

**Evaluation of Career-Based Outreach Program (CBOP)
Scholar Outcomes
2002/2003**

Sandy Taut¹

Occasional Report #16

Outreach Evaluation

OCCASIONAL REPORT SERIES



Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

UCLA

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June, 2003

Outreach Evaluation Project
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Evaluation of Career-Based Outreach Program (CBOP) Scholar Outcomes
2002/2003
-- Executive Summary --

Sandy Taut²
UCLA Outreach Evaluation

Overview of evaluation study: Purpose, questions, methods

This is the executive summary to an evaluation study with the purpose of providing useful information for the continuous improvement of the CBOP experience for high school scholars. The evaluation team applied a user-oriented approach, involving the primary intended users of the evaluation (program director and key program staff) in the evaluation process – especially during its beginning and concluding stages. That is, the evaluation questions and methods were jointly determined, and the evaluation results jointly discussed and interpreted.

The evaluation study focused on three main questions:

- 1) What are the intended course contents and activities for scholars?
- 2) Do scholars achieve the intended outcomes of the CBOP course, in terms of both knowledge and attitudes?
- 3) Do scholars find these course contents / outcomes useful and important?

The beginning of the evaluation process consisted of conversations with program staff / course developers about the CBOP course. Faced with the task of constructing a survey that would help measure scholar outcomes, program staff and evaluator jointly worked on articulating the conceptual underpinnings of the course. The discussion started with clarifying the intended outcomes for scholars, followed by explicating how these outcomes could be achieved through course content and corresponding teaching activities.

In close collaboration a survey was constructed containing 14 closed- and 3 open-ended questions on college-related knowledge and attitudes. The survey was delivered to all scholars at all 17 CBOP schools at the beginning of the Winter/Spring 2003 9th grade on-site CBOP classes (pre-test), as well as in May 2003 (post-test). We invited CBOP fellows to aid us in administering both surveys. Six³ out of seventeen schools provided pre- and post-test data. Matching resulted in 51 sure pre-test/post-test matches, 26 participants were new on the post-test (which should not have happened), 3 participants had missing student IDs on the post-test, and 48 matches were made with some doubt because of inconsistencies in parts of the student ID or lacking matches with the school IDs. The following survey data analyses were conducted on the cleanest matched pre-test/post-test database we could obtain. There were still some ambiguous matches (which were retained instead of further limiting the sample size by deleting them). Therefore, the sample sizes do not match perfectly between pre-test and post-test (pre = 86; post = 90). The scholars who participated in both pre- and post-tests were roughly one-third male, two-third female, with

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³ For various reasons related to differences in tracks and schedules for year round and traditional schools, only six schools (Hamilton, Inglewood, Morningside, Palisades, Roosevelt, Venice) provided post-test scores by the time this analysis was carried out (see section on Possible Limitations of the Evaluation).

the following ethnic background: 58% Latino, 22% African-American, 6% Asian-American, 2% Caucasian, 11% other, 1% missing.

The following table provides the number of pre-test and post-test responses from each school

School	PRE	POST
Hamilton	39	39
Inglewood	6	5
Morningside	4	5
Palisades	14	17
Roosevelt	12	15
Venice	11	9
Crenshaw	16	
Fremont	31	
Garfield	32	
Jefferson	47	
Jordan	15	
Locke	13	
Lynwood	27	
Manual Arts	19	
San Fernando	31	
South Gate	15	
Washington Prep	21	
Total	353	90

In addition to the survey, the evaluation team conducted two focus groups with CBOP scholars at two high schools (8 and 10 participants, respectively). The focus groups gave more in-depth insights about scholars' perceptions of the course contents, particularly their benefits and unintended outcomes. General ideas for course improvement were also elicited from the participants.

Evaluation Findings

The following section presents the evaluation findings by topic area. The tables show the answers to the closed-ended questions of the survey. The cells contain the percentages of responses per response category and, if possible, the means. Similarly, the results of the open-ended questions were categorized, and frequencies reported. Thus, even through the number of responses for post and pre were different pre/post comparisons were facilitated by looking at the percentage of responses in each category.

Study skills, strategies, habits

1. Usually, how confident are you

Survey item	Confident (4)		Somewhat confident (3)		Somewhat unsure (2)		Unsure (1)		MEAN	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
Summarizing main points of text	25%	29%	64%	59%	9%	10%	2%	2%	3.1	3.1
Taking notes on homework readings	47%	48%	43%	40%	8%	10%	2%	2%	3.3	3.3
Asking questions in class	29%	38%	39%	42%	28%	18%	4%	2%	2.9	3.2
Writing essay about personal topic	44%	31%	48%	52%	4%	11%	5%	6%	3.3	3.1

2. In the last month of school, how often did you discuss homework or other school-related issues with your friends?

	PRE	POST
Once a day or more	37%	38%
Every other day	32%	28%
Once a week	24%	22%
Less than once a week	8%	12%
Total	100%	100%

3. In the last month of school, how much time did you spend each day doing homework or studying?

	PRE	POST
Half an hour or less	13%	12%
Half an hour to one hour	23%	35%
One to two hours	34%	33%
Two to three hours	21%	12%
More than three hours	9%	8%
Total	100%	100%

4. What are three strategies you try to use to do better in school? (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)⁴

Categories ⁵	PRE	POST
A – study / work hard	50	52
B – class attendance	5	3
C – note taking	16	20
D – listen / attention / focus	32	36
E – time management / organization	10	12
F – future perspective / goals / motivation	15	11
G – homework / assignments	28	33
H – read (more)	6	6
I – rest / health	6	3
J – get help / ask questions / tutoring / group work	31	24
K – other	27	26
L – participate / cooperate / observe rules	5	7

Non-respondents: Four on pre-test, three on post-test.

College application related items

5. How confident are you writing a personal statement for your college application?

	PRE	POST
Confident (4)	28%	21%
Somewhat confident (3)	44%	44%
Somewhat unsure (2)	17%	23%
Unsure (1)	11%	10%
Total	100%	100%
MEAN	2.9	2.8

⁴ The results of the open-ended questions were categorized, and frequencies reported.

⁵ Shaded area are the three most frequently mentioned categories. These are frequencies (or number of times an item was mentioned).

6. How prepared do you feel to complete an entire college application?

	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
Well prepared (4)	9%	16%	51%	66%
Somewhat prepared (3)	42%	50%		
Not very prepared (2)	43%	29%		
Not at all prepared (1)	6%	6%		
Total	100%	100%		
MEAN	2.6	2.8		

7. Have you talked to a UCLA Bruin advisor or EAOP advisor?

	PRE	POST
No	48%	39%
Yes	52%	61%
Total	100%	100%
<i>If yes, how often, in total?</i>		
Once	39%	20%
2 to 5 times	52%	56%
More than 5 times	9%	24%
Total	100%	100%

8. How many extracurricular activities are you currently participating in?

	PRE	POST
1	43%	41%
2	17%	23%
3	13%	10%
4	5%	8%
5	0%	0%
More than 5	2%	2%
MISSING (incl. zero)	20%	16%
Total	100%	100%

9. How many extracurricular activities do you plan on participating in next year?

	PRE	POST
1	17%	8%
2	21%	22%
3	33%	31%
4	11%	16%
5	6%	9%
More than 5	12%	10%

MISSING (incl. zero)	1%	4%
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10. What are the requirements for being admitted to a UC campus, e.g. UCLA? Please list all that you can think of. (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)

Categories	PRE	POST
A – A-G requirements/ subjects / years listed	73	102
B – standardized tests	22	35
C – GPA	40	46
D – extracurricular activities	16	26
E – financial aid	2	2
F – personal qualities	12	9
G – grades general reference	17	22
H – classes general reference	4	5
I – other	20	21
J – high school diploma	11	9

Non-respondents: 14 on pre-test, 12 on post-test.

11. Which resources or persons can help you with your college application? Please list all that you can think of. (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)

Categories	PRE	POST
A – family members	118	120
B – college / career counselor / college center	45	54
C – teacher	51	52
D – CBOP / Bruin / EAOP	13	25
E – other outreach programs	2	4
F – friends	23	19
G – other (incl. names)	31	25
H – college students / reps general reference	8	10

Non-respondents: Eight on pre-test, seven on post-test.

College plans and expectations

12. When I finish high school, I plan to

	PRE	POST
Attend a UC (e.g. UCLA)	58%	53%
Attend a California State university (e.g. Cal State L.A.)	7%	12%
Attend a private college or university (e.g. Stanford)	21%	16%
Attend a community college	5%	1%
Attend a trade or technical school	2%	2%
No longer attend school and find a job	2%	2%
I probably will not finish high school	1%	3%
MISSING (including double choices)	4%	10%

Total	100%	100%
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13. My chances of getting into one of my top three college choices are

	PRE	POST	Pre	Post
Very high (5)	14%	11%	65%	68%
Good (4)	51%	57%		
Reasonable (3)	24%	23%		
Low (2)	6%	3%		
Not sure (1)	5%	6%		
MEAN	3.6	3.7		

14. I may not be able to go to college because:

Survey item	Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Somewhat disagree (2)		Disagree (1)		MEAN	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
My family cannot afford it	17%	17%	27%	26%	25%	27%	32%	31%	2.3	2.3
I am not smart enough	4%	3%	6%	6%	12%	17%	79%	74%	1.3	1.4
I am not interested in school	0%	0%	6%	3%	9%	11%	85%	85%	1.2	1.2
My classes do not prepare me well enough	2%	1%	7%	18%	37%	30%	53%	51%	1.6	1.7
My parents expect me to get a job after high school	0%	2%	2%	9%	13%	10%	85%	79%	1.2	1.3

14.a Results for “I may not get into college because: My classes do not prepare me well enough” by school

Survey item	Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Somewhat disagree (2)		Disagree (1)		# Of Respondents	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
Hamilton	5%	0%	5%	13%	28%	33%	62%	54%	39	39
Inglewood	0%	0%	17%	20%	33%	40%	50%	40%	6	5
Morningside	0%	20%	0%	20%	33%	0%	67%	60%	3	5
Palisades	0%	0%	21%	18%	29%	24%	50%	59%	14	17
Roosevelt	0%	0%	0%	40%	50%	13%	50%	47%	12	25
Venice	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	67%	73%	33%	11	9
Total Average	2%	1%	7%	18%	37%	30%	53%	51%	85	90

Focus Groups

We first asked participants to list the contents they had covered in their CBOP class so far. Six out of a total of eleven (nine, respectively) content areas were the same for the two schools; these included note taking, text analysis, vocabulary, essays / personal statements, UC admission requirements, particularly A-G requirements, and standardized test prep. We next asked the scholars to talk about the potential importance and value of learning about these content areas. Almost all content areas were listed by one or another participant as important, with different levels of sophistication regarding the explanations as to why they were important. The question about unimportant contents made clear that all contents were useful for at least a few students. We conducted a polling exercise where we asked participants to arrive at a final judgment about the most and least important content of the class. What was found to be the least important content area in Group one (A-G requirements) was considered most important in Group two.

In the end we asked the participants to share ideas how to improve the CBOP class. The suggestions differed for the two groups. Group one talked about making the CBOP class more selective, for example by introducing an application process, and by giving students a choice of whether to attend or not, in order to ensure that there are only highly motivated students in the class. In Group two, scholars focused on the atmosphere in class and the way the fellows handled discipline issues and disagreements in class discussions. Some scholars noted a lack of interest in class due to the redundancy of the information that occurs when different track (or off track) students were added to the class. Some of the scholars attributed the disciplinary issues to this redundancy. Group two scholars also talked about reducing the size of the class to make it more manageable, or alternatively, to have more fellows teach the class.

Discussion

Survey Findings

In general, the survey findings indicate that it is difficult to achieve measurable impact on scholars within a short period of three months. There are multiple possible explanations for the specific results we obtained. For example, for the confidence items it could be the case that due to the CBOP class, students learned more about what is expected of them and that therefore, their confidence decreased in a number of instances (e.g., essay and personal statement items). Students were aware of strategies to be better in school even prior to the CBOP class; thus, there was almost no change on the post-test.

For items addressing study skills, strategies, and habits, there were not any marked differences between pre and post responses. The scores on the pre-test for these items were relatively high to begin with, thus not allowing for any marked changes.

For the college application related items, there were some marked differences on certain questions. For example, in terms of preparedness to complete a college application (table 6), the ratings increased, which is a desired outcome of the course: On the post-test, 66% of scholars felt “somewhat prepared” or “well prepared” – as opposed to 51% on the pre-test. This is also reflected in the 10% increase in the use of Bruin advisors or EAOP staff (table 7).

Regarding UC admission requirements, students gained knowledge from pre-test to post-test. They more frequently listed the correct requirements; especially noteworthy is the knowledge gain regarding the A-G requirements (pre-test mentioned 72 times, post-test

mentioned 102 times)(table 10). However, as on the pre-test, the scholars still listed items that are not requirements⁶ (either they contribute to competitiveness, for example, extracurricular activities, or they are too vague, for example, good grades). The college information resources (table 11) that scholars identified show almost no change from pre-test to post-test, except for an increase in the number of times a CBOP/Bruin/EAOP person were mentioned as a resource for help (pre-test mentioned 13 times, post test mentioned 25 times).

There was a minor change in scholars' college preferences from pre-test to post-test (table 12) : slightly fewer scholars chose a UC (from 58% to 53%) and a private university, whereas more decided on a California State University. It might be the case that by the time the scholars took the post-test, they had a better idea of the UC admission requirements and could more realistically assess their chances, thus adapting their top choice accordingly.

Scholars were generally optimistic about their chances of being accepted at one of their top three college choices (between "reasonable" and "good")(table 13). Asked what might hinder them from going to college (table 14), the scholars saw the financial aspect as most preventive, while generally disagreeing with all other potential reasons. one interesting observation did emerge from the responses to this question. Scholars generally disagreed with the statement "My classes do not prepare me well enough" on both pre and post test, except that on the post test there was an increase in the percentage of "slight agreement" to the statement (from 7% pre to 18% post). Further break down of the question by school (table 14a) indicated the school where this finding seemed to emerge.

Focus Groups

Were the covered areas the core contents expected to be covered in the CBOP classes? It seems difficult to find a balance between prestructuring the curriculum to achieve comparability between schools, and the motivational benefits of granting fellows and scholars the freedom to define (to a certain extent) their own needs. In terms of the importance of the contents that were covered in the classes, it seems that different students benefit in different ways, but that everyone benefits in some way. Therefore, it also makes sense that it was difficult for students to agree on any unimportant contents, as shown by the very different polling results for the two groups. It is interesting that in group one (school A), the A-G requirements were judged most *unimportant*, because all these students had learned about them in middle school, and did not need a repetition in CBOP. In group two (school B), however, the A-G requirements were judged most *important*, because these students had never heard of them and realized that it was time they aligned their choice of classes with these requirements if they wanted to keep their chances of attending a UC.

Suggestions for improvement also reflected the particular context of the CBOP classes. While the first group was highly motivated to learn and expected the same of the other scholars as well as the fellows, the second group focused on more basic structural issues such as class size and fellows being on time.

⁶ This could be due the confusion between minimal requirements for admission versus competitive requirements for admission.

Possible Limitations of the Evaluation

Survey delivery was entirely in the hands of the CBOP fellows. The evaluation team was dependent on their diligence and reliability; we had no way of assessing the integrity of data collection. Of particular concern is the low number of schools delivering post-test results; After speaking with program coordinators it was discovered that schools follow different calendars (traditional versus year-round), which impacted the transience of CBOP scholars and made matching of pre- and post measures even more difficult. It was found that most of the schools that did return the post-test surveys were traditional schools that still had the same CBOP fellows.

The survey itself has a number of limitations. Most closed-ended items ask for judgements and are thus highly subjective. Social desirability is an obvious drawback of such subjective items, which might have been less pronounced on the post-test than on the pre-test, resulting in lower scores on some items without reflecting actual changes (e.g., “time on homework” question). Concerning the open-ended questions, the respondents seemed to have lost some motivation on the post-test to answer as specifically and completely as they could have, because they recognized the questions and answering them might have felt redundant to them (testing effect).

Where to go from here

Presentation and discussion of the evaluation findings at a meeting with key program staff led to consideration of several ideas for potential program development. Staff will undoubtedly expand and modify the following list:

- Begin the CBOP orientation process earlier in the year.
- Create a sense of identification to the CBOP program by establishing a CBOP club for scholars, and/or lunch meetings.
- Identifying a CBOP teacher at each school site to answer questions about the program and coordinate activities with site managers.
- Increase efforts to train and educate counselors, and teachers about the A-G requirements and/or the college application process.
- Creating a subject-tracking sheet for each site to track the contents being taught. This would allow fellows to avoid overlap and redundancy. (The sheet would list each topic that needs to be covered, and after a topic is covered the fellow would check that topic off the list, thus making sure that future fellows know that this particular topic had been covered)
- Talking to principals about allowing “off track” students access college counseling/information.