

Los Angeles Regional Adult Education Consortium, LARAEC

Focus Group Findings

CTE

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Prepared by Richard Iadevaia

1

Data collected by the following Subject Matter Experts (SMEs): Alma Alvarez, East Los Angeles Skills Center, David Earhart, Slawson Southeast Occupational Center, Henry Fimbres, Ford Park Adult School, Richard Iadevaia, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Jose Zaragoza, Burbank Adult School, Lorena Zorrilla, Los Angeles Technology Center. Additional support was provided by Ana Martinez and Gonzalo Perez

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to explore the perceptions of students who are currently enrolled in a variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) fields offered by different education centers within the Los Angeles region. Additionally, the report will assist LARAEC in developing new and existing career pathways within, and between, local adult schools and community colleges that will aid students in completing the subject requirements of their career choice.

SCOPE

Data was acquired during the first three weeks of February 2017 from six participating schools: five from Los Angeles Adult Schools and one from a community college as noted below.

1. East Los Angeles Skills Center, LAUSD
2. Slawson Southeast Occupational Center, LAUSD
3. Los Angeles Technology Center, LAUSD
4. Ford Park Adult School, MUSD
5. Burbank Adult School, BUSD
6. Los Angeles Trade Technical College, LACCD

Approximately one hundred students participated in this study and represented the following CTE career pathways:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Architectural Technology○ Automotive Technician○ Building and Grounds○ Business English○ Certified Nursing Assistant○ Child Development○ Computer Skills○ Construction○ Cosmetology○ Electrical○ Electrical Construction and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Health Information Technology○ Home Health Aide○ Hospitality○ Medical Assistant○ Microsoft Computer Applications○ Pharmacy Technician○ Photovoltaic Technician○ Security○ Trucking○ Video Production
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DEMOGRAPHICS

Basic demographic data was collected and is shown below to better understand the scope of this report. For simplicity, data from each of the five adult schools was added together into one group and displayed in a pie chart and compared to the data from the community college.

- Approximately 80% of responders came from the adult school community and the remainder came from the community college. **See Exhibit A.**
- The data pool revealed an even split between men and women. **See Exhibit B.**
- Age groups sampled were nearly identical among the participants. For example, half of all participants were between the ages of 18 to 29 years old. In the remaining half of the sample, there was equal distribution among the other three age categories, 30-39, 40-49, and 50+. **See Exhibit C.**
- In both adult schools and the community college, the participants were mostly Hispanic. In fact, about eighty percent of those sampled from adult schools were Hispanic compared to about fifty percent from the community college. The African-American and Caucasian populations of those sampled in the adult schools were 9% and 4% respectively compared to 26% and 16% in the community college. **See Exhibit D.**
- Almost 50% of students that attend adult schools travel five miles or less. In contrast, 37% of students travel more than twenty miles to attend the community college. **See Exhibit E.**
- Up to 65% of the participants were preparing themselves for their first career. **See Exhibit F.**

METHODOLOGY

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) developed a questionnaire that extracted basic demographic information such as: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, School location, Distance traveled to school, CTE field, and whether the student is training for their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd career or advancement in their careers. The second component of the questionnaire involved gathering data from various experiences or preferences encountered by students as they navigate their way toward their career goals. For example, these “experiential areas” and their associated questions included the following:

Marketing	How did you find out about the CTE class that you are currently enrolled?
Counseling	Tell me about your guidance or counseling experience that you received before you enrolled in the program?
Fees	Can you describe the financial assistance you are receiving?
Enrollment	What factors influenced your decision to enroll in the class/program?
Satisfaction Quotient	How would you describe the training you are receiving in the program?
Goals/Outcomes	Describe your future plans after completing the program.
Prior Learning	Can you describe how ESL/Reading/Math has helped you to succeed in school?

Students were asked these questions in a variety of ways such as in one-on-one interviews, small groups, class survey, and focus group discussions.

FINDINGS ANALYSIS

There was an extremely wide range of responses in each of the “experiential areas.” However, this report will only identify the most common responses. **Note:** the percentages reported are approximations.

Marketing

Students discover CTE through a variety of avenues. About 33% of students enter CTE programs from speaking with friends, family, and coworkers. A slightly lower percentage comes from the interaction students have with teachers, counselors, and the staff at schools. Another significant means of discovery is through website and internet advertisement.

Counseling

Before beginning their studies, approximately 60% of students received some type of guidance or counseling and about a third reported having no counseling.

Fees

More than 40% of CTE students pay for their education “out of pocket” or obtain support from their families, and about 30% of support comes from community sponsors such as Homeboy Industries or Para Los Niños. Most of those paying out of pocket indicated that the fees are reasonable or manageable. In the case of the community college, approximately half of all financial support primarily comes from government subsidies such as fee waivers, Worksource Center, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS).

Enrollment

The two primary factors that influenced students to choose CTE was 1) to advance in their careers and 2) to explore their personal interest in field. The approximate percentages of these two factors were 30% and 40% respectively.

Satisfaction Quotient

Students from both adult schools and the community college described their experiences within the CTE program in an overwhelmingly positive manner. Most, about 70%, praised their teachers, counselors, and school personnel for their help and guidance.

Goals/Outcomes

Students enroll in CTE programs for the following reasons: to obtain training toward a new career, to advance in their careers, to receive industry certification/state board licensing and to increase their income potential. These reasons represent about 70% of all responses.

Prior Learning

About 60% of all participants reported that ESL, reading, and math classes prior to enrolling in CTE classes definitely helped them to succeed in their studies as well as in every-day life. About 30% reported that ESL, reading, or math did not apply or was not applicable to them.

CONCLUSIONS

- The data indicates that students travel further to a community college. One reason for this may possibly be to attend programs with unique features. For example, the nursing program at LATTC accepts students on a first come first serve basis. This feature exists in contrast to other nursing programs that accept students on the basis of more strict guidelines such as GPA.
- Students at adult schools rely primarily on themselves and their family members to pay for costs. Adult schools also have to rely on community sponsors such as Homeboy Industries or Para Los Niños to support students. This may concern students who find themselves pursuing their career goals in an adult school with little financial support compared to a community college where fees are offset by various government subsidies.
- ESL, reading, and math classes have a definite impact on students who require these classes in order to be successful in their career pursuits.

NOTE: This is a small sampling representing the responses from Burbank Unified School District, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Montebello Unified School District.

EXHIBIT A

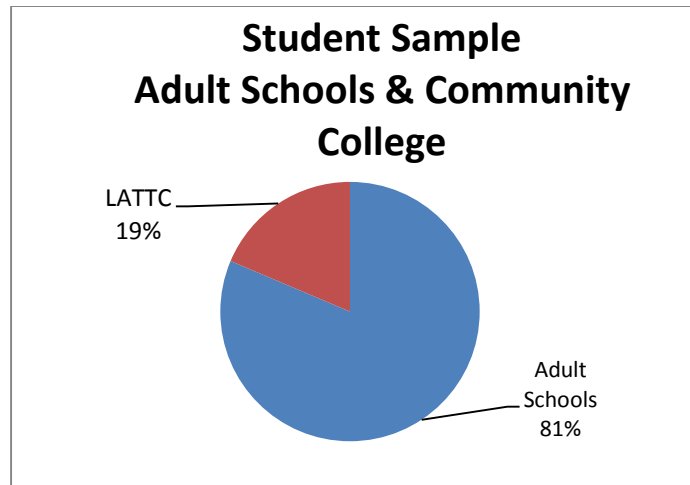


EXHIBIT B

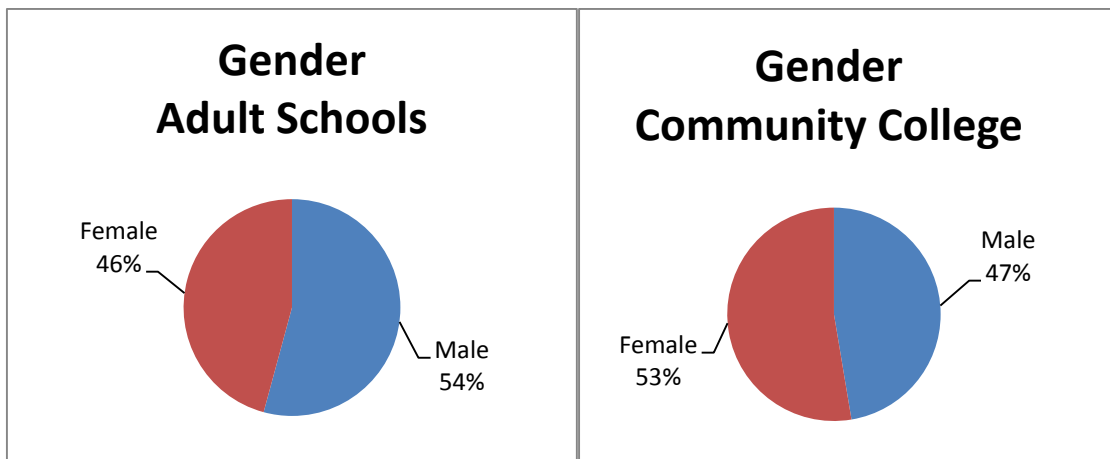


EXHIBIT C

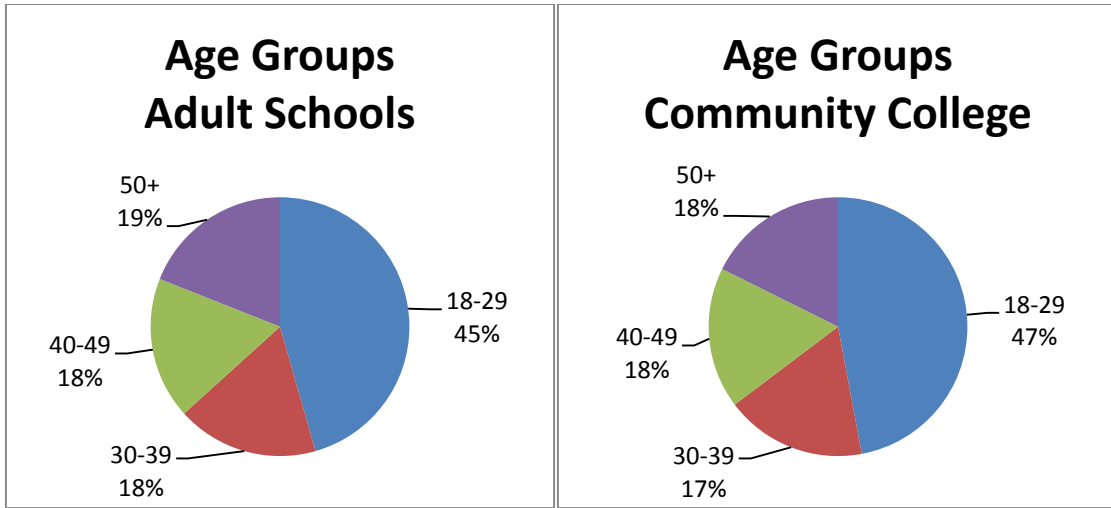


EXHIBIT D

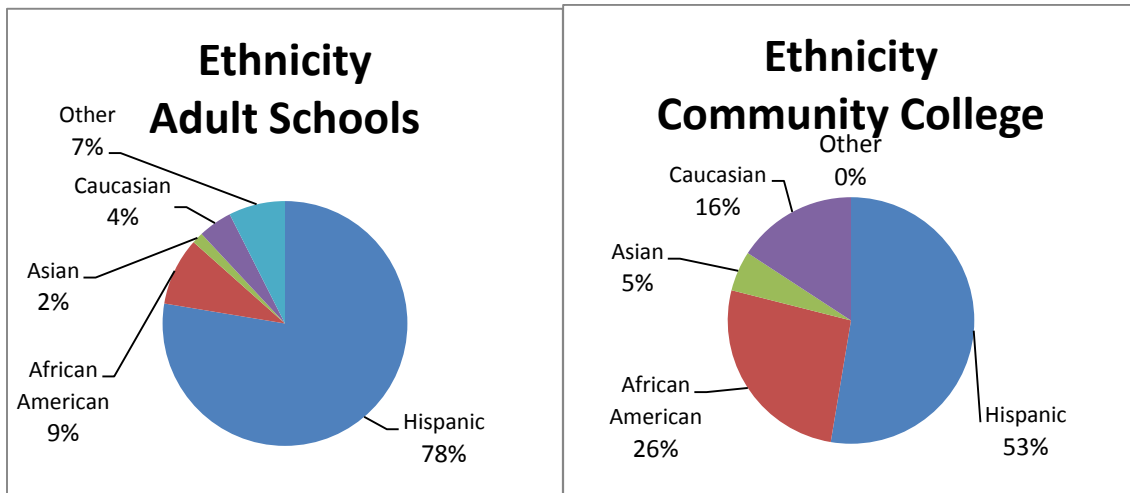


EXHIBIT E

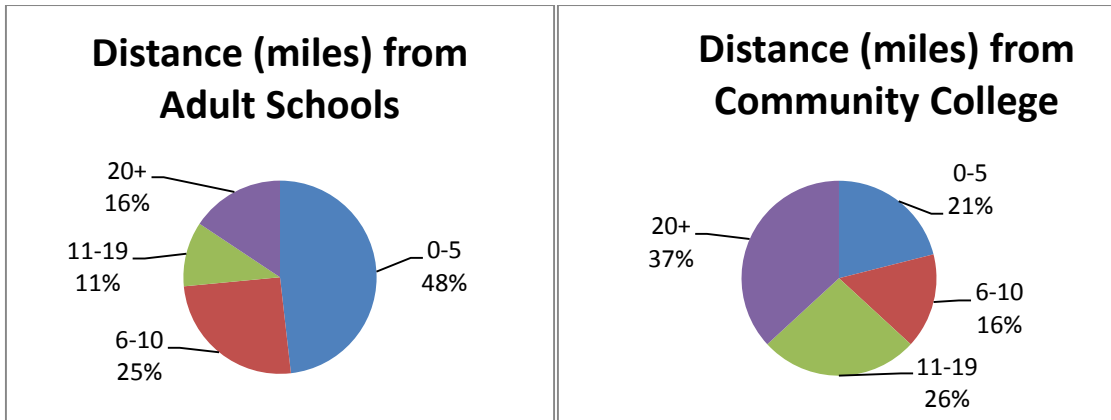


EXHIBIT F

