

**Facilitating the Implementation of CBOP in High
Schools:
A Report for Participating Sites**

Nicole Eisenberg

Occasional Report #11

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Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

UCLA

Facilitating the Implementation of CBOP in High Schools: A Report for Participating Sites

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Outreach Evaluation Project
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What is CBOP?

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) has implemented a variety of outreach programs after the elimination of affirmative action, with the goal of improving the opportunities for California students in disadvantaged circumstances to achieve eligibility and to enroll in UC campuses. One of UCLA's main outreach efforts is the Career-Based Outreach Program (CBOP), which was established in 1997 as an educational development effort designed (a) to increase the academic competitiveness of disadvantaged students in grades 9-12 for admission to UCLA, and (b) to increase the academic competitiveness of disadvantaged undergraduates at UCLA for admission to its graduate and professional schools. The goal of CBOP is to help local schools with a high proportion of educationally disadvantaged students, so that their students can become not only eligible but also competitively eligible to the University of California.

CBOP uses service learning as a strategy to accomplish its objectives. CBOP trains UCLA undergraduate students to teach and mentor 9-12th grade students at local high schools. The UCLA undergraduates, called "fellows" learn a curriculum designed to help students study efficiently and effectively, and then teach it to the high school students, called "scholars." This curriculum, the Personal Academic Learning System (PALS), consists of a system of skills and strategies for achieving academic excellence. Fellows hold sessions at high school sites for a selected group of students, and the criteria for selecting students vary by school. In addition to the classes at the high school, the students are invited to attend intensive educational sessions on the UCLA campus.

In practice, CBOP meetings take place at the high schools the scholars are attending, which the fellows visit once per week. The meetings, conducted by fellows, are usually

scheduled to last either one class period or about one hour before or after school. They typically include a group of fellows and a larger group of scholars. Fellows usually plan activities that the scholars either complete on their own or with the fellows' assistance. Sometimes there are high school teachers present during CBOP meetings, but these teachers usually act more as representative administrators than as consultants or participants. In high school sites as few as two or as many as nine fellows may be working together. In addition to CBOP fellows, UCLA also has site coordinators and site advisors who are in charge of coordinating CBOP activities at the different high school sites. In some schools, site coordinators are more involved in CBOP meetings than in others: some site coordinators are present during all CBOP meetings, some site coordinators appear to make announcements at the beginning of some meetings, and other site coordinators are typically absent during CBOP meetings.

What does the research tell us?

Several evaluation studies have been carried out during the past year to assess different aspects of UCLA's outreach efforts. One of these studies focused on the implementation of CBOP at high school sites.² It revealed valuable information for UCLA staff, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the program and providing insights into ways in which CBOP could be improved. The study also provided information about the implementation of the program at particular sites that we feel can be helpful for high schools in order to increase the impact that the program is having on their students. This present report will focus precisely on the school-

² The goal of the study was to (1) describe what takes place in CBOP meetings from the perspective of the undergraduates, the high school students, and the perceptions of outside observers; (2) explore variations in how CBOP meetings were being conducted and how PALS was being taught; and (3) explore scholars' perceptions of the impact CBOP had in their lives. See Tonyan, H. and Eisenberg, N. (2001) *Implementing CBOP in High School Sites*. Occasional Report #7, Outreach Evaluation Occasional Report Series. Los Angeles, CA: Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA.

related supports and barriers that affect the operation of CBOP, based on the information obtained for the larger study of the implementation of CBOP.

Our findings are based on observations of CBOP meetings at high school sites, as well as interviews with both fellows (UCLA undergraduates) and scholars (high school students). We conducted a total of 39 observations, and interviewed six fellows and thirteen scholars, at eight different high schools in the Los Angeles area.³ Our sample included sites that varied in many ways: They were located in different neighborhoods including South Central L.A., East L.A., the Westside, and the San Fernando Valley. Several sites held CBOP meetings during intact classes⁴ while others held meetings either before or after school. Many of the sites were composed of predominantly Latino scholars, although a few sites were composed of predominantly African-American scholars.

What do scholars learn through CBOP?

We found that it was important to explore the ways in which schools can help facilitate the implementation of CBOP after finding that most scholars perceived many benefits from participating in the program. The study mentioned above revealed that the majority of scholars appreciated getting college information (e.g., the A-G requirements, admissions information) and learning new techniques that improved their study skills (e.g., test-taking skills, note taking skills, tips on how to read and organize study material). They valued the role that their fellows played as mentors, encouraging and inspiring them. Scholars used what they learned to improve their study skills, time management skills and ability to prioritize schoolwork. They also

³ The high school sites sampled for the study were: Palisades, Locke, Inglewood, San Fernando, Garfield, Manual Arts, Morningside and South Gate.

⁴ At some sites, cooperating teachers volunteered to “give up” one hour per week of their scheduled class time in order for fellows to meet with scholars.

described how CBOP had an effect on their relationships with peers (e.g., some made new friends through the sessions, some learned to postpone social activities until after they finished their academic tasks) and their relationships with teachers (e.g., they now asked their teachers more questions and had a more active role in their classes).

How can schools help facilitate the implementation of CBOP?

Despite the fact that most scholars could articulate what they had learned through the program, we found that the implementation of the program also left room for improvement. Both the staff at UCLA and the staff at participating high school sites can do things that facilitate the implementation of the program. In this report we describe what we found to be school-related supports and barriers to the operation of the program. We describe aspects within the schools—such as support from the staff, timing of the sessions, teachers’ behavior—that we found had an impact on how CBOP was being conducted and on the results it had for the students.

Support from teachers

Through the observations and interviews we found that teachers could help facilitate the implementation of CBOP in several ways. Fellows appreciated working in sites where they received support from the staff. For example, a fellow said, “The teacher in the class we’re in is very appreciative and supportive. She always greets us with a smile. She says ‘Thank you, we’re glad that you’re here, you’re welcome.’” At another school, one of the fellows described her interaction with another one of the staff members:

I saw one person who we worked a lot with, one of the assistant principals, and then the college counselor. Because we also do our meetings in that office, in the college center, so he’s the one, I mean you if you need him for a field trip, he’s the supervising person. So he’s helped a lot. He’ll attend our parent night... We meet with the teachers once a month.

At the same site, another fellow felt that at her school, “the vice principal [was] behind [the program]” and “the teachers [were] wonderful.” However, she criticized one of the teachers for not taking the initiative in offering help or support. “If we want it we have to ask for it,” she reported. “That he’ll initiate it, not likely.”

One of the fellows felt that it was helpful when the teachers were actively involved in CBOP. Her group worked with two teachers, and she contrasted the way in which each was involved in the program.

One of the teachers actually helps us out a lot more than the other. She’ll tell us exactly how [the scholars are] doing on their projects and she’ll ask for our input. “Well how are they doing their work? Is there anything I can do?” So that’s helping us out a lot...The other [teacher], he’s more “Let me do my spiel the first two minutes, then you take the class over, I’m sitting in my corner to read.” But the first teacher, she makes it a point of making sure they’re still doing their work. She would remind them every once in a while. We brought them to UCLA and she had them write what was the best thing out of this experience and she read them all and she commented to us, she called to make meetings with us. So she’s actively involved.

Another instance where the fellows felt support from the teachers was when they made an arrangement with the supervising teacher for CBOP activities to count in the scholars’ class grades. The supportive teacher mentioned above decided that the scholars’ participation in the CBOP meetings would count as their participation grade. The fellow explained, “[The teacher said] ‘We’ll take it into consideration at the end,’ so they know...they know it’s serious now.” This served as an incentive for scholar participation, as illustrated in the following example from a classroom observation:

The fellow asks if everyone got the vocabulary words. There is a brief discussion about how to best study the vocabulary words. One of the boys [who had not done his homework] asks whether the vocabulary and other homework gets counted toward their biology class grade and says that if it does, he’ll do it next time.

Another way in which teachers can facilitate the implementation of CBOP is by doing things that can help their students apply the PALS principles.

Both fellows and scholars reported that some of the learning skills that CBOP promoted were difficult to apply with high school students. One of these skills consists in reading the

material ahead of time so that the students are prepared for it before it is covered in class. Our interviews revealed that this principle was easier to apply in classes where the teachers provided students with a syllabus or where teachers let their students know what will be covered ahead of time.

Our study revealed that high school students seldom knew ahead of time what material would be covered by their teachers, because they did not have a syllabus detailing the contents or readings of the class. The following fellow explained this in his own words:

Teaching [PALS] to high school students is a little bit different. Because...many times the students don't know what the teacher is going over for that week. They don't have a set curriculum so it's a little harder for them...

Another scholar mentioned a similar situation: "You know how you are supposed to look at it [the course material] before you actually get it, but you can't because you don't know it yet, you don't get the books before it, you don't get what you are going to do. You don't really get a syllabus here." At one of the high schools, a scholar had tried to apply the system of reading ahead, before the class, and it had worked reasonably well for one class, but not for another. "[The teacher] doesn't want us to jump ahead like that," she explained, "because she thinks we might get confused or learn something wrong."

In some cases, however, scholars had been able to use the system of preparing for classes ahead of time. One scholar reported, "I'll ask the teacher 'Do you know what we are going to do for tomorrow?' and he tells me [and] I look over it. That way I know what to expect... Recently, I've been doing this." Another student explained that in her geometry class, "The teacher wasn't there for a whole week and because our substitute, he had an accent and we couldn't really understand what he said, so every day we would read the lesson for the next day and it was really easy to understand."

The examples shown above indicate that some of the PALS principles—such as reading ahead of the class or preparing for class beforehand—made more sense to those students in classes where there was a syllabus or where students could ask their teachers what material would be covered in the next class. When students had no way of knowing what was coming next, it was either difficult or impossible to use PALS in this sense.

Our results show that teachers can help with the implementation of CBOP in several ways, such as showing the fellows encouragement and offering them their help, and becoming actively involved in the program. Teachers can cooperate, for example, by reinforcing the content taught in CBOP in their own classes, by asking their students about their CBOP activities, by having CBOP participation count in their students' grades, or by providing their students with a syllabus or guidelines as to what material will be covered in their classes.

Support from high school staff

Another issue that was important to facilitating the implementation of CBOP was a clear understanding on the part of the high school staff as to what the purpose of the program was. Even though the fellows at one of the sites were able to overcome their difficulties, they cited a situation where the school expected the CBOP fellows to do tutoring, while they tried to explain that they were doing something different. “We went through a real tough time in the beginning because they wanted us to be tutors at the school,” one fellow reported. “We are not tutors, especially in biology, none of us are science majors. So we had to have a meeting about it...It was difficult at first. I think what's ended up happening is the school thinks it's one thing and the teachers and ourselves know it's another.”

Other fellows felt that the schools were not very aware of their work and that the school staffs were not supportive. One of the fellows questioned whether the school administration

even knew they were working at the school, and also described a recurring problem they have had in terms of lack of support: “I don’t even know if they know...It’s like early in the morning...6:50 to 7:50...I guess the worst part about it is we show up like on time, but the door is never open on time. So we’re waiting around [outside the school] for them to open the door and by the time they open the doors [we’ve lost a lot of time]; today they actually opened the door pretty early and it was 7:10.” At another site, the fellow mentioned that one of the teachers at her school would let them stay in her room until the teacher of the class they actually worked with showed up in the mornings. But she commented, “I haven’t seen the principal at all.”

Intimately related to the above, fellows sometimes reported barriers to their work related to time and space constraints. One of the main barriers that fellows felt they faced in their work with the scholars was a lack of time; several of them thought they did not have enough time to work with the high school students on the activities they had planned, and they ended up being rushed. Again, where high school staff and students helped out by being on time, the sessions were easier to manage; on the contrary, when fellows lacked this type of support, they had difficulty reaching the goals they had for their sessions.

One fellow thought this was the major barrier she faced in her work.

The only problem is that we hardly have enough time so we don’t get to do as much as we would like to do...we just need more time to do more stuff...We only wind up having thirty minutes maybe...We always start late...The teacher, she’s always late...and the students are late too...And the teacher, she’s doing her best to try to get there on time, but she has to work on what she has. So we stand outside and talk to the students and stuff during that time that we’re supposed to be actually meeting in class. We’ll just talk to them more on a personal level.

At another school, the fellow also reported time constraints as the primary problem.

I guess the worst part about it is we show up like on time, but the door [to the school] is never open on time...Every time we’ve been it’s always been, we’re waiting outside [and] it’s cold. Yeah, it’s horrible. And a lot of times we have a lot planned and we can’t cover it all because there’s no time because the door isn’t open...That would be the worst problem that we’re facing right now. I feel like I’m rushed for time, so a lot of times I’ll be missing something. I’ll be missing a few thoughts because there’s not enough time to get it in. I do wish they would have the door open...because it’s such a waste. Everyone’s standing out there waiting for the door to be opened, and I’ve noticed that this time that a lot of the students showed up

late even after the door had been opened. And I feel like it's because they were...they realized that the door would be locked when we get there.

Fellows at two other sites also felt that they often did not have enough time. "We realize that sometimes an hour is not enough time when we're breezing through some things," one of the fellows reported. "You get into one topic...and then you look at your watch and...it's time to go and we didn't cover all the things because time just passed by," said the fellow at the other school. Yet another fellow mentioned that in one of the classes she worked in, they did not have enough space and were cramped.

Another timing issue we encountered was the times of the day at which the CBOP meetings took place. We observed that meetings were held at different times of the day across the sites. Some meetings occurred before school, some after school, and some during class time. There were differences across these meeting times, but no arrangement seemed more conducive than any other. Although the sessions that took place before school had problems getting classrooms open on time and scholars to arrive on time, during sessions that took place after school scholars often appeared tired and restless. When meetings took place during school hours, attendance was more regular, but school-wide events like testing or fire drills sometimes interfered with activities the fellows had planned.

Our interviews with scholars also revealed that the 'timing' of the sessions was a problem for some, especially when they were held after school. A scholar reported that she had schedule problems. "...I didn't really like the after school thing because I have to go work. And it would be like really hard, I couldn't go." Another scholar mentioned the same issue, even though she did not find it a problem for herself: "Maybe the time. How it's after school. Some people don't go. I'm able to go, but some people aren't. So that's where it becomes a bit of a problem." Timing issues were mentioned at yet another site where CBOP meetings were held after school.

I think it's not really a good time, because kids feel like they're out of school. It's like school's over, 'cause school's over at 2, they feel like, "Okay, school is over," just they don't consider this as a class. But then in the mornings, they might be sleepy, so I don't know what type of time would be good. And like, two times a week would probably be better because only once a week, people are forgetting, we're like, 'What did we do last week?' and stuff like that.

Finally, at one of the sites timing became a conflict for one student because he regretted having to go to the CBOP sessions during intercession. "The only thing that I think discouraged a lot of people was the intercession," he said. "We had to come during vacation to classes; not a lot of people wanted to come."

Our results indicate that high school staff can help in the implementation of CBOP by becoming involved in the program and aware of its goals and purposes. When the staff clearly understands the objectives of the program, their expectations are more realistic and the support they can offer is more closely aligned with what fellows actually need. They can also help by facilitating the practical operation of the program, in terms of providing adequate timing and space for CBOP sessions (for example, making sure that rooms are available on time or that other school activities will not interfere with CBOP sessions).

Fostering scholar involvement, motivation and participation

Another issue that we found in our study was related to scholar's involvement in the program. Most scholars reported that they got involved in CBOP without having a very clear idea of what they were getting into. In many cases, they were "invited" to participate or just "signed in" by one of their teachers. For example, a scholar said: "My biology teacher signed me up for it... That was the first time I heard about it." Another student at the same school mentioned that her entire honors biology class was enrolled in the program. A student at another site mentioned that she had been recruited for the program the year before, when she was in eighth grade: "They kind of just chose us." Another scholar said she "got put in CBOP"

because of her good grades, while another said that a teacher, who was her best friend's sister, had gotten applications for her, "telling us that it would be good for us in the future." One student interviewed felt his teacher "made" him enroll.

She told me I had to come or they were going to change my classes if I didn't come to the meetings...Like if I didn't go, she was going to take me out of CBOP and if they took me out, they were going to have to change my classes because the classes that I was taking were for CBOP.

The fact that many scholars did not know what they were getting into when participating in CBOP may be one of the factors influencing low motivation. A few of the fellows mentioned that the scholars' lack of motivation was sometimes a barrier for their work. For example, one of the fellows felt that the students' apathy and short attention spans were difficult to deal with, and another alluded to some of her scholars being more motivated than others. The fellow at one of the sites stated that a difficulty for her was that ultimately, the scholars had to commit to getting something out of CBOP for it to work for them.

It's basically up to the students...because you can teach them all you want, like you can tell them like everything you know, but it's actually up to them to actually do it, to actually try to achieve the goals that you set up for them. I think that's the main thing. Like getting through to them and having them help themselves. That's really hard to do.

Our observations in the classrooms also revealed low scholar participation. Whether in large or small groups, or at sites where fellows and scholars seemed to relate to one another well or not so well, fellows encountered a great deal of difficulty getting scholars to participate in discussions related to academic achievement. When scholars did speak, they often talked about topics tangentially related to academic achievement or about topics unrelated to achievement.

In a few cases, scholars described a more conscious decision to participate in the CBOP program, such as the case of the scholar who described that CBOP was the reason she enrolled in that particular high school.

My parents didn't like the school. They had a slight reservation about it. So I didn't really care what school I went to. My cousin told me they had a program that was good here, that was CBOP, that it was from UCLA. So I was like "OK, I'll just go in, you know try it out, if not I'll choose a different school."

Despite the fact that they did not clearly choose to participate and did not have a clear idea of what they were getting into, in general, the scholars knew that they were chosen to be in the program because of their academic achievement. “[I was enrolled] because I’m in the magnet. I’m a pretty good student I guess. I get A’s and B’s in my classes,” one scholar said. “[I had to] bring my latest report card. I had to have good grades for math and English,” another reported. “I think they chose us over GPA [grade point average] or classes that you were in,” another said. “We were chosen to be in an honors class and that’s how we got chosen to be in the CBOP program,” another commented.

The scholars described the enrollment process in very general terms. “They had a meeting in the room over there to explain everything...and then they gave us applications to sign.” In some cases, “They made another meeting for the parents to also be explained what would be happening in the program.” At one high school, a scholar described being called for a meeting during lunchtime and then being asked to stay every Thursday afternoon. One scholar said all he had to do was “keep showing up,” while another said she “signed a contract as a part of it.”

The above results pose an important question to both the schools and the CBOP staff: Would motivation and participation be higher if students had a clear idea of what they were getting into by participating in the program? Should more energy and resources be used to clearly explain to students what the program is and to motivate them to participate? Should this motivation and recruitment process be carried out by schools, by UCLA staff, or by both together? Although we do not know whether addressing these issues would have an impact on the results of CBOP on student achievement, our results do indicate that it is an area that should be reexamined.

Our findings indicate that scholars enter the CBOP program without a clear idea of what it is they are getting into, and that many of them lack the motivation to actively participate in some of the activities. Offering students more information regarding the program—about its purpose, goals, and requirements—and improving the recruitment and selection process, may help increase student participation.

Conclusion

After interviewing fellows and scholars, and observing CBOP sessions at high school sites, we identified three main areas where participating schools can help facilitate the implementation of the program. Fellows valued working at schools where teachers were supportive and encouraging of their work. They also appreciated when teachers became actively involved in CBOP, for example, by asking their students about their experiences with CBOP or by arranging to have CBOP activities count in their students' class grades. Scholars found that it was easier to apply some of the study skills that CBOP fellows taught them when teachers provided them with a syllabus or information about the material to be covered in future classes.

It was also helpful when the school staff had a clear sense of what was the purpose and goal of CBOP, and when administrators supported the work carried out by the fellows. At some sites, fellows reported situations where practical considerations interfered with the implementation of the program (e.g., classrooms were not open on time, fellows and scholars had to wait outside in cold weather for someone to open the school).

Finally, we found that both UCLA and high school sites face the challenge of promoting participation in CBOP in ways that can help foster student involvement, motivation and participation.