, 94% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 17% of students are English language learners.

Although Alliance currently has a 95% high school graduation and college acceptance rate,⁷ Alliance expects only 29% of its class of 2017 alumni will persist to complete a four-year college degree.⁸ Although this is three times the 9% national average college graduation rate for low-income students,⁹ Alliance is dedicated to matching the college graduation rate of students from more affluent communities. To meet its goal, Alliance is implementing CCC in select schools as a means to provide systematic, research-based education for their scholars around the college-going process.



Two Alliance schools implemented CCC during the 2017-18 school year. Luc stated that Alliance's students and teachers have enjoyed using CCC. In particular, they report liking the peer-to-peer aspect of CCC because all students (regardless of how introverted or extroverted they are) have the opportunity to practice classroom management and delivering presentations.

Further, teachers have found that this practice has improved student respect and empathy in the classroom because they experience first-hand the challenges of teaching. Of all of the lesson types, students state they most appreciate the personal interest and conflict resolution lessons because of their relevance to their personal lives.

In the webinar, Luc shared practical advice about what schools can do to implement CCC based on Alliance's initial experiences. Specifically, she mentioned that students might need some initial coaching on how to best facilitate the CCC lessons, that technology-based schools can be creative in how they disseminate CCC materials since the materials are pdf-based (Alliance put them on shared slides), and that teachers and administrators have to communicate with each other about their application of CCC since there are a number of implementation options available. She also discussed the importance of having buy-in from teachers prior to using CCC and of establishing feedback loop meetings where teachers can discuss lessons learned and areas for improvement.

Alliance GEAR UP is implementing the CCC 9th-grade curriculum in all seven GEAR UP high schools in school year 2018-19. In the future, Luc would like to track implementation fidelity more closely, assess student growth, and track both short- and long-term outcomes as a result of implementing CCC.

Currently, Alliance GEAR UP, NCCEP, and ACT are collaborating on a research project that will examine these issues. The learnings will help each organization to improve the curriculum content, the delivery and implementation of the curriculum, and the methods by which this type of research is conducted and disseminated.

⁷California Department of Education Dataquest, Naviance

⁸Expected four-year completion rates are a prediction of how many Alliance graduates will attain a four-year degree within six years of graduating from high school. The rate is based on the college graduation rate where students matriculate. Compared to actual completion rates, the expected rate is fairly accurate when looking at earliest available data from the high school graduating classes of 2008 onward. Six-year minority graduation rates from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) are matched to enrollment data provided by the National School Clearinghouse (NSC).

⁹Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States, 45-year Trend Report. The Pell Institute. http://www.ahead-penn.org/sites/default/files/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Christian Latino was a research assistant at ACT while working to complete his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa. His research interests included the use of yoga as a therapeutic tool and first generation college students.



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