



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations

3-25-2024

The Potential to Be the Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time: Implementation of AB705

Kristina Martinez

Loyola Marymount University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Martinez, Kristina, "The Potential to Be the Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time: Implementation of AB705" (2024). *LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations*. 1282.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/etd/1282>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

The Potential to Be the Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time:
Implementation of AB705

by

Kristina Martinez

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education
2024

The Potential to Be the Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time:

Implementation of AB705

Copyright © 2024

by

Kristina Martinez

**Loyola Marymount University
School of Education
Los Angeles, CA 90045**

This dissertation written by Kristina Martinez, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

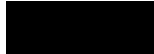
December 14, 2023

Date

Dissertation Committee



Kenzo Sung, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair



William Perez, Ph.D., Committee Member



Rebecca Stephenson, Ph.D., Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so thankful for all the support I have had from all of my friends and family throughout this journey. Your unwavering love and support sustained me throughout the past 3 years. The completion of my dissertation was truly a team effort and I appreciate each and every one of you who played a role in making this all possible.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Ryan. Thank you for supporting me throughout this entire process. I appreciate you always being there for me when I have wild ideas, like deciding to start my doctorate during the pandemic. Thank you for keeping me fed, keeping the house clean, and taking the kids to all their sports and activities when I could not be there. I love you with all my heart and there is no one else I would want to spend my life with.

My daughter, Rylee and my son, Ryder have been my biggest inspirations. Their belief in me kept me motivated to never give up. Thank you for your constant love, patience and understanding.

I also want to acknowledge my mom and dad who have always encouraged me and were always there to help me whenever I needed it. I owe a debt of gratitude to you. To my sister Michelle, and brother AJ, thank you for always cheering me on. I am so grateful to have you as my family.

To my group of best friends, thank you for always being there for me. You kept me distracted when I needed it. We are all so lucky to have each other.

I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Kenzo Sung, whose invaluable feedback and guidance helped to keep me motivated

throughout this journey. I am so grateful for my dissertation committee members Dr. William Perez and Dr. Rebecca Stephenson. Thank you for your time, insights and feedback that help.

Special acknowledgement to Dr. Dipte Patel, who continued to encourage me throughout this journey. Thank you for allowing me to constantly and continuously bounce ideas off of you and talk through my streams of rambling themes and thoughts.

Thank you to the Lo Grande College (pseudonym) English faculty participants. I appreciate your time, candor, and willingness to share your experiences with me. Your participation significantly contributed to the success and depth of the project.

Last but not least, I want to give a special SHOUT OUT to Cohort 18! We did it! Thank you for being a continuous network of encouragement and support. We made it through all the order and chaos! You are all brilliant and I am humbled to have shared this journey with you.

DEDICATION

To my husband Ryan, I couldn't have done this without you. To my daughter, Rylee and my son, Ryder, nothing makes me prouder than being your mom.

To my Gartinez Family, aka the Gartland Family, I dedicate this in memory of Brian "Big B" Gartland. He was the true "professional."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Theoretical Frameworks	4
Social Justice Framework	4
Definition of Leadership	6
Systems Thinking for Organizational Change	7
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	10
Research Design and Methodology	11
Procedures.....	12
Research Site.....	13
Limitations	14
Generalizability.....	14
Experimenter Effects	14
Sample Size.....	14
Reliance on Memory.....	15
Delimitations.....	15
Assumptions.....	15
Positionality Statement	15
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	18
Overview.....	18
Background of AB705	18
Measuring the Success of AB705	20
Implementation of AB705	22
Additional Reform Efforts and Student Support Redesign.....	25
Models to Support Student Success.....	27
Role of Community College Counselors to Support Student Success	28
Theoretical Frameworks	31
Systems Thinking Approach.....	31
Social Justice Leadership Frameworks	34
Operationalizing Social Justice Leadership for Transformative Change	37
Conclusion	43
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	45

Purpose Statement.....	46
Research Questions.....	47
Rationale for Qualitative Study	47
Site and Participant Selection	49
Setting.....	50
Site Selection and Gaining Entry.....	51
Participants.....	52
Data Collection Methods	54
Interviews.....	54
Document Review.....	55
Data Analysis.....	55
Protection of Subjects	56
Data Storage.....	57
Validity/Trustworthiness.....	57
Triangulation.....	58
Member Checking.....	58
Reflexivity.....	58
Research Log	59
Peer Debriefing	59
Limitations	60
Generalizability.....	60
Experimenter Effects	60
Sample Size.....	59
Reliance on Memory.....	61
Delimitations.....	61
Assumptions.....	61
CHAPTER 4: FACULTY PERSPECTIVES AND MAJOR THEMES.....	62
Theme 1: Individual Readiness for Change and Commitment to Equity	67
Introduction of Participants and Their Initial Reactions to AB705	67
Professional Development	71
Informal Coalition: English 1AS Committee	75
Changing Expectations	77
Changes to Pedagogy.....	80
Linguistic Justice and Acknowledgement of Students’ Cultural Capital/Wealth.	83
Changing of the Guard.....	85
Mental and Emotional Impact on Faculty.....	86
Theme 2: Systemic Readiness for Change.....	88
Systems-Thinking Approach	89
Policies as Systemic Barriers	89
Embedded Student Support.....	92
Basic Needs Resources	96
Adequate Resources for Students With Disabilities	98
Failed K–12 System.....	100

Course Modalities Impact on Student Success	102
Effects of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic	106
Perceived Systemic Impact on Student Equity	108
Conclusion	110
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND	
CONCLUSION	112
Overview.....	112
Discussion of Findings.....	115
Recommendations to Support Cultural Change.....	117
Understanding Motivation	118
Involvement in Implementation Planning.....	118
Professional Development for Individual and Systemic Reflection	119
Shared Vision.....	120
Reflective Processes.....	121
Foundation of Trust.....	122
Managing Conflict	122
Coalition Building.....	123
Recommendations to Support Structural Change	124
Identifying Barriers and Redesigning Policies, Practices, and Curriculum.....	125
Course Size	125
Course Modality.....	126
Ensuring Equitable and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.....	126
Summer Bridge Preparation.....	127
Expanding Noncredit: Considerations for Students With Disabilities	127
Providing Holistic Support Resources	128
Basic Needs.....	128
Counselor and Instructional Partnerships	129
Embedded Mental Health Support.....	130
Integration of Initiatives and Budget Allocations	131
Funding	131
Additional Support for Faculty, Staff and Administrators.....	132
Focus on Well-Being	132
Support for Part-Time Faculty	133
Continuous Reiterative Cycles for Improvement	134
Recommendations for Future Research	135
Conclusion	136
Epilogue	138
APPENDIX A	141
APPENDIX B	144
APPENDIX C	145
APPENDIX D	147
REFERENCES.....	148

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Student Headcount	51
2. Fall 2022 English 1A/1AS Course Enrollment and Success—Race and Ethnicity.....	64
3. Fall 2022 English 1A Course Enrollment and Success—Race and Ethnicity.....	65
4. Demographics of Study Participants	66

ABSTRACT

The Potential to Be the Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time:

Implementation of AB705

by

Kristina Martinez

As a result of *California Assembly Bill 705*(AB705, 2017) and *California Assembly Bill 1705* (AB1705, 2021), most 1st-year students will enroll directly into transfer level math and/or English courses (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Sims, 2020). Students once placed into remedial coursework before enrolling in transfer level coursework may need more student support services to ensure course completion and retention (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Baca, 2021; Cook, 2016; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Sims, 2020).

The recent implementation of AB705 allows for community colleges to redesign pedagogical practices and restructure student support to address equity gaps and promote student success (Sims, 2020). Prior to AB705, remedial math and English course sequences were often gatekeepers that prevented students of color from completing their educational goals (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019).

As colleges move toward full compliance of AB705 and AB1705, colleges should have a comprehensive understanding of faculty members' experiences as they implement reform efforts. Faculty perceptions of how the legislation has impacted student equity and success outcomes can inform continued, reiterative, and intentional improvements to reform initiatives. This qualitative study used semistructured interviews of English faculty members to examine if AB705 served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures at

community colleges. This study uncovered reform recommendations and best practices colleges can implement as they redesign educational support structures at their colleges.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Research has suggested over half of the students that enter college will not complete, and of students that enter community college as being considered “college ready,” only 20% will complete a 2-year degree in 3 years (S. Jones, 2015; Windham et al., 2014). The California Community Colleges (CCC) is the largest educational system in the world; yet, it does not have adequate resources to provide comprehensive support and services for all students (Arteaga, 2018). Many students face barriers when trying to matriculate into college and are often unaware of the various student support programs and services that are designed to help students be successful (Bailey, 2015, Baston, 2018; Booth et al., 2013; S. Jones, 2015). Students who do not receive proper guidance and do not become connected and engaged with the institution are less likely to remain in college and earn a credential (Booth et al., 2013; Tinto, 1975, 1993).

Studies reflect that many community college students begin college without an understanding of how to navigate the complex educational system (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Baston, 2018; S. Jones, 2015). S. Jones (2015) noted that despite increases in the number of students that are attending college, improvements are needed to help students navigate their college path. S. Jones (2015) asserted:

Thanks to extensive research, we know what the primary obstacles to college completion are: poorly designed and delivered remedial courses, a culture that rewards enrollment rather than outcomes, broken credit-transfer policies, overwhelming and unclear choices for students, and a system that is out of touch with the needs of students who must balance work and family responsibilities with their coursework. (p. 25)

Community colleges have made extensive efforts over the last several years to reform, redesign and reimagine the community college student experience; yet, there is still much work to do to ensure equitable outcomes for students (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Booth et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). Emerging research has been rooted in a commitment to promoting college access and equity for students (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). McClenney (2019) asserted colleges have a “moral obligation to ensure that institutional policies and practices are specifically designed to promote equity—and conversely, to eliminate unintentional barriers, unconscious bias, and institutional racism” (p. 87). As colleges examine their policies and practices to be more equity focused, there needs to be changes at both the individual and institutional levels.

In 2021, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s office (CCCCO) announced its updated “Vision for Success.” Former CCCCCO Chancellor Eloy Oakley declared:

In the face of new challenges, our role in breaking down persistent systemic barriers, especially those linked to racial and ethnic identities, has never been more important. With this update to the Vision, we are reaffirming our goals and core commitments to drive improvement, success, and equity. (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office [CCCCO], 2021, p. 1)

The updated “Vision for Success” provides the community college system of 116 institutions with a unified philosophical framework to commit to transformative change as it focuses on student equity and success (CCCCO, 2021).

CCCs are amid an extensive structural change to move toward a system that promotes equitable outcomes for all students, especially students of color. These initiatives have the potential to move us closer to educational equity and antiracism. For these initiatives to be

successful, colleges must ensure cohesive implementation strategies that include collaboration efforts in and across institutions and educational systems.

Over the last several years reform has been underway to redesign and reimagine the community college student experience through a guided pathways framework. Bragg et al. (2019) made recommendations on how the guided pathways framework can be used as a tool to integrate equity. Bragg et al. (2019) defined *equity-mindedness* as “practitioners who recognize the harm of institutional racism and thus iteratively question, assess and act to resolve practices, policies, and norms that create inequities for racially minoritized student groups” (p. 6). The community college system can promote transformative change for equity through collaborative and cohesive implementation of the Vision for Success, Guided Pathways, and other legislative reform efforts.

California Assembly Bill 705 (AB705; California Assembly Bill 705 [AB705], 2017) is legislation that permits all students attending a CCC to enroll directly into transfer level English and mathematics courses, replacing a placement system that profoundly disadvantaged students of color. Prior to AB705, remedial math and English course sequences were often gatekeepers that prevented students of color from completing their educational goals (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). AB705 was proposed after it was discovered that many community college students did not complete their educational goals because they were not successful in completing math and English requirements (Sims, 2020). It was also discovered that remedial courses did not impact student success in transfer level courses (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Mejia et al., 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Sims, 2020). AB705 gained

support from legislatures who were committed to investing in more efficient and equitable pathways to degree and transfer to 4-year universities (Melguizo et al., 2022).

As colleges implement several policies aimed to increase student success including guided pathways and student equity and achievement initiatives, it is important that college leaders are prepared to promote transformative changes at their institutions by integrating social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking. Colleges should reexamine their curriculum and develop support structures that welcome and support student success rather than continuing to perpetuate systems that create systemic barriers for students of color. Colleges should also ensure faculty experiences and student voices are included in curricular and programmatic design and decision making (Cafarella, 2016; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020).

Theoretical Frameworks

Social Justice Framework

As colleges work to drive meaningful and transformative social justice initiatives, it is important to define the intention of what social justice work is and the outcomes social justice work intends to achieve. If the mission of social justice work is not clear, individuals may have the best intentions to promote social justice, but these efforts can contribute to the systemic barriers that prevent equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students.

As Theoharis (2007) noted, “it takes more than what traditionally has been understood as good leadership to achieve greater equity” (p. 253). If we continue to practice what has been accepted as “good leadership” we will continue to perpetuate the inequities that exist in education. We must reimagine “good leadership” to intentionally lead with a focus on social justice and equity for our students. Theoharis’s (2007) examples of what it means to be a “social

justice leader” (p. 252) encompasses the qualities of compassion, self-reflection, persistence, resiliency, action, and innovation. For example, a so-called “good leader” would focus on building a “collective vision of a great school,” whereas a “social justice leader” would recognize the “school cannot be great until the students with the greatest struggles are given the same rich opportunities both academically and socially as their more privileged peers” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 252).

Good leaders have traditionally failed to acknowledge the inequities that exist in education, resulting in the acceptance and preservation of an educational system with inherent systematic barriers for students of color (Theoharis, 2007). By distinction, social justice leaders are steadfast in their intent and commitment to overcoming systemic barriers that impede student achievement. Social justice leaders should listen to, understand, and be responsive to the needs of the community which they serve, while also empowering their communities to become social justice leaders.

Social justice leaders advocate for transformative change to address inequities and achieve equitable educational outcomes for all students. These leaders approach their roles with passion for what they do, love for those they serve, and compassion for those who do not benefit from the same privileges that they may benefit from. These leaders advocate for the unique needs of all students, especially those who may not otherwise have their voices or needs heard, validated, or prioritized.

Social justice leadership frameworks can serve as tool for individual readiness for transformative change (Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020). Shields (2010) explained transformative leadership is distinct from transformational and transactional leadership. Shields argued

transformative leaders are committed to Freire's (1998) contention "that education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it, transformation cannot occur" (p. 37).

Transformative leaders are committed to diversity, justice, liberation, democracy, and advocating for and empowering others (Freire, 1970, 1982, 1998; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020).

Leaders can promote social justice and equity by building the capacity of faculty and staff to use equity-minded teaching and learning (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland, 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Sims, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Through reflection and personal growth, instructors can incorporate culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy that validates students' lived experiences and leverages students' social and cultural capital. To support the varied and unique needs of all students, education should incorporate culturally inclusive practices and curriculum as legislation like AB705 is implemented (Sims, 2020). As community colleges put structures in place to allow faculty to incorporate culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy, they must also focus on the individual readiness of faculty to support such a change (Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Sims, 2020). A focus on professional development that inspires critical self-reflection, and an awareness of privilege through critical self-reflection can help to prepare community college faculty, administrators, and staff to lead with a focus on student equity and social justice.

Definition of Leadership

In transformative leadership theories, anyone can lead (Freire, 1970, 1982, 1998; Shields 2010, 2018, 2020; Yukl, 2012). One's position or role at an institution does not make an individual a leader. Maxwell (2020) described "leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing

less” (p. 7). Yukl (2006) defined leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 8). Senge (2006) described leadership to be the human contributions one makes to shape the future. Northouse’s (2010) definition described leadership to occur when an individual has influence over a group to achieve a common goal.

Systems Thinking for Organizational Change

For transformative change with a focus on student equity and social justice to occur, educational leaders must acknowledge that colleges have internal and external challenges and face systemic barriers that prevent meaningful, substantive, and sustainable change (Senge, 2018; Stroh, 2015). To promote transformative change, leaders must acknowledge that educational institutions operate in complex systems that often unintentionally create and contribute to the problems they are trying to solve. To improve the entire system, we must improve relationships among the parts (Senge, 2006; Stroh, 2015). Siloed efforts will not lead to transformative change. Coordinated and cohesive efforts are needed across campus departments and operations for reform efforts to succeed.

As new policies are implemented, organizations must change to align with the policies intended outcomes (Baca, 2021; Kezar & Fries-Britt, 2020; Kezar & Lester, 2010). These changes impact areas across the institution. Often, changes in one area of the organization unknowingly create systemic barriers that further perpetuate the problem that the change was trying to solve. Organizational change theories can help to inform how institutions can

effectively promote transformative change and influence organizational culture as legislative reforms are implemented.

Institutions that are amid change often find themselves in times of renewal (Owens & Valesky, 2015). Leaders must be prepared “to shift the culture of the school from emphasis on traditional routines and bureaucracy toward culture that actively supports the view that much of the knowledge needed to plan and carry out change in school is possessed by people in the school themselves” (Owens & Valesky, 2015, p. 223).

Organizational theories focused on systems thinking can provide practical frameworks for leaders to implement transformative change at their institutions. Stroh (2015) called for leaders to affirm their organization’s readiness for change, engage key stakeholders to help design change strategies, develop a shared vision, build capacity for collaboration, and understand motivation. Systems thinking and social justice leadership frameworks can equip leaders to promote transformative change at their institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Many students face barriers when trying to navigate the complex higher education system and are often unaware of the various student support programs and services that are designed to help students be successful (Bailey, 2015, Baston, 2018; Booth et al., 2013; S. Jones, 2015). Students who do not receive proper guidance are less likely to remain in college and earn a credential (Booth et al., 2013, Tinto, 1975, 1993). As a result of AB705 and *California Assembly Bill 1705* (AB1705; California Assembly Bill 1705 [AB1705], 2022), most 1st-year students will enroll directly into transfer level math and/or English courses (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Sims, 2020). Students once placed into remedial coursework before

enrolling in transfer level coursework may need more student support services to ensure course completion and retention (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Baca, 2021; Cook, 2016; Lopez, 2022; Sims, 2020). Colleges should reexamine their organizational structures and leadership approaches to create a culture that welcomes and supports student success rather than continuing to perpetuate systems that create systemic barriers for students of color. As colleges move toward full compliance of AB705 and AB1705, colleges should have a comprehensive understanding of faculty members' experiences as they implement reform efforts. Faculty perceptions of how the legislation has impacted student equity and success outcomes can inform continued, reiterative, and intentional improvements to reform initiatives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore English faculty members' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of AB705 at a CCC and the impact the reform has had on advancing student equity. This study explored whether faculty members took equity considerations and used social justice leadership approaches during the implementation of AB705. This study also observed how both individual and organizational readiness for change or lack thereof influenced the success of reform efforts. This study also sought to understand how social justice leadership tenets may have inform college's restructuring institutional systems and practices to support student success. English faculty were specifically selected for this study based on the leadership role they assumed to promote AB705 in a way that not only complied with the mandates of the law, but also promoted social justice and equitable outcomes for their students. This study also sought to understand if AB705 was a catalyst toward transformative institutional changes in support of student success and equity.

Research Questions

The findings of the study help to understand leadership and equity implications to consider when implementing AB705 and AB1705 at Lo Grande College (pseudonym) and may help to inform other CCC campuses.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures?
2. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity influenced college implementation of AB705?

Significance of the Study

The recent implementation of AB705 (2017) allowed for community colleges to redesign pedagogical practices and restructure student support to address equity gaps and promote student success (Sims, 2020). Prior to AB705, remedial math and English course sequences were often gatekeepers that prevented students of color from completing their educational goals (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). This study examined if AB705 served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures at community colleges. This study uncovered reform recommendations and best practices colleges can implement as they redesign educational support structures at their colleges. A combination of social justice leadership frameworks and organizational change theory were purposefully used to inform the scope and design of this research.

As colleges continue to move toward full compliance of AB705 and AB1705, the results of this study are of importance to legislators, community college administrators, staff, instructional faculty members, counseling faculty members, and students. Although the results of this study may not be generalized to other institutions, the findings are still significant in elevating the voices and the realities of the faculty experience as they implement the legislation.

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study used semistructured interviews as the primary method to collect data. The qualitative study was a single, holistic design, studying AB705 implementation at one single college district. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized qualitative research methods can inform the researcher “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 15). Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because the intent of the research was to understand English faculty members perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures and how the legislation has impacted student equity and success outcomes. Furthermore, a qualitative study design was appropriate because the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of a perplexing issue in a complex system (Leavy, 2017).

A review of the literature of prior studies helped to inform how themes around leadership and readiness for change are operationalized in the study. Institutional readiness for organizational change was operationalized using a systems-thinking approach. Social justice leadership traits and one’s individual readiness for change were operationalized using social justice leadership frameworks. Leadership was operationalized based on definitions that focus on one’s ability to influence rather than one’s role or position in the organization.

This study operationalized individual readiness for transformative change using social justice leadership frameworks. Individual readiness for transformative change was operationalized using distributive leadership, coalition building, resistance and resilience, critical self-reflection, the acknowledgement of oppressive structures that have historically impacted student success, growth mindset, culturally responsive pedagogy, and participation in continuous professional development (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007).

Procedures

This study used semistructured interviews as the primary source for data collection. An interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to allow for consistency in the types of questions asked of the faculty participants. The questions were purposefully designed to be vague to draw meaningful responses from the participants' interpretation. Additionally, document collection and analysis were used to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and compare and triangulate participant interview responses. Interview participants were purposefully selected based on their involvement in teaching transfer level English composition courses during the implementation of AB705. Twelve faculty members participated in the interviews, which ranged from 35–90 minutes. To gain a holistic perspective of implementation efforts, institutional documents including meeting minutes, program reviews, and training materials were also reviewed. This research design allowed for triangulation of data elements and a comprehensive analysis of implementation efforts.

Research Site

The research site for this study was a single district community college located in Southern California. The student population reflected the multicultural, multiracial, and varied socioeconomic composition of its surrounding communities. The college was a fully accredited member of the California Association of Community and Junior Colleges. The college provided lower-division general education, associate degree programs, career technical education, certificates, and transfer preparation in over 200 academic programs. Although there was a decline in enrollment due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, enrollment was approximately 20,000 students in Fall 2021. Approximately 53% of the student population identified as Latinx and the college was a minority serving institution. The college was selected for the study based on its diverse student body and its designation of being a Hispanic serving institution. The college has a total student headcount of approximately 20,000 students per academic year.

This research site was also selected based on the mission, vision, and statement of values. An institution's mission statement serves as a guiding framework for the organization's purpose (Senge, 2006). Senge (2006) asserted organizations must have a philosophical framework of what the organization stands for before transformative changes can begin. Lo Grande College's (pseudonym) mission statement, vision statement, and statement of values exhibit the college's shared commitment to student success and equity (Lo Grande College, 2023). The college's mission, vision, and values help to center all initiatives with the intent and focus on student success.

Limitations

Generalizability

It is important to note this study's findings were specific to Lo Grande College. Under traditional research design, it is important to note there were many threats to external validity that made it problematic to provide recommendations and generalizations that apply to contexts outside of Lo Grande College. It is important to consider other factors that may have influenced the situation at Lo Grande College before making recommendations that would apply to other community colleges. Also, because faculty preparation to implement AB705 varied from college to college, the participants' experiences and the professional development they received may or may not be the same as the experiences of all faculty. The findings may not represent the experiences at all community colleges, although there may be application to other schools.

Experimenter Effects

A potential threat to external validity that should be considered based on the design of this study is experimenter effects. There is a threat of experimenter effects when the participants' responses may be influenced based on behaviors or traits of the experimenter. Because I was an administrator at the college at the time of this study, there was potential my role at the college may have influenced participant responses.

Sample Size

Twelve faculty members were interviewed, which was an appropriate sample size for a phenomenological research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The interviews provided in-depth responses from participants but may not be representative of the collective viewpoints or perspectives from all faculty in the English division.

Reliance on Memory

Participants were asked to recall experiences that began with the early implementation of AB705. These experiences may have occurred several years ago. Responses may be impacted based on the participants ability to recall information and what the participant remembers as being significant.

Delimitations

One delimitation was this study focused on AB705 implementation at only one, single-campus district. Although this design limited generalizability to other districts, it allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexities and interdependencies of implementation across the institution. This allowed me as the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how AB705 may have served as a catalyst for transformative change.

Assumptions

One assumption of this study was faculty influenced implementation of AB705 at their institution. Another assumption was this qualitative study would yield information that would help understand how both individual and organizational readiness for change supported implementation of AB705 efforts.

Positionality Statement

This topic was personal to me, as I was a community college student who was adversely impacted by the traditional math and English placement exams. As a 1st-year college student, I was placed in two levels below transfer level mathematics and one level below transfer level English. I took 2 semesters of Algebra 1 and 2 that were not transferable because admittedly math was not my strong suit. I struggled through 2 semesters, ultimately enrolling in a transfer

Statistics course after. To my dismay, little of what was taught in the nontransferable math courses served as a foundation for my success in Statistics.

I was more confident I could be successful in a transfer-level English course, so I advocated for myself and successfully appealed my placement with the English department. I was allowed to enroll in the transfer-level English course. I often think about other students who may have been in the same situation as me but did not advocate for themselves. I wonder if they took unnecessary courses, or if they gave up and did not enroll in college after being dissuaded by their math and English placement results?

As I thought about my role as a social justice leader, I put emphasis on building relationships and developing trust. As I reflected on how I could best support change on my campus, I was continuously drawn to the servant leadership model. I believed in creating a culture of trust, listening, and encouraging diversity of thought and fostering leadership in others.

As a White woman leader in education, understanding positionality has helped me recognize the oppressive structures that have placed barriers on students and colleagues and recognize my own privileges. I have been committed to being a change agent that supports and promotes a campus culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have been determined to improve the student experience and implement effective holistic student support programs that improve educational outcomes for disproportionately impacted students. My motivating factor has always been to improve the student experience to support student success.

The resiliency and determination I have seen from students has fueled my passion to dedicate myself to projects that reduce barriers for Lo Grande College students and empower our students. I was enthusiastic to further study the effectiveness and impact holistic support

programs and services have on reducing achievement gaps and achieving equitable education outcomes. I have remained committed to making a difference for students and for my community. I am eager to provide research that can help shape the future direction for student support programs and services for community college students.

In line with the mission of the institution for which I worked at the time of this study, I had a personal commitment to making a positive difference in people's lives. I genuinely care for the students, colleagues, and community I serve. I feel my role as a leader is to provide support and services that allow my students, colleagues, faculty, and staff to be successful. There is not a "one size fits all" approach when it comes to supporting students and employees. I am genuinely interested in learning how I can provide individual support and resources that will assist both students and employees in achieving their personal goals.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter gives an overview of the California community college (CCC) system and discusses the intent and early implementation of *California Assembly Bill 705* (AB705; California Assembly Bill 705 [AB705], 2017). This chapter also reviews several college initiatives and strategies institutions are using as they implement the law. Additionally, this chapter explores systems thinking, improvement science, and several social justice leadership frameworks to understand how reform efforts can support transformative change. Finally, this chapter explores empirical studies used to inform how social justice leadership and systems thinking is operationalized in this study.

Background of AB705

Each year, approximately 250,000 students enroll in 1st-year math and English courses at CCCs (Rodriguez et al., 2018). Policymakers across the state have been increasingly interested in promoting equity and student success as they propose legislative mandates and reforms designed to promote equity for students at CCCs. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Vision for Success, the Guided Pathways movement, and the expanded implementation of the Associate Degree for Transfer (AD-T) are all current initiatives that seek to improve completion and transfer rates for CCC students (Brohawn et al., 2021).

Passed into state law in 2017 and requiring full compliance by Fall 2019, AB705 was considered one of the most ambitious legislative reforms affecting students in California higher education (Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021). AB705 sought to eliminate math and English

remedial courses that may delay or hinder students from reaching their educational goals. The intent was to maximize the number of students that will complete transfer level math and English courses during their first year enrolled in college (Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021).

AB705 mandated colleges to reform their assessment and placement policies that disproportionately placed students of color into remedial courses.

AB705 was signed into California law on October 13, 2017, and required community colleges to comply with the regulation by fall 2019. Under the bill, CCCs were required to “maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year timeframe” (AB705, 2017, p. 1). Prior to AB705, standardized placement exams were used to determine proper course math and English placement for students entering the CCC system. Many students were placed into remedial courses that required several semesters of coursework before the students were eligible to take a transferable math or English course (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Sims, 2020). Students were placed into math and English courses based on their results on a placement test, regardless of the math and/or English courses and grades the students had completed in high school.

AB705 complemented the CCCs focus on Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) and Guided Pathways initiatives that sought to promote student success and eradicate achievement gaps. Although AB705 could help to address equity gaps around completion of transfer level math and English, it was not the only policy needed to promote equity and increase completion rates for community college students. The intent of AB705 was to be a structural change that would increase student success and reduce barriers for students. Research has suggested student success is increased when course curriculum and academic and nonacademic support structures

are redesigned to embed wrap-around student support services and instruction (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Cook, 2016). Studies have shown students who enroll directly into transfer level courses, while concurrently enrolling in support courses, have higher rates of successful course completion (Daugherty et al., 2018; Hope & Stanskas, 2018; Sims, 2020).

As AB705 was implemented, colleges were encouraged to redesign their student support programs to provide more holistic support structures that addressed student's academic, socioemotional, and basic needs. Some colleges created support structures that aimed to understand and support students' life challenges (Brohawn et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Many colleges implemented a corequisite support course model where students enrolled in some type of support course while taking a transfer level math and/or English courses (Brohawn et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). These corequisite courses often included support for soft skill development and connection to both academic and nonacademic support resources.

Measuring the Success of AB705

Since its implementation, the impact of AB705 was measured at the state and local levels. AB705 went into effect during the 2019–2020 academic year, increasing the number of students that enrolled in transfer level math and English courses. Preliminary review of students completing transfer level math and English during their first year are encouraging. The University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and the Los Angeles Community College conducted a study as part of a research–practitioner partnership to describe the early implementation outcomes of AB705 at the Los Angeles Community College District (Melguizo et al., 2022). In 2019–2020, there was a significant increase in the number of students that completed a transfer level English course. The number of students enrolling in transfer level

English courses during their first year more than doubled and students enrolling in transfer level math courses during their first year tripled (Melguizo et al., 2022).

Early data suggested AB705 allowed for transformative change across the community college system. Students of color, when compared across racial/ethnic groups, had the most significant increases in both enrollment and success in subsequent math courses, compared to trends prior to AB705 (Mejia et al., 2021). Data supported Black/African American students enrolling in transfer level courses grew by a factor of 5 and Latina/o/x by a factor of 3.4 (Melguizo et al., 2022). Although the percentage of students successfully completing transfer level math and English courses has declined, the overall throughput and total number of students completing transfer level math and English has increased. In the Los Angeles Community College District, almost 900 more students completed transfer level math and over 2,200 more students that completed transfer-level English, in Fall 2019 compared to Fall 2017 (Melguizo et al., 2022).

These preliminary data helped to support that AB705 was effectively removing barriers and narrowing equity gaps for disproportionately impacted student populations. Data trends will need to continue to be examined over the next several years as success numbers for the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 academic years may be skewed based on the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Preliminary data showed AB705 has had a positive impact in increasing the number of students that enroll directly into transfer level math and English courses (Melguizo et al., 2022).

According to Brohawn et al. (2021), “Timely completion of transfer-level math and English in the first year is a critical tipping point for making it near the transfer gate” (p. 8). The

study found completing both transfer-level English and math in the student's first year has an immense impact on whether the student would be deemed a transfer candidate. When looking specifically at Black/African American students, the study found students who passed transfer level math and English during their first year were more than 300% more likely to fulfill transfer requirements than those that did not. Furthermore, completing transfer level math in the first year was a greater indicator of whether the student would be transfer eligible (Brohawn et al., 2021). Black/African American students who completed transfer level math in the first year, and not English, were 160% more likely to meet transfer requirements, compared to 70% more for students who completed transfer level English, but not math, in their first year (Brohawn et al., 2021).

Implementation of AB705

College implementation has been varied as colleges were not provided with recommended best practices or a model suggesting how to effectively implement the requirements of the bill (Sims, 2020). For example, colleges had leverage in determining how they would design corequisite courses, the pedagogical frameworks, and whether students would be required to take corequisite courses (Sims, 2020). Colleges had a wide latitude on how they chose to implement the requirements on AB705 on their campuses. One of the main requirements was community colleges could no longer place students into remedial (pretransfer level) courses, unless “(A) the student is highly unlikely to succeed in the transfer-level course; and (B) enrollment in pretransfer-level coursework will improve the student's likelihood of completing transfer-level courses in one year” (California Community College Chancellor's Office [CCCCO], 2020, p. 1).

Although AB705 required colleges to modify their placement policies to include multiple measures in determining appropriate course placement for math and English courses, it did not provide the resources colleges needed to restructure support and provide professional development for faculty to ensure colleges were ready to holistically support students. As AB705 was implemented across the state, colleges used various approaches to comply with the law. There was not a consistent framework used to implement the legislation at the 115 community colleges across the state. Colleges used differing strategies such as accelerated courses, corequisite support courses, embedded services, eliminating pretransfer coursework, and multiple measures for placement (Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021). Some colleges offered extensive equity minded professional development opportunities to encourage culturally responsive teaching practices and culturally relevant pedagogy (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020).

Legislative mandates, such as AB705, were designed with the intent of increasing access, student success, and equitable outcomes in an educational system that has limited success in transfer and completion rates, especially for students of color (Lopez, 2022). Baca (2021) observed how a Hispanic-serving CCC made organizational changes in response to AB705. The study found that academic expectations should not be altered in response to AB705, but rather improvements should be made to communication structures. Baca observed barriers were a major theme in impeding successful implementation of AB705.

Lopez (2022) emphasized throughout the AB705 implementation process, change agents need to examine “underlying values, structures, processes, assumptions, and culture to institute change (p. 114). Lopez (2022) themed barriers into four major categories:

- power as a barrier to creating change,
- confusion as a barrier,
- time as a barrier, and
- resistance as a barrier.

The research called attention to the imperative role community college administrators play in influencing how AB705 was implemented. Baca (2021) noted the influence and capacity college administrators have on updating structures, using strategic plans, and ensuring the college's mission and vision statements align with the desired changes and intended outcomes of AB705 to drive substantive, meaningful, and sustaining institutional change.

If faculty are involved from the beginning planning stages of reform implementation, change efforts are more likely to be successful (Cafarella, 2016; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Sims (2020) used a mixed methods study to examine math faculty perspectives of the legislative mandate, pedagogical impacts, and implementation of AB705 at a CCC. Sims found that most of the faculty she interviewed had background knowledge and a comprehensive understanding in why the policy decision was made, but most of the faculty were neutral or did not support the legislation because they viewed it as a top-down mandate. Sims also noted being surprised that those of her faculty interview participants who supported the legislation stated they did not change their pedagogical approaches, whereas those neutral or not in support of the legislation reported changing their pedagogy. Sims made recommendations for increased faculty professional development opportunities. Another major recommendation from the study was to have increased collaboration between instructor and counseling faculty to improve recommended course placement.

At the end of 2020, all CCCs were required to submit an Equitable Placement Validation of Practices Submission form to the CCCCCO (2020) to document the college's progress in implementing AB705. The CCCCCO reported in Fall 2020, "at one in five colleges, a third or more of students were enrolled in pretransfer-level mathematics" and that "some colleges increased line pretransfer-level offerings in fall 2020" (*California Assembly Bill 1705* (AB705; California Assembly Bill 1705 [AB1705], 2022) Based on reports that colleges were not meeting the intent of the legislation, policy makers called for more stringent reform to ensure colleges ceased offering pretransfer courses.

Additional Reform Efforts and Student Support Redesign

California Assembly Bill 1705 (AB1705, 2022) was signed into California law in 2022. This legislation was a follow up to AB705, with the intention to mandate that all CCCs eliminate all remedial courses. Supporters of AB1705 asserted this bill was necessary to ensure the intent of AB705 was implemented at all CCCs. AB 1705 mandated colleges cease offering any remedial courses and focus efforts on supporting students in completing transfer-level math and English courses in their first year.

In addition to AB705 and AB1705, implementation of the guided pathways framework at CCCs further facilitated students completing their educational goals promptly. The guided pathways framework included four pillars that seek to increase student success by clarifying the students' educational path, getting students on the path, keeping students on the path, and ensuring learning (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013). McClenney (2019) focused on how the guided pathways framework's mission is rooted in a commitment to promoting college access and equity for students. Bragg et al. (2019) made recommendations on how the guided pathways

framework can be used as a tool to integrate equity. Despite several new initiatives, there is still much work to do to ensure equitable outcomes for community college students (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). Reform efforts will fail if there is not cohesion across implementation of the various initiatives.

There have been varied approaches to redesign student support structures as colleges implemented AB705 and aligned with the CCCCO's updated vision for success. Prior to AB705, several studies had suggested corequisite courses to be an effective strategy to increase course completion by connecting students to campus resources while also building genuine connections between faculty and students (Daugherty et al., 2018; Hope & Stankas, 2018; Sims, 2020). In many of these models, counselors or other student support professionals have been embedded in corequisite courses. Students have been connected to academic and support services designed to ensure students have access to resources that would help them be successful (Sims, 2020). As a result of AB705, several colleges have reimaged pedagogy and teaching practices by increasing partnerships between instruction and student support.

The implementation of AB705 has encouraged more collaboration between instructional and noninstructional areas to ensure there is holistic support available to customize and personalize the support available to students based on the students' unique circumstances. Many CCCs have reenvisioned nonacademic student support by increasing resources for basic needs, mental health, employment, and financial assistance. Partnerships between counselors and instructional faculty have been instrumental in connecting students to the various nonacademic resources available to support student success in and out of the classroom.

Models to Support Student Success

Students have greater success when they are connected to holistic support (Booth et al., 2013; Sims, 2020; Tinto, 1975, 1993). Tinto (1975, 1993) studied what factors contributed to students staying enrolled in college. Tinto (1993) suggested students are more likely to persist in higher education if the students feel connected to the social and academic life at the college. Tinto (1993) stressed that students needed to integrate into college, both socially and academically.

Student support services and resources can help integrate students into college. The student support (re)defined model evaluated student support services inside and outside of the classrooms for CCC students and identified “effective support must address the “whole student” (Booth et al., 2013). Six success factors (Booth et al., 2013) were identified as:

1. Directed: students have a goal and know how to achieve it
2. Focused: students stay on track—keeping their eyes on the prize
3. Nurtured: students feel somebody wants and helps them to succeed
4. Engaged: students actively participate in class and extra-curricular activities
5. Connected: students feel like they are part of the college community
6. Valued: students’ skills, talents, abilities, and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated. (p. 6)

This model can help to inform how colleges redesign the student support structures to support students holistically. Student support services such as basic need resources, academic counseling,

1st-year experience programs, and student clubs and organizations can help support students' sense of feeling directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued.

Role of Community College Counselors to Support Student Success

Due to AB705, the role of community college counselors has shifted focus beyond traditional academic guidance. Counselors play a pivotal role in supporting students' success by providing guidance and connecting students to resources specific to individual student circumstances. Students that meet with academic counselors transfer to 4-year universities at higher rates (Brohawn et al., 2021). Brohawn et al. (2021) found Black/African American students who meet with an academic counselor were 60% more likely to transfer than Black/African American students who did not meet with an academic counselor (Brohawn et al., 2021).

According to a recent study conducted by University of Southern California (Ngo et al., 2021), counselors felt there has been increased collaboration and discussions in their departments as well as increased collaboration with math and English departments to improve guidance to support proper course placement for community college students. Most counselors (94%) reported there was increased collaboration in their departments to discuss how to best guide and advise students on proper course placement. Only one counselor in the study said they did not rethink how they advised course placement due to AB705 (Ngo et al., 2021). In addition to reducing systemic barriers that created gatekeeper courses that impeded student success, AB705 has also helped to change how faculty approach student advising, course placement, and connection to resources.

Students who meet with academic counselors not only receive course recommendations to ensure students do not take unnecessary coursework but are also directed to services and resources that can support the student holistically based on the unique situation of the student. Dykes-Anderson's (2013) research pointed to the importance of college counseling departments providing holistic and comprehensive support and resources. Since 1989, the number of students that seek help for depression and suicide has tripled (Dykes-Anderson, 2013). The need for colleges to provide mental health and other basic needs resources has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic, with students reporting increased rates of depression, anxiety, social and emotional traumas. Students are also facing food and housing insecurities at alarming rates.

Traditionally, most colleges and universities were under-resourced to meet the social, emotional, and psychological needs of students (Dykes-Anderson, 2013). Colleges have increasingly begun offering services that support the whole student, including students' basic needs. Resources such as food pantries, clothing closets, and improved access to mental health resources are increasingly being offered at community colleges. Despite comprehensive student support programs and services offered at community colleges, many students are unaware of the academic, counseling, health, and financial resources that are available. Implementation of AB705 has increased partnerships between counseling and instructional faculty to ensure students are connected to available resources that can assist the whole student both in and out of the classroom.

Counselors have changed their approaches to go beyond academic advising to include connection to individualized resources that holistically support the whole student. J. A. Lewis

(2011) suggested counselors that had a foundation in social justice understood how their students were impacted by oppression and inequities and those counselors accepted a professional responsibility in helping students address barriers. J. A. Lewis (2011) focused on the humanistic counseling foundation, which emphasizes “the dignity of each human being, affirms the right of all people to choose and work toward their own goals, and asserts the importance of service to community” (p. 183).

J. A. Lewis et al. (2011) provided the following model to show how counselors could participate in advocacy and influence public policy on a larger scale:

- Distinguish those problems that can best be resolved through social/political action.
Identify the appropriate mechanisms and avenues for addressing these problems.
- Seek out and join with potential allies.
- Support existing alliances for change.
- With allies, prepare convincing data and rationales for change.
- With allies, lobby legislators and other policy makers

In response to AB705 and other equity initiatives in CCCs, the scope of the counselors has evolved to go beyond academic guidance and expand their focus to include individualized connection to intentional and holistic resources. AB705 implementation has also led colleges to shift focus to include both academic and nonacademic resources to holistically support student success. Systems thinking can help understand the complexities and interdependencies of various areas in an organization. changes are an example of how AB705 reform efforts are beginning to transform higher education and disrupt traditional educational structures that have systematically been a barrier for students of color.

Theoretical Frameworks

Systems Thinking Approach

Systems thinking acknowledges that college systems are complex, and there are deep issues that exist that prevent transformative change (Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015). For transformative change to occur, leaders need to foster a culture of innovation. Leaders need to communicate a philosophical framework or mission that guides the organization and establishes a sense of purpose. Simultaneously leaders need to create an infrastructure that allows for collective reflection and enables the organization to improve and evolve, continuously and intentionally (Senge, 2006).

Robinson (2010) noted that efforts to reform educational systems are not enough, and evolution of educational systems are needed to fix the broken educational system. He calls for a fundamentally innovative revolution in education where schools go beyond scaling best practices and begin to customize resources based on individual student needs and circumstances. AB705 has been boasted to be the most historic higher education reform effort of our time (CCCCO, 2023). AB705 had the potential to disrupt traditional educational structures that have restricted access to higher education for students of color and reimagine education to provide holistic, individual support structures to support students' academic and nonacademic needs.

Furst-Bowe (2011) contended leaders must acknowledge that making a change in one area of an organization will have an impact across the organization. As with AB705, changes in academic placement impacted the academic and nonacademic resources the college needed to have available for students. Furst-Bowe asserted when leaders use a systems-thinking approach,

change is accelerated and more efficient. Leaders that anticipate changes can have ripple effects across the organization can be more proactive than reactive in the approaches to change.

Stroh's (2015) systems thinking for social change model included the following:

- Stage 1: Building foundation for change,
- Stage 2: Backing current reality,
- Stage 3: Making an explicit choice, and
- Stage 4: Bridging the gap.

The first stage in this model emphasizes affirming the organization's readiness for change, engaging key stakeholders to help design change strategies, developing a shared vision, building capacity for collaboration, and understanding motivation. Stage 2 involves an analysis of the organization's understanding and acceptance of change and suggests engaging in conversations to develop a deeper awareness of staff concerns, cultivate acceptance and work to develop alternative solutions. Stage 3 calls for the organization to make an explicit choice and commit to change. Finally, Stage 4 focuses on momentum and the benefits of collaboration. Stroh's (2015) model also discussed the difference between short- and long-term impacts of action, reducing dependence on quick fix solutions and increasing investment in fundamental solutions by creating a vision of an alternative future that compels this investment over the long term (Stroh, 2015).

To create transformative change, leaders must acknowledge that institutions operate in complex systems that have systemic barriers that prevent meaningful, substantive, and sustainable change. Stroh (2015) contended that organizations and systems take on a life of their own. Despite our best efforts to drive change, the systems continue to operate as if our efforts

have no impact (Stroh, 2015). In the context of driving transformative change for social justice and equitable student outcomes, leaders must understand the forces and powers of existing structures that create barriers for change. Leaders must learn to navigate the systems and work within them, instead of unconsciously working in opposition to them. Oftentimes, institutions unknowingly contribute to the problems that they are trying to solve.

Good intentions to promote change are not enough. For transformative change efforts to be successful, organizations must have both institutional and individual readiness for change. Leaders need to have the ability to reflect on how the institutions and systems they are operating in may be unintentionally the source of inequities. A systems-thinking approach combined with foundations of social justice leadership frameworks can help to inform how colleges can continuously improve AB705 implementation and reform efforts. Shukla (2018) developed a model of systems thinking in action that can be adopted during change initiatives to focus on holistic growth. In times of crisis, leaders think, react, and adapt. Using a systems-thinking approach, leaders are proactive in anticipating how one decision can impact other parts of the organization. Transformational educational reform requires systemic changes in educational structures.

To complement systems thinking, improvement science provides a framework for continuous quality improvement. Shukla (2018) asserted systems thinking in action includes “the need of persistent improvement in the strategic, functional and operation level to observe the plan, do, check, and act process in every strategic decision that leaders make for the benefit of the institution” (p. 951). This aligns with the improvement science model of “Plan, Do, Study, Act.” Improvement science provides a method for practitioners to learn how to operationalize

specific feedback into their work (Gomez et al., 2021, Hannan et al., 2015). Improvement science views issues from a systems approach and focuses on continuous inquiry, improvement, and learning (Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015).

Improvement science allows institutions to develop a capacity for increased collaboration. Improvement science allows for (Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015):

- Trying innovative ideas (it is okay to take risks);
- A method to rapidly test change ideas (okay to fail and learn from mistakes);
- Data to be collected and analyzed frequently;
- Continuous opportunities to revise, adopt, or abandon change ideas; and
- Scale and spread successes.

Improvement science is an effective model to test innovative interventions, receive timely and consistent feedback, implement continuous improvements to the system, and promote incremental changes that can lead to transformative changes over time.

Social Justice Leadership Frameworks

Several studies have focused on transformative leadership to promote change (Glanz, 2007, Hoffman & Burrello, 2004; Kose, 2007; Marshall & Olivia, 2005; McLaughlin, 1989, Shields, 2018, 2010). Shields (2010) focused on seven key features of transformative leadership and focuses on the differences between what it means to be transformative, versus transformational or transactional. Transformative change occurs when leaders engage in critical self-reflection, participate in activism, lead change by influencing and educating others, building relationships, remaining persistent, and being steadfast in their commitment to equity. Shields's

(2010) transformative leadership approach focused on the acknowledgment of power, privilege, and introspection.

Beyond wanting to do good, social justice leaders must critically examine how their actions impacts students. Research has suggested effective social justice leaders engage in critical self-reflection, participate in ongoing professional development, develop trust, and build genuine relationships with students, colleagues, and the community (Khalifa et al., 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Theoharis, 2007). Social justice leaders understand the importance of building trust and connections with the communities they serve and lead (Khalifa et al., 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Theoharis, 2007).

Faculty, staff, and students' united voices can be enormously powerful in promoting transformative change. As an educational leader, it can be a balancing act to advocate for equitable educational outcomes for students while also meeting the expectations of executive leadership and supporting the faculty and staff concerns of those you lead. As evidenced by Schoorman and Acker-Hocevar (2010), shared governance structures can make institutional change of any kind move at a snail's pace. Faculty resistance and faculty unions can create roadblocks and often work to preserve the status quo.

It is critical to find faculty who are committed to social justice work to help rally and keep progress moving (Cafarella, 2016; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). It is important that faculty members committed to equity work have a seat at the table at committees such as Academic Senate and faculty union leadership. Garza (2008) highlighted the external pressures and threats educational leaders can be subject to when their supervisors or the Board of Trustees is invested in preserving a hegemonic culture. Schools, especially colleges, are large bureaucratic structures

that have many hoops to jump through before change can occur. Progress can be stalled, and oftentimes promising change initiatives never make it through the collegial consultation process. Sometimes it is necessary for policymakers to initiate changes in education through legislation.

When analyzing the meaning of social justice, the historical context of social justice activism should be addressed and acknowledged. What social justice leadership was once understood to be has notable differences in its modern practice. Although social justice dates to the mid-19th century, it was not until more recent times and the rise of the Civil Rights movements that social justice advocacy has had a critical focus on the inequities that exist for students based on race (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; K. Lewis, 2016; Williamson et al., 2007). History has shown students of color did not experience the same benefits, privileges, and conditions of their White counterparts in “separate but equal” schools (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; K. Lewis, 2016). In that same context, it is important to distinguish that equality does not equal equity in current social justice practices.

Larson and Murtadha (2002) noted that if educational leaders believe social justice outcomes are achieved when students of color have increased scores in standardized tests, practices such as “teaching to the test” become “best practices” that well intended educators may adopt to support their students. Schools may celebrate and boast their improved test scores, but the reality may be that the students’ learning was focused on specific assessment, rather than meaningful education. To promote culturally responsive and inclusive environments, it is important to understand the role of social justice leaders and advocates. As Larson and Murtadha (2002) noted, educational leaders promoting social justice “will have to recognize the wisdom of behaving less like corporate executives and more like community organizers” (p. 150).

In constructing policies and practices that promote social justice, it is important to consider if there are measurable outcomes to determine whether social justice practices are successful—or rather does social justice leadership succeed when students have the same rights and opportunities, regardless of race, class, religion, or any other factor. Williamson et al. (2007) pointed out “scholars who subscribe to the notion of assimilation and individual advancement as social justice confuse the battle to acquire the privileges of Whiteness with the desire to assimilate” (p. 198). Promoting assimilation should not be synonymous with promoting social justice. For social justice to be achieved, students should not be forced to be stripped of their identities, cultures, and values, but rather students’ unique identities and lived experiences should be validated and incorporated into curriculum and learning.

Operationalizing Social Justice Leadership for Transformative Change

Leaders that embody social justice leadership traits can promote transformative change and equity in their institutions by: engaging in critical self-reflection, continuously participating in activism, using their sphere of influence to lead and educate others, building relationships with students, colleagues, and the community; remaining persistent despite adversity; and their unwavering commitment to their students to enact change for equitable educational outcomes (Brooks et al., 2007; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). With the implementation of AB705, faculty that promote social justice have also implemented culturally relevant pedagogy and have committed to continuous professional development that focuses on student equity.

The models considered in this study operationalize characteristics of social justice leadership to include distributive leadership, coalition building, resistance and resilience, critical self-reflection, the acknowledgement of oppressive structures that have historically impacted

student success, growth mindset, culturally responsive pedagogy, and participation in continuous professional development.

Brooks et al.'s (2007) model of distributive leadership allows all social justice advocates to lead from where they are—whether they are in a traditional position of power. A distributive leadership model helps to describe the phenomenon of different individuals becoming leaders and engaging followers depending on different circumstances or situations (Brooks et al., 2007). In this model, one's title does not define the role of a social justice leader, but rather one's influence and action.

In systems of higher education, faculty voice and support play a critical role in the success of any change initiatives. In Brooks et al.'s (2007) distributive leadership model, there is emphasis for the individual assuming the role of the social justice leaders to “awaken” the consciousness of their students, colleagues, and community. In this model, leadership is viewed from a distributive perspective and operationalizes social justice to include leaders as transformational public intellectuals, leaders as bridge people who connect students and educators to educational resources, and critical activists who advocate for equity for all students (Brooks et al., 2007).

Leaders face resistance when trying to promote transformative change. As AB705 was implemented, not all faculty were ready to engage or accept that changes to the status quo were necessary to improve education. Theoharis (2007) called attention to the negative repercussions that social justice leaders experience from their advocacy efforts. Resistance is further complicated in academic settings when faculty face resistance and reluctance for change from

their faculty peers. Social justice leaders may inspire some to join their efforts but must also be prepared to encounter those with opposing viewpoints.

Social justice leaders have such a commitment and passion to impact change, that they may not know when to set boundaries to allow themselves to “recharge” and often internalize their sense of failure when they do not see an impact as quickly as they believe their students deserve. Social justice leaders can fall into the trap of becoming jaded when their efforts are not enough or are not making the impact they had imagined (Theoharis, 2007). These leaders may lose their enthusiasm and sense of empowerment to lead change in their schools. This can often lead to stalled, abandoned, and failed reform efforts.

To overcome the opposition leaders, face from within their schools, the community, and even their own self-doubt, the leaders highlighted in Theoharis’s (2007) study developed resilience by building networks of like-minded colleagues, engaging in continuous communication in the school and community, and constantly reminded themselves of their commitment to fight against the inequities that existed in their institutions.

These frameworks emphasize that not everyone is ready to engage in social leadership at the same time or at the same intensity. These frameworks suggest that for leaders to have the greatest impact, it is important for social justice leaders to build relationships with allies and those that may oppose their efforts. It is important for leaders to build trust so that they can foster and empower others to engage in social justice, leadership, and activism, while also guiding and influencing others to realize changes are necessary.

Social justice leaders must engage in critical self-reflection and awareness that acknowledges their position, influence, and commitment to change. Social justice leaders possess

a critical sense of self, which allows one to stay committed to their mission (Brooks et al., 2007; Shields, 2010; Theoharis, 2007). It is also important to note that how one defines, internalizes, and practices critical self-reflection will have some variability from leader to leader, and model to model. Leaders will not view social justice leadership through the same lenses and will not have the same approach to social justice leadership. Although critical self-reflection lays the foundation for social justice leaders to implement culturally responsive leadership theories, it is just the first step in building effective relationships that promote inclusivity.

Khalifa et al.'s (2016) social justice leadership framework sought to promote equity by being inclusive and responsive to the diverse background and cultures of their students. This approach relied on the leaders to have a foundation of critical self-reflection. Khalifa et al. (2016) described critical self-reflection as leaders "recognizing that she or he is a cultural being influenced by multidimensional aspects of cultural identity, even as she or he attempts to do the work of leadership" (p. 1285). Khalifa et al. explicitly included critical self-reflection of leaders as a tenet of their model, in addition to developing culturally responsive teachers, fostering culturally responsive and inclusive school environments, and engaging the students, parents, and indigenous contexts.

The culturally responsive leadership framework by Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) included six themes: caring, building relationships, being persistent and persuasive, being present and communicating, modeling cultural responsiveness, and fostering cultural responsiveness, among others. Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) asserted, "The role of the leader in equity pedagogy is to help teachers become knowledgeable of their students' cultures, not only so they avoid bias in their teaching but also to make the students' cultures part of their teaching" (p.

179). Horsford et al. (2011) suggested that teachers practicing culturally relevant pedagogy fail to “explicitly address power and privilege, White supremacy, and institutional racism” (p. 592). He contended, “as a result, some educators may romanticize or exoticize other cultures rather than recognize and legitimize them as equally acceptable ways of living, knowing, and being” (Horsford et al., 2011, p. 592).

Reed and Swaminathan’s (2016) framework for contextually responsive leadership (CRL) used three distinct pillars to put CRL into practice: distributed leadership (DL), professional learning communities (PLC), and social justice leadership (S JL). Horsford et al.’s (2011) framework included the political context, a pedagogical approach, a personal journey, and professional duty.

Reed and Swaminathan (2016) and Horsford et al. (2011) both emphasized the need for the leader to have an awareness and acknowledgement of the contexts of the students and institutions they lead. After all, how can we validate and amplify the voices of our students if we do not first hear them? Reed and Swaminathan (2016) noted that despite some teacher preparation training emphasizing social justice, “once preparation programs end, unless a school leader seeks opportunities for ongoing equity professional development, these ideas may not make their way into leadership practice” (p. 1104).

Beyond leaders’ own personal self-awareness, research points to the importance of leaders acknowledging the lived experiences of the students and communities that they serve. Khalifa et al. (2016) and Kirkland (2020) emphasized the critical consciousness aspect of culturally responsive teaching. Both asserted that teachers must know who they are as themselves as people and the contexts in which they teach. Both called for leaders to question

their knowledge base, assumptions, and beliefs of themselves and their students. Horsford et al. (2011) contended that:

The ability of educational leaders to measure and assess their effectiveness in working with student, family, and community populations are directly connected to their willingness to interrogate and acknowledge their deeply held beliefs and assumptions concerning students who represent racial, ethnic, economic, or linguistic backgrounds or life experiences different from their own. (p. 597)

Reed and Swaminathan (2016) acknowledged, “[S]chool leaders, like everyone else, come to us with baggage of misinformation and prejudice from a variety of value systems that may have reinforced oppressive behaviors” (p. 221).

To promote equity, it is important for leaders to build trust, connect with, and foster relationships with their students, parents, and community they serve (Khalifa et al., 2016). However, how can leaders engage with their communities if they do not understand their students’ narratives, lived experiences, and historical contexts? Before leaders act to create change to promote equity, they must first understand the systematic barriers and student experiences they are trying to change (Khalifa et al., 2016). Many teachers have difficulty effectively engaging and communicating with families from diverse backgrounds.

Khalifa et al. (2016) also pointed out that social justice leaders “must be keenly aware of inequitable factors that adversely affect their students’ potential” (p. 1281). Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) described culturally responsive leadership as “the ability and willingness of the leader to look beyond their own personal beliefs, values and biases to see other people for who they are—One who is willing to relate to and learn about others and then embrace their differences as they lead and impart change” (p. 182). This approach to culturally responsive

leadership included “developing a school vision that embraces all cultures” that also “combined the students’ and teachers’ lived experiences and school experiences” (p. 182).

Conclusion

Recent research has explored perceptions of mathematics faculty and the impact academic counselors have had on AB705 implementation (Brohawn et al., 2021; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). There has been limited research on the experiences and perceptions of English faculty members implementation of AB705 and the impact AB705 has had on increasing student equity.

Although there have been extensive studies that focus on systems thinking and social justice frameworks, there have not been studies that combine the two approaches to study transformative institutional change. Social justice leadership frameworks informed how individual readiness for change is operationalized and a systems thinking approach helped to operationalize organizational readiness for change (Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015).

This study explored institutional readiness for change by understanding how faculty leaders have exhibited social justice leadership traits. This study also considered how colleges are beginning to reimagine student support structures and how incremental changes are beginning to disrupt educational structures that have traditionally restricted students of color from accessing higher education. The study was also interested in understanding how organizational theory and social justice leadership frameworks informed college reform efforts to advance student equity during AB705 implementation.

The intent of this study was to understand English faculty members perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures. Additionally, this study sought to understand English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity influenced college implementation of AB705. The following chapter provides an overview of the research design.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences and perceptions of English faculty members who instructed 1st-year students transfer level composition courses during the implementation of *California Assembly Bill 705* (AB705, 2017). The study also intended to understand if faculty members took equity into consideration and used social justice leadership approaches during the implementation of AB705. Additionally, this study sought to identify how social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking can be used to prepare individuals and organizations to implement reform. The study was also interested in understanding how individual and organizational readiness for change influenced college implementation of AB705 and served as a catalyst for transformative change at the institution. This study used the individual experiences of English faculty members during the implementation of AB705 to answer the research questions. My values as a researcher and citizen were reflected in this topic selection as I chose this topic based on my lived experience of being a community college student who was negatively impacted by English and math placement exams.

As evidenced in the literature review in the prior chapter, English and Math placement at California Community Colleges (CCC) has evolved as the result of the legislative mandate of AB705. Faculty have profound influence over whether college reform efforts will be successful. Faculty approaches in implementing AB705 will directly impact student success and will have equity implications. Faculty members' leadership approaches in using systems thinking and

social justice leadership frameworks can guide institutions toward transformative changes that promote student equity and success.

This chapter details the research design and logistical components of the study. It presents the purpose statement, research questions, and explains the rationale for using a qualitative approach. It also outlines the research and data analysis methods that were used.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences and perceptions of English faculty members who instructed 1st-year students transfer level composition courses during the implementation of AB705. An additional purpose of this study was to identify how social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking can be used to prepare individuals and organizations to implement reform. The research sought to use a social justice leadership framework to understand how Lo Grande College implemented AB705 with an equity focus. This study was of local importance to Lo Grande College as understanding faculty experience and perceptions of the implementation of AB705 can enhance and improve how the college prepares for the implementation of AB1705.

This study examined the effects of English faculty leadership and influence during the implementation of AB705. This research specifically focused on the perspectives of English faculty members and their equity minded approaches in implementing the mandate. This study operationalized characteristics of social justice leadership to include distributive leadership, coalition building, resistance and resilience, critical self-reflection, the acknowledgement of oppressive structures that have historically impacted student success, culturally responsive pedagogy, and participation in continuous professional development. This study operationalized

organizational readiness for change using systems thinking organizational change theories (Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015).

Research Questions

The findings of the study will help to understand leadership, organizational change, and equity implications to consider when implementing AB705 and AB1705 at Lo Grande College and may help to inform other CCC campuses.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures?
2. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity influenced college implementation of AB705?

Rationale for Qualitative Study

A qualitative study is appropriate research design to examine deeper analysis of a complex issue (Leavy, 2017). Faculty perceptions are difficult to quantify, so the use of a qualitative research method is appropriate. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, qualitative research allows the researcher to explore: “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 24). Qualitative research uses participant perspectives to help to understand the participants point view based on their lived experiences and social, cultural, and political contexts. It aims to understand the truths of the whole person.

The characteristics of qualitative research add valuable evidence to support matters that address equity and social justice. Denzin (2010) suggested five ways qualitative inquiry can contribute to social justice:

- identifying different definitions of a problem or situation,
- identifying and interrogating assumptions,
- identifying points of intervention, and
- putting emphasis on judging based on points of view of the person's most directly affected, emphasizing uniqueness of each life.

Qualitative research is a powerful tool in uplifting the voice of those who are often oppressed, providing alternative perspectives, and counter-storytelling the actual lived experiences and contexts of participants. This study sought to understand English faculty members' perceptions and attitudes during AB705. As AB705 compliance was mandated by a reform designed by state legislatures, this study sought to understand the first-hand experiences of faculty as they implement the law at colleges.

Qualitative research empowers voices and brings to light narratives that are often left out in traditional research models that support dominant paradigms (Denzin, 2010). Qualitative research is best suited for answering the research questions as qualitative methods allow the researcher to “build a robust understanding of a topic, unpacking the meanings people ascribe to their lives— to activities, situations, circumstances, people, and objects” (Leavy, 2017, p. 124). As faculty voices may have been left out in the legislation's design, this research is important to understanding what the actual implementation experiences.

Characteristics of qualitative research include natural setting, participant perspective, researchers as data gathering instruments, extended firsthand engagement, and data analysis (Leavy, 2017). Conducting qualitative research in a participant's natural setting is an important characteristic of qualitative research as it focuses on the lived experiences of participants, allows for the researcher to understand the complete context and complexities of the setting of the participants, and allows for the researcher to emerge themselves in the participants setting (Leavy, 2017). Data analysis in qualitative research can expose the humanity that is often absent from statistical analysis. The researcher may draw conclusions from themes from the qualitative data collected. The different approaches to qualitative research will help to determine the types of data the researcher uses.

Qualitative research allows for extended firsthand engagement between the researcher and participant(s). The researcher engaged in deep and meaningful conversations that allowed them to understand the participants' perceptions and attitudes for the reform efforts. This study used responses from semistructured interviews to capture the lived experiences of the participants, draw a thematic analysis, and offer counter-storytelling that is often absent in traditional empirical research design. The conclusions drawn from the study are informed by the researchers' interpretations of the data. The researcher used thematic analysis and iterative review to draw findings from the participant responses.

Site and Participant Selection

This study used semistructured, interviews as the primary source for data collection. Additionally, document collection and analysis were used to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and compare and triangulate participant interview responses. To answer my research

question, interviews were conducted with 12 instructional faculty members who instructed transfer level English composition courses during the implementation of AB705. To gain a holistic perspective of implementation efforts, institutional documents including meeting minutes, program reviews, and training materials were also reviewed. This research design allowed for triangulation of data elements and allowed for a comprehensive analysis of implementation efforts. In the following section, I will provide details on the participants, setting, data collection, and data analysis plan.

Setting

The research site was a large public 2-year community college in a suburban region of Los Angeles County. The student body reflected the multicultural, multiracial, and varied socioeconomic composition of its surrounding communities. The college was a fully accredited member of the California Association of Community and Junior Colleges. The college provided lower-division general education, associate degree programs, career technical education, certificates, and transfer education in over 200 academic programs. Although there has been a decline in enrollment due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, enrollment was approximately 20,000 students in Fall 2022. Approximately 53% of the student population identifies as Latinx and the college is a minority serving institution (see Table 1). The college has been experiencing an enrollment decline for the last several years. As the demographics of the college continue to shift, it is important to examine how the needs of students at the college are also changing.

Table 1*Student Headcount*

Term	Total	Asian	Black/AA	Latinx	White	Two +	Other
Fall 2018	24,819	15%	13%	53%	13%	5%	1%
Fall 2019	24,271	11%	13%	44%	10%	4%	18%
Fall 2020	20,476	13%	14%	48%	13%	3%	9%
Fall 2021	19,476	14%	14%	53%	14%	4%	1%
Fall 2022	20,085	13%	13%	53%	15%	5%	2%

Note. Data from Lo Grande College Facts and Figures.

Site Selection and Gaining Entry

The site was selected based on its diverse student population, its designation as a Hispanic serving institution and its commitment to the student success and equity as evidenced in the institution’s mission statement, vision statement, and statement of values. I was currently employed as an administrator in the district under study at the time of this study. I worked directly with several department heads that allowed me access to request interviews with their faculty members and review institutional documents that were pertinent to the study.

English Department Selection

This study was designed to focus specifically on AB705 implementation efforts in the English department at Lo Grande College. The English department at Lo Grande College was specifically selected for this study based on its equity index score of 4.2 “Approaching Equity,” compared to the college-wide score of 3.30 “Needs Improvement” and the Math Department score of 2.40 “Needs Significant Improvement” (Education Trust West, 2023). According to The Education Trust West-Mapping Equitable Implementation of AB705, the equity index score was based on the following data points:

- Fall 2019 math and English throughput (the rate of students successfully completing transfer-level courses in their first term) for all students,

- Fall 2019 throughput relative to enrollment for Black and Latinx students in math and English,
- Fall 2020 transfer-level courses offerings compared to remedial course offerings, and
- Fall 2020 corequisite transfer-level courses compared to remedial course offerings for underprepared students.

The equity index score webpage tool was developed with the intent to “bring awareness to the disparate implementation of AB705 across campuses and the corresponding negative impact on Black and Latinx students” (Education Trust West, 2023). The study also emphasized it hoped it would help to inform policy makers and reform supporters to “evaluate local course placement practices and to advocate for more equitable access to transfer-level courses” (Education Trust West, 2023). As data become available as AB705 implementation efforts evolve, local implementation efforts must be reviewed, analyzed, and updated to meet students’

Participants

The English faculty were also a particularly interesting department to study based on their demographics. In the Fall 2022 faculty prioritization request document, the dean of humanities reported that there were a total of 34 full-time faculty members in the English department (Lo Grande College, 2022). Of the 34 full-time faculty members, three were Asian American, two were Latinx, and zero were Black. The remaining 29 full-time instructors were White. Additionally, there were a total of 47 part-time faculty members assigned to the English department, although demographic data were not available for that group (Lo Grande College, 2022).

This study used purposive sampling to select 12 English faculty members who instructed a 1st-year students transfer level composition course during the implementation of AB705. Purposeful sampling was used to “discover, understand and gain insight” into a specific group (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that purposeful sampling allows for the researcher to use intentional selection criteria to select research participants who can provide “information rich cases” (p. 96) to gain a deeper understanding of a complex problem.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their involvement with AB705 implementation and reform efforts and/or based on their experience instructing a 1st-year students transfer-level English and corequisite course (English 1A and English 1AS sections). The dean of humanities provided a list of faculty members who instructed English 1A and 1AS corequisite courses since AB705 implementation.

A total of 28 English faculty members, both full time and part time, who taught an English 1A/1AS course in Spring 2023 were contacted to participate. Potential participants were sent an email (see Appendix B) inviting them to participate in the research. After 7 days, a follow up email was sent reminding participants about the opportunity to participate in the study. In total 14 English faculty responded that they were willing to participate in the study, but due to scheduling conflicts only 12 interviews were conducted. Before the interviews were conducted, participants signed the Loyola Marymount University Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) and were also provided a copy of the Loyola Marymount University Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights (see Appendix D). The 12 participants included seven male participants and five female participants. Four of the participants identified as non-White and/or of mixed race and the

remaining eight participants identified as White. Of the 12 participants, nine were full-time tenured faculty members and three were part-time faculty members.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

The primary method of data collection was from semistructured interviews with English faculty members. A semistructured interview protocol was used to standardize interviews to allow for consistency in guiding the interview. As suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the interview questions were designed to allow for “inward, outward, backward, forward” open ended, narrative responses (p. 50). This design of the research questions was intended to evoke participants’ responses reflecting emotions (inward), perceptions of their environment (outward), their past (backward), and present and probable future (forward) experiences. This allowed for participants to provide deep and meaningful responses, reflections, and recommendations.

I conducted 12 semistructured interviews that lasted about 25–90 minutes. The interview questions included open-ended questions to solicit in-depth responses. I developed an interview protocol that included questions based on a combination of the research questions, and literature review. An interview protocol (see Appendix B) was used to allow consistency in the sentiment and types of questions each participant was asked. The interview protocol also allowed for intentional gathering of data aligned with the study and research questions. The goal of the interview questions was to derive as much information and insight as possible to understand the participants’ attitudes and perceptions in implementing AB705. Topics in the interview included faculty perceptions of success and challenges during AB705 implementation, how faculty purposefully revised their pedagogical or curriculum to support AB705, and what resources,

opportunities or support were being offered to students enrolling in transfer level composition and a supporting corequisite course. Participants were also asked to share their observations on how AB705 has impacted student success and to provide recommendations on how implementation efforts and initiatives could be improved in the future.

Document Review

Additional sources of qualitative data were collected for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of implementing AB705 and to triangulate the findings from the qualitative interviews. Institutional document review included department meeting agendas and minutes, the institutional web page which included the college catalog and schedule of courses (LoGrande College, 2022; 2023). I also used public data available on the California Community College (CCC) Chancellor website and success dashboards posted on the institution's webpage (Lo Grande College, 2023).

Data Analysis

Data from the interviews were analyzed using both emergent and a priori themes. The audio transcripts from each interview were analyzed and coded for common themes, concerns, recommendations, and significant findings. After each interview was conducted, I created an analytical memo to log the major themes that I identified during the interview with each participant. First, I used a priori themes to find commonalities regarding social justice leadership theory to inform individual readiness for change and systems thinking organizational theory to inform organizational readiness for change. Additionally, I identified additional emergent themes as I read each interview transcription in its entirety.

After reading each individual interview transcription for the first time, I created a list of common themes. I reread each transcript multiple times, notating and highlighting both a priori and emergent themes. Next, I grouped similar themes together to create overarching categories to narrow my focus of analysis. These categories were then organized based on if they were individual efforts or barriers to implement change or institutional efforts or systemic barriers to implement change. Additionally, document analysis and institutional artifacts were reviewed to triangulate the data uncovered in the interviews. Institutional artifacts included college facts and figures, meeting agendas and minutes, the English department's program review and course success and completion dashboards that were publicly available on the college webpage.

Protection of Subjects

An application to the Loyola Marymount University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix D) was submitted and approved before beginning data collection to ensure participant protection. Because Lo Grande College did not currently have an IRB, the President of the college designated the Director of Research and Planning at Lo Grande College to write a letter of support for the research to be completed at Lo Grande college. This letter was submitted as part of the LMU IRB application process.

The informed consent process started during the participant recruitment process. Participants were emailed the informed consent form which they reviewed and signed before the interview. Participants were also encouraged to ask questions about the informed consent form. After signing the consent form, participants completed a demographics form that included a section for the participant to choose a pseudonym used for the study. Participants were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonym for use during the study, including data analysis.

Participants who did not choose a pseudonym had one assigned to them. Additionally, any participant response that included information easily traceable to a specific participant was not disclosed in the study results. At the start of each interview participants were verbally reminded about the informed consent process, that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from participating in the study at any time for any reason. Also, before the interview started, participants gave verbal consent to have the interview recorded for transcription purposes.

Data Storage

Interview recordings, transcripts, and informed consent forms were stored on my personal cloud storage and on my Loyola Marymount University Zoom (www.zoom.us; Zoom, 2023) account storage. Files stored on my personal cloud storage account were encrypted and password protected. Audio from the interviews was transcribed using the Zoom platform. I listened to each interview while reviewing and editing the Zoom transcript. All interviews were listened to at least 2 times to confirm the accuracy of the transcription. Interview recordings will be deleted after 1 year.

Validity/Trustworthiness

The research design included triangulation of data, reflexivity of the researcher, member checking, maintaining a research log, and peer debriefing to support the study's validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Leavy, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2022). As an insider–outsider of this study, I also had to be constantly aware and recognize how my connection with the institution may have influenced how I interpreted the data. I had to be continuously aware of my biases, attitudes, and feelings throughout the study (K. Jones, 2013; Spall, 1998).

Triangulation

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that triangulation is a strategy to improve credibility of the findings by including multiple sources of data to confirm the research findings. In this study the interview data were analyzed, and then institutional documents were reviewed to confirm significant findings and themes. For example, department meeting agendas helped triangulate the types of professional development opportunities offered to faculty members. Meeting minutes also helped to inform how AB705 implementation efforts were developed, such as the design of the English 1A/1AS support courses.

Member Checking

Member checking allows for the researcher to validate the accurateness of the information they had received during the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). At the conclusion of each interview, I reviewed and reiterated major themes that I had gleaned from the meeting and asked the participant to confirm and clarify the researcher's observations. I also questioned and asked the participant to clarify certain points to confirm accuracy of my understanding and interpretation of the information collected. This strategy also helped to ensure information was not misinterpreted based on the researcher's own potential bias, viewpoints, or experiences.

Reflexivity

The quality and credibility of the findings is based on the researcher/participant relationship and themes the researcher can draw from based on the context and by what is shared by the participants. The researcher as the data gathering instrument is an important characteristic of qualitative research in that the researcher makes decisions on what data are meaningful (Leavy, 2017). Based on my role as an administrator at the institution, it was easy for me to

develop rapport and a sense of trust with the participants. The participants knew that I was pursuing this research topic because I had a deep commitment to improving student success. During the interviews, participants gave deep and meaningful responses that were candid and vulnerable. Reflexivity in qualitative research allows the researcher to reflect on their previous understandings, revise them, build on them, and develop new concepts and frameworks (Yin, 2002). There is reflexivity when interpreting the data based on the relationship the researcher has built with the participant (Leavy, 2017).

Research Log

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a reflecting journal and audit trail can be used to improve the credibility of the study's findings. Throughout this study, I maintained a research log to document decisions, ideas, and other significant insights related to it. Additionally, following each interview, I wrote analytical memos to document relevant details and themes that I captured and observed during the interview. Analytical memos and research logs can be used as a strategy to increase the trustworthiness of the results of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing is a strategy that can be used to strengthen credibility and dependability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing involves "extensive discussions" with an "impartial peer" that helps to keep the researcher "honest" throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). This process allows the researcher to discuss research tools, methods, analysis, and findings to receive feedback. Colleagues and content experts at my college, including the dean of counseling served as a peer debriefer for the study. Peer debriefing was

used in the design of the interview protocol and throughout the coding, data analysis, and findings. Discussing the design, analysis, and findings of the study with peer debriefers also helped to ensure I did not overly reflect my own biases or assumptions in the research findings (Spall, 1998).

Limitations

Generalizability

It is important to note the findings of the study were specific to Lo Grande College. Under traditional research design, it is important to note that there were many threats to external validity that made it problematic to provide recommendations and generalizations that apply to contexts outside of Lo Grande College. It is important to consider other factors that may have influenced the situation at Lo Grande College before making recommendations that would apply to other community colleges. Also, because faculty preparation to implement AB705 may vary from college to college, the participants' experiences and the professional development they received may or may not have been the same as the experiences of all faculty. The findings may not represent the experiences at all community colleges, although there may be application to other schools.

Experimenter Effects

A potential threat to external validity that should be considered based on the design of this study is experimenter effects. There is a threat of experimenter effects when the participants' responses may be influenced based on behaviors or traits of the experimenter. Because I was an administrator at the college at the time of this study, there was potential my role at the college may have influenced participant responses.

Sample Size

Twelve faculty members were interviewed, which was an appropriate sample size for a phenomenological research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The interviews provided in-depth responses from participants but may not be representative of the collective viewpoints or perspectives from all faculty in the English division.

Reliance on Memory

Participants were asked to recall experiences that began with the early implementation of AB705. These experiences may have occurred several years ago. Responses may be impacted based on the participants ability to recall information and what the participant remembers as being significant.

Delimitations

One delimitation was this study focused on AB705 implementation at only one, single-campus district. Although this design limited generalizability to other districts, it allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexities and interdependencies of implementation across the institution. This allowed me as the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how AB705 may have served as a catalyst for transformative change.

Assumptions

One assumption of this study was faculty-influenced implementation of AB705 at their institution. Another assumption was this qualitative study would yield information that will help understand how both individual and organizational readiness for change supported implementation of AB705 efforts.

CHAPTER 4

FACULTY PERSPECTIVES AND MAJOR THEMES

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore faculty members' perceptions and attitudes on the implementation of *California Assembly Bill 705* (AB705, 2017). This study was concerned with AB705's potential to serve as a catalyst for transformative change across student academic and support structures at California Community Colleges. In addition, the study sought to understand how a focus or lack of focus on student equity, combined with individual and organizational readiness for change, influenced college implementation of AB705. This study collected data on English faculty members' individual experiences and perspectives of the implementation of AB705.

The data collected in this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures?
2. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity influenced college implementation of AB705?

According to the 2021–2022 English Department Program Review, to comply with AB705, the department:

created a corequisite course which is linked to English 1A (freshman composition); the corequisite is 1AS. 1AS is a two-unit corequisite course that is designed to provide students with two additional hours per week with the instructor allowing the students more time to work on their reading, writing skills and much more. Students with a GPA (Grade Point Average) of 2.59 and below are placed in English 1A with 1AS. This corequisite provides embedded tutoring and counseling services to help students in the classroom, offering targeted instruction to those who need it most.

To comply with AB705, students were placed directly into English 1A, transfer level English composition. Students were either placed in English 1A class without the support component or in the English 1A/1AS sections corequisite support course component that included embedded counselors, success coaches, and tutors. In Fall 2022, the number of students that enrolled in the English 1A/1AS corequisite with support was 1,565 and the number of students that enrolled in the English 1A course without support was 2,084 (see Table 2). Of the 1,565 students that enrolled in English 1A/1AS in the Fall 2022 semester, only 77.3% of students completed the course and only 48.8% completed the course with a passing grade. When the English 1A/1AS course completion rates were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, the highest course completion was for White students at 82.2% and Asian students at 81%, compared to 77.6% for Latinx students and 74.2% for Black/African American students. Of the groups that had over 10 students enrolled, Asian students had the highest successful course completion rate at 64.7% followed by White students at 63%. Only 46.6% of Latinx students and only 42.5% of Black/African American students successfully completed English 1A/1AS courses.

Table 2*Fall 2022 English 1A/1AS Course Enrollment and Success—Race and Ethnicity*

Race/ethnicity	Enrollment	Course completion	Course success
America Indian	<10	100.0%	75.0%
Asian	116	81.0%	64.7%
Black/African American	221	74.2%	42.5%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<10	50.0%	25.0%
Hispanic or Latinx	1,010	77.6%	46.6%
Two or more races	56	67.9%	51.8%
Unknown/decline	18	61.1%	27.8%
White	135	82.2%	63.0%
Total	1,565	77.3%	48.8%

Note. From Lo Grande College Institutional Research Dashboard

Students that enrolled in English 1A without support had higher course completion and success rates (see Table 3). This is most likely attributed to student enrolling in English 1A without support having a greater foundational English skillset. Students were recommended to take English 1/1AS corequisite support section if they had below a 2.5 GPA in high school. In Fall 2022, of the 2,084 students that enrolled in English 1A with support, 80.2% completed the course and 62.7% successfully completed the course. Similar to English 1AS course completion and success rates, Asian and White students had higher course completion and success rates compared to Black/African American and Latinx students.

Table 3*Fall 2022 English 1A Course Enrollment and Success—Race and Ethnicity*

Race/ethnicity	Enrollment	Course completion	Course success
American Indian	<10	75.0%	50.0%
Asian	293	90.1%	79.9%
Black/African American	220	70.0%	49.5%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10	80.0%	80.0%
Hispanic or Latinx	1,143	77.1%	56.1%
Two or more races	116	85.3%	71.6%
Unknown/decline	14	92.9%	71.4%
White	283	88.3%	77.7%
Total	2,084	80.20%	62.70%

Note. From Lo Grande College Institutional Research Dashboard

This study included interviews from 12 English faculty members who had taught English 1A and/or English 1A/1AS during the implementation of AB705 (see Table 4). The study included faculty from various backgrounds and demographics. All faculty demographic data were self-reported by the participant. The study included three adjunct faculty members and nine full-time faculty members. The participants had community college teaching experience from 6–36 years. To protect the identities of participants, participants’ ethnicities are not disclosed. Instead, race was classified into three categories: White, non-White, and mixed race.

Table 4*Demographics of Study Participants*

Name	Years	Current position	Race	Gender
Sue	12	Adjunct	Non-White	Female
Clare	10	Adjunct	Mixed race	Female
Travis	8	Adjunct	White	Male
Cam	25	Full-time tenured	White	Male
Hubert	17	Full-time tenured	White	Male
Margaret	36	Full-time tenured	White	Female
Allie	15	Full-time tenured	Non-White	Female
Brian	18	Full-time tenured	White	Male
Lee	22	Full-time tenured	Non-White	Male
John	6	Full-time tenured	Non-White	Male
Erin	11	Full-time tenured	White	Female
Cristian	13	Full-time tenured	White	Male

Note. Demographics were self-reported by participants.

This chapter presents significant themes identified in the study, as told through the experiences and perspectives of the faculty participants. This chapter thematically presents the faculty responses in two sections: individual readiness for change and institutional and systemic readiness for change. As informed by the literature review, social justice leadership frameworks were used to analyze individual readiness for change and systems thinking was used to analyze institutional readiness for change. The faculty's perceptions on how student equity influenced college implementation of AB705 are included throughout each subsection. Throughout this chapter, developmental and remedial may be used interchangeably to describe courses in the pretransfer level English sequence that students were often placed in to prior to AB705. These courses were designed to prepare students for the transfer-level English composition course, but these courses had since been eliminated to comply with AB705 requirements.

To answer the research questions, data were collected using semistructured interviews. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of research participants. The participants in this

study included three part-time and nine full-time faculty members. I analyzed the data collected in the study using social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking. Systems thinking was used to analyze institutional readiness for change and social justice leadership frameworks were used to analyze individual readiness for change. I first organized the data into two overarching themes, individual readiness for transformative change and systemic readiness for transformative change. Then, I grouped data that evidenced faculty perceptions on AB705's impact on equity and faculty recommendations to improve reform efforts into subgroups.

Theme 1: Individual Readiness for Change and Commitment to Equity

The first major theme analyzed in the study was individual instructor's readiness to implement AB705. Individual willingness to change aligns with the tenets of social justice leadership frameworks (Brooks et al., 2007; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). These tenets of social justice theory, including continuous critical self-reflection, internal checks of bias and privilege, coalition building, and continuous training and professional development were used to analyze the data collected in this study. These data were analyzed to exhibit the participants willingness and readiness to lead transformative AB705 reforms efforts for equitable student outcomes.

Introduction of Participants and Their Initial Reactions to AB705

The faculty interviewed in this study included both part-time and full-time faculty. Participants had a range of 6–36 years of teaching experience. Three of the faculty members were part time and the nine full-time faculty member participants all achieved tenure status. Eight of the participants identified as Caucasian and five participants identified as mixed race, Asian, or Latinx.

The participants in this study had varied reactions when they first learned of AB705 reform efforts. Some faculty participants supported the legislation from the beginning, whereas some participants opposed (and continue to oppose) the legislation. There were also several participants who reported being initially hesitant, but through training and preparation decided to support the reform efforts. Despite faculty members varying degrees of support for the legislation, one thing was consistent across all participants—they had an unwavering commitment and desire to help students be successful. This section provides a brief introduction of each participant and will give an overview of their initial reactions to AB705 legislation.

From the beginning several faculty members were on board and enthusiastic about implementing AB705. Cristian, Allie, John, and Erin, who were all full-time tenured English faculty, were supporters of AB705 from its inception. All four faculty members had also previously taught pretransfer level English courses before they began teaching English 1A/1AS support courses. Cristian strongly supported AB705, as he felt the change to allow students to enroll directly into transfer level English courses was a “necessary evolution and a necessary step toward getting more equitable outcomes.” Cristian believed that AB705 complemented other reform efforts such as Guided Pathways to support more equitable student outcomes. Similarly, Allie believed that AB705 was welcomed and needed change. She noted that pre-AB705, it was heartbreaking to see students get stuck in pretransfer level courses without every making it to the transfer level English course.

John and Erin shared unique experiences and perspectives as they were just beginning their tenure-track positions when AB705 implementation began at the college. John shared, “I have a unique story in that I was thrust into AB705 immediately when I started tenure-track.”

John noted it was interesting to see how the various colleges where he had previously been an adjunct faculty member, were also preparing to implement AB705. John expressed, “To be honest, I really appreciate the fact that I was kind of thrown into the fire.” He explained when we arrived at Lo Grande College, the Puente program, was “really ahead of the game with regard to AB705.” Erin, who was also starting as a tenure-track faculty member during initial AB705 implementation planning, was all-in as an AB705 supporter from the start. She was enthusiastic and eager to support efforts that would lead to more equitable efforts for students.

Margaret, Hubert, Cam, Lee, and Brian were all full-time faculty members who admitted having some reservations about the implementation of AB705. They were all former remedial instructors who noted witnessing the growth and development of students who took remedial courses. Lee joked, “I don’t want to call myself a grudging supporter, but maybe that’s what I am?” They shared similar opinions where they understood the intention of AB705 but also thought students who wanted to take developmental courses should also have that option. Hubert shared he was initially skeptical of the reform efforts, but ultimately saw the potential in the legislation. Hubert shared initially, “It was hard for me to fathom how students in those classes would be able to pass a transfer level course without any practice or run up to it.” Hubert emphasized how no longer offering remedial courses “was hard for [him] to wrap my head around, and as [he] suspected, it was hard for many of [his] colleagues to wrap their heads around it too.” In terms of getting on board with the AB705 reform, Hubert exclaimed, “I feel like within pretty short order. We sort of got on the bus and decided, okay, this is what we’re doing. Let’s make the most of it.”

The part-time faculty members shared unique perspectives on their initial reactions to the reform. The part-time faculty members brought varied experiences from throughout the K–16 educational system. Clare, a part-time faculty member who also had experience teaching in K–12, was initially curious how AB705 would affect her role as a reading instructor. She noted that once she realized AB705 was coming, she started doing some of her own research, to understand the data behind the intent of the legislation. She recalled starting to realize the classes she taught as a reading instructor would “obviously start getting phased out.” When she heard colleagues start to suggest that developmental departments and classes would go away all together, she shared, “I remember at the time thinking ‘Well, that feels pretty extreme.’” She decided to dig into the data. She noted, “It kind of alarmed me to see students kind of getting trapped in these remedial courses. I think at one point a lot of schools offered almost 2 years. So, 4 semesters worth of [remedial] courses.” Clare recalled that when she realized that meant some students were not able to get into transfer level English until they completed the required remedial course sequences, she knew something needed to change.

Travis, a part-time faculty member who also had experience teaching in K–12, was not shy in expressing his opposition to AB705. Travis asserted, “With the implementation of AB705, they have removed the single most critical element of getting those students where we profess, we need them to be, and that is by offering developmental writing classes.” Travis added, “I think that it was exactly the wrong move because it’s the exact opposite of what those students need. They need additional support. They need additional time. They need to go back and revisit the fundamentals.” Travis jokingly remarked, “I should probably say, look, I don’t have a PhD in education administration, the whole AB705 thing may very well be brilliant and I’m simply not

smart enough to appreciate it, but I do know what goes on in the classroom.” Throughout his interview, Travis asserted his frustration that the legislation harmed students more than it helped.

Sue, a part-time faculty member who also taught at the university level, shared she liked the idea that AB705 focused on “getting students through the system quicker.” She believed the English remedial class sequences were too long. She explained students usually enrolled in 3 semesters of remedial reading and 3 semesters of remedial writing. Sue exclaimed, “Theoretically, students would have to go through 6 steps of remedial or basic skills English courses before they can get into freshman composition.” However, Sue shared that now she had taught English 1AS, she strongly felt that the pretransfer level courses still needed to be available to students who wanted to take them. She noted many of her students were not successful completing transfer level English composition, even after several attempts. She asserted, “We really need basic skills classes, especially here at the community college level.” Although Sue supported the legislation and saw its potential, she felt there still needed to be some additional time and support for students who struggled to pass the English 1A/1AS courses and opted to take pretransfer level preparation courses.

Professional Development

Several participants in this study discussed how professional development was a key component to their individual readiness to implement AB705. Eleven of the faculty members stressed the importance of professional development during AB705 implementation. Faculty shared how training inspired critical self-reflection and improved faculty capacity to use equity-minded teaching and learning.

Allie, a full-time tenured instructor, recalled the benefits of her participation in the California Acceleration Project (CAP) training conferences. According to English department meeting minutes from September 6, 2018, faculty who attended the CAP training reported receiving “great training on how to adjust teaching styles in the wake of AB705” (Lo Grande College, 2018). Allie noted her participation in the CAP allowed her to connect with colleagues and strategize how they could implement the legislation to most effectively benefit and support students.

Erin began attending training sessions like the CAP, even before AB705 became legislation. Erin shared, “I feel like a lot of us were sitting around and like reading the tea leaves right, especially in English.” Erin noted that at the same time that AB705 was passed, she became a full-time instructor at Lo Grande College. She recalled, “I was in a cool spot to be watching a lot of that because we had a feeling that BSI, basic skills coordination was going to move toward AB705, and we weren’t sure what that was going to mean.” When she arrived at Lo Grande College, she attended the CAP training. She reflected on her experience attending the training with her new colleagues as a young faculty member. She remembered the impact that experience had on her. She stated, “If I were to write down the 10 of the most important [professional development training] in my life, it would be in the top 10.” She described her experience at the next CAP conference she attended recalling at that time, “it was still not required that [they] implemented AB705.” She said, “I gave a presentation, and then I kind of felt like I had joined the Honey Badgers Club.” She continued, “that was helpful, you know, as an identity kind of thing.”

Erin shared she was the last instructor who was still teaching the remedial courses before they were eliminated. Erin emphasized, “Anecdotal, people love to bring up how great it was to teach basic skills classes. And I try to empathize because I also love teaching basic skills classes.” Erin recalled, “They were great, like taking 4 months to teach the paragraph. You play games, take nature walks like it was a blast like it just was a waste of their time. you know.” Erin recalled, “Then I remember having, like the ethical coming to consciousness, and realizing that I wasn’t comfortable teaching that class anymore.” Erin noted that despite many faculty members being in support of AB705, there was still a “fair amount of infighting” as faculty members worked together to determine how AB705 would be implemented.

Margaret shared that although she was initially hesitant about the legislation, she quickly got on board and became involved in reform efforts. She asserted, “I had mixed feelings about the implementation of AB705, but went to a lot of meetings with colleagues, and you know, I mean the law is the law.” The AB705 reform efforts piqued Margaret’s interests because she understood students were getting stuck in the developmental courses and she wanted to be part of a solution to support students in completing the transfer level courses.

John shared that Lo Grande College had previously offered a professional development program called “SITE: the Scholarly Institute for Teaching Excellence.” John noted it was developed by faculty members and was “inspired by AB705,” but emphasized his disappointment that the training was no longer around. John shared that he appreciated the SITE training because it was a campus wide, cross disciplinary professional development. He believed the training approach was particularly successful because it did not just have an English or Math slant, but that the training focused on “getting people on board campus wide. Not just department

wide.” John explained that by attending professional development opportunities such as SITE and the CAP conferences, he improved his practice and learned so much from his colleagues’ experiences in other disciplines. He shared, “It’s so interesting to me how they approach the classroom. It’s still so cool.” John also shared that he also completed other online professional development opportunities on his own to “sharpen [his] canvas presence and [his] pedagogy.” He emphasized, “I feel like that just opens me up to chat, to challenge myself and sharpen my overall approach.”

The interviews also highlighted the potential disparities in professional development opportunities for part-time faculty members. Unlike the full-time faculty members who reported having several professional development opportunities and trainings available to prepare for AB705 implementation, Sue’s perception as a part-time faculty member was “like no one really told [them] exactly what AB705 was, like this is what it means.” Sue did not feel the intent of AB705 was adequately explained. She noted, “No one really told us. They just said, ‘oh, we’re just getting rid of basic skills classes.’”

Part-time faculty members also noted that they are often working at several different campuses, which often prevents them from committing to attending “Brown Bag Lunches,” the English 1A/1AS committees, and other applicable training or meetings. Additionally, it was suggested that attendance at these types of training events and activities may also be on the part-time faculty members’ own time. Allie recalled, “I mean, I have seen some of my adjunct colleagues at some of these trainings, but they will mostly have to do it on their own time out of their own pocket. So, it does make it harder.” Hubert, a full-time faculty member, shared a similar concern. He noted, “Adjuncts never have the resources or the training that’s needed right.

They're always going to struggle to find those things because their investment in any one campus is lower than a full-time faculty." Hubert empathized with the struggle of part-time faculty members having to work at multiple campuses, while struggling to attend professional development opportunities and become familiar with the various campus resources.

Part-time faculty also expressed feeling left out of some professional development opportunities. As a part-time faculty member, Travis provided his insight, "I know that there are professional development opportunities that are available to all full timers and adjuncts that are not compensated." Travis continued, "I know that there are opportunities presented to faculty that isn't offered to adjunct. I think that adjuncts should have equal access to all professional development." Travis also pointed out, "I think, if I'm not mistaken, there are actual committees and work groups that adjuncts are simply not invited to participate in." Clare, a part-time faculty member for over 10 years, shared similar concerns. She asserted, "Sometimes as part timers we're as much of the college as anybody else. but we're kind of relegated to." She added, "Like not given input, or not having seats at decision making tables or on committees." Part-time faculty members shared a desire to be more involved but noted it was also difficult based on their time being split at other campuses.

Informal Coalition: English 1AS Committee

Several full-time faculty members discussed how their participation in the English 1A/1AS committee was beneficial. Cristian, Erin, John, Margaret, Allie, Cam, and Hubert all discussed how being part of the English 1AS committee was beneficial during the implementation of AB705. This may have been one of the committees that part-time faculty members were not able to take advantage of. Faculty members who participated in the committee

expressed their shared commitment to promote equitable student outcomes. Participants in the committee shared the committee formed when like-minded colleagues began to unofficially gather, effectively building a coalition of different voices who united to support students and one another during AB705 implementation. Cristian shared that he thought Lo Grande College did an excellent job in preparing faculty members for AB705 implementation. He also shared that the English faculty had got together to form what he called an “English 1AS Survival Group” which would later become the English 1AS committee. He explained, “We all get together and share how it’s going. How are you feeling? We check in with each other. We share strategies, we write recommendations for other 1AS teachers. We’ve addressed things like updating the course to be more equitable, we try to make the course better.” He shared that the group was helpful for faculty to share their best practices and provide a network of support for one another.

Throughout the interviews, full-time faculty brought up how being part of the English 1AS committee allowed them to share ideas and improve their teaching styles and practices. Erin noted that faculty members who were teaching English 1A/1AS sections organically got together to create an informal English 1AS committee. She shared that her colleagues would meet to discuss their experiences and share best practices with each other. Allie shared, “We have a 1AS committee, and so during our committee meetings I only talk to people who are on board with it.” She added, “Who are, you know, doing their best to help their students succeed, and we’re sharing strategies. What can help our students, what is going on.” She also revealed, “A lot of it is commiserating, I have to admit.” A consistent theme shared by the many of the participants was, although they may have been initially hesitant of the legislation, participation in

professional development and critical self-reflection allowed them to recognize and accept change was necessary.

Changing Expectations

Several participants discussed how preparation for AB705 allowed them to engage in critical self-reflection to change some of their classroom management practices. As Lee explained his process of self-reflection, he exclaimed he was not necessarily a “prick” pre-AB705, but the training he received allowed him to recognize and be more aware of the barriers and hurdles many of his students face. Lee also suggested students perceiving the instructor as uncaring and/or dismissive of their situations was another hindrance to student success. Lee shared, “So the great thing about AB705, I think it did make instructors more aware or conscious of the struggles that different students face.” Lee shared how prior to AB705, his policy was not to allow any students to enter class if they were late. Lee started to get emotional as he recalled, “How about that student taking two bus transfers just to get here. It’s heartbreaking, like I don’t want to cry or anything, but you think of it.” Lee remembered, “I had students who would show up, and they’d be late because their bus was late, and I don’t think I just fully appreciated it. What it took for them to get there.” Lee insisted, though he did change some policies, he did not lower his academic standards.

Travis worried some instructors may have been compromising academic rigor as they made changes to their pedagogical approaches. He asserted, “The focus has now shifted to addressing and providing emotional support as opposed to academic support.” He was concerned many of his colleagues were putting more of an emphasis on “reducing [students’] anxiety at the exclusion of doing the academic work.” He added, “I get it, there’s a balance. You want

sympathy. You want empathy. You want to have compassion and understanding at the instructor level. But there's also the getting the job done." In terms of classroom policies, Travis shared, "I have a very generous attendance policy, meaning you have to break up with me. I'm not going to break up with you." He noted that he has students in his courses that had a significant number of absences. He asserted, "I certainly would have been within my rights to have dropped you. But I want them to learn. I want them in the room."

Brian described how he adjusted his approach with students to be more caring and supportive. Brian recounted, "I'm kind of the sarcastic teacher who pops off and makes fun of my students and jokes with them, and all that kind of stuff, and I've kind of had to reign that in." Brian shared that his old approach was to joke with students, especially if they did not do their reading assignments. Brian explained, "Before, I would have given them some snarky comments and now I'm like, oh, well, let's talk about why you didn't do it."

Margaret insisted, "I do hold my students to a certain standard in terms of academic English and proper grammar and use of documentation style," but she explained she adjusted her approach to give students the opportunity to revise their writing assignments during class time. Margaret explained, "If we don't prepare them for transfer, and most students want to transfer, and if we don't give them those skills. You know how we'll not give them, help them, you know, attain those skills." Margaret hoped, "maybe in decades from now, maybe not even a decade. The Academy will change, and you know the understanding. you know of what academic English is will become less racist, more just." Margaret continued, "But until that happens. it's like throwing students to the wolves."

Clare explained since the pandemic she realized, “the students need to feel that they need to know that they’re cared for, that we see their strengths. We’re building on their strengths. and just being flexible.” As Clare discussed her relaxed tardiness policy, she noted, “people say this all the time about me letting students come in at whatever time, and the real world will have consequences.” She asserted, “Yes, the real world will fire them. I’m not their boss.” She continued, “I don’t have that mindset. I have a mindset of grace.” She also noted, “But I also believe, the consequences are natural in my class.” She explained, “If you walk in an hour late and you just miss the lecture and now, we’re in a writing workshop you’re going to struggle.” However, she noted the student could work on their computer to catch up.

Although Cam wanted to be as flexible as possible to assist students, Cam explained it was often difficult to adjust standards and deadlines. Cam noted, “We have a timeframe that we have. We have a beginning of a semester in an end semester, and we way points between that. And when a student is struggling, they don’t understand that. We have constraints.” He added, “Yeah, I would love to give you as much time as you needed to write this, but unfortunately. we’ve got another essay to start working on, and that’s the hard part.” Cam explained on the first day of class he would often ask his class, “How many of you all want to take this class without any deadlines? And very few, if any, will raise their hand.” Cam noted over his over 20 years of teaching he had learned “students need deadlines, human beings need that.” He added, “I know I need them as a professional, and so it’s finding that balance where you’re giving structure but you’re not so harsh.”

The faculty all agreed that they wanted to support their students’ success, but they had varying opinions on how shifting their classroom practices would impact their students. Overall,

faculty were open and willing to make changes to their courses if it would be a benefit to students. Faculty were only hesitant in updating their practices when they believed it would negatively impact the student's future academic success. Many faculty felt it was their obligation to ensure their students had foundational academic skills to be successful as an academic writer.

Changes to Pedagogy

Most faculty members that participated in the study reported a willingness to change their pedagogical approaches to support student success. Several participants discussed making changes to curriculum, textbooks and course materials, and classroom management approaches and/or policies. Participants shared how they incorporated culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching practices to validate students' lived experiences and leverage students' social and cultural capital.

Cristian shared that he decided even prior to AB705 implementation to update his texts to be more modern and relevant to students' interests. He explained, the traditional approach of using texts from dead, White, male authors gave a cultural capital advantage to White students. He noted, "It's not just that students of color were feeling left out. It's that it was also giving a step up to previously advantaged students, anyway." He noted the importance of having authors from diverse backgrounds, including different gender and sexual orientation identities, that different students in his classes could relate to.

In terms of his course materials, Brian explained, "My texts have stayed the same. I always try to keep a certain amount of rigor. I do challenge them a little bit. I want them to have endurance to finish a longer text. So, I still stick to the two long longish works that they have to do for the semester." However, in terms of his approach to classroom management Brian stated,

“I’ve become a softer touch, I think, like more patient.” Brian also shared, “It’s also through the equity training that we’re making our adjustments. So, it’s also about being more mindful of those kinds of things.”

Similarly, Cam stated he did not necessarily change course texts to help support AB705 efforts but noted that he knew many of his colleagues had made “big changes and big strides in that regard.” He shared, “I’ve always tried to have literature works and texts that reflected my students.” Cam said he had made a concerted effort to include more diverse authors in his course, even prior to it becoming a best practice. As a result of AB705, several faculty members were trying different approaches to increase student success in their courses.

John was enthusiastic about having low-cost textbooks, or even zero cost textbooks in his courses. John shared he did not want students to choose whether they could take his classes based on the ability to buy textbooks and course materials. John explained, “So for me, I don’t really have a traditional textbook. I create handouts myself, coupled with OER (Open Educational Resources), online educational resources and for the past, 4 or 5 years. The only thing I have them buy is one novel.” John added, “I think the students appreciate that, because in the other class, when they drop 200 bucks, the CD costs another 50, and this and that.” He noted his approach was “inspired by equity, by trying to create more equitable outcomes.” He believed his students appreciated his efforts and helped them understand. “I’m there for them,” he added.

Allie described how she updated her texts to be more relatable to her students. Allie allows her students to select from five diverse types of memoirs, including memoirs by a Latina translator who assisted children migrating to the United States, a graphic novel artist, a Muslim, an Asian American woman who was adopted by White parents, and a Black Lives Matter

activist. Allie shared she was intentional on choosing texts that are relevant to her students' lived experiences. Allie shared, "My students have said that the ability to choose a book definitely helps their reading experience, because, you know, I'm telling them, choose a book that interests you that resonates with your personal experience." Allie shared that when her students draft their essays about the book, they include their personal experience in connection to the author's story. Allie explained, "So you know. I'm trying to show them, like, your personal experiences are valid." She emphasized that she wants to create an environment where her students feel they belong in a college classroom. Allie noted her strategy is to "engage them and show them that their experiences do matter in the college classroom." She asserted, "I guess it's very similar to Yosso's cultural wealth theory."

Clare shared a similar approach where she chooses texts appealing to her students and assigns narrative assignments that let them share their unique experiences and perspectives. Clare emphasized that she wants her students to feel like they belong in the course, so she tries to find ways to "make the courses more engaging." She noted, "I have colleagues teaching things that they read in college." She questioned, "Is that relevant to our students?" She noted faculty would often debate about curriculum, pedagogy, and course requirements. Clare noted, "So many folks are focused on this academia form of writing that I'm like, where does that serve us, where do people use that?"

Several participants challenged the traditional approaches and texts that were used in their English 1A/1AS courses. As many participants pointed out, traditional 1st-year English composition courses included text from predominantly White, male authors. Several instructors were updating their course materials to be more diverse and reflective of their students' voices

and identity. Several instructors were all challenging the importance and focus on academic writing criteria and expectations in their English 1A/1AS courses. Many English faculty members were exploring new pedagogical approaches to teaching transfer level English composition.

Linguistic Justice and Acknowledgement of Students' Cultural Capital/Wealth

There seemed to be the greatest faculty divide on implementing pedagogical approaches that used linguistic justice in English 1AS courses. Cristian was excited to explore how linguistic justice could be implemented in his English 1AS course. He explained, "Another thing we're looking at is presenting diverse voices is one part of creating a more culturally responsive classroom." He added, "But if you leave it there, it's kind of like preparing a meal, but not cooking it right. It's that there's an element missing which is when you want to be culturally responsive." He asserted, "I am never going to be an expert in all of the cultural wealth that my students have. I'm never going to be, and no teacher is, regardless of their background, because our students are very diverse." He added, "So, in order to celebrate that diversity, we have to allow students to bring some of themselves into the classroom." He noted, "In different classes that means totally different things, but in English it's actually not that hard, right?" He explained:

You ask students for example, in your home language, the way you speak at home. How would you describe this concept? or you talk about? "What are the things that you've learned in your home life, and I use the word home generally. Not necessarily their house, but you know your home life, your home culture, your home language that could apply to this problem that we're posing in writing. And so, I think that the second part of making English classes more equitable is making sure that the student voice is not just sort of being reflected to them, but that it's having an impact on the class itself, and that they're being shown that it is academically valuable that it is rhetorically valuable.

Clare shared that the English department recently had a training promoting linguistic justice. She believed it would “probably be another kind of divided topic among colleagues,” but added she leans more in favor with linguistic justice. She explained:

There’s these opportunities and discussion boards or collaborations to be like, just say it how you say it like, just use your authentic voice and let’s hear your ideas that are, you know, great, and they don’t have to be perfect in the grammar, you know, we don’t have to be self-conscious of it.

Erin was also enthusiastic, stating, “I want to use linguistic justice and inclusivity in the language standards of our classrooms, and making sure that Black English is a valid way to communicate, and like, how can we use Spanish in an essay.” Erin reported facing resistance from fellow faculty who would point to the course’s student learning outcomes of grammar, clarity, and readability.

There were some participants in the study that did not support the idea of incorporating linguistic justice in English courses. One participant felt passionate and compelled to keep academic English as a requirement based on her lived experience as a community college. The faculty member, who wanted to be anonymous on their position toward linguistic justice, shared:

Some of my colleagues allow students to write in a way that is unclear, because of style, grammar issues, and they are like well, academic English is racist and unjust and inequitable. So, students don’t have to use it, and that angers me because it’s like, if I had professors like that in community college, I wouldn’t have made it at the University. I wouldn’t have gotten a bachelor’s, and I certainly wouldn’t have gotten a masters and a PhD.

Another faculty member had a similar concern, stating:

There is a whole group of teachers that are saying we can’t correct students’ grammar because again, you know, it’s the right White supremacy idea of grammar. You know this, the rules that we come up with, we can’t correct students, grammar and again, I am seeing the students in my upper division courses write horribly. You know. Some of their sentences are so grammatically incorrect that sometimes I’m like, I have no idea what you’re trying to say, because there’s, you know, grammar errors everywhere. Do we

really want them to go off into their . . . you know the real world, right? writing their cover letters like that, you know. They're not going to get hired you know, or if they do have a job. And they write, you know, emails to their presidents like that. you know. they're not going to get a raise or right, or they're not going to become managers. So, I don't know. Are we really helping them or not helping them?

The faculty that opposed offering linguistic justice noted that they felt it was their obligation as a transfer level English composition instructor to ensure students could write to traditional academic writing standards. It is important to note that these instructors did not necessarily agree with traditional academic writing standards being the dominant academic expectation but felt that as long as there were societal and educational academic writing expectations, they did not feel comfortable using linguistic justice in their courses. One faculty member shared that they were particularly passionate about adhering to the academic writing expectations in their course because the instructor shared, they would not have been able to be successful in graduate school if their transfer level English composition course they took in community college prepared them to be an academic writer.

Changing of the Guard

Several faculty members pointed out that many of the faculty who did not support AB705 no longer taught at the college. Most faculty members noted that most faculty members that were currently teaching the English 1A/1AS sections, as Cam described, because they “wanted to be there.” In terms of having to comply with the law, Cam shared, “I think there were some older faculty who have retired that resisted it.” Many participants alluded that those faculty members that had not believed in the AB705 reform efforts had left the institution. Hubert further elaborated, “We are now a pretty young department, but that has not always been the case with English. It's not always the case everywhere, obviously. But I think we have a pretty hip young

group of diverse people who are more, perhaps inclined, to view a student's potential." He was excited for the energy his colleagues had on wanting to try new practices and approaches that may help students be more successful in the English 1A/1AS courses.

Clare noted, "I hear the folks who've been here a really long time are kind of like digging their heels in about who they think should be our students." She added, "It's like when I'm hearing colleagues talk who are in school, or maybe on the younger end, who are hearing and receiving new research and ideas that almost lands differently than people who are like. I don't need to go back to school. I don't need to learn anything." Clare believed the majority of her colleagues wanted to do whatever they could to support students and would not let the older faculty members stall their efforts in being innovative with new approaches to support students.

Allie pointed out, "Our department is big enough where we can choose whether or not we want to teach 1AS." She emphasized, "So those of us who teach it are the ones who are on board with it." She suggested the faculty who did not support AB705 usually taught regular 1A sections or literature courses. The participants seemed to all agree that they would rather have faculty assigned to the English 1A/1AS sections that supported AB705 rather than having faculty who may not be as committed to doing whatever they could to adapt their classroom practices and pedagogical approaches to support student success.

Mental and Emotional Impact on Faculty

Participants were forthcoming in sharing the impact AB705 had on their individual motivation and morale as an English instructor. Several faculty members expressed feelings of being demotivated, overwhelmed, and frustrated by the number of students failing and the number of students choosing not to turn in their assignments. Faculty who had previously taught

pretransfer level courses shared they were having a challenging time adjusting to seeing more of their students fail their courses. Several participants shared they used to enjoy seeing the progress students made in their pretransfer level courses and now seeing more students not passing was an unwelcome change.

Allie shared that the number of students dropping or failing her course was “definitely demoralizing,” and revealed, “I’m not ashamed to say that I’ve cried many times.” Cristian reflected that it was difficult for him to see his declining student success rates. He noted, “There is sort of an emotional downside for teaching [English 1A/1AS], because you do see a lower success rate, and it’s, and it’s hard, and you want to help students pass the first time.” However, he pointed out, “There’s also just a shift in mindset that’s necessary, that we’re more focused on helping students get to the ultimate goal of transfer level math and English and we’re doing that at a much higher rate.” Cristian explained, “It’s like my success rates used to be, you know 80, 85%. And now they’re more like 70, 68, and that’s hard.” Cristian noted that although he saw an increase in students initially not passing the course, oftentimes students would retake the course again with him, and overall, he was seeing more students get through than ever before.

Brian described his declining enthusiasm and motivation:

In general, it seems like more students struggle than before, so it’s pretty dis-spiriting. And we all kind of feel like we’re not doing our part and like it’s hard too. If I can’t get somebody to do the work to show up on time. I mean, you know, in one respect it’s on them, but in the other respect I’m the teacher. I’m supposed to be able to inspire them to come to class and do their work. And so, it is. There are moments when you feel like I’m not doing well at this more than I’ve had before. I’m reasonably secure as an instructor. But I’ve had some moments, with this in the past year, or something where it’s just like I’m not reaching them. So, it’s kind of wearing on me.

Brian expressed a genuine care for his students and was having a tough time accepting that despite his best efforts, many students were still not able to successfully complete his courses. Like his colleagues, he noted that that had an impact on how he felt as a professional.

Similarly, Erin shared that despite seeing more students fail her classes, she is seeing the number of students that pass transfer level English increasing overall. Erin emphasized, “The pass rate is really bad initially, but the whole point is the throughput.” She explained students who failed English 1AS oftentimes passed the course once they took it again, but shared, “It obviously doesn’t feel emotionally good for me or the student to be failing at the rate that I’m failing students”

Several faculty members expressed an internalized sense of failure when they did not see an impact as quickly as they believed their students deserved. The participants had a genuine concern for their students and felt it was their personal responsibility to ensure their students were successful. This illustrated the shared commitment and dedication the faculty members that participated in this study had on student success. Institutions should be aware of the personal burdens faculty often take on when trying to lead change and the unrealistic expectations they may put on themselves. To prevent burn out and initiative fatigue, institutions should ensure systems and structures are in place to support the change efforts individuals are leading.

Theme 2: Systemic Readiness for Change

The second major theme in the study was the institution’s systemic readiness, or lack thereof, to implement transformative change to better meet the needs of students as a result of AB705. Several faculty members pointed out that although themselves and their colleagues supported AB705 reform efforts and were willing to make individual changes to their

pedagogical approach and teaching practices, systemic barriers still existed at the state and institutional level that hindered transformative change at the institutional level.

Systems-Thinking Approach

Most English faculty members that participated in the study supported the intent of AB705, but there was an overall sentiment that structures may not be in place to assist students that need the most support. The overall concern was that although more students may be passing transfer level English in the sense of throughput, what was happening to the students that were not passing?

Policies as Systemic Barriers

Although the intent of AB705 was to remove systemic barriers to student completion and success, faculty identified several institutional policies and practices that continued to be obstacles for students. The faculty discussed the need for the college to reexamine specific policies that perpetuated barriers to student equity, despite the reform efforts of AB705.

Cristian shared how the course repeat policy was negatively impacting students who were unsuccessful completing English 1AS after 3 attempts. He explained, “One institutional challenge, I think, has been that we have a policy of having students have a maximum of repeating a course 3 times before they have to do it at another college.” He added, “Many of us in the 1AS committee would like to see that raise to 4, and it’s been hard to first of all find out how to even start that process of trying to change something.”

Sue shared her observation of the increasing number of students not passing English 1AS after several attempts. Sue described that this semester she tried to meet with the students failing her course. Sue asked her students that were failing her course, “Is this your first time taking

English 1A or 1AS, and all of them say, no, this is my second, this is my third.” She shared an example of a student with disabilities who was taking English 1A/1AS for the fourth time. She noted, “This is his fourth time, so he’s failed it 3 times and so, of course, you know, after you fail it 3 times you’re supposed to get—you know. That’s it. Right? Three attempts and you’re out!”

Sue explained that her student who was taking English 1A/1As had to jump through several hoops to be granted approval to attempt the course for a fourth time. She noted he was finally granted approval by the director of the special resource, based on his disability. Sue further stated, “He’s been in, you know, the community college system, for I think he said, 6, 7 years and so he was kind of like, just taking just random classes because he was like, I don’t know what to do, because I can’t graduate without English 1A.”

Faculty had concerns regarding students that were not successfully passing English 1A/1AS. Cam expressed interest in looking at the data and demographics of students who were unsuccessful in completing English 1A/1AS. Cam questioned, “What’s happening to these students who take one 1A three times and can’t pass it. What’s happening to them?” He continued, “Or even twice, and just giving up. You know I’d like to see those numbers.” In regard to the number of students that were failing English 1AS, Allie pointed out, “They were the ones who were most systemically disadvantaged.” She noted the students who were failing were also “facing the barriers of equity, and they are the ones that weren’t passing.”

Hubert also emphasized a need to reexamine the course repeat policy and investigate alternate solutions to support students who were unsuccessful in passing English 1AS. He argued, “All the targeted interventions in the world are not really going to do the trick. What they need is some sustained work being done at a lower level.” He emphasized students not ready for

transfer level English courses needed more practice and “just taking English 1A over again doesn’t provide you enough practice before you run out of chances.”

Cristian agreed that different solutions should be considered for students who do not pass English 1AS after several attempts. Cristian made a recommendation for “some mechanism, for like a Mini version of academic renewal to happen right away.” He explained if a student gets a low grade in English 1A/1AS in one semester, and then retakes the course and gets a higher grade, the original grade should not have an impact on the student’s grade point average (GPA). He suggested students “might fail the first semester, and then we’re going to encourage them to come back. And do it again.” He added, “If they fail twice in a row, and then they get a B. I don’t think those 2 Fs should count towards their GPA.”

Cristian also explained that despite intentions to change the course curriculum, faculty faced systematic bureaucratic barriers, which admittedly, faculty did not always have experience navigating:

We are trying to do things like make the class more equitable. And so, we’re dealing with change. Sometimes there are slow processes for changing rules around. What do you have to assign in the course because a curriculum is on a schedule, and so you can’t do things as quickly as you’d like all the time. I think some of those challenges are somewhat the challenges that anyone has when they want to make a change at a large institution, is that there’s a lot of steps to take, and it takes a long time and you know a lot of us who are doing the work—You know we’re teachers, so we don’t necessarily have a lot of expertise with, you know, bureaucracy, and I don’t necessarily mean that in a bad way. I just mean that that’s not what we’re good at, necessarily. So, we’re having to learn some extra skills and work with a lot of people, and basically everyone has been helpful and supportive. I can’t think of any particular position on campus that has been a block for us. It’s just that the systems are complex, and they’re and they’re slow, and that’s been a challenge.

Faculty may need support and guidance on how to navigate the complex educational structures, such as the collegial consultation process. As faculty work to implement reform

efforts, they may encounter systemic and structural barriers that they have difficulty overcoming. Although faculty may support change efforts, they may not always be able to participate in shared governance structures to update curriculum or institutional policies.

Embedded Student Support

Participants discussed how embedded student support structures assisted students in obtaining resources and navigating the complex educational system. All 12 faculty members interviewed discussed the impact student support services have on student success. Although most faculty welcomed the additional student support that was available to assist their 1AS courses, several faculty members pointed to systemic barriers that were not allowing the support to be as impactful as possible. Participants discussed efforts to increase collaboration between instructional and noninstructional areas to ensure there was holistic support for students' individualized needs.

Clare noted the systemic changes being made at the college and pointed out it was a “time of really kind of rethinking the community college in terms of the things that we can offer students.” She discussed how programs like the laptop loan program, basic needs, peer mentoring, and the 1st-year experience program included services that benefited students. She hoped those programs and services could be scaled up so more students could use them. She noted many of her students appreciated the services once they realized the services are available. She noted, “They get it and they run with it.”

Cristian emphasized that many of the obstacles students face oftentimes do not have anything to do with their academic abilities. He noted the increased number of students struggling with basic needs required faculty to be more proactive in working with campus

resources. He suggested, “A lot of times, the reason students struggle in this class has nothing to do with their intelligence or anything.” He added, “It’s just that students who typically were not succeeding before, a lot of it had to do things like food insecurity, anxiety, depression.” He emphasized, “It’s required us to step up to meet students where they are, which is not always easy, but it is a good thing.”

John discussed the benefit of having an embedded tutors and counselors supporting the English 1A/1AS course, especially in the courses taught as part of the Puente program. John shared that Lo Grande’s Puente program design was prepared for AB705 implementation, in that the program was already designed to include embedded support. He noted that he felt blessed to have the support of both embedded counselors and tutors in his courses. He emphasized, “I didn’t feel like I was going into the fire, but I had a lot of support around me.” He continued, “I had a desire getting into education. I had a desire to help students, especially Latino students or Latinx students, with their writing and their reading comprehension.” He voiced his support for AB705, noting he was a believer that it was implemented to support the success of minoritized populations.

Several faculty members pointed out the benefit of having embedded counselors in the course to connect students to resources, although many expressed frustrations with the increased number of part-time counselors that were being assigned to the English 1AS courses. Erin noted, “The embedded counselor, when done well, is great. Unfortunately, there’s a lot of part-time counselors in that role, so it can get short changed. But when I’ve been paired with another full-time counselor. It’s really impactful.”

Allie shared a similar sentiment and boasted about the effectiveness of having a full-time counselor assigned to her 1AS sections. Allie noted, “She would also stop by and just hang out for like the last half hour of class.” Allie noted that students felt comfortable connecting with the counselor for support because they were familiar with the counselor. Allie recalled, “They knew who she was, and they reached out to her, and it was amazing.” Allie also shared that when she had a full-time counselor assigned to her 1AS section, “it was that ideal scenario” and was much more successful than when she had a part-time counselor assigned. Allie noted that when she worked with part-time counselors “the nature of the support is different there.” Allie added, “This is not their fault. It’s just the nature of things. I think it’s a system problem, not an individual problem, I guess, because they have so many other commitments, they’re on campus fewer hours.” Allie discussed the importance of counselors building trust with students for counselor interventions to have the biggest impact on student success.

Allie emphasized, “Especially for students who have felt marginalized by our education system. It’s all about trust, and you know, as instructors. We work so hard to build trust.” Allie believed that having a counselor come into her course several times throughout the semester also helped to build trust with the students, but when counselors did not regularly stop by throughout the semester, students were less likely to follow up or respond to the counselor or success coaches. She emphasized, “I think trust is a big factor in all of this, and you know, even if we, as instructors, talk about our counselor coeducator, if they’re not around, then you know the students don’t really know who they are, and so how can one trust someone?” She added, “What I’ve heard from my students, if someone they don’t know whether it’s the counselor coeducator, or the success coach reaches out to them. I think they just ignore it, unfortunately.”

The faculty seemed to agree their opinion on the success of having counselors and success coaches embedded in their sections was dependent on which counselor or success coach was assigned to their course. In regard to the embedded counselors in English 1AS sections, Allie emphasized, “In theory, I think it’s a great program for our students.” She recommended revisiting the assignments to include more full-time counselors, to ensure counselors had more time available to support the students and instructor in the English 1AS courses. Sue questioned the effectiveness of embedded counselors and student success coaches. Instead, Sue noted the effectiveness of having tutors embedded in the classroom and advocated for the need to hire more. She emphasized, “I think what we actually need are more, more tutors, because, you know that’s what they need. They need the support; they need more tutors.”

She argued that she would rather have more tutors than embedded counselors and success coaches in her courses. She stated that students “don’t need people, you know, emailing them and bothering them. You know, every week, saying, you know, where are you? How come you’re not going to class?” She emphasized that she thought the tutors were a great benefit for her students but there just simply was not enough time allocated to the tutor to support all 30 students in her course. In the future, allocating more resources to provide increased tutor support could be considered and the effectiveness and function of embedded counselors and success coaches can also be examined to ensure resources are being used efficiently and effectively to benefit students.

Travis also supported having more student engagement with tutors. Travis asserted, “For some students, hearing that option, the hearing, the word optional empowers them to simply disregard it, because that’s what optional means. Right? I don’t have to do it.” Travis shared that

in his syllabus, he requires at least 3 engagements of the embedded tutor as a graded component of the class. Travis shared a recommendation he had received from his students, to ensure tutors were available for expanded hours, beyond the time the embedded tutor was assigned to the course. He explained, “Like the sub joint down the street, where they have a little card, and every visit you go they punch the card, and after 10 visits to get a free sub like that kind of thing.” He noted the student’s suggestion, which he thought was “actually pretty brilliant in its simplicity, was, if they offered the students who registered or enrolled in those support classes like that kind of a setup.”

Several participants boasted about the resources provided by embedded tutors and the Reading and Writing Center. John emphasized that the “foresight to bring in the writing center has been phenomenal.” Erin also noted, “The tutors in the classroom are really nice. we use them.” Erin explained that there were also roundtable sessions with tutors and the writing center coordinator to discuss best practices in how instructors could use embedded tutors in their courses.

Basic Needs Resources

Students’ basic needs, including access to food, housing, clothing, and mental health resources, was a consistent concern brought up by the faculty. Erin noted that homelessness was a concern that many of her students were facing. She noted, “We don’t have dorms yet. That’s something we’re talking about. She added, “We did create a closet for clothes and a food pantry around the same time as AB705.” Cam shared, “A lot of what we’re facing, a lot of what our students are facing, are the effects of poverty, right? And AB705, and community colleges are designed to fix poverty, meaning that you know these students have to work, have to.” Cam said

he acknowledged that many of his students struggled with housing food, housing, and other basic need resources that prevented them from being able to focus on their students. He shared, “That’s the frustrating part. We know the students could do it if they had the resources themselves, their families. you know. Once, you know, they have a little hiccup in their lives, it’s really hard for them to get back up track.” The overall sentiment shared by faculty was that they were aware of the basic needs and insecurities their students were facing and they wanted to do whatever they could to get their students connected to all of the resources available to support students.

Faculty members also discussed the increasing need to provide mental health resources for students. Brian shared he knew several colleagues that had walked students over to the student health services for mental health support. He mentioned the incidents seemed to be occurring more frequently since returning after the COVID-19 global pandemic. He also noted, “And then students are constantly missing and just saying I can’t make it, because I’m in need of a mental break, and I’m not doing well mentally.” Allie also noted many of her students “feel like they don’t belong in college. They feel like impostors or outsiders.” She added, “So it’s hard for them to even begin working on an assignment if there are mental barriers.”

Lee described the increased number of students he was encountering who needed mental health resources. Lee emphasized, “When I say this, I don’t mean this in a derogatory manner. People are in a more emotionally or psychologically fragile state, right? Because they’ve got things going on and sometimes, I can help them, you know, if it’s something basic.” Lee stated, “I can provide emotional support and encouragement but that only goes so far.” Lee continued, “And sometimes people are suffering in terms of both emotional and financial support. In

speaking of available resources, Lee recognized “it’s not that there isn’t any” available, but he stated many of his students did not have the time to seek out resources. Lee stated, “I mean, a lot of my students are working over 40 hours, and they’re trying to take multiple classes. They’ve got all these balls in the air that they’re juggling.” As Lee was describing his students’ experiences, he realized he could also help to promote the campus mental health resources. Lee decided, “I might have somebody from the Student Health Center come in and do a presentation about the resources, because in general, I mean, sometimes maybe half the students know that they have some access. But it’s hard.”

Faculty members shared that because of AB705, they were increasingly more aware of the nonacademic concerns and barriers students were facing outside of the classroom. Erin pointed out the availability of campus health resources available to students but questioned if faculty were using them. Erin stated, “We have really robust mental health services, and I am very grateful for it.” Erin reported frequently inviting the Student Health Services team to do classroom visits, but also suggested, “I know not enough faculty are doing that.” As colleges increase holistic support services, it is important to ensure the institution is making the campus community aware of the resources available to students.

Adequate Resources for Students With Disabilities

A major concern brought out by almost every faculty member was offering adequate support for students with disabilities in English 1AS courses. Clare reflected:

So yes, we are trying to create equity. But this is not the only piece we need to be looking at. I am definitely in my own beliefs, and as I think about the last 10 years. I am pro AB705. I am believing that we need to give students the autonomy and the decision making, but I do wonder about students that need more support, I think, for whatever reason, I have found more students that are eligible for special resources or DSPS [disabled student programs and services] services in English. Especially the 1AS courses

because I teach both. And I can see that there is almost like a significant amount more. So, I think in one of my classes right now, I have eight students with accommodation requests, and two of those students need a lot of support. And I wonder if this is the only model that would work for these students. But overall, this idea that students are coming out of high school and being able to sort of choose right into transfer level English. It feels very important to success rates and getting students on track in a timely manner.

Sue shared a similar sentiment. She pointed out, “Now again, we’re a community college, we accept anyone and everybody right? It doesn’t matter if you graduated from college, it doesn’t matter if you have any disabilities.” She suggested, “Many students with disabilities are, or who went to school systems that work pretty bad” and “they weren’t really taught much.” She was frustrated, stating many of her students “come with very low reading and writing skills.” Lee also worried if the support offered to students with disabilities was sufficient to assist students with passing English 1AS. Lee noted that he did not feel AB705 reform efforts had come up with a solution for students with disabilities. Lee shared his concerns noting, “I guarantee someone else’s mentioned this but for students who struggle with reading and have learning disabilities, I feel that we haven’t come up with a solution.”

Lee argued AB705 had disproportionately negatively affected students with disabilities. He noted, “The class goes faster, even though we have adjusted and accommodated.” He added, “I think, for students who would have struggled in the old regime in the old system, they’re struggling more now.” He questioned if there was a possibility for “some sort of a combination of additional accommodation” in addition to additional time to take tests, which he observed was often part of a student’s accommodation from the special resource center. He noted the additional time to take tests “just doesn’t really fill in whatever gaps that they are experiencing.” Lee emphasized, “I’m not even sure if the special resource center has the tools, or if anyone has

the tools to help these students who kind of got passed along and have very great difficulty, either reading or writing.”

Lee, like his faculty colleagues, was passionate about wanting to make sure he was able to provide any resource available that would help make students successful. However, Lee shared he was not quite sure what adequate support would look like to support students with disabilities in the English 1A/1AS courses.” He emphasized, “So, there may not be an answer for that problem I just express, but for the really struggling students there, it is difficult to find the right levels of support for them. And I’m totally sympathetic.” All of the participants expressed willingness to support students with disabilities be successful in passing the English 1A/1AS classes, but all agreed the accommodations that were being offered were not always adequate to get the students at the skill level they needed to be to successfully pass the course.

Failed K–12 System

In alignment with concerns for students with disabilities, participants also discussed how the ineffectiveness of the K–12 system perpetuated students being underprepared for transfer level English courses when they enter community college. Travis expressed his disappointment with the K–12 system, pointing out:

I do have a pretty extensive background in substituting K–12 across LA [Los Angeles] Unified and other public-school districts in Southern California, and also in a wide variety of private and charter school environments. So just to kind of set things up when I sit in English department meetings, and I hear full-time faculty bemoan the fact that freshmen aren’t where they’d like them to be with their writing and they seem to not understand why I could see very clearly why the way they teach writing skills in K–12 is not like the way they taught us. And you do. You end up with people graduating from high school that don’t know an adjective from an adverb because they aren’t required to know the difference.

Cam shared a similar sentiment that declining expectations in the K–12 system may be contributing to students not being prepared for transfer level English courses after high school. In terms of students not turning in their assignments, he stated, “I think, it is also that they are kind of used to that at the high school levels so, a lot of these kids show up every week, you know, and they are there. They just do not do the work.” He suggested that he was not convinced that students could not necessarily do the work, but rather “it’s just they’re not doing it.”

Lee noted that although community colleges were not necessarily blamed for students not being prepared to take transfer-level courses, they were faced with “trying to resolve issues that were many years in the making.” He expressed that he was happy to help students develop as writers and noted he was not upset with students’ lack of preparedness but believed “some K through 12 systems need to be held more accountable.”

Allie expressed similar concerns with how the K–12 system was preparing students to be successful in transfer level English right of high school. She shared, “Because of the inequities of the public education system [students] did not yet feel comfortable about their reading skills.” She explained that to build her students’ reading confidence she spends time in her class explaining to students how she would approach reading a text. She explained in English 1AS sections how she walks students through, “This is how I would read a text, and this is what goes on in my mind when I read a text.” She admitted that her approach “may sound silly at first,” but she believed her students benefitted from her explaining her thought process when reading. Allie shared that her students would tell her later in the semester that her sharing her tips on how she reads was helpful for them. Allie emphasized, “I’m sure my colleagues who teach 1AS would agree that a lot of what we’re doing is helping them regain confidence in their reading, writing,

and critical thinking skills. The confidence that was unfortunately eroded by K through 12 public education.” Allie shared that pre-AB705, these types of tips on reading would have been covered in the pretransfer level preparation courses. However, now that those courses were no longer offered, she was finding ways to infuse foundational skills in her English 1A/1AS instruction.

Course Modalities Impact on Student Success

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, students and faculty were forced out of the traditional classroom learning experience and thrown into an online learning environment. Although some students and faculty had previously participated in online course offerings, the online course structure was a completely new and unfamiliar experience for most students and instructors. Faculty had mixed perceptions on how the course offering modalities (face to face, hybrid, or online) may have impacted student success. Faculty members also had varying opinions on which course modality was most beneficial for students. Several faculty members believed face to face courses had better success rates, but stated students often chose online or hybrid modalities because they thought those courses would be easier or more convenient.

Many of the participants expressed their frustrations with teaching English 1A/1AS course in an online modality. Brian admitted, “I despise online. I hate grading everything that’s online.” Brian described, “For me, the class discussion was the best part of class. Right? It’s when things are alive, and you see students learning.” In terms of using online discussion boards, Brian noted, “It’s just not authentic, and there’s no real spark. I don’t see anything happening and there’s no driving the conversation in a way that is inspiring and meaningful to me.” Brian expressed, “That is part of why I feel less inspired than I used to,” as he described his time spent in his online courses was “just counting words and grading written text for completion rather

than having that dynamic classroom interaction.” Allie noted her frustrations with online only sections and stated she refuses to teach online only 1AS sections. She explained, “At least even with hybrid sections, if I see them once a week, I think that helps. I think they need more face-to-face time.”

Travis was adamant that offering English 1/1AS sections online was not conducive to student learning. Despite being willing to “take any opportunity to get better at [his] job or find an easier, better way to do things,” Travis did not believe offering courses online for students would be successful. He asserted, “It’s not like I’m one of those old timers who doesn’t get how distance ed can be effective. But I started life with developmental writers, and my heart is with them.” Travis noted he had not experienced any English 1A/1AS classes offered online “where it wasn’t a significant hindrance to their achievement and their success.”

John also questioned whether online and hybrid were appropriate modalities for English 1A/1AS sections. He admitted, “To this day are having an issue with hybrid modality and online modality. When it comes to our supplemental courses.” John mentioned looking at the success of offering English 1A/1AS was a priority of the English 1A/1AS committee. He noted, “We are really mindful of equity issues when it comes to one as especially when it comes to modalities.” Students having the appropriate technology to successfully complete online courses were also a concern. John gave the example that several students enroll in hybrid sections of English 1A/1AS, but not having access to a working computer. He also questioned the consistency and effectiveness of embedded counselors when the support course was offered online. He noted some counselors “may pop in once a month” and also noted part-time counselors assigned to

online sections could also pose a challenge. John emphasized, “I think the modalities are going to be crucial moving forward, especially in the post pandemic world.”

Other faculty members saw the potential with offering online courses. Lee believed that online course offerings were improving, compared to the initial implementation. Lee explained for both students and faculty, “It was, of course, very difficult during COVID. But I think the people who are teaching online now, and the students who are taking online courses have a better understanding of expectations, and the material is.” Margaret thought her students were more successful in her fully online courses than they were in her on campus classes. She shared, “My embedded tutor said, ‘You’re not alone.’” Margaret stated the decreased success of in-person classes may have been attributed to students just not showing up for the in-person support components on the English 1A/1AS support classes.

Sue recommended a new strategy she was using with her synchronous online section to catch students that may need additional support or connection to resources. She described how the support component of the course met for an hour every Monday and Thursday. She used the time by putting students in breakout rooms to complete in class writing assignments. In describing being able to connect with students one on one who needed support, Sue emphasized, “So that’s worked out really well. because [the students] have to be here. They have to be on zoom right? Because it’s a live Zoom class.” Sue described, “We pull them out, and meet with them, you know, anywhere from like 5 to 10 min. So that’s worked out really well because we force them to meet with us.” Faculty members working to continuously improve their teaching practices showed their commitment to student success.

Clare also shared a practice that be used to humanize and personalize the online instruction experience to try to improve student success and retention in online courses. Clare shared her best practice of recording her comments and feedback she gives to students on their writing assignments. Clare explained, “What I know to be true about students is they already come with self-esteem kind of issues around writing, and so I don’t want the comments to be seen without the tone of my voice.” Clare used Canvas to record her comments so that students could hear the tone in her voice and encouragement she was giving to students. Clare added that she wanted her students to hear the positive feedback she was giving them like, “You did awesome on this, I love this part of your essay, or Let’s focus on this part instead.” Clare explained that she wanted to ensure students did not gloss over the positive feedback she was providing and only focus on the negative. She emphasized, “I am trying to adopt a kind of a message of care and concern and praise which I think is my own struggle of like the difference between being in person.” Faculty making the attempt to humanize the online course experience is one practice that may lead to greater student success in online courses. Attention should be given to course success rates in English 1A/1AS sections based on course modalities.

Clare shared her experiences on the modality and length of course impacting student success. She noted that she had taught English 1A/1AS in every course modality option except for hybrid. She noted that that for the upcoming summer term she noticed that many of the online courses were filling, and the on-campus courses still had open seats available. She questioned what the success rates would be for students taking a full online, condensed 6-week offering of the course. Clare questioned, “Do we build the classes out that students are demanding? Or do

we sort of funnel and force them to come back to campus” She emphasized, “We don’t want to just offer the courses. But we want the students to be successful in the courses.”

As colleges build class schedules, particular attention should be paid to the course modalities that are being offered. As the faculty pointed out, the student academic experience is drastically different for students who take the class in person versus students that take the courses online asynchronously. Some faculty who taught online sections reported greater participation in courses that were taught synchronously, where others believed students had more success when the course was taught asynchronously. There were other faculty members that reported students who enrolled in hybrid courses often did not complete the “online” component of the courses, and only attended the in-person classroom component. Many faculty members also agreed the “support” component of asynchronous courses was impossible and almost nonexistent. In online asynchronous courses there are less direct interactions in a group setting at standard times. This format makes it difficult for students to get connected to embedded services.

Effects of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Participants in the study agreed that the actual impact AB705 has on student success may not be apparent or accurately gauged for several years. AB705 required full compliance by Fall 2019, just months before the shutdown due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Allie emphasized that she would be able to gauge the impact of AB705 more effectively if the pandemic and being “forced to transition into online learning had not happened.” She noted the students who take English 1A/1AS students “are the students who are most systematically disadvantaged by the inequities of a public education system.” She emphasized, “So I think it was very traumatizing for them. I don’t use that word lightly, and I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say it was

traumatic.” She added, “I feel like I’m still dealing with the effects of the forced learning, the forced online learning, that happened during the pandemic.”

Erin noted how there was a “multiconvergence” of college initiatives, noting AB705, Guided Pathways, student equity and achievement, changes to the student-centered funding formula, and the COVID-19 global pandemic occurred at the same time. Erin described, “It was like boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.” She recalled going to meetings where the topics of conversations were consistently focused on student success outcomes and equity gaps. She noted the initial focus on equity “started with AB705 and then [they were] really quickly catapulted by all those other factors, so it is hard to say, like causation and correlation.”

Throughout the interview, Brian was not sure if his experiences and attitudes on the implementation of AB705 were connected to the reform efforts or the pandemic. He noted, “The other thing, I think, is so critical to the discussion is that AB705 hit in full right in the pandemic.” He asserted, “So I have a tough time reading what is really a factor or the fact that I think it’s a combination of those two things that really make it hard to read.”

Hubert shared similar concerns, noting many of his observations regarding the implementation of AB05 “coinciding with the COVID pandemic really makes it hard, makes it difficult to sort of suss out where the successes are.” He noted there could be a variety of factors attributed to both AB705 and the pandemic that are “causing students to succeed or fail.”

Clare also questioned, “How do we tease that data out against COVID?” She pointed out the students enrolling in her English 1A/1AS classes “now, last year, and for the next few years will have students that experienced COVID in high school.” She asserted, “So that is going to directly impact their success in an English course.”

Margaret feared AB705 would not have a fair shot at showing its potential for student success. She shared, “I know research wise. it may turn out that—well, the pandemic is a big wrench in the whole operation.” She was not convinced the data would show the elimination of remedial classes was helping students. She suggested, “Success rates pre-pandemic for English 1A/1AS and post-pandemic I believe, are going to be different—and of course, during the pandemic—that first year was just total chaos.”

It has been difficult to gauge the impact AB705 has had on student success and what has been a result of the pandemic. As many faculty noted, with so many major changes occurring at the same time, it is difficult to attribute what factors may be impacting students to succeed or fail. As more data on student success outcomes become available post pandemic, it will be important to identify why students that are not successfully completing transfer level English courses and determine how the institution can provide better support structures to increase successful course completion.

Perceived Systemic Impact on Student Equity

In terms of student equity, John felt AB705 was “a game changer.” John asserted, “I think the numbers have shown that.” John noted he had “heard there was a lot of conflict” when initially implementing AB705 but pointed out that conflict “is very common when it comes to changing core practices.” He stated it was difficult for some to adjust with eliminating “remedial type classes that had been in college decades.” Throughout the interview John shared his best practices he implemented during AB705 and emphasized “a number of educators in math and English are out of their silos.” He noted AB705 “forced us to work with different disciplines.” He stated, “We’re still dealing with a college acculturation. you know, equity over equality kind

of a stance.” He noted that once the college figures out “how we meet the students where they’re, it’ll be extremely beneficial, and I think it’s going to have a significant impact on minoritized populations.”

Cristian admitted, “The success rates in English 1A and 1AS are lower than they were pre AB705. I think the most recent number is 8% lower.” However, he noted, “The throughput has increased quite a bit, and it has increased more for Black and Latinx students, which is exactly what we wanted it to do so.” He mentioned equity gaps and success rates are something the college could continue working on.

When discussing if AB705 was improving student equity, Clare noted, “In my heart, I’m hoping that it’s more and more.” Clare stated, “I just hope that as time goes on, we will be able to show people, the upside to AB705, that it is equitable, that students are getting through faster.” She added, “Because I know for sure, I knew students who were just trapped.” Clare added, “For myself, I almost look back and go. How were we doing that to students? Why did we think that was a good idea?”

Not all participants believed AB705 would have a significant impact on student equity. Travis asserted, “It has absolutely crippled the very people it was intended to serve.” Travis added, “So I think that it not only has had a negative effect, but it’s also had a negative effect exclusively on those who are the most served, inequitably.” Sue feared students that we were “setting students up for failure” by not having basic skills courses available to help them prepare to succeed in English 1A/1AS sections.

Despite all the resistance, systemic barriers, and a world-wide pandemic coinciding with the implementation of AB705, Erin remained a staunch supporter of the reform. In terms of its

impact on student equity, she emphasized, “When it’s done correctly, I think when it’s in its spirit and in the hands of people who believe in the spirit of it. I think it means meeting students where they’re at.” She noted, “The important part is the switching from students being college ready to the college being student ready.” Erin pointed out that it took campus-wide efforts to create an institutional support system for students. She praised her colleagues, stating, “I think our counselors are awesome, I think that our writing center has risen to that standard. Our librarians, like our noninstructional faculty, feel even more important to me.” She was eager to continue working with peers across the institution to support students. She stressed it was a shared institutional responsibility in “making sure that we surround the students with success,” including connecting students to the available tools and resources. She continued, “But that part’s really hard, like old ghosts die hard, right? Like—who is responsible for student success and who is responsible for student failure?”

Although overall success rates of English 1A/1AS were declining, the majority of faculty believed that AB705 was having a positive impact on students, especially students of color. Overall, faculty members were optimistic that AB705 would help to narrow equity gaps. However, all of the faculty participants expressed concern about the students that were not able to successfully complete the transfer level course, and wondered what additional support the institution could provide to those students while also staying in compliance with the legislation.

Conclusion

As part of the qualitative research design, this chapter thematically presented the stories of faculty members’ perceptions and attitudes toward their experiences during the implementation of AB705. This chapter identified significant themes while purposefully

presenting the data collected in the study in a way that preserves and honors the direct voices of the faculty participants. The following chapter will provide an analysis and discussion of the findings, provide future policy implementation recommendations as inspired by the faculty interviews, and give suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Overview

The California Community College (CCC) system has experienced several legislative mandates and reform initiatives aimed to support equitable student outcomes for students enrolled in the 115 community colleges across the state (Bailey, 2015; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019). *California Assembly Bill 705 (AB705, 2017)* is legislation that permits community college students to enroll directly into transfer level English and mathematics courses. Prior to AB705, students' math and English course placements were based on student's results of placement exams. Students, especially students of color, were often placed into pretransfer level remedial math and English course sequences, that often served as gatekeepers that prevented students from attaining their educational goals (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019; McClenney, 2019).

Legislative mandates, such as AB705, are designed with the intent of increasing access, student success, and equitable outcomes in an educational system that historically, has had limited success in student transfer and completion rates (Lopez, 2022). Early data suggested AB705 allowed for transformative change across the community college system (Brohawn et al., 2021; Ching et al., 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021). The early data suggested the total number of students completing transfer level math and English within their first year has been significantly increasing (Melguizo et al., 2022). *California Assembly Bill 1705 (AB1705, 2022)* was a follow up legislation to AB705, that mandated all CCCs completely eliminate all remedial courses. AB705 had the intention to create more efficient and equitable student

pathways to degree and transfer to 4-year universities (Melguizo et al., 2022). The legislation required transformative changes to occur at community colleges for the full impact and potential of the bill to be realized (Melguizo et al., 2022).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore faculty members' perceptions and attitudes on the implementation of AB705. The study also sought to examine how AB705 legislation had the potential to serve as a catalyst for transformative change across student academic and support structures at CCCs. In addition, the study was interested in understanding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity, combined with individual and organizational readiness for change, influenced college implementation of AB705.

This qualitative research study was guided by a conceptual framework that combined social justice leadership and systems thinking organizational change theories. Transformative leadership theories take the approach that anyone, regardless of their position or title, can be a leader (Freire, 1970, 1982, 1998; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Yukl, 2012). The qualities associated with social justice leadership include compassion, self-reflection, persistence, resiliency, action, and innovation (Theoharis, 2007). Leaders must also assess their organization's readiness for change, engage key stakeholders to help design change strategies, develop a shared vision, build capacity for collaboration, and understand motivation (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Stroh, 2015; Theoharis, 2007).

Systems thinking and social justice leadership frameworks can equip leaders to promote transformative change at their institutions. When institutions seek to create transformative

change for social justice and equitable student outcomes, leaders must be aware of existing power structures that can prevent change from occurring. Despite best efforts to drive change, organizations and systems tend to take on a life of their own, making it nearly impossible to effect meaningful change (Stroh, 2015). Oftentimes, institutions are unintentionally perpetuating the problems that they are trying to solve.

The research questions that were examined in this study were:

1. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how AB705 has served as a catalyst for transformative change across academic and student support structures?
2. What are English faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding how a focus or lack of focus on student equity influenced college implementation of AB705?

The data collected in the study were analyzed using social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking. Systems thinking was used to analyze institutional readiness for change and social justice leadership frameworks were used to analyze individual readiness for change. The data were first organized into two overarching themes, individual readiness for transformative change and systemic readiness for transformative change. The data were then grouped into subgroups that thematically demonstrated faculty perceptions on AB705's impact on equity and faculty recommendations to improve reform efforts.

The results of this study were of local importance to Lo Grande College. Understanding faculty members' experiences and perceptions during the implementation of AB705 can enhance and improve how the college prepares for the implementation of AB1705. The findings of the study can also help to understand leadership and equity implications of AB705 and AB1705

implementation at Lo Grande College. This study may also help inform other CCC campuses on best practices and lessons learned at Lo Grande College during AB705 implementation. In this chapter, I discuss the major themes that were brought out by the responses of the faculty participants, give recommendations for practitioners, and provide suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Findings

This study uncovered rich faculty narratives that gave insight into the unique perspectives and experiences English faculty members encountered during the implementation of AB705 at Lo Grande College. The overall results of the study suggest that for an institution to implement transformative change efforts, the institution must have people who are ready to implement change and a system and structure that is able to support the changes. If the institution has people that are ready to implement changes, but the institution does not have systems and structures to support these efforts, the reform will inevitably fail. The same is true for the reverse. If the institution has systems and structures to support change efforts, but the people at the institution are not prepared or willing to implement change, these efforts will also fail. Educational institutions often find themselves operating in an environment faced with continuous reform efforts. Fragmented approaches to implementing reform efforts contribute to educational systems facing constant initiative fatigue where there are continuous cycles of failed reform efforts.

In answering the first research question, the overall sentiment from faculty was that although AB705 propelled some institutional changes that improved academic and student support structures, barriers continued to exist that precluded the institution from realizing the maximum intended impact of reform efforts. The findings of this study suggested although there was both individual faculty member and institutional support to implement AB705, individual

and systemic barriers continued to preclude AB705 reform efforts from having a maximum impact on student success and student equity. Faculty shared that the institution was responsive in developing new programs and services to holistically support students but felt there was still much more changes needed for the institution to realize the maximum impact the legislation intended to have on student success.

In answering the second research question, the findings suggested that although some faculty implemented AB705 with an intentional focus on student equity, systemic barriers continued to exist that precluded reform efforts from realizing the full potential of the intent of the bill. Institutions can support change efforts by building the capacity of faculty and staff to support transformative change efforts. The findings of this study also suggested colleges should reexamine their organizational structures and leadership approaches to create a culture that welcomes and supports student success. Colleges should intentionally create an environment that supports individual and institutional change, rather than continuing to operate in a system that unintentionally perpetuates and creates barriers for students.

Colleges should examine if their institutional systems and structures support the intended change efforts or are precluding their institution from successfully implementing the desired changes. As individual and systemic barriers are named and identified, institutions should be prepared to support both individual and systemic change. Not only must the people be ready and open to changes, but the institution must also be prepared to support necessary changes systematically and structurally. The following sections give recommendations institutions can consider in supporting cultural and structural changes to promote transformative change during reform implementation efforts.

Recommendations to Support Cultural Change

As colleges prepare to promote transformative change, there should be a considerable effort and focus on stakeholder preparation. Institutions can build the capacity for faculty, staff, and administrators to promote transformative change by providing professional development, encouraging individual and collective reflection, developing a shared vision, and providing a culture of support and innovation (Baca, 2021; Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Lopez, 2002; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Sims, 2020; Stroh, 2015; Theoharis, 2007). Colleges can support these efforts by providing extensive professional development to inspire reflection to support both personal and institutional transformation.

The culture of the college should be built on a foundation of trust where individuals at the college feel supported and there is a focus on collaboration and relationship building (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). As colleagues build trusting relationships, informal communities and networks of support are formed. This prepares individuals to have a greater awareness of identifying potential institutional barriers that may serve as obstacles to student success. When there is a culture of trust, collaboration, and support there is a greater likelihood colleagues will work together to identify and overcome systemic obstacles. When a culture of trust and support is lacking, colleagues may be reluctant to give and receive recommendations for improvement. In the instances when feedback is given, colleagues may take their criticism as an attack and become adversarial in their approaches to working with one another. Institutions may consider the

recommendations in the following sections to promote an institutional culture centered on trust, collaboration.

Understanding Motivation

Participants had mixed responses in their perceptions of the institutional culture at Lo Grande College. The effectiveness of an institution is based on culture, relationships, and trust (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Culture can make or break an institution. An institution's culture can be the difference in whether its staff and faculty are enthusiastic about coming to work in the morning or are dreading just thinking of going to work. An institution's culture can also have an immense effect on faculty and staff retention. It can be difficult to lead an institution that has high turnover rates.

At large, complex institutions, relationships are everything and an institution's culture has a direct impact on employee morale (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Faculty and staff who feel supported and have trust in their administration are more likely to be energized and approach their roles with passion and a commitment to serving students. People who feel supported have a higher morale and are energized and passionate about coming to work and making a difference in student's lives.

Involvement in Implementation Planning

As many faculty members in the study noted, although they were initially hesitant of the reform efforts, many became more invested in the legislation when they got involved in the implementation planning process. If faculty are involved from the beginning planning stages of

reform implementation, change efforts are more likely to be successful (Cafarella, 2016; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). For transformative change at educational institutions, it is critical to find faculty who are committed to change that can serve as change agents to help rally stakeholders and keep progress moving (Cafarella, 2016; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020).

Professional Development for Individual and Systemic Reflection

All participants in the study stressed the impact professional development, or lack thereof had on their readiness to implement change efforts to support AB705. As institutions work toward creating systemic changes, they should prepare personnel to challenge assumptions, embrace discomfort, and be committed to taking action (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Professional development focused on equity can provide a foundation to support a campus culture of inclusion that is ready to implement informed and meaningful change. Colleges that invest in professional development to prepare faculty, staff, and leaders to clearly understand the intent of legislative mandates and reform initiatives may be able to be more proactive in achieving the intended results of the respective legislation or initiative.

College systems and the problems that plague them are complex. It is critical that as implementation efforts are designed, colleges take the time to really examine and understand the problem. This will support development of holistic, systemic solutions rather than quick fix initiatives. Providing professional development solidifies the institution's commitment to reform efforts and an investment in a campus culture that is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe &

Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Professional development can be a great tool that leaders can use to influence an institution's culture and can be used to improve faculty and staff's skills, while also uniting faculty and staff toward a common goal.

Shared Vision

Several participants discussed the importance of having a clear understanding of the intent of AB705 legislation and how that impacted their roles at the college. It is important that colleges communicate a shared vision and understanding of what the mandate actually intends to accomplish (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Stroh, 2015). Institutions that are intentional in communicating a common vision and sense of purpose are better equipped to influence transformative change (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Institutions that are implementing legislative reform efforts should be clear on what the intent of the legislative mandate is and be explicit in identifying how systemic institutional changes to implement the reform are reflected in the institutional mission and vision of the college.

A shared philosophical framework of why the institution exists and what its mission and values are can help establish a groundwork for how priorities are determined and what institutional initiatives are funded, supported, and receive buy-in from stakeholders (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Stroh, 2015). This can help to prevent reform again and again scenarios, or abandonment of legislation before adequate time passes to measure results. If the intent of what the initiative or legislation intended to achieve is not clear, individuals may have the best

intentions to implement the initiative, but their efforts may unintentionally perpetuate issues that the initiative is trying to resolve.

Reflective Processes

Most participants discussed how engaging in critical self-reflection and reflective institutional processes led to affirming their individual support and gave themselves a deeper understanding of why the AB705 reform efforts were needed to support student success. The processes of self and collective reflection can help inform a deeper understanding of how both individual and systemic change may be needed to help achieve the intent of the reform efforts. If colleges take siloed approaches in instituting change, reform efforts in one area of the organization can unintentionally create systemic barriers in another area, further perpetuating the problem that the change was trying to solve. Participation in professional development is a strategy college can use to inspire both critical self-reflection and institutional collective reflection (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Stroh, 2015; Theoharis, 2007). Professional development that focuses on the shared vision of the college and the intent of the mandate can help promote discussions on how both individuals and systems may need to think and operate differently to support new initiatives. This process can encourage dialogue where colleagues think together to understand the complexity of issues and work together to develop solutions. This approach can allow stakeholders to see the bigger picture of the issue and barrier and not just their individual connection to the problem and/or solution.

Foundation of Trust

Participants who demonstrated the greatest support for the legislation also expressed having positive relationships with colleagues and other stakeholders. Leaders that develop trust and build relationships with colleagues may have more cooperation and support when leading institutional change efforts. Building trust will support a culture change that will allow faculty and staff to be innovative in developing and designing structures and supports that will assist students in successfully completing transfer level math and English courses. By fostering a culture of leadership that is rooted in innovation and support, extensive equity minded structural changes can begin by empowering faculty and staff to design programs, curriculum, and support structures using equity frameworks (Brooks et al., 2007; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Kirkland 2020; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Reed, 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). The findings of this study revealed that although not all faculty participants had the same opinions or attitudes toward the legislation, they were able to build relationships that supported an openness to sharing ideas and providing and receiving feedback. These findings suggest change efforts are not likely to be successful if they are not supported by a culture of trust that allows for innovation without fear of blame.

Managing Conflict

Nearly all participants discussed how there had been disagreements among faculty during the AB705 planning and implementation process. A collaborative approach to managing institutional conflict will allow for courageous conversations that provide for a deeper understanding of the problem. This can lead to potential conflicts among stakeholders. As colleges implement reform efforts, they should be prepared to experience healthy conflict that

may include difficult discussions and courageous conversations. Kenneth Thomas (1976) pointed out that healthy conflict in an organization can support institutional growth. He asserted:

Confrontation of divergent views often produces ideas of superior quality. Divergent views are apt to be based upon different evidence, different considerations, different insights, different frames of reference. Disagreements may thus confront an individual with factors which he had previously ignored, and help to arrive at a more comprehensive view which synthesizes elements of his own and other positions (p.890).

As colleagues share their unique experiences, perspectives, and ideas, a deeper and more holistic understanding of the issue may be revealed that includes the need to have holistic changes at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels. Participants may gain a better understanding of the interdependencies of the people and systems that contribute to the complexities of the problems and solutions in the organization.

Coalition Building

All full-time faculty participants discussed how their involvement in the English 1A/1AS committee was a positive experience and served as motivation and support group during AB705 implementation. As colleagues connect and build trust, these relationships can lead to informal partnerships and networks, such as the informal English 1A/1AS committee that was formed by the English instructors. The example of the faculty members creating an informal support committee exemplifies faculty willingness to learn and think differently together. Together, faculty met to engage in conversation and discuss ideas that cultivated an acceptance to the changes as a result of the reform effort (Stroh, 2015). These informal coalitions can also serve as support networks for faculty and avoid colleagues from becoming accidental adversaries (Stroh, 2015). Difficult discussions and courageous conversations can help to promote a foundation of

trust that allows for collaboration, sharing of ideas, and supportive feedback for continuous improvement.

Recommendations to Support Structural Change

In addition to a shared vision, a foundation of trust, and an institutional sense of value and support, the institution must ensure it has the infrastructure in place to support change (Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015). As institutions continue to implement new initiatives, organizations must be prepared to align their infrastructure to support change efforts (Baca, 2021; Kezar & Fries-Britt, 2020; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). For transformative change to be successful, there must be an institutional infrastructure to support change and people that are ready and committed to lead the change (Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015).

Institutions implementing reform efforts should examine if there are organizational structures to support institutional and individual commitment to continuous improvement (Baca, 2021; Kezar & Fries-Britt, 2020; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020)—in other words, whether change efforts are valued and supported by the organization. To support equity efforts and increase student success, colleges should interrogate their policies, practices, and curriculum to identify existing structures that create barriers for students (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020).

As the college prepares individuals to implement reform efforts and promote a cultural shift, the institution must also provide the infrastructure to support these efforts (Baca, 2021;

Kezar & Fries-Britt, 2020; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Institutions may reflect on the recommendations in the following sections to ensure adequate systems and structures are in place to support change efforts. There should be systems in place that support the faculty, staff, and administrators that are driving the change efforts, as well support structures to promote student success. It is difficult for leaders to drive sustainable and meaningful change if institutional and systemic barriers continue to perpetuate unnecessary complexities and hurdles for students.

Identifying Barriers and Redesigning Policies, Practices, and Curriculum

Almost all participants expressed frustrations with institutional policies and practices the faculty perceived to be continuous barriers to student success. Colleges should examine institutional policies such as course repetition and academic renewal policies to identify potential barriers these policies put on students post AB705 (Baca, 2021; Kezar & Fries-Britt, 2020; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Colleges may consider updating policies to allow for increased attempts to English 1A/1AS courses and allow for the courses to be repeated if desired by the student. Colleges should also examine how systems and communication can be improved to ensure the collegial consultation process is followed while also not causing undue delays (Schoorman & Acker-Hocevar, 2010),

Course Size

Many participants expressed concern on the number of students enrolled in their English 1A/1AS courses. Based on the varying levels of student academic preparedness for a college level composition course, several participants expressed how they needed more time to provide substantive and meaningful individual feedback to students in their English 1A/1AS. Participants

also discussed the increased amount of time they were spending on reading and grading assignments and then individually meeting with students to provide recommendations.

Institutions may want to reexamine the student course caps for English 1A/1AS corequisite courses. Lowering the number of students enrolled in English 1A/1AS may allow for faculty to spend more time on individualized student instruction.

Course Modality

Several participants expressed that they found it difficult to build meaningful connections with students through online courses. Many discussed their frustration of only having the ability to interact with students through a screen or online module and talking to a person face to face is certainly a different experience than interacting with a person on a screen or only through an online module.

Ensuring Equitable and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Most faculty members reported that they used culturally relevant and responsive curriculum and teaching practices. Several faculty members discussed adding more diverse authors and including class assignments that were relevant to students' lives and validated their unique voices and experiences. Inclusive classroom practice such as linguistic justice, leverages the individual social cultural capital students bring to the learning environment, while also validating students' unique identities and lived experiences (Baca, 2021; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Students of color have often felt excluded from traditional curriculum that focused primarily on the stories and writings of White men. Using curriculum that students can identify with and see themselves in, supports a sense of belonging.

Summer Bridge Preparation

Many participants identified the K–12 system as inadequately preparing students to successfully complete transfer level English courses upon high school graduation. Colleges may consider offering summer intensive workshops focusing on bridging the skills students need to be prepared for English 1A course content.

Expanding Noncredit: Considerations for Students With Disabilities

Some faculty recommended that noncredit courses be considered to support students that do not successfully complete English 1A/1AS. One of the biggest concerns of faculty in this study was ensuring students with disabilities had appropriate time with the class material to successfully complete the course. Offering optional noncredit developmental courses may be of particular benefit to students with disabilities or other students. Noncredit developmental courses would allow for additional time for students to master reading and composition skills. Colleges may consider offering noncredit developmental courses that students can elect to take.

It is important to note that there are limitations with offering noncredit developmental courses for students. Aside from it being strongly discouraged in AB1705, noncredit courses are not eligible for financial aid. Although there is no cost for students to enroll in noncredit courses, some students may be negatively impacted because the courses do not have units associated with them. It is also important to note that many federal student financial aid programs, such as Pell grants and subsidized and unsubsidized student loans which can help fund student educational expenses, are constrained by Title IV federal regulations that often do not align with California state initiatives (U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

Providing Holistic Support Resources

Almost all participants felt that holistic student support resources had a positive impact on student success. Research suggests that students are most successful in their courses when the curriculum is designed to embed academic and nonacademic wrap-around student support services and instruction (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Brohawn et al., 2021; Cook, 2016; Daugherty et al., 2018; Hope & Stankas, 2018; Sims, 2020). Intentional interventions assist students with prioritizing their courses, developing educational plans for academic success, and identifying and overcoming both academic and personal barriers.

When courses have embedded student support services such as counselors, advisors, or coaches, those personnel are available to spend time with students discussing their lives and potential challenges. This allows the counselors and coaches to work with students and provide resources for addressing their specific issues. Student services professionals can discuss students' concerns, such as personal time commitments, primary caregiving responsibilities, and financial obligations, without the student needing to reach out outside of class time for resources.

Basic Needs

Several faculty members in the study also noted how their students had benefited from basic needs resources provided by the college. The 2023 Real College California Basic Needs Among CCC surveyed 66,000 community college students across the state (Community College League of California, 2023). The results revealed 2 out of every 3 students faced at least one basic needs insecurity. Colleges can create structures to support students with basic needs such as providing food pantries, clothing closets, student housing and assistance applying for CalFresh benefits. Additionally, colleges can consider providing emergency grants to assist students with

financial hardships. Colleges can also provide textbooks, course materials, laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to ensure students have access to all of the tools, materials, and technology needed for their courses.

Counselor and Instructional Partnerships

As the participants pointed out, the implementation of AB705 has provided for more intentional collaboration between instructional and noninstructional areas. Initiatives such as the Instructor/Counseling partnerships that embed support in the English 1AS support course, allow for holistic support that is embedded in the students' classroom experience (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Baca, 2021; Cook, 2016; Lopez, 2022; Melguizo et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Inclusive classroom practice such as linguistic justice, leverages the individual social cultural capital students bring to the learning environment while also validating students' unique identities and lived experiences (Atkins & Beggs, 2017; Brohawn et al., 2021; Cook, 2016; Daugherty et al., 2018; Hope & Stankas, 2018; Sims, 2020). The counselors, success coaches, and tutors embedded in the course are available to customize and personalize support, based on the students' unique circumstances. This helped to bring the resources to the students, instead of the students having to seek out the resources. Some best practices of counselor and instructor partnerships included the instructional and counseling faculty offering combined virtual office hours where students were able to get support on both academic and nonacademic concerns.

The counselor and instructor partnerships seemed to have the biggest impact during the initial implementation phases. Instructors commented on the embedded counselors being an excellent resource to get students connected resources. During the initial implementation of AB705, the partnerships also eased some instructors' concerns on whether instructors would

have the capacity to support students' varying needs. The partnerships also helped to bridge connections between counseling and instructional faculty, creating additional informal coalitions and networks of support (Sims, 2020). However, now that instructors have become more aware of the resources available, counselor and instructor partnerships may longer be necessary. This may be an opportunity for future research to consider.

Embedded Mental Health Support

Many participants discussed how the pandemic intensified the need to humanize the experiences and interactions we have with students, colleagues, and other college stakeholders. There has been a shift from traditional transactional student interactions to a need to have more intentional transformational interactions with students (Dykes-Anderson, 2013; J. A. Lewis, 2011). Participants reported that they had noticed a significant increase in the number of students reporting dropping their courses due to mental health reasons. Instructors establishing relationships with different support services embedded in the courses increases the instructors' awareness of available resources across the campus and allows for instructors to connect and build relationships with colleagues they may not have had an opportunity to otherwise connect with (Sims, 2020).

Based on the influx of students experiencing mental health concerns, colleges may want to consider embedding mental health supports in the classroom (Dykes-Anderson, 2013; J. A. Lewis, 2011). Colleges may consider offering training on trauma informed teaching practices. Colleges may also consider embedded mental health professionals as a component of instructor-counselor partnership in English 1A/ 1AS corequisite courses. Colleges may consider phasing in different embedded supports as the needs of students evolve (Sims, 2020). Establishing

partnerships with instructors and mental health resources could have a similar effect as the counselor and instructional partnerships had during the initial AB705 implementation phases.

Integration of Initiatives and Budget Allocations

Participants in this study noted how AB705 implementation efforts coincided with other institutional initiatives. AB705 complements the CCCs focus on Student Equity and Achievement and Guided Pathways initiatives that seek to promote student success and eradicate achievement gaps (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et al., 2013; Bragg et al., 2019). Implementation efforts that occur at the same time often compete for support and resources. If there is no cohesion across implementation of the various initiatives, the efforts are likely to fail. Although AB705 can help to address equity gaps around completion of transfer level math and English, it is not the only policy needed to promote equity and increase completion rates for community college students. Colleges should develop integrated plans to ensure coordinated and cohesive institutional efforts to support all institutional goals and initiatives.

Funding

Funding, or lack thereof, was a consistent theme brought up in the interviews. It is often stated in higher education that funding of programs and initiatives is a statement of the institution's values. Some faculty felt some initiatives, like embedded tutors or counselors, would not have been a priority of the college, and therefore not funded by the college, if AB705 was not a legislative mandate. Others questioned whether funding was effectively being allocated to support the needs of students.

AB705 and AB1705 mandated equitable placement was an institutional priority at all CCCs. Existing funding sources combined with new funding opportunities to support

implementation efforts can be leveraged to fund initiatives that support systemic change. At the state level, the legislature appropriated \$64 million in one-time funding for community colleges. colleges have been encouraged to invest in programming to continue to support and improve reform efforts. On May 18, 2023, the CCC Chancellor’s Office hosted a webinar on “Guidance on the Equitable Placement, Support and Completion (AB 1705) Funding Allocation and the Submission of Funding Plans” to support colleges efforts as they continue to implement AB705 and AB1705.

This one-time funding opportunity supports local investment in concurrent student support structures and in equitable and culturally competent classroom practices, curriculum, and pedagogy, and professional development. The intent of the \$64 million pot of money was to support CCCs as they moved from compliance of AB705 to continuous improvement of implementation efforts. It is suggested that colleges and districts leverage other relevant funding sources, such as Student Equity and Achievement, Guided Pathways, and other funding to strategically strengthen and launch new efforts. Colleges can use multiple funding sources to create initiatives and programming that can systematically change student support and instruction to promote equitable student outcomes.

Additional Support for Faculty, Staff and Administrators

In the following sections are recommendations institutions can consider when designing systems and structures to support faculty, staff, and administrators during transformative change.

Focus on Well-Being

Several participants shared the emotional toll AB705 reform efforts had on their well-being. In addition to the focus on the well-being of students, it should also be an institutional

priority to ensure the well-being, health, and safety of faculty and staff. This study showed that several faculty members served as leaders in promoting change efforts to implement AB705. Institutions should be prepared to provide support and understand the individual personal effects leaders may experience as they promote change.

As faculty, staff, and administrators support and lead meaningful and transformative change, they may face and withstand resistance that can also lead to burnout (Brooks et al., 2007; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). As faculty and staff encounter resistance during their change leadership efforts, it is important that they feel supported by the institution. The institution should create a space where leaders, regardless of their role or title at the institution, feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Faculty may benefit from spaces where they feel heard, seen, and validated for their experiences. Colleges should ensure there is an intentional focus on making sure faculty well-being is a priority.

Support for Part-Time Faculty

Participants in this study shared several concerns of inequities that existed for part-time faculty members such as exclusion from committees and meetings, inability to offer office hours, and not attending professional development opportunities due to not being compensated for these activities in the same way they are compensated for full-time faculty. This poses a systemic barrier for part-time members who may be willing and eager to participate in professional development training to better support students, but they are precluded from attending because they are working at several campuses as part-time faculty to supplement their income (Sims, 2020).

Institutions should examine how policies and structures may be negatively impacting part-time faculty. Part-time faculty who are working at several colleges may not have the ability to attend additional meetings or spend additional time with students if they have commitments at several different institutions. Additionally, part-time instructors and counselors that are assigned to English 1A/1AS partnerships may not have the availability to be adequately engaged in the courses. As of this writing, Lo Grande was negotiating with the faculty union to offer additional paid office hours and professional development opportunities for its part-time faculty.

Continuous Reiterative Cycles for Improvement

Faculty offered many suggestions to how AB705 reform initiatives could continue to be improved and enhanced. Meaningful and sustainable change takes time and educational initiatives are often not given adequate time to show measurable results before a new initiative or reform effort is introduced. Improvement science is recommended as an approach to measure the success of AB705 implementation initiatives while also allowing for continuous improvement and enhancement to the initiatives. Improvement science is a problem centered approach that is rooted in inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015, Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015). This approach is suggested as a performance measurement tool because it allows for multiple change ideas to be tested before they are adopted and scaled.

Improvement science provides a method for practitioners to learn how to operationalize specific feedback into their work that allows for continuous improvement (Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015). Improvement science views issues from a systems approach and focuses on continuous inquiry, improvement, and learning. (Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015). The framework is an iterative process that includes rapid cycles consisting of plan, do, study, act.

This evaluation tool allows for learning by doing, innovation, taking risks, testing ideas, and scaling practices that are successful and provide for proof of concept (Hannan et al., 2015). Improvement science can be used to continuously evaluate and improve reform efforts such as English 1A/1AS partnerships, curriculum and pedagogical changes, course modalities, and other policy and practice changes.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study identified several areas that future researchers can consider to better understand the impact of AB705. It would be meaningful to the research to examine students' perspective on the impact of AB705. A future study may consider the students' perspective on the continued impact on instructor–counselor partnerships in English 1A/1AS sections. As community colleges are expected to face significant budget cuts in the upcoming years, there should be a cost-benefit analysis on continuing to fund counseling faculty to be embedded in English 1A/1AS support courses. As instructional faculty members become more familiar with the different student support resources on campus, there may be less of a need to have an academic counselor assigned and embedded in each course. Future research should also examine the impact pedagogical approaches that include linguistic justice have on student outcomes.

Because AB705 is relatively new legislation, most studies have been qualitative in nature. It has also been difficult to assess if the quantitative results measuring the success of AB705 have been skewed as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic occurring at the same time of AB705 reform efforts and compliance deadlines. As more data on student success outcomes become available, research should examine and identify students that are not successfully completing transfer level English and/or math courses. Future studies should consider the

number of times students are attempting transfer level English and/or math courses before they are successfully passing the course. Future quantitative studies should continue to monitor successful course completion numbers.

The data should also be disaggregated by student race/ethnicity to continue to monitor the impact AB705 is having on students of color. A future study on grade distribution can also help understand if AB705 has had an impact on the letter grades students are receiving. It is also suggested that future research examine if transfer rates to 4-year universities has increased as a result of AB705. Finally, this study also recommends future research examining student success in future courses after students transfer to a university.

Conclusion

AB705 has the potential to be the most historic educational reform effort of our time. As a result of AB705 and AB1705, most 1st-year students will enroll directly into transfer level math and/or English courses. Faculty members' perspectives and experiences during reform efforts can give powerful insights that can help inform legislators and system leaders on whether AB705 has had the intended impact on student success. These experiences and perspectives can also help inform reform efforts and institutional changes that colleges may consider as they move toward full implementation of AB705 and AB1705.

Systems thinking and social justice leadership frameworks can equip leaders to promote transformative change at their institutions. Leaders that embody social justice leadership traits can help influence transformative change to support equity at their institutions (Brooks et al., 2007; Shields, 2010, 2018, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Systems thinking acknowledges that college systems are complex, and there are deep issues that exist that prevent transformative change

(Furst-Bowe, 2011; Gomez et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2015; Senge, 2006; Shukla, 2018; Stroh, 2015). Colleges that support a culture of innovation may be better equipped to successfully implement change efforts that support the intended outcomes of the initiative or mandate.

The purpose of this study was to identify how social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking can be used to prepare individuals and organizations to implement reform. This study also sought to gain insights in how social justice leadership traits may have contributed to college's reforming their educational practices and structures to support student success. The overall intent of this study was to understand if AB705 was a catalyst toward transformative institutional changes in support of student success and equity. The faculty's shared experiences in this study uncovered several barriers that students and faculty faced during the implementation of AB705. Although AB705 has the potential to be the most transformative reform effort of our time, it will not yield maximum reform results if individual change is not matched with systemic change at the institutional, state, and federal levels.

The needs of the students and communities that we serve should always be at the forefront of our work. The findings of this study suggest for transformative change to occur, there must be an alignment for both individual and systemic readiness for change. Colleges should evaluate their leadership capacity and organizational structures to promote a culture that emphasizes and supports student success rather than continuing to perpetuate systems that create systemic barriers for students of color. Individuals that are committed to both personal and professional change are better equipped to lead and adapt to systemic change. However, if individuals are committed to personal and professional change, but the institutional systems they operate in do not change, change efforts may not be successful. Conversely, if an institution

successfully changes its systems but does not have people that are ready to adapt to the systemic changes, reform efforts may also fail.

Epilogue

As a community college student, I was placed in math and English courses that were below transfer level, I took 2 semesters of algebra 1 and 2 that were not transferable because admittedly math was not my strong suit. I struggled through 2 semesters, ultimately enrolling in a transfer Statistics course after. To my dismay, very little of what was taught in the nontransferable math courses served as a foundation for my success in Statistics.

I was more confident that I could be successful in a transfer level English, so I advocated for myself and successfully appealed my placement with the English department. Ultimately, I was allowed to enroll in the transfer level English course. I often think about other students who may have been in the same situation as me but did not advocate for themselves. I wonder if they took unnecessary courses or if they gave up and not enroll in college after being dissuaded by their math and English placement results.

This program has helped me realize that qualitative data can be used to show initial results of initiatives while we wait for the quantitative results to catch up. As my college moves toward a culture that is centered on data-informed decision making, a priority for me is to improve the data integrity as it relates to capturing the impact our institution has on student success, retention, and completion, and its impact on working toward closing equity gaps. It is also a priority to work with campus and community stakeholders to define as a campus how we define and operationalize equity as an institution as we work toward building a comprehensive and cohesive equity strategy. It is important for the institution to be able to be able to analyze the

effectiveness of its equity initiatives using a strategic lens to understand the value-added components and the return on investment of our efforts and budget allocations.

As we implement reform efforts, it is important to recognize that the leaders,' students,' teachers,' and communities' values, beliefs, biases, and needs will not be the same and may not align. However, the needs of the students and communities that we serve should always be at the forefront of our work. During this program, I was also reminded that my role as a leader is not always to provide an answer or feel pressured to come up with a solution. There are times when it is okay to take a step back and let others lead while I assume a supportive role. As I continue to refine my definition of social justice, critical self-reflection and a critical understanding of the historical contexts of the students and communities I serve will be the foundation and first step toward my definition and approach to social justice leadership.

Although I do not always agree that legislative mandates are the best and most effective ways to implement change in schools, sometimes they are necessary. Schools, especially colleges are large bureaucratic structures that have many hoops to jump through before change can occur. Progress can be stalled and oftentimes promising change initiatives never make it through the collegial consultation process. Sometimes it is necessary for policymakers to initiate changes in education through legislation. Although AB705 was a top-down mandate, institutions can maximize results of the reform effort by allowing for collaborative strategizing of implementation efforts from all impacted stakeholders.

As an educational leader who is committed to promoting equitable student outcomes, I think it is also imperative to make a commitment to action and activism. It is important to create a coalition of different voices that are committed to driving change. I have been fortunate to

work at an institution where there are many like-minded administrators, faculty, and staff who are passionate about promoting social justice and creating change at our institution. As we approach social justice work, I think it is imperative that we find those like-minded individuals who we can take risks with and have each other's backs.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Interview Information	
Date:	Time:
Interviewer:	Interviewee (pseudonym):
Location:	

I. INTRODUCTION	NOTES
<p>Hello, my name is Kristina. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my dissertation research. The purpose of this study is to explore English faculty members' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of Assembly Bill 705 at a California community college and the impact the reform has had on advancing student equity.</p> <p>During the interview, I'll ask you to tell me about your experiences in your experiences and perspectives during the implementation of AB705. These questions are not intended to be intrusive or make you feel uncomfortable, but if I ask a question that you do not feel comfortable answering, please just tell me that you do not want to answer and we will move on to the next question.</p> <p>I anticipate the interview will take approximately 60 minutes. With your permission, I will record video and audio via Zoom so that I can transcribe the conversation and use the transcript for analysis. <i>[IF PARTICIPANT DOES NOT AGREE TO BE RECORDED, YOU CAN CONTINUE THE INTERVIEW JUST TAKING NOTES OR YOU CAN CHOOSE TO DISCONTINUE INTERVIEW.]</i></p> <p>Do you have any questions before we begin? <i>[ANSWER QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. IF YOU CAN'T ANSWER OFF HAND ASK IF THEY'D BE COMFORTABLE WITH YOU GETTING BACK TO THEM WITH THE ANSWER AFTER THE INTERVIEW]</i></p>	

II. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	NOTES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What can you tell me about your experience in implementing AB 705? ● What outcomes, either positive or negative, have you seen in the implementation of AB 705? ● What institutional changes would you recommend your college make to support students and faculty as AB1705 is implemented? ● Can you please describe what AB 705 means for student equity on your campus? ● Can you describe any successes or barriers to success in implementing AB705? ● If you could change one thing about implementation of AB705, what would it be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? ● Are there any other things you would like me to know about implementation of Assembly Bill 705 that we have not discussed? 	

III. CLOSING	
--------------	--

<p>We need to start wrapping up our interview now, but before we do, is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask about?</p> <p><i>[STOP RECORDING.]</i></p> <p>Thank you for your time and your thoughtful responses. My next step is to transcribe this conversation so I can use it in my data set for analysis. Is it ok if I reach out to you if I have questions or need clarifications about this conversation?</p> <p><i>[BE SURE TO MAKE A NOTE OF THEIR ANSWER.]</i></p> <p>Thanks again. If you think of any questions or have any concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.</p>	
---	--

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

From: [Martinez Kristina](#)
To: [Martinez Kristina](#)
Subject: Participation in AB705 Research
Date: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 5:15:00 PM

Dear English Faculty Member,

My name is Kristina Martinez and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership for Social Justice Program at Loyola Marymount University. I am currently in the final year of my doctoral program and I am reaching out to see if you would be interested in being interviewed for my dissertation research.

The purpose of my research study is to explore English faculty members' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of Assembly Bill 705 at a California community college and the impact the reform has had on advancing student equity. I am interested in hearing from you about your perspectives in implementing AB705. Your experiences could help me tremendously with writing my dissertation. Participation in this study would include an approximately one hour, one-on-one interview. The interviews will be conducted in person or via zoom, depending on your preference. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed with your consent.

I recognize that as a faculty member your schedule can be very busy and I will work with you to find a time that works best for our interview. I will contact you to set up a time and date for our interview. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw participation in the study at any time.

If you are interested in participating in this study please reply to this email, email me at kmart113@lion.lmu.edu, or contact me by phone at (310)918-3835.

If you have any additional questions please feel free to email or call me.

Best,

Kristina Martinez

Kristina Martinez
Interim Dean, Student Support Services
El Camino College
16007 Crenshaw Blvd. | Torrance, California 90506
Phone: 310-660-3593 ext. 3627 | Email: kmartinez@elcamino.edu

APPENDIX C

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT

Loyola Marymount University Informed Consent Form

- TITLE:** The Most Historic Higher Education Reform Effort of Our Time: Implementation of AB705 for Equitable Student Access and Success
- INVESTIGATOR:** Kristina Martinez, School of Education, Loyola Marymount University, (310) 918-3835
- ADVISOR: (if applicable)** Dr. Kenzo Sung, School of Education, Loyola Marymount University
- PURPOSE:** You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate English faculty members' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of Assembly Bill 705 at a California community college. This research study seeks to understand the impact the reform has had on advancing student equity. You will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. You will be asked to be audio-recorded; recordings will be used for transcription and analysis purposes only. If you wish to participate in an interview without audio recording, the researcher will respect this request and take detailed field notes instead. Your participation in the study is voluntary and all responses will remain confidential. Your decision to participate or not participate in the study will not impact your relationship or employment at the college in any way.
- RISKS:** You will be asked to share your personal perspectives and experiences during the implementation of AB705. There is some risk for discomfort as you may share your personal reflections about your experiences. If you are not comfortable answering any of the questions you are asked, you have the right to skip the question and move on to the next question.
- BENEFITS:** A potential benefit of this study is to identify how social justice leadership frameworks and systems thinking can be used to prepare individuals and organizations to implement reform. The research seeks to use a social justice leadership framework to understand how El Camino College implemented AB705 with an equity focus. This study is of local importance to El Camino College as understanding faculty experience and perceptions of the implementation of AB705 can enhance and improve how the college prepares for the implementation of AB1705.

INCENTIVES: You will receive no gifts/incentives for this study. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never be used in any public dissemination of these data (publications, presentations, etc.). All research materials and consent forms will be stored in a password-enabled tablet and laptop accessible only by the researcher. When the research study ends, any identifying information will be removed from the data, or it will be destroyed. All of the information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for both participants and the institution.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: Your participation in this study is *voluntary*. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty. Your withdrawal will not influence your relationship with El Camino College. Your withdrawal will not influence any other services to which you may be otherwise entitled, your class standing, or your relationship with Loyola Marymount University.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. Kristina Martinez may be reached at kmart113@lion.lmu.edu or 310-918-3835. A summary of the results will be available on or around December 2023.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being asked of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. If the study design or use of the information is changed I will be informed and my consent reobtained. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that if I have any further questions, comments or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact Dr. David Moffet, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Loyola Marymount University, 1 LMU Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045-2659 or by email at David.Moffet@lmu.edu.

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS BILL OF RIGHTS

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24172, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

1. I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.
2. I will be given an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the medical experiment, and any drug or device to be utilized.
3. I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.
4. I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.
5. I will be given a disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures, drugs or devices that might be advantageous and their relative risks and benefits.
6. I will be informed of the avenues of medical treatment, if any, available after the study is completed if complications should arise.
7. I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.
8. I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.
9. I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.
10. I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

REFERENCES

- AB-705 Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: Matriculation: Assessment, CA Education Code §78213 (2012 & rev. 2017).
https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB705
- AB-1705 Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: Matriculation: Assessment, CA Education Code §78213 (2017 & rev. 2022).
https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1705
- Arteaga, B. E. (2015) Applying cultura in the community college counseling practice. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(8), 708–726.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2013.876374>
- Atkins, C., & Beggs, C. T. (2017). Commuting the math sentence: Accelerating developmental mathematics using the co-requisite model. *NADE Digest*, 9(1), 20–24. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ1178226). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1178226.pdf>
- Baca, A. (2021). “Now let us shift”: A case study of developmental education reform in a Hispanic serving community college. *Journal of Critical Issues in Educational Practice*, 11(1), Article 4. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/wie/vol11/iss1/4/>
- Bailey, T. R. (2015). *Redesigning America’s community colleges: A clearer path to student success*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674425934>
- Bailey, T., Jaggars, S. S., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2013). *Characterizing the effectiveness of developmental education: A response to recent criticism*. Community College Research Center, Columbia University.
- Baston, M. A. (2018) Elevating student affairs practice in community college redesign. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(11), 812–817.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2018.1446057>
- Booth, K., Cooper, D., Karandjeff, K., Large, M., Pellegrin, N., Purnell, R., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Schiorring, E., & Willett, T. (2013). *Using student voices to redefine success: What community college students say institutions, instructors and others can do to help them succeed*. The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.
- Bragg, D., Wetzstein, L., & Bauman, K. (2019). *Integrating racial equity into guided pathways*. Community College Research Initiatives, University of Washington.

- Brooks, J. S., Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H. & Hodgins, D. W. (2007). Distributed leadership for social justice: Exploring how influence and equity are stretched over an urban high school. *Journal of School Leadership*, 17(4), 378–408.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460701700402>
- Brohawn, K., Newell, M., & Fagioli, L. (2021). *Enrollment and success in transfer-level English and math in the California community colleges system: Fall 2015 to Fall 2019 statewide analysis*. RP Group.
https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/MultipleMeasures/AB705_Workshops/AccessEnrollmentSuccess_RPGroup_Final2020-1.pdf
- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Harvard Education Press.
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2020). *Equitable placement (AB705) validation of practices data reporting*. <https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation>
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2021). *Update to the vision for success reaffirming equity in a time of recovery*. <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/vision-for-success-update-2021-a11y.pdf>
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2023, Feb 7). *Equitable placement, support and completion: Implementation and implications of AB 1705* [Webinar]. <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/equitable-placement/resources>
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2023, May 18). *Guidance on the Equitable Placement, Support and Completion (AB 1705) Funding Allocation and the Submission of Funding Plans* [Webinar]. <https://vimeo.com/830648887/2941aa54f4?share=copy>
- Cafarella, B. (2016). Acceleration and compression in developmental mathematics: Faculty viewpoints. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 39(2), 12–25. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ1117729). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1117729>
- Clandinin, D., & Connelly, F. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-008043349-3/50013-X>
- Community College League of California. (2023). *Affordability, Food, and Housing Access Taskforce Report Real College California: Basic Needs Among California Community College Students*.
https://ccleague.org/sites/default/files/images/basic_needs_among_california_community_college_students-final-2023.pdf

- Cook, A. G. (2016). SOARing to new heights with underprepared students. *NADE Digest*, 8(1), 2–9. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ1178218).
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1178218.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE publications.
- Daugherty, L., Gomez, C. J., Carew, D. G., Mendoza-Graf, A., & Miller, T. (2018). *Designing and implementing corequisite models of developmental education*. RAND Corporation.
<https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2337>
- Denzin, N. 2010. *The qualitative manifesto: A call to arms*. Routledge
- Dykes-Anderson, M. (2013) The case for comprehensive counseling centers at community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 37(10), 742–749.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668921003723235>
- Education Trust West. (2023). *Mapping the equitable placement of AB705*. The Education Trust West. <https://west.edtrust.org/mapping-the-equitable-implementation-of-ab-705>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder & Herder.
- Freire, P. (1982). Creating alternative research methods. Learning to do it by doing it. In B. Hall, A. Gillette, & R. Tandon (Eds.), *Creating knowledge: A monopoly* (pp. 29–37). Society for Participatory Research in Asia.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Furst-Bowe, J. (2011). Systems thinking: Critical to quality improvement in higher education. *Quality Approaches in Higher Education*, 2(2), 2–5.
https://obecurriculumsessions.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/day-one_systems-thinking1.pdf
- Garza, E. (2008). Autoethnography of a first-time superintendent: Challenges to leadership for social justice. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 7(2), 163–176.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348430701828749>
- Glanz, J. (2007). On vulnerability and transformative leadership: An imperative for leaders of supervision. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 10(2), 115–135.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120601097462>

- Gomez, L. M., Biag, M. & Imig, D. G. (2020). Educating teachers for the 21st century: culture, reflection, and learning. *Handbook of the cultural foundations of learning*. Taylor & Francis.
- Hannan, M., Russell, J. L., Takahashi, S., & Park, S. (2015). Using improvement science to better support beginning teachers: The case of the building a teaching effectiveness network. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(5), 494–508.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487115602126>
- Hoffman, L. P., & Burrello, L. C. (2004). A case study illustration of how a critical theorist and a consummate practitioner meet on common ground. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(2), 268–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X03260999>
- Hope, L., & Stanskas, J. (2018). *AB705 implementation guidelines*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. https://asccc.org/sites/default/files/AA%2018-40%20AB%20705%20Implementation%20Memorandum_.pdf
- Horsford, S. D., Grosland, T., & Gunn, K. M. (2011). Pedagogy of the personal and professional: Toward a framework for culturally relevant leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, 21, 582–606. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461102100404>
- Jones, K. (2013). Infusing biography with the personal: Writing *Rufus Stone*. *Creative Approaches to Research*, 6(2), 6–23.
https://www.academia.edu/4264974/Infusing_Biography_with_the_Personal_Writing_RUFUS_STONE
- Jones, S. (2015). The game changers: Strategies to boost college completion and close attainment gaps. *Change: Higher Learning*, 47(2), 24–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2015.1018085>
- Kezar, A., & Fries-Britt, S. (2020). How do we lead on equity? Hint: avoid a routine approach--and focus on building trust. *Liberal Education*, 106(3), 10–13.
- Kezar, A., & Lester, J. (2010). Breaking the barriers of essentialism in leadership research: Positionality as a promising approach. *Feminist formations*, 22(1), 163–185.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/nwsa.0.0121>
- Khalifa, M., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272–1311.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316630383>
- Kirkland, D. E. (2020). *Guidance on culturally responsive-sustaining remote education: Centering equity, access, & educational justice*. Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and Transformation of Schools.

- Kose, B. W. (2007). Principal leadership for social justice: Uncovering the content of teacher professional development. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*, 276–312.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460701700302>
- Larson, C. L., & Murtadha, K. (2002). Leadership for social justice. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 101*(1), 134–161.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7984.2002.tb00007.x>
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. Guilford Publications.
- Lewis, J. A. (2011). Operationalizing social justice counseling: paradigm to practice. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 50*(2), 183–220. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1939.2011.tb00117.x>
- Lewis, J. A., Lewis, M. D., Daniels, J. A., & D'Andrea, M. I. (2011). *Community counseling: A multicultural social justice perspective* (4th ed.). Brooks/Cole.
- Lewis, K. (2016) Social justice leadership and inclusion: A genealogy. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 48*(4), 324–341.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2016.1210589>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Lo Grande College (2018 September 6). English Department Meeting Minutes.
- Lo Grande College (2023). *Lo Grande College Dashboard*.
- Lo Grande College (2022). *English Department Program Review*.
- LoGrande College (2022). *English Department Faculty Prioritization Request*.
- Lo Grande College. (2023) *Mission*.
- Lopez, A. B. (2022). Implementing AB 705: Implications for equitable outcomes of Latinx students. *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research, 8*(2), 107–134.
<https://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/article/view/217/349>
- Madhlangobe, L., & Gordon, S. P. (2012). Culturally responsive leadership in a diverse school: A case study of a high school leader. *NASSP Bulletin, 96*(3), 177–202.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636512450909>

- Marshall, C., & Olivia, M. (2005). *Leadership for social justice: Making revolutions in education*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Maxwell, J. C. (2020). Who has Leadership potential within the organization? If you're a leader who wants to develop other leaders, you need to encourage them. *Leadership Excellence*, 37(2), 7–9.
https://www.hr.com/en/magazines/leadership_excellence_essentials/february_2020_leadership/who-has-leadership-potential-within-the-organizational_k67wxn5s.html
- McClenney, K. M. (2019). Guided pathways to college completion and equity. In T. U. O'Banion (Ed.), *13 ideas that are transforming the community college world* (pp. 85–103). Roman & Littlefield Publishers.
- McLaughlin, D. (1989). Power and the politics of knowledge: Transformative leadership and curriculum development for minority language learners. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 66 (3), 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01619568909538648>
- Mejia, M. C., Rodriguez, O., Johnson, H., & Perez, C. A. (2022). *Community college English in California's new era of student access*. Public Policy Institute of California.
- Melguizo, T., Ngo, F., Ching, C., Swanson, E., Harrington, D. L., & Yücel, E. (2022). *AB705 implementation in the Los Angeles community college district: Results from a district-wide survey*. Pullias Center for Higher Education
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ngo, F., Velasquez, D., & Melguizo, T. (2021). Faculty perspectives on using high school data in an era of placement testing reform. *Community College Review*, 49(3), 290–313.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00915521211002896>
- Northouse, P. G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Owens, R., & Valesky, T. G. (2010). *Organizational behavior in education: Leadership and reform*. Pearson, Boston.
- Reed, L. (2008). An expansion of a scholar's social justice perspective: A meeting at the crossroads. *Journal of School Leadership*, 18(2), 200–223.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460801800204>
- Reed, L. C., & Swaminathan, R. (2016). An urban school leader's approach to school improvement: Toward contextually responsive leadership. *Urban Education*, 51(9) 1096–1125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914553675>

- Robinson, K. (2010). *Sir Ken Robinson: Bring on the learning*. TED Talk. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e609462010-001>
- Rodriguez, O., Cuellar Mejia, M., & Johnson, H. (2018). Remedial education reforms at California's community colleges: Early evidence on placement and curricular reforms. *Public Policy Institute of California*. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/reforming-english-pathways-at-californias-community-colleges/>
- Schoorman, D., & Acker-Hocevar, M. (2010). Viewing faculty governance within a social justice framework: Struggles and possibilities for democratic decision-making in higher education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 43(3), 310–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2010.494493>
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.
- Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(4) 558–589. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10375609>
- Shields, C. M. (2018). *Transformative leadership in education: Equitable and socially just change in an uncertain and complex world*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315207148>
- Shields, C. M. (2020). *Becoming a transformative leader*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429261091>
- Sims, J. M. (2020). *An analysis of the impact of corequisite support classes new placement criteria on community college faculty implementation decision-making* [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles].
- Shukla, D. (2018). Modeling systems thinking in action among higher education leaders with fuzzy multi-criteria decision making. *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society*, 13(2), 946–965. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mmcks-2018-0015>
- Spall, S. (1998). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: Emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4 (2), 280–292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400208>
- Stroh, D. P. (2015). *Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

- Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(2), 221–258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X06293717>
- Thomas, K. W. (1976). Conflict and Conflict Management. In: M. D. Dunnette (Ed.) *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, pp. 889–935, Rand McNally, Chicago.
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45(1), 89–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089>
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. The University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226922461.001.0001>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2023). *Federal student aid handbook (2023–20223). Vol. 1 Student eligibility*. Retrieved from <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2023-2024>
- Williamson, J. A., Rhodes, L., & Dunson, M. (2007). A selected history of social justice in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 31, 195–224. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X07300046195>
- Windham, M. H., Rehfuss, M. C., Williams, C. R., Pugh, J. V., & Tincher-Ladner, L. (2014). Retention of first-year community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 38(5), 466–477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2012.743867>
- Yin, R. K. (2002). *Case study research: Design and methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Yukl, G. (2006). *Leadership in organizations* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Yukl, G. (2012). Leadership: What is it? In W. G. Rowe & L. Guerrerro (Eds.), *Cases in leadership* (3rd. ed. pp. 1–42). SAGE Publications.
- Zoom. (2023). Zoom Video Communications [Computer Software]. www.zoom.us