



Data & Dialogue

A Newsletter of the Woodrow Wilson Early College Network

July 2007

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This issue of *Data & Dialogue* focuses on classroom assessment at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Performance-based strategies that give both students and teachers frequent feedback have great potential to increase Early College students' college readiness.

• **DIALOGUE**
Assessment for Learning



A 7th-grade student at CAL Prep (UC Berkeley) presents his math exhibition model of a miniature golf course hole. Photo by Peg Skorpinski

The next issue of *Data & Dialogue* is scheduled for September/October 2007.

To share news and highlights with the network, please contact [Kristen Vogt](#).

Past issues of *Data & Dialogue* are available [online](#).

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Whether we want students to think like historians or scientists, use a range of strategies to solve problems, or apply knowledge to new contexts, we don't just need to teach these skills, we also need to find out how well students are learning them. Woodrow Wilson's Early College network schools face the essential challenge of finding ways to assess the higher-order thinking skills that are the cornerstone of college readiness and college success.

Performance-based assessment offers an authentic way to do just this. Portfolios and exhibitions are the two most common types of performance-based assessment. Exhibitions, in particular, are part of the educational design in a handful of WW Early Colleges.

For example, an exhibition is required in each year that a student attends CAL Prep (California College Preparatory Academy; partner

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A list of partnerships in the Woodrow
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[online](#).

UC Berkeley), beginning in sixth grade. The projects, which begin in December and typically end in March, involve classroom learning, group work, independent research, problem-solving, and writing. Products include a final report, an oral presentation, and visual aids such as posters and models. The projects emphasize a CAL Prep theme - learning by designing - and also address California State Standards in different content areas.

- **Grade 6:** Heroism in Living History--Oral History (humanities): placing life events in historical contexts. ([more info](#))
- **Grade 7:** Mini-Golf Design Project (mathematics): using formulas for surface area and the principles of measurement and geometry to design a series of mini-golf holes. ([more info](#))
- **Grade 8:** Rube Goldberg Contraption (physical science): designing and testing a device in the spirit of Rube Goldberg to, for example, move a marble through a maze using the concepts of force and motion and scientific experimentation. ([more info](#))

Each project culminates in an oral presentation to a panel of teachers, peers, and community members including UC Berkeley faculty. "To have middle schoolers presenting to college faculty, that is really amazing," said Gail Kaufman, co-coordinator of the early college initiative at UC Berkeley. However, she also noted that student panelists tend to be the toughest judges with the highest standards, most likely because they know the project best and know what is expected throughout the process.

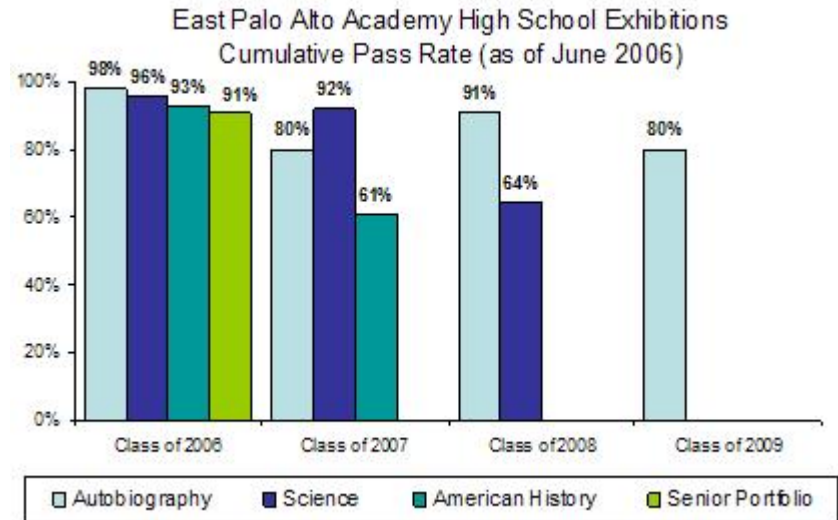
After two years of experience with conducting exhibitions, expectations are now more defined, teachers are more adept at scaffolding the projects, and the projects are better designed. Over 80% of students passed exhibitions this year, according to Ms. Kaufman. Students who do not meet all expectations have an opportunity to revise and resubmit.

Performance assessment, like exhibitions, is most successful when integrated into classroom instruction. Through the assessment process, students learn content, build their literacy skills, develop an appreciation for multiple drafts and revision, and experiment with alternative designs to learn from their mistakes. In this learning environment, where instruction and assessment are interconnected, teachers provide feedback often, and give direction based on each student's progress in meeting expectations. These expectations are outlined in a rubric for evaluating the exhibition. Students therefore know their target, and with their teacher's help, they move closer to meeting those goals.

"I see it as a culminating, capstone experience for the students," said Ms. Kaufman. "It incorporates the process of learning and thinking that they have used since September."

- **DATA
Performance Assessment at**

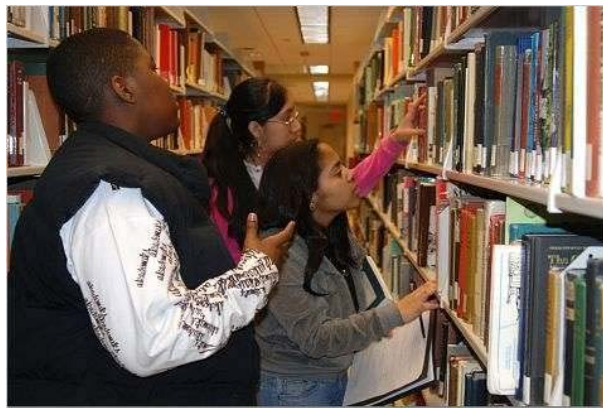
East Palo Alto Academy High School



Each year at East Palo Alto Academy High School, students must complete an exhibition, a presentation of a project they develop over several months with the support of their classroom teachers and an advisor. A panel of judges uses a rubric to determine if students pass with distinction, pass, pass with revision, or if they must resubmit.

According to the school's 2005-06 annual evaluation report, "In general, 60% to 90% of students pass without contingencies, 10-30% have some contingencies to complete, and a small number, about 5-10%, need to resubmit." The report also notes that over time, more students meet their requirements earlier than did their peers in previous cohorts.

- PROMISING PRACTICES**
Increasing Curriculum Intensity at STAR Early College High School



STAR 9th graders rely on Brooklyn College library print resources for their humanities research project. (Photo courtesy STAR High School/Rachel Axinn)

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The partnership between Brooklyn College and STAR Early College High School developed and implemented a transition plan to create a more seamless educational transition for students. From the pre-9th grade summer bridge to six-week enrichment seminars to

college courses, the educational components introduce students to college culture at the same time that they prepare students academically for college. As one STAR teacher reflected, "I think that we're definitely increasing their chance of succeeding at college. They're more used to a more challenging set of expectations."

Each component of the transition plan was created through college and high school faculty collaboration. This collaboration is fostered by formal and informal organizational structures of the partnership. [A practice brief](#) details the Brooklyn College/STAR transition plan.

This practice maps to the principles of increasing curriculum intensity via acceleration and scaffolding the college experience as outlined in the Woodrow Wilson [Promising Practices Framework](#) (a dynamic work-in-progress).

- **NEWS and NOTES**



At a reception following the Manhattan Hunter Science High School Commencement on June 22, a recent graduate signs a friend's yearbook.

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- Congratulations to the Class of 2007 at East Palo Alto Academy High School (Stanford), Friendship Collegiate Academy (UDC), Manhattan Hunter Science High School (Hunter), STAR Early College High School (Brooklyn), and Wallis Annenberg High School (Cal State LA)!
 - [The Palo Alto Daily News'](#) coverage of the EPAAHS graduation ceremony.
 - [Press release](#) of the MSHS graduation ceremony.

- [Press release](#) of the STAR graduation ceremony.
- Graduates of the Class of 2007 are headed to college in the fall. The list includes Dartmouth, Franklin & Marshall, Spelman, and St. Mary's colleges; Arizona State, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Cornell, Johnson & Wales, New York, Ohio Wesleyan, and Penn State universities; and the universities of Hartford, Michigan, and North Carolina. States with Early Colleges also benefited with graduates enrolling in various campuses of their state university systems including the University of California at Berkeley, Davis, Riverside, and San Diego and the State University of New York at Buffalo, Delhi, Stony Brook, and Environmental Science and Forestry. Read a [brief report](#) on college access for WW Early College graduates in New York.
- Congratulations to 61 rising seniors from Friendship Collegiate Academy who were recognized in June as part of the first-ever DC Achievers scholarship program. This program of the DC College Success Foundation and DC College Access Program, sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, provides pre-college support including mentorship and assistance with college applications followed by a full college scholarship.
- STAR Early College High School (Brooklyn College) was one of three schools highlighted in a short video about the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Early College High School Initiative (available soon at www.earlycolleges.org). The video "premiered" at the National Summit on America's Silent Epidemic held May 8-9 in Washington, DC and was shown again at the May 21- 23 Early College Partners Meeting in Jersey City, NJ.

● **ASSESSMENT RESOURCES**

- The [Portfolio and Exhibition Toolkits](#) for the Rhode Island Diploma System were developed to help schools and districts implement the state's new diploma system. The Web site offers guides for planning, implementing, and sustaining portfolio and exhibition assessments, as well as example tools that may be downloaded and adapted.
- The [Coalition of Essential Schools National Web](#) provides many documents and resources on assessment in competency-based classrooms.
- Dr. David Conley, in "[Toward a More Comprehensive Conception of College Readiness.](#)" a March 2007 report prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, outlines potential formative assessments of the key aspects of college readiness: habits of mind, content knowledge, academic behaviors, and contextual skills and awareness.
- [Classroom Assessment Techniques \(CATs\)](#) (Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, 1993) are easy-to-use tools to give faculty feedback on student learning. Many tools are

effective even in large lecture-style courses. While the handbook is available from the publisher, an Internet search will lead to details on the most popular CATs.

- The [New York Performance Standards Consortium](#) provides resources related to its collectively developed performance-based assessment system. The system focuses on tasks such as literary essays, conceptual problem-solving in math, original science experiments, and research projects.
- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory [Toolkit98](#) provides professional development readings and training activities to guide student learning assessment.
- The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory hosts a [Data Primer](#) with short modules to learn about using data to guide instruction.
- "[Evaluation of the Early College High School Initiative: Select Topics on Implementation](#)" by AIR/SRI was released in April 2007. The executive summary provides an overall perspective on the initiative to date. Partners may be interested in the sections on instruction, supports, and climate at schools and colleges (p. 27) and sustainability (p. 83).
- [The High School Initiative clearinghouse](#) from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education maintains resources and reports on dual enrollment and related programs, including early college, as well as resources on literacy and math and science, models and practices, accountability and data, and grant programs.
- "[College Admissions and the Essential School,](#)" an article published in the *Horace Journal* from the Coalition of Essential Schools, describes how schools communicate their unique learning environments to college admissions offices and how colleges respond to innovative school reform.

Data & Dialogue Extras