

What Works Clearinghouse



High School Puente Program

No studies of the *High School Puente Program* that fall within the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the *High School Puente Program* on adolescent readers. Additional research is needed to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this intervention.

Program Description¹

The *High School Puente Program* aims to help disadvantaged students graduate from high school, become college eligible, and enroll in four-year colleges and universities. Interdisciplinary in approach, the program has three components: writing, counseling, and mentoring. Students in the ninth and tenth grades receive rigorous writing practice through college preparatory English classes. The curriculum includes Mexican-American/Latino and other multicultural literature. The counseling component of the *High School Puente Program* guides students in identifying career goals, developing short- and long-term education plans, and applying to four-year colleges. The mentoring component provides student leadership opportunities and structured mentoring activities with volunteers from the local community. The *High School Puente Program* is open to all students but is targeted to students from populations with low rates of enrollment at four-year colleges. Students are identified for the program at the end of eighth grade through an application and selection process. Each *High School Puente* site has an assigned academic counselor and an English teacher. These team members receive intensive initial training in program methodologies, along with ongoing training and support. In addition to *High School Puente*, the Puente Program has a community college program model that does not fall within the WWC Adolescent Literacy review protocol.

Research²

The WWC identified 27 studies of the *High School Puente Program* for adolescent learners that were published or released between 1989 and 2011.

One study is within the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review protocol but does not meet WWC evidence standards. This study uses a quasi-experimental design but does not establish that the comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to the start of the intervention.

Eight studies are out of the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review protocol because they have an ineligible study design.

- Five studies do not use a comparison group design.
- Three studies are literature reviews or meta-analyses.

Eighteen studies are out of the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review protocol for reasons other than study design.

- Fourteen studies do not include students in grades 4–12.
- Three studies do not include an eligible literacy outcome.
- One study uses a sample that does not include at least 50% general education students.

References

Study that does not meet WWC evidence standards

- Donnelly, D. J. (1999). An analysis of the impact of the High School Puente program on the academic, behavioral, and college admission patterns of Hispanic students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(05A), 138-1506. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.

Studies that are ineligible for review using the Adolescent Literacy Evidence Review Protocol

- Avalos, J., & Pavel, D. M. (1993). *Improving the performance of the Hispanic community college student*. Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Beatty-Guenter, P. (1992). *Sorting, supporting, connecting, and transforming: Student retention strategies at community colleges*. Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Calderon, V. (1996). *The Puente Program: Latino student outcomes in English 96 and 1A, 1993–95 (Research, planning, and grants report 966-01)*. San Francisco, CA: City College of San Francisco, Office of Institutional Development, Research, and Planning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Cazden, C. B. (1996, April). *The “mentor paper” writing assignment in one community college Puente class: Preliminary report from a participant observer*. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association convention, New York. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Cazden, C. B. (2002). A descriptive study of six High School Puente classrooms. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 496. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
- Cooper, C. (2002). Five bridges along students’ pathways to college: A developmental blueprint of families, teachers, counselors, mentors, and peers in the Puente project. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 607–622. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
- Cordero, W. J. (1990). *Coordination of effort among student services programs: A report*. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges Board of Governors. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Duffy, H. M. (2002). Reconceptualizing teaching and learning: An exploration of professional development and its classroom application in the High School Puente project. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 63(09A), 267-3158. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
- Gandara, P. (2001). *Paving the way to postsecondary education: K–12 intervention programs for underrepresented youth*. Alexandria, VA: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. The study is ineligible for review because it is a secondary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Gandara, P. (2004). Building bridges to college—California’s High School Puente project encourages high school students to attend four-year colleges. *Educational Leadership*, 62(3), 56. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
- Gandara, P. C. (1998). *Final report of the evaluation of High School Puente, 1994–1998. Executive summary*. Oakland, CA: Puente Project, University of California, Office of the President. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

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Additional source:

- Gandara, P. (2002). A study of High School Puente: What we have learned about preparing Latino youth for postsecondary education. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 474–495.
- Genera, E. M. (1993). Chicano students' responses to community college academic empowerment programs. Critical reflections of their educational experiences: A participatory research. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 54(08A), 227-2923. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Ignash, J. M. (1993). *Challenging the “revolving door syndrome.”* Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature.* Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. The study is ineligible for review because it is a secondary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Laden, B. V. (2000). The Puente Project: Socializing and mentoring Latino community college students. *Academic Quarterly Exchange*, 2, 90–99. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.

Additional sources:

- Laden, B. V. (1998). An organizational response to welcoming students of color. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 26(2), 31–41.
- Laden, B. V. (1998, April). *Celebratory socialization: Welcoming Latino students to college.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Laden, B. V. (1999). Socializing and mentoring college students of color: The Puente project as an exemplary. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 74(2), 55.
- Lester, J. (2006). Who will we serve in the future? The new student in transition. *New Directions for Student Services*, 114, 47–61. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Martell, S. T., & Antrop-Gonzalez, R. (2008). Using narrative as a data source and analytic method to investigate learning outside of traditional school settings with diverse youth. *Research in the Schools*, 15(2), 65–79. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
- McCormick, D. L. (2008). The Puente project: A case study of the partnership between institutions of higher education (IHE) and their communities. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 69(11A), 144-4201. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
- Moreno, J. F. (2002). The long-term outcomes of Puente. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 572. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
- Norton Grubb, W., Lara, C., & Valdez, S. (2002). Counselor, coordinator, monitor, mom: The roles of counselors in the Puente program. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 547–571. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% general education students.
- Quinones, M. R. (1999). Building bridges: The Puente project and its contributions towards the retention and ultimate success of Latino community college students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(08A), 82-2829. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Rodriguez, C. C. (2007). Examining the networks of program leaders in the community college component of the Puente project within the context of a social capital framework. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(09A),

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- 225-3763. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Saenz, V. B. (2002). *Hispanic students and community colleges: A critical point for intervention*. Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Saucedo, M. (1991). *Puente project students' performance: Report on spring 1988 sabbatical leave*. Washington, DC: ERIC Digest. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(3), 290–322. The study is ineligible for review because it is a secondary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Willett, T. (2002). *Puente student English success, retention, and persistence at Gavilan Community College*. Gilroy, CA: Gavilan College. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.

Endnotes

¹ The descriptive information for this program was obtained from publicly available sources: the program's website (<http://www.puente.net/programs/hsprogram.html>, downloaded December 2011) and the WWC Dropout Prevention report. The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. The program description was provided to the developer in January 2012; however the WWC received no response. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review. The literature search reflects documents publicly available by December 2011.

² The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.1, as described in the Adolescent Literacy review protocol, Version 2.0. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.

Recommended Citation

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Glossary of Terms

Attrition	Attrition occurs when an outcome variable is not available for all participants initially assigned to the intervention and comparison groups. The WWC considers the total attrition rate and the difference in attrition rates across groups within a study.
Clustering adjustment	If treatment assignment is made at a cluster level and the analysis is conducted at the student level, the WWC will adjust the statistical significance to account for this mismatch, if necessary.
Confounding factor	A confounding factor is a component of a study that is completely aligned with one of the study conditions, making it impossible to separate how much of the observed effect was due to the intervention and how much was due to the factor.
Design	The design of a study is the method by which intervention and comparison groups were assigned.
Domain	A domain is a group of closely related outcomes.
Effect size	The effect size is a measure of the magnitude of an effect. The WWC uses a standardized measure to facilitate comparisons across studies and outcomes.
Eligibility	A study is eligible for review and inclusion in this report if it falls within the scope of the review protocol and uses either an experimental or matched comparison group design.
Equivalence	A demonstration that the analysis sample groups are similar on observed characteristics defined in the review area protocol.
Extent of evidence	An indication of how much evidence supports the findings. The criteria for the extent of evidence levels are given in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 2.1).
Improvement index	Along a percentile distribution of students, the improvement index represents the gain or loss of the average student due to the intervention. As the average student starts at the 50th percentile, the measure ranges from -50 to +50.
Multiple comparison adjustment	When a study includes multiple outcomes or comparison groups, the WWC will adjust the statistical significance to account for the multiple comparisons, if necessary.
Quasi-experimental design (QED)	A quasi-experimental design (QED) is a research design in which subjects are assigned to treatment and comparison groups through a process that is not random.
Randomized controlled trial (RCT)	A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is an experiment in which investigators randomly assign eligible participants into treatment and comparison groups.
Rating of effectiveness	The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in each domain based on the quality of the research design and the magnitude, statistical significance, and consistency in findings. The criteria for the ratings of effectiveness are given in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 2.1).
Single-case design	A research approach in which an outcome variable is measured repeatedly within and across different conditions that are defined by the presence or absence of an intervention.
Standard deviation	The standard deviation of a measure shows how much variation exists across observations in the sample. A low standard deviation indicates that the observations in the sample tend to be very close to the mean; a high standard deviation indicates that the observations in the sample tend to be spread out over a large range of values.
Statistical significance	Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between the groups. The WWC labels a finding statistically significant if the likelihood that the difference is due to chance is less than 5% ($p < 0.05$).
Substantively important	A substantively important finding is one that has an effect size of 0.25 or greater, regardless of statistical significance.

Please see the [WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook \(version 2.1\)](#) for additional details.