Preparing for entry into the workforce: Educational attainment for CalWORKS students

Sylvia Solorio

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PREPARING FOR ENTRY INTO THE WORKFORCE:
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CALWORKS STUDENTS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Sylvia Solorio
June 2003
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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CALWORKS STUDENTS

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June 2003

Approved by:

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

Dr. Christine Flores, L.C.S.W., Extended
Opportunities Programs and Services

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

Date
ABSTRACT

This study concerns an evaluation of a community college support services program. The study participants included 58 female CalWORKS students. Data was gathered from a self-administered survey questionnaire designed specifically for this study to gather student’s level of satisfaction with program services. The results showed conclusively that the support services center had accomplished their goal of assisting CalWORKS post secondary education students on a path towards self-sufficiency through utilization of the specialized support services offered. Practice, policy and research implications were discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express special recognition and gratitude for their assistance to Dr. Christine Flores and Ruth Delgado, of the Chaffey college extended opportunities programs and services center, my heartfelt thanks.

The writer also wishes to recognize her research advisor, Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Social Work Research Coordinator for her guidance, time, support and encouragement. Her dedication and commitment to all students is greatly admired and appreciated. I could not have accomplished this much without you. God Bless.

The writer also wishes to extend her deepest gratitude to her children and grandchildren for their patience, support and encouragement during the writer’s pursuit of her graduate degree. My prayer is that your own dreams be fulfilled. With all my love, Mom.
DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to all current, former, and future CalWORKS students who aspire to greater economic and personal achievement through the pursuit of a higher education.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

On August 22, 1996 President Clinton signed the new Welfare to Work plan that stopped public assistance as an entitlement created by President Roosevelt during the New Deal (Adair, 2001). The enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 was born out of much discontent with the former welfare system. Views that welfare created dependency and a lack of personal responsibility in participants were major contributors in the creation of the new law (Sawhill et al., 2002). This new legislation fosters a work-first attitude through strict work requirements and time limits. Due to this attitude, many recipients have limited or no opportunity to receive a college education and thereby, reduce their chance of becoming truly self-sufficient. Although this legislation gave states flexibility in creating programs to help people become employed, the stipulation was very clear that it was pro-work and anti-education in its detailed language as to what activities would count in federal participation rates (Gueron & Hamilton, 2002).
The new reauthorization passed on February 13, 2003 under the Bush Administration mandated those receiving public assistance to work 40 hours per week in order to keep their grant. This initiative also reduced the number of activities that can count towards the participation rate. The main focus is to get recipients off welfare and into jobs. Educational/vocational training would be limited to two to three months out of every twenty-four months. The majority of degree programs that would allow a greater chance of participants' becoming self-sufficient are two-year programs and are not allowed under the current time limit. Without adequate skills and education, opportunities to obtain employment that will allow participants to exit welfare permanently will not occur (Negrey, Golin, Lee, Mead, & Gault 2001).

The issue to be addressed in this study concerns post-secondary education for welfare recipients and the effectiveness of supportive services offered to this population to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. The community college system plays a significant role in providing educational and vocational opportunities to welfare clients. These institutions recognize the importance of an education as a vehicle towards greater economic success and successful entry into the workforce.
The community college support services are developed with careful consideration for those students needing additional assistance. Staff are aware of the many barriers this population encounters and take these into consideration. Programs such as those offered at community colleges, help to instill hope and build self-efficacy in their participants. They provide a positive and nurturing environment in which to develop. These programs incorporate a holistic approach in helping students achieve their highest potential and goals. Many of these participants do not have a supportive personal network and therefore, rely on their school environment to provide emotional as well as educational support.

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center (EOPS) is one program that has developed additional support services in order to assist the welfare to work population. This program serves women with minor children who receive welfare benefits. Clients share a common goal of desiring to obtain a higher education to improve their life situation and become positive role models for their families.

Community college systems are accessible to recipients because of the low cost of tuition and because they are centrally located. They offer a variety of
vocational and educational certificate and degree programs that aid in obtaining better jobs/careers with better pay. Numerous studies have shown that a higher education is a way out of poverty (Loprest & Zedlewski, 1999). Education opens doors that lead to better paying jobs and in turn leads to self-sufficiency thus, decreasing the likelihood that women will return to welfare (Bloom et al, 2001).

Reducing the welfare roll and getting people off of welfare and into jobs that allow them to become self-supporting has been an ongoing legislative agenda since the inception of the welfare to work initiative passed by the Clinton Administration in 1996. Legislators are at a standstill regarding this issue. Expanding Education and vocational training services are being considered. However, the focus remains on the work ethic.

This study will examine whatever programs specifically designed for CalWORKS students at the post-secondary level help ensure positive outcomes for the welfare population. The issues presented may help to change legislation focused on moving the welfare population into jobs/careers that will allow them to become self-supportive. Employers want and require a skilled and educated workforce even in entry-level positions. However, many welfare recipients lack the
necessary skills and education to enter the workforce (Holzer, 1996). Counties in California such as San Bernardino are turning to the community college system to help them do their work of getting the welfare population into higher paying jobs (RAND, 2001). It is important to begin to eliminate the myths and stereotypes, and discrimination regarding the welfare population as an unproductive segment of society, and begin to view them as investments for the community.

The result of obtaining degrees/certificates means higher income levels that would promote higher spending within their communities, resulting in more money for cities. Higher levels of income due to higher education would also result in homeownership, and thus, in turn, help to reduce pockets of deterioration and slums within communities. Quite simply, people tend to take pride in their communities as homeowners. In addition, illiteracy rates, substance abuse and domestic violence rates would also decline (Reuys, 1997). This is a win-win situation in which all would profit.

Private and other governmental agencies that provide funding, legislators, and the public as well, want to know whether or not programs work, and if their money is being spent on worthwhile endeavors. Program evaluation is and
should be a constant when providing services to the public.

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center (EOPS) at Chaffey College provide additional support services for this population. Although this department is aware of the many barriers this population encounters, the staff is always on the lookout for any additional services it may provide to their students. However, this department has not had the opportunity to obtain adequate feedback directly from the students as to what extent current services are helpful. This study may assist this program in this area.

Oftentimes, agencies take it upon themselves to assume to know what their clients need and then implement those services. This is a grave error. While the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) department has assisted many welfare students in becoming adequately prepared for entry into the workforce, no formal assessment of the effectiveness of service delivery has been undertaken. People must be given incentives to work. It will not do any good to have people working but still on aid because low wages and dead end jobs will not allow for upward mobility. Without education, supportive services, higher wages and better benefits, our society
will continue on a basic course of inequality (Zucchino, 1997).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the relationship between participation in one community college CalWORKS program and participant’s sense of preparedness for self-sufficiency. This study is based on the assumption that this program and the support offered positively enhance student chances for success. Through participation in this program, CalWORKS post-secondary students will be better prepared for entry into the workforce.

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) department is located on the Chaffey College main campus in Rancho Cucamonga, California. This program serves CalWORKS (welfare) students who are pursuing their educational and career goals, in addition to serving other non-CalWORKS low-income students. The program assists students in identifying and achieving their educational goals and offers structured support services including childcare, personalized counseling, tutoring, book grants, and guidance courses. This study will focus on five support components: Care Program that offers additional
services to CalWORKS participants such as cafeteria meal
tickets for themselves and their children, monetary
stipends for attending summer school, counseling,
tutoring, book grants, and guidance courses.

The client population totals 136 CalWORKS students of
different ethnicities and ages largely made up of single
females with an average of two children, all receiving
public assistance/welfare. A few are referred from
various county agencies within the Inland Empire; the
majority are those known as Self Initiated Participants
(SIP’s). SIP’s opted on their own to pursue their
education before they signed their welfare-to-work
contract with the county. Their decision to pursue an
education allows longer time limits to complete their
program of study. Once a contract is signed between the
recipient and the county, their chances of having higher
education included in their welfare-to-work plan is
dramatically reduced. The factors related to this
phenomenon are numerous, ranging from worker attitude and
biases to assumptions and myths regarding this population
not having what it takes to obtain a higher education, in
addition to state mandated work only requirements.

Welfare students are utilizing support services due
to a lack of sufficient skills or education and their
desire for a better future. The majority receive childcare services, book grants, one-on-one tutoring, and specialized counseling, and guidance courses. It is hoped, that this study will provide evidence that that these services help students build self-confidence and raised self-efficacy as well as provided them with the skills base needed to enter the employment arena.

This study will survey 60 CalWORKS students currently enrolled and actively participating from June 2002 through April 2003. Examples of some of the questions to be asked are: 1) Were the supportive services accessible and helpful? 2) Was the staff easily accessible and supportive? 3) Were there any obstacles encountered that prevented them from completing their program? 4) Do they think the educational experience will help them move towards self-sufficiency? The study will use a quantitative approach using a designed survey questionnaire.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

Findings from this study may be instrumental in creating better support systems and mobilizing resources for the underprivileged, as well as more opportunities for social workers to advocate on behalf of this population.
As social workers, "Our primary mission is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society" (NASW Code of Ethics, 1996, p. 1). Moreover, social workers may be able to become more involved in the implementing and designing of delivery services or programs and the legislative process. Within the legislative arena, social workers should strongly advocate to change existing policies that do not allow post-secondary education to count as work, remove time limits for education and stop the clock on the state training limits, and eliminate the thirty percent cap on the number of recipients allowed to count education and training as work activity. This would create a better linkage between the clients served, workers, and those that make the laws.

This study may also motivate social workers to develop skills in the areas of community practice and small group work for the advancement of social work practice. The data from this study may be used as a guide
for analyzing other agencies and for implementing the
survey to fit their own needs in addition to becoming an
important tool to measure outcomes. Last, this study may
be useful in advancing the empirical knowledge base
regarding welfare recipients and post-secondary education.

**RESEARCH QUESTION:** How effective are post-secondary
educational support services for CalWORKS students in
guiding them on the path to self-sufficiency?
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of the literature focused on several key elements of current welfare reform legislation and the October 2002 welfare reauthorization. Educational attainment and other important welfare related issues were discussed. Childcare, earnings and poverty took the forefront (Edelman et al., 2002). What was quite evident in all the literature was that without a higher education, expanded support services, and living wages, this population will continue to stay in poverty (Edelman, Greenberg, Harrington, & Rozell, 2000). Much of the literature studied and analyzed is based on both the feminist and ecological perspectives. This study utilized a feminist perspective. Gaps identified include lack of information regarding males and the immigrant population.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Empowerment theory (Gutierrez, 1990) is based on a conflict model that assumes a society consists of separate groups possessing different levels of power and control over resources. The process of empowerment occurs on the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels, where
a person can develop a sense of personal power, an ability to affect others and thus, the ability to work with others to change social institutions (Gutierrez, 1990). Promoting empowerment means believing that people are capable of making their own choices and decisions. It means that people possess the strengths and potential to resolve their own difficult life situations and that they increase their strengths and contribute to society by doing so (Cowger, 1994). A post secondary education will allow welfare recipients to contribute to society as equal members of the community.

With the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, the shift to a work first mandate made it difficult for welfare recipients to access a post-secondary education. However, research has shown that participation in post-secondary education provides a positive avenue to self-sufficiency (Greenburg, Strawn, & Plimpton, 1999). According to Cynthia Woodside, NASW government relations associate, successful welfare reform is not measured by how many families leave the welfare roll, but by how many leave the poverty roll. Under current welfare law, only twelve months of vocational education can be counted as work, and only thirty percent of welfare recipients are allowed by
counties to meet their work requirement through educational activities (Levenson et al., 1999). President Bush's legislation for the welfare reauthorization would raise the work requirement to forty hours a week from the current thirty-two hour requirement and limit activities that now count as work, such as, vocational and educational training, to three months once every twenty-four months.

Previously, a proposed amendment to allow welfare recipients more opportunity to obtain a higher education was supported by the nation's social work organization (NASW, 2000-2003). This amendment would add post-secondary education and vocational education as a countable work activity and extend the time limit from the current 12 months to 24 months. Allowing welfare recipients more time to enhance their chances in the job market for higher pay and greater stability. The Institute for Women's Policy Studies (1998) found that a college degree increases earnings by $3.65 an hour for working mothers, compared to those with only a high school education. Numerous research studies have shown that women who go on to earn a college degree will spend less time on welfare and are far less likely to need welfare assistance again (Loprest & Zedlewski, 1999).
Advocates of education-focused programs often support their position by citing the numerous studies that have shown there is a direct correlation between education and income (Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 1998). Buck (2001) at the University of San Diego conducted one study showing the impact of education on reducing poverty rates, increasing labor participation and improving the employment rate. Her study clearly demonstrated that any education beyond the high school level even without completing a degree, results in greater employment stability and higher earnings for women. (Buck, 2001).

Welfare clients may have a much harder time complying with the strict work mandate due to low self-esteem from not having an education, work skills or the support they need to become compliant (Kunz & Kalil, 1999). Another study found that low self-esteem, social isolation and the lack of personal social skills were factors related to not having an adequate education (Tracy, 1990). There has been much debate during the TANF reauthorization regarding the desirability of the work first approach that gives higher priority to becoming employed, thereby limiting the extent to which education and vocational training can count as work activities (Loprest, 1999). This issue has dominated state welfare to work strategies. Findings that welfare
leavers generally have low earnings, face high levels of job instability, and have little upward mobility have raised serious concerns about this approach (Van Lare & Griener, 2000).

Many researchers and advocates argue for a redefinition of work activities placing more emphasis on education and training, and the expansion of education and training opportunities for low-wage workers (Edelman et al. 2000). It is further argued that non-traditional job training opportunities should be expanded and made available for welfare recipients to enhance their ability to move into jobs paying living wages (Negrey, Golin, Lee, Mead, & Gault, 2001; NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2001). In addition, there are calls for the expansion of work supports that increase employment stability, such as subsidized child care, paid family leave, and transportation assistance (Edelman et al., 2000).

Mothers who are affected by current welfare policies are concerned about their children’s welfare and future prospects. They worry how they will support their families if they have no education and lack the necessary skills to enter into the workplace (Ellwood, 1998). Employment-related initiatives such as education and occupational training have been a strategy of the
government to aid the poor towards self-sufficiency and are viewed as ways in which to allow them to participate in this goal (Levitan, Mangum, & Mangum, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to discover how effective support services are in assisting welfare participants on their goal towards self-sufficiency. Adair (2001) argues that lawmakers, who are committed to improving social and economic equity through employment, should understand how important post-secondary education is for low-income single mothers, and to work against legislation that will not allow these women to enter into post-secondary education.

The typical welfare recipient is a single mother with one child in elementary school and a second younger child (Strawn & Martinson, 2000). For such a family to be financially independent they would need to hold a full time job earning at the minimum $21.75 per hour (Urban Institute, 1996). Jobs at this salary level require higher education, job training skills, technical training and or certification. Only 4% of workers with Associates Degrees have lived in poverty compared to 17% of workers with less than a high school diploma and 7% of high school graduates (Urban Institute, 1996).
It is agreed by the majority of researchers that a higher education is the key to achieving economic independence; and that mandating recipients to low-wage and insecure employment at all costs cannot move families to self-sufficiency nor lift them out of poverty. Welfare recipients, who have left the welfare rolls for low-wage dead end jobs, have remained mired in poverty and often return to public assistance (National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, 2001). Since 1988, The Center for Women’s Policy Studies (2001) has examined the role of post-secondary education and has found that the additional earning capacity that a higher education provides can make the difference between economic self-sufficiency and continued poverty for many women welfare recipients (Bloom & Michalopoulos, 2001). Community college CalWORKS programs serve as a stepping-stone to greater economic mobility for CalWORKS students and assist in providing an empowering environment for success.

Summary
Since the inception of the 1996 welfare to work reform, several think tanks and advocacy organizations have conducted studies to find out the effects of the new legislation and the impact on the welfare population
Studies show that welfare to work is not working, mainly because this policy is work first focused. The welfare population continues to struggle in poverty, impacting the entire family structure. While a small percentage of families have been successful in rising above poverty, studies have shown that this is due in part to the higher educational level of the participants (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2002). Education is a means by which to empower women on welfare to take an active role in improving the negative circumstances in their lives and gain new perspectives, strengths, and, develop healthier emotional outlooks. A focus on the educational component as an integral part of moving families out of poverty is necessary and vital if welfare reform is to succeed. In all reality, it is thought by the researcher, that poverty will never be truly eradicated. However, legislation should strive to make the lives of those less fortunate a little less exasperating and hopeless by incorporating fewer sanctions and seeking to involve the recipients in their own empowerment. The empowerment dynamic gives rise to the notion of self-determination and allows people to learn to think critically and develop positive and healthy ways to counter negative aspects of their environment.
(Falck, 1988). A post-secondary education provides opportunities and resources to enable the welfare to work population an opportunity to gain self-respect and dignity, and to acquire greater avenues to self-sufficiency. Investing in people through education and supportive services benefits everyone. Knowledge is power.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of support services at the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center at Chaffey College in preparing welfare students for entry into the workforce. This study was based on the assumption that the supportive services provided by this program enable students to be better prepared to become self-sufficient.

Study Design

A survey of CalWORKS participants was conducted utilizing supportive services using a descriptive research design. The study gives a description of the relationship between the variables involved. There were no foreseeable limitations or concerns in regards to conducting this study at the Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center.

Advantages to using a questionnaire are that there is less pressure on the respondent, and interviewer bias is avoided. It is easily administered and respondents can remain anonymous. The disadvantages are that there will be photocopying costs, the participants may not answer all the questions, participants may not return the
questionnaire and participants may misinterpret the questions.

Research Question: How effective are post-secondary educational support services for CalWORKS students?

Sampling

The sample consisted of 58 CalWORKS participants from Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center at Chaffey College. The CalWORKS population was chosen for the purpose of assessing whatever support services assisted the CalWORKS population in becoming better prepared for entry into the workforce.

The sample included single women with children, of all ethnicities ages 18 and up, living independently or with others, utilizing one or more of the support services. Both self-initiated participants (SIP’S) and mandated participants at the post-secondary educational level were included. The survey was handed out to students on site at the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center and collected after completion. It was expected that the survey would take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. A letter of permission to do this study from Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services may be found in Appendix E.
Data Collections and Instruments

The data were gathered using a self-administered survey questionnaire designed specifically for the study. The survey questionnaire consisted of seventeen closed-ended questions, and one open-ended question, based on professional knowledge and experience gained from working in the field (see Appendix A).

Demographics variables included: age, ethnicity, marital status, and number of children. The purpose of the study was to describe the relationship between the dependent variable effectiveness, and the independent variables use of Care Program, counseling, tutoring, guidance course, book vouchers. Dependent variable and independent variables were measured using ordinal levels of measure.

Procedures

The questionnaire was introduced and administered to participants on site at the Extended Opportunities Program and Services Center by the researcher in March 2003 and collected after completion. The participants were asked to leave the completed questionnaire in a box set aside for this purpose and collected after completion by the researcher. Letter of informed consent (see Appendix B).
Protection of Human Subjects

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary and each participant was provided a letter of informed consent informing them that their responses would be held in the strictest confidence and their participation would have no effect on the services received from the program. The completed questionnaires were placed in a box by the student, and picked up by researcher after completion. No information was used to identify participants. Subject identity was anonymous.

Data Analysis

The survey questionnaire was designed to collect descriptive data from 60 CalWORKS women participants from the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center. It was assumed that out of 60 participants only 40 participants would respond. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was utilized for compilation of the quantitative data. Tables were created displaying frequencies for each variable. Several bivariate correlation coefficients were reported as statistics within the research report, reporting them in tabular form. A correlational matrix table will be designed for this purpose.
Summary

This study examined the effectiveness of support services for CalWORKS students at The Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center. The sample consisted of 58 CalWORKS students who were given a survey questionnaire designed to solicit their opinions as to the effectiveness of support services utilized by the participants.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis to evaluate this support services program’s success. Both of these procedures were necessary to describe the demographics and to illuminate the information gleaned from the questionnaire. Included in the information were frequencies, chi-square analysis, and t-tests to measure the differences between groups and services utilized.

The data from the frequencies sample showed that out of the sample size of 58 CalWORKS participants, all 58 students utilized the Care Program (N = 58), 14 (N = 14) students utilized the Tutoring service and 44 (N = 44) did not utilize this service. Of the Guidance Courses, 28 (N = 28) students utilized this service and 30 (N = 30) did not utilize this service. For the Counseling service, 52 (N = 52) students utilized this service and 6 (N = 6) students did not utilize this service, and for the Book Voucher service 51 (N = 51) students utilized this service and 7 (N = 7) students did not utilize this service.

Students were asked whether the program responsibilities and their responsibilities were clearly
explained, and according to the results of the frequencies sample, 56 (N = 56) reported that the program’s and student’s responsibilities were very clearly explained, 2 (N = 2) students reported their and the program’s responsibilities were “somewhat clear.” No reasons were given as to this response as this was a closed ended question.

The question as to whether the program’s staff was easily accessible and supportive, 54 (N = 54) students reported that the staff and support offered to them was very accessible, 4 (N = 4) students reported that they were “somewhat accessible”. No reason was given as to the reason for this response as this was a closed-ended question.

When asked if student’s perceived themselves more confident or not due to their participation in this program, participants reported as 54 (N = 54) students viewed themselves as more confident as a result of participation in the program, and 4 (N = 4) reported “somewhat more confident”. No reason was given as to the reason for this response as this was a closed ended-question.

When asked if student’s thought participation in this program would lead them in becoming self-sufficient, 54
(N = 54) students strongly agreed that their participation in the program would lead them on their goal toward self-sufficiency, and 4 (N = 4) students reported that they “somewhat agreed” to this question. No reason was given as to this response as this was a closed-ended question.

The question of whether participation in this program would help prepare students for their career, 54 (N = 54) students strongly agreed and 4 (N = 4) students answered that they “somewhat agreed” to this question. No reason was given as to this response as this was a closed-ended question.

The question pertaining to the quality of the services offered by the program, 55 (N = 55) of the students reported the quality as excellent, and 3 (N = 3) reported the quality as good. In regards to any difficulty in receiving services in this program, 55 (N = 55) students reported they had no difficulty in receiving services and 2 (N = 2) students reported there was some difficulty. This question was combined with an open-ended question asking students to briefly explain any difficulty experienced. 1 (N = 1) student reported by circling the answer, that of the five services within the program: 1) Care program, 2) Tutoring, 3) Guidance courses,
4) Counseling, and 5) Book voucher, the first student had some difficulty with receiving a Book Voucher, however, the student did not state the reason why. The second student circled the Tutoring service and stated, "time availability" as the reason for having difficulty. It is assumed by the researcher that the student’s class schedule conflicted with the time frame availability for the tutoring sessions.

The question as to satisfaction with the program and the services offered, 53 (N = 53) students reported being very satisfied with the program’s overall services, and 4 (N = 4) students reported as being "somewhat satisfied" with the program and services offered.

The question of whether the student planned to continue with their education, i.e. transfer to a University for a Bachelor’s or higher degree was as follows: 53 (N = 53) of the students reported that "yes, very likely" to continue with their education, and 4 (N = 4) were "somewhat likely" to do so.

Demographic Data

The sample for this research project consisted of 58 (N = 58) CalWORKS students. Of this total sample in regards to ethnicity, 14 (N = 14) were White, 22 (N = 22)
were Latino, and 21 (N = 21) were African American. 1 student either declined to answer or missed the question.

In response to the question of whether participants were first generation college students, 45 (N = 45) stated they were first generation college students and 12 (N = 12) stated they were not first generation college students, meaning one or both parents’ had a college education. 1 (N = 1) student either declined to answer or missed this question.

In response to the question of the student’s year of graduation, 8 students (N = 8) stated they would graduate in the year 2003, 26 (N = 26) stated they would graduate in the year 2004, and 16 (N = 16) stated they would graduate between the years 2005-2006.

In response to the question of age of student: 10 (N = 10) students ranged in ages 19-23 (17.2%) median age = 21, 16 (N = 16) students ranged in ages 29-34 (27.6%) median age = 33, and 10 (N = 10) students ranged in ages 35-45 (17.1%) median age = 35. The majority of the students 18 (N = 18) fell within the 24-28-age range at (31.0%) with the median age at 26 years.

In response to the question of whether students would pursue a degree, certificate or both, 19 (N = 19) students stated they would pursue a degree, 8 (N = 8) students
stated they would pursue a certificate, and 31 (N = 31) students stated they would pursue both a degree and certificate.

In response to the question of number of children for each student: 18 (N = 18) students reported having only 1 child, 23 (N = 23) students reported having 2 children, 8 (N = 8) students reported having 3 children, 4 (N = 4) students reported having 4 children, 1 (N = 1) student had 6 children. In all, the total number of children for the CalWORKS students totaled 54 (N = 54). Not accounted for were 4 student’s answers to this question, either because they declined to answer or simply missed the question. Average number of children of participants were 2 children.

In response to the question of student’s marital status: 39 (N = 39) students reported being single, 19 (N = 19) reported being either divorced or separated (see Table 1).
Table 1. Demographic Data

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive Degree or Certificate</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39.7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/Separated</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A table was created from the frequencies sample to show the level of service that was most helpful to the student on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the most helpful and 5 the least helpful (see Table 2).
Table 2. Helpful Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Voucher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<td>Third</td>
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<td>13.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
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<td>20.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A table was also created to show the student’s response to the question of who helped the student pursue their education. Students circled all that applied from 4
answers listed as: 1) self, 2) family, 3) Friend, 4) other (see Table 3).

Table 3. Help With Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self (N = 57)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the program’s effectiveness from the student’s perspective and to generate information regarding the program’s success to allow the staff to make any improvements deemed necessary.

Findings of this study indicate that the overall effectiveness of this program’s purpose of assisting welfare students toward the goal of becoming self-sufficient was being met. Students utilizing program services reported having higher levels of self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of participation in this program. The higher level of confidence and self-efficacy was further evidenced by the student’s reports on the survey that the majority of the students, (N = 56) would continue to pursue their education beyond the community college level. Also revealed in the study was the high number of students (N = 37) that would be obtaining both a certificate and degree, lending more evidence to a rise in student empowerment.

The majority of CalWORK students reported the center’s staff was responsive to their needs and supportive of their endeavors. Students expressed a high
level of satisfaction in regards to the overall performance of the center’s support services and programs.

Support services that offer a more individualized approach seem to have higher levels of success in program performance and outcomes. The community college environment offers a supportive learning environment and an opportunity to rise above the negative barriers faced by many on welfare. Furthermore, previous research supports the findings that a higher education leads the way to higher earnings and a greater chance at economic security and self-sufficiency.

Limitations

Limitations to this project was that the use of only one open-ended question on the survey questionnaire, was not enough to generate information from students on a more personal level. Any personal information was limited to demographic data only. Utilizing more open-ended questions could have provided an expanded view and reflection of the goals of welfare students who use support services in the community college setting. A qualitative study for future research is highly recommended.
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Social workers provide a vast array of resources to their clients, however, more work is needed in the area of promoting education as a means for empowerment to those whom they serve. It is recommended that programs or workshops be developed to allow social workers to learn about the opportunities available at community colleges and how their clients may access these opportunities. For instance, College Education Units (C.E.U.’s) can be provided to social workers that take certain workshops to gain information regarding access to community colleges and the programs on campus their clients may be eligible for.

Social workers may also be instrumental in assisting their clients in forming coalitions to address the importance in allowing for higher education within the welfare reauthorization agendas. Policy makers, social workers, advocates and researchers must work in collaboration with agencies and their states to ensure that clients are aware of educational options and be encouraged and offered opportunities to participate in higher education.
Further research is recommended regarding the beneficial impact a post-secondary college education has for those on welfare pursuing a higher education. A follow-up project on those who graduate would add to the existing data regarding welfare recipient’s success. It is further recommended that community colleges focus on more extensive outreach methods within their communities and target lower income and disenfranchised populations. In addition, Community colleges should continue to develop services and programs geared specifically to the welfare population to continue to ensure a positive educational experience and successful outcomes.

Conclusions

The overall findings of this study reflected the Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services success in assisting the CalWorks students in their goal toward upward mobility. Students were confident that they would be better equipped to successfully enter the workforce and thus exit welfare.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What supportive services are you receiving? (circle all that apply)
   (1) Care Program
   (2) Tutoring
   (3) Guidance Courses
   (4) Counseling
   (5) Book Voucher

2. Which services have been the most helpful to you? (Please rank in order of importance from 1-5)
   (1) Care Program _________
   (2) Tutoring _____________
   (3) Guidance Courses _____
   (4) Counseling ____________
   (5) Book Voucher __________

3. Was the program clearly explained to you, including services provided, their responsibilities and your responsibilities? (circle one)
   (1) Very clearly
   (2) Somewhat clear
   (3) Somewhat unclear
   (4) Unclear

4. Was the staff easily accessible and supportive? (circle one)
   (1) Very Accessible
   (2) Somewhat Accessible
   (3) Somewhat Inaccessible
   (4) Very Inaccessible

5. Do you think the supportive services provided to you will be helpful in reaching your goals? (circle one)
   (1) Very helpful
   (2) Somewhat helpful
   (3) Somewhat unhelpful
   (4) Very unhelpful

6. Do you perceive yourself as more confident as a result of participation in this program? (circle one)
   (1) Very confident
   (2) Somewhat more confident
   (3) Slightly less confident
   (4) Not confident at all
7. Do you think this educational experience will lead you towards your goal of becoming self-sufficient? (circle one)
   (1) Strongly agree
   (2) Somewhat agree
   (3) Somewhat disagree
   (4) Strongly disagree

8. Do you think this program will be helpful in preparing you for a better job or career? (circle one)
   (1) Strongly agree
   (2) Somewhat agree
   (3) Somewhat disagree
   (4) Strongly disagree

9. Please rate the quality of services you receive (circle one)
   (1) Excellent
   (2) Good
   (3) Fair
   (4) Poor

10. Did you encounter any difficulty in receiving any of the services offered? (1)Yes (2)No

11. If yes, what service? (Circle one)
    (1) Care Program
    (2) Tutoring
    (3) Guidance Courses
    (4) Counseling
    (5) Book Voucher

12. What was the barrier? (Briefly explain)
13. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center and the services they provide? (circle one) 
   (1) Very satisfied 
   (2) Somewhat satisfied 
   (3) Somewhat dissatisfied 
   (4) Very dissatisfied 

14. Do you plan to continue your education beyond the community college level? (Circle one) 
   (1) Yes, very likely 
   (2) Somewhat likely 
   (3) Somewhat Unlikely 
   (4) No, very unlikely 

15. Who helped you pursue your education? (Circle all that apply) 
   (1) Self 
   (2) Family 
   (3) Friend 
   (4) Other (please specify) 

16. Are you a first generation college student? (1)Yes (2)No 

17. What year will you graduate? 

18. Will you receive a: 
   degree___ certificate___ both___? (please check one) 

19. What is your age? 

20. What is your ethnicity? 
   (1) Asian ___ 
   (2) White ___ 
   (3) Latino ___ 
   (4) Native American ___ 
   (5) African American ___ 
   (6) Other, (please specify) ___ 

21. Number of children ___ 

22. Marital Status: (please check one) 
   (1) Single _______ 
   (2) Married _______ 
   (3) Divorced _______ 
   (4) Separated _______ 
   (5) Widowed _______
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in this research study, which is designed to examine effectiveness of support services provided to CalWORKS students at the Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center. Please do not write your name on any part of the questionnaire. Participants of this study are asked to check a box at the bottom of this page that indicates they understand and agree to participate in this study.

This study is being conducted by Sylvia Solorio, a graduate student in the MSW program at California State University, San Bernardino as a requirement for graduation. This study has been approved by the Social Work Department sub-committee of the California State University San Bernardino Institutional Review Board. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researcher of this study. Whether or not you participate will have no effect on the services you receive from Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS); staff will not know if you participated. A debriefing statement will be included in the questionnaire packet describing the study in more detail. The results of this study will be available in the summer of 2003 at the Chaffey College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services department.

If you have further questions and/or concerns about this study, you may contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at California State University, San Bernardino, California 92407 or call (909) 880-5507.

☐ I have been informed and agree to participate, and I am at least 18 years of age
APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The questionnaire that you have just completed was designed by Sylvia Solorio, MSW student to measure your perception of program effectiveness at the Chaffey College Extended Opportunities Programs and Services Center. This study was designed to analyze whether services were effective in assisting you with your post-secondary educational needs.

Thank you for your participation in this study and for not discussing the contents of the questions with other students. If you have any concerns or questions about the study, please contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 880-5507. If you would like to obtain a copy of the results of this study, a copy of the study will be available at the Chaffey College Extended Opportunities Programs and Services department at the end of Summer 2003.
March 7, 2003

Chaffey College  
Program Coordinator  
Extended Opportunity Programs and Services  
5885 Haven Avenue  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91737

Dear Ms. C. Flores and Ms. R. Chivichon,

I am writing this correspondence to ask permission to conduct a research project on “Program Effectiveness at The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Center” This research project is a requirement for graduation in the MSW program at California State University, San Bernardino.

The purpose of this study is to find out how effective services were in assisting welfare students with post-secondary educational needs and preparing them for self-sufficiency.

Each questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes for each participant to answer. The data-gathering period will be from 3/2003. The results of this study will be available after June 2003.

The rights and confidentiality will be protected and participants will be anonymous in regards to this study. Participation will be strictly voluntary.

A copy of my research proposal will be submitted upon request.

I am requesting that I obtain written consent from your department by 3/14/03. Your immediate attention will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Solorio  
MSW Student  
California State University, San Bernardino California
REFERENCES


http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/welfare.050402


http://www.rand.org/hot/Press/calworks:032201.htr


